

# WRITINGS OF ALLEN CARR

by Allen Carr

---

*A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Allen Carr, compiled for study and devotional reading.*

97 Chapters

## Table of Contents

1. 01.00 Biblical Worship:
2. 01.00i Introduction
3. 01.01 The Synopsis Of Biblical Worship
4. 01.02 The Setting Of Biblical Worship
5. 01.03 The Sacrifice Of Biblical Worship, Part 1
6. 01.04 The Sacrifice Of Biblical Worship, Part 2
7. 01.05 The Scent Of Biblical Worship -
8. 01.06 The Significance Of Biblical Worship
9. 02.00 Great Invitations Of The Bible
10. 02.01 The Invitation To Committment - Gen\_7:1-16
11. 02.02 The Invitation To Companionship - Num\_10:29-32
12. 02.03 The Invitation To Cleansing - Isa\_1:18
13. 02.04 The Invitation To Contentment - Isa\_55:1-3
14. 02.05 The Invitation To Contrition - Hos\_6:1-2
15. 02.06 The Invitation To Children - Mat\_19:13-15
16. 02.07 The Invitation To Consider - Joh\_1:35-42
17. 02.08 The Invitation Of Confidence - Joh\_6:37-40
18. 02.09 The Invitation Of Conversion - Rev\_22:17
19. 02.10 The Invitation Of Completion - Rev\_22:20
20. 03.00. Prayer Series
21. 03.01. THE PLACE OF PRAYER
22. 03.02. THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER
23. 03.03. THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER
24. 03.04. THE PROBLEMS OF PRAYER
25. 06.01 QUESTIONS FOR MODERN DAY PHILEMON'S
26. 06.02 THE MAN WHO COULD NOT GOVERN HIMSELF
27. 07.00. Sermons From Ruth
28. 07.01. An Example Of A Steadfast Life - Rth 1:1-22
29. 07.02. Three Tombstones In A Washpot - Rth 1:1-7
30. 07.03. Three Widows In A Washpot - Rth 1:6-18
31. 07.04. Coming Home The Hard Way - Rth 1:19-22
32. 07.05. Searching For Grace - Rth 2:1-3
33. 07.06. In The Field Of Grace - Rth 2:4-17
34. 07.07. Good News From The Field Of Grace - Rth 2:17-21
35. 07.08. Abiding In The Field Of Grace - Rth 2:21-23
36. 07.09. Looking For A Little Rest - Rth 3:1-2
37. 07.10. Getting Ready To Meet The Master - Rth 3:3
38. 07.11. Finding Your Place At His Feet - Rth 3:1-11
39. 07.12. Redeemed, Redeemed By Love Divine - Rth 3:9 to Rth 4:12

40. 07.13. Redeemed! How I Love To Proclaim It! - Rth 4:1-17
41. 07.14. Ruth: From Brokenness To Blessedness - Rth 4:13-17
42. 07.15. Somebody Pinch Me Please - Rth 4:13-22
43. 08.00 The Bible: God's Perfect Word
44. 08.01 THE PERFECTION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
45. 08.02 THE PRESERVATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
46. 08.03 THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
47. 08.04 THE PROFIT IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
48. 09.00 The Book of Revelation
49. 09.01 Revelation 1:1-8 THE UNVEILING OF REVELATION
50. 09.02 Revelation 1:9-20 THE BACKDROP FOR THE REVELATION
51. 09.03 Revelation 2:1-7 THE CURE FOR THE COMMAN COLD
52. 09.04 Revelation 2:8-11 THE POOR LITTLE RICH CHURCH
53. 09.05 Revelation 2:12-17 AN UNHOLY UNION
54. 09.06 Revelation 2:18-29 THE CHURCH WITH THE ROTTEN CENTER
55. 09.07 Revelation 3:1-6 THE CHURCH WITH A REPUTATION
56. 09.08 Revelation 3:7-13 THE JESUS CHURCH
57. 09.09 Revelation 3:14-22 THE CHURCH THAT THOUGHT IT HAD IT
58. 09.10 Revelation 4:1 WHEN JESUS OPENS THE DOOR
59. 09.11 Revelation 4:2-11 THE THRONE CHAPTER
60. 09.12 Revelation 5:1-7 THERE STANDS THE LAMB
61. 09.13 Revelation 5:8-14 HEAVEN'S CONCERT
62. 09.14 Revelation 6:1-8 RIDERS ON THE HORIZON
63. 09.15 Revelation 6:9-17 HISTORY'S GREATEST PRAYER MEETING
64. 09.16 Revelation 7:1-8 THE 144:000
65. 09.17 Revelation 7:9-17 THE TRIBULATION SAINTS
66. 09.18 Revelation 8:1-13 WHEN THE TRUMPETS BEGIN TO SOUND
67. 09.19 Revelation 9:1-12 WHEN HELL VISITS THE EARTH
68. 09.20 Revelation 9:13-21 THE SIXTH TRUMPET
69. 09.21 Revelation 10:1-11 THE BEGINNING OF THE END
70. 09.22 Revelation 11:1-14 THE TWO WITNESSES
71. 09.23 Revelation 11:15-19 THE EDGE OF ETERNITY
72. 09.24 Revelation 12:1-6 WONDERS IN HEAVEN
73. 09.25 Revelation 12:7-17 THE GROWING CONFLICT
74. 09.26 Revelation 13:1-10 THE BEAST FROM THE SEA
75. 09.27 Revelation 13:11-15 THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH
76. 09.28 Revelation 13:16-18 HELL'S GATE PASS
77. 09.29 Revelation 14:1-5 WITH THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION
78. 09.30 Revelation 14:6-20 SECONDS AFTER DEATH
79. 09.31 Revelation 14:14-20 THE HARVEST OF THE ENDTIMES
80. 09.32 Revelation 15:1-16:21 THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES
81. 09.33 Revelation 17:1-18 THE FALL OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON

82. 09.34 Revelation 18:1-24 THE FALL OF COMMERCIAL BABYLON
83. 09.35 Revelation 19:1-10 SCENES OF GLORY IN HEAVEN
84. 09.35a Revelation 19:11-21 VE DAY
85. 09.35b Revelation 20:1-10 THE 1,000 YEAR PARTY
86. 09.36 Revelation 20:11-15 THE SINNER'S DAY IN GOD'S COURT
87. 09.37 Revelation 21:1-8 A BRIGHT NEW WORLD
88. 09.38 Revelation 21:9 - 22:5 `A GLIMPSE OF OUR NEW HOME
89. 09.39 Revelation 22:6-21 THE CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK
90. 10.00. The Prison Experiences Of The Bible (Sermon Series)
91. 10.01. The Prison Of His Promotions - Genesis 39:20-22; 41:14
92. 10.02. The Prison Of His Purifications - Judges 16:16-30
93. 10.03. The Prison Of His Persuasions - Matthew 11:1-11
94. 10.04. The Prison Of His Perseverance - Jonah 1:1-17
95. 10.05. The Prison Of His Power - Acts 12:1-19
96. 10.06. The Prison Of His Purposes - Jeremiah 32:1-15
97. 10.07. The Prison Of His Praises - Acts 16:16-26

## **01.00 Biblical Worship:**

---

Biblical Worship: What It Is And Why It Matters 01 - The Synopsis Of Biblical Worship - John 4:20-30 02 - The Setting Of Biblical Worship - Genesis 22:1-18 03 - The Sacrifice Of Biblical Worship, Part 1 - Deuteronomy 26:1-11 04 - The Sacrifice Of Biblical Worship, Part 2 - Matthew 2:1-12 05 - The Scent Of Biblical Worship - Exodus 30:34-38 06 - The Significance Of Biblical Worship - Exodus 33:12-23

## 01.00i Introduction

---

Series Introduction: We talk about worship in our churches. We encourage worship in our churches. We believe we worship when we come into our churches. Sometimes we actually do!

We want to try and determine what biblical worship is and what it is not. Things like singing, preaching, going to church and praying are not by themselves worship. They may serve to stimulate worship, and they may be carried out in a spirit of worship, but they are not worship in and of themselves. So, if these things that we all believe to be worship are not really worship, then what is it? That is a good question, and that is the question I hope to answer with this series of sermons. We are going to spend the next several Sunday evenings studying the important topic of biblical worship. I want to share with you a series of messages I have entitled Biblical Worship: What It Is And Why It Matters. I would like for us to get a handle on the true nature of biblical worship. I want us to come to understand the nature true biblical worship. I want us to see why true biblical worship matters. I want us to understand how we can become involved in true biblical worship.

## 01.01 The Synopsis Of Biblical Worship

---

### John 4:20-30 THE SYNOPSIS OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP

Intro: This is a familiar text. III. The Context. We looked at it in detail a few weeks ago. There is no way that we can adequately preach on a topic like worship in one or two sermons. So, I want to begin our journey with a message I am calling The Synopsis Of Biblical Worship. Rather than park in one place and preach from one text as is my usual habit, I want to call your attention to several passages that speak to the matter of worship. I want to give you a synopsis, a general summary, of what worship is. In our text, I want to call your attention to the Word “worship”. It appears in this text, in some form, eight times. Each time it appears in this passage, it translates the Greek word “proskuneo”. This word literally means “to kiss toward”. It is used of the ancient tradition of a person kissing the hand of a superior. A person would bow to the ground, bow the head and kiss the hand of one who was superior to him. It was also used in the sense of “bowing down, or prostrating oneself.” A person would bow before a superior with a sense of honor, respect, awe, reverence and homage. It is also used to speak of a dog licking his master’s hand. That is an image of trust, respect and honor. Our English word “worship” comes from the old Anglo-Saxon word “weorthscipe”. It refers to giving someone their “worth”. When it comes to God, it means that we ascribe to God His worth. It means that we state and affirm His supreme value and glory. When we apply these images to our relationship with God, it simply means that we humble ourselves and give glory, honor, reverence, awe, respect and homage to God. It means that we recognize His vastly superior standing and we humble ourselves before Him and give glory to Him. Thus, worship is giving. Essentially, it is giving honor and respect to God. Hopefully, that is the reason we have gathered in this place. We are not here to honor the preacher, the singers, the church or our traditions. We are here to humble ourselves before our great God and give Him the glory He deserves. So, we should not come to church “to get a blessing”. We should come before God daily, whether it is here, at home or wherever, to give glory, honor, respect, and reverence to the Lord God Almighty. There are over 87 Hebrew and Greek words that are used to describe the concepts of praise and worship. There are over 600 references to praise and worship in the Bible. Obviously, we will not have the time to consider all of them, but we will try to hit the high spots as we move along. Worship literally fills the pages of Scripture. In the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve fell into sin because they worshiped self instead of God. The book of Revelation pulls back the curtain between earth and Heaven and gives us a glimpse of pure worship in glory. All the way through the Bible, you see scenes of worship recorded for our help in understanding what worship is and what it is not. Worship is the absolute non-negotiable of the Christian life. The Christian must worship. I will go so far as to say that the truly redeemed child of God can’t not worship. Worship to the believer is like the engine in your automobile. It is like the mainspring in a watch. Worship is, to our spiritual lives, the most important and essential element. It is as natural for a Christian to worship as it is for a person to breathe. For a Christian to live without true worship is like a fish trying to live without water. It is like a bird trying to fly without wings. It is like a house trying to stand without a foundation. Worship is essential to everything we are and do as believers.

That is why understanding what worship is, is so vital and so important. I want to give you some possible definitions of worship. Worship is a concept that defies adequate definition. We just have to take a stab at it and hope that we come close. For instance, how do you adequately describe a sight of rare beauty? How do you tell someone else about a pleasant fragrance or an amazing flavor? How do you explain time? Worship is something that is better experienced than it is defined. Still, I want to try and do the impossible. I want to try to define worship. One of the best definitions I have ever read was written by a man named William Temple. Temple was the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1942-1944. Here is how he defined worship.

Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God. To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, To feed the mind with the truth of God, To purge the imagination by the beauty of God, To open the heart to the love of God, To devote the will to the purpose of God. And all this gathered up in adoration is the greatest of human expressions of which we are capable.

Warren Wiersbe defines worship as, “the believers response of all that they are – mind, emotions, will and body – to all that God is and says and does.”<sup>[i]</sup> Today, I want to quote a few more authors and their attempts at a definition.<sup>[ii]</sup> As we consider their words, we will look at their definitions in light of the Word of God. What they have to say about worship, along with what the Word of God say about worship, can help us understand the matter of worship a little more clearly.

1. Worship is “The overflow of a grateful heart, under a sense of Divine favor.” This write is teaching us that worship is a spontaneous event. True worship does not have to be pumped and primed; it is the outpouring of a heart that is filled a sense of God’s goodness, greatness and glory. In Psalms 45:1, David said it this way, “My heart is indicting a good matter...” The word “indicting” means “to keep moving”. It was used to speak of a boiling pot of water. It has the idea of “boiling over, or bubbling up”. As David reflected on the glory and majesty of God as it is revealed in His creation, His Word and His salvation, his heart boiled over with love and praise for His God. When his full heart overflowed, worship ascended to God. We find this same picture in Psalms 23:5. So worship is the overflow of a heart filled with the glory of Who God is and what He has done. When we stop to reflect on Him, His power, His grace, His love, His mercy, His salvation, His Word, and a host of other things, our hearts are filled to overflowing with love and adoration for Him. When that heart boils over, worship is the result. Worship is my entire being giving honor, adoration and glory to all that God is.

2. Worship is “the outpouring of a soul at rest in the presence of God.” In this definition, a emphasis is on the spiritual condition of the worshiper. The believer is at perfect peace with God. He or she is conscience of the fact that they are in a right relationship with God. They are assured that they have been accepted by God because of their relationship with Jesus Christ, Ephesians 1:6. The believer has come to realize that, in Jesus, God sees him as sanctified, justified, redeemed, regenerated and blessed with all spiritual blessings, Ephesians 1:3. As the believer considers who he is in Jesus, his heart is filled with adoration, love and praise for the God Who made it possible. He reaches heavenward with His praises directed toward the God Who loved, saved and blessed him. This is the idea expressed by the woman for her beloved in Song of Solomon 2:3-4, “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”

3. Worship is “the occupation of the heart, not with its needs, or even with its blessings, but with God Himself.” Too often our praying and our thinking are occupied with self. Is it not true that we come to church “to get a blessing”? It is not true that we go to God in prayer because we have a need? It is not true that we often engage in what we call worship because of what we want to get out of it? In truth, genuine biblical worship is not about us getting anything. It is about us being lost in the wonder of Who God is. When David was told by Nathan that God would establish David’s throne and kingdom forever, David simply sat down in the presence of God, 2 Samuel 7:18-22. As David sat there and basked in the glory and goodness of God, he was overcome with wonder and praise. That is the essence of true worship. This image is made clear by a couple of glimpses at Heaven’s worship. Consider Revelation 4:11 and Revelation 5:9-14. In these verses, not a single petition is made, not a single request is made, all that we find is pure, unadulterated worship of the Person and glory of God,

4. Worship is “the upspring of a heart that has known the Father as a Giver, the Son as Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as the Indwelling Guest.” While anyone in the world, even an unbeliever, can recognize that God exists and that He is Supreme and the Creator, not everyone has the capacity for worship. The lost man can understand the reality of God, but he cannot appreciate the truths about God that can only be revealed by the Spirit of God, 1 Corinthians 2:14-15.

Believers, on the other hand, enjoy a special relationship with God. We enjoy a “living water” experience with Him. When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well, He said, “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life,” John 4:13-14. This is a picture of what happens to us when we are saved. The Spirit of God takes up residence in our hearts. He fills us with the wonder of Who God is and He flows out of us in worship and service to God, John 7:37-39. Worship is really the “living water” returning to its source. In Ecclesiastes 1:7, Solomon wrote these words, “All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.” In this verse, Solomon is talking about the hydrological cycle. The water comes down from the sky in the form of rain, snow and ice. This water fills the river and they flow down to the seas. The water is evaporated by the sun and goes back into the clouds. Then, it is dropped on the earth once more. Worship operates the same way. The Spirit on the inside, Who was sent from Heaven to our hearts, bubbles up and fills us with the wonder and glory of our God. When He does this the praise in our hearts flows out and is offered up to God in the form of worship. It goes back to the source. Thus, all true worship begins with God; it flows to and through us; and ascends back to God. It is a divine cycle.

Conc: Those are enough definitions for one service. As we move through our study, we will encounter more words that are used for worship and we will consider them.

Let me close today by making a statement: Everybody worships someone or something. John MacArthur tells the story of an article he read in the Chicago Tribune. It seems that a woman from New Mexico noticed that the skillet burns on one of her tortillas she was frying resembled the face of Jesus. She showed it to her husband and neighbors who agreed the marks on the tortilla looked like a face and it truly bore a resemblance to their idea of what Jesus looked like. At any rate, she took her tortilla to her priest to have it blessed. And she testified that the tortilla had changed her

life. Now her husband once again agreed. He said that his wife had been a more peaceful, happy, submissive wife since the tortilla had arrived in their home. So the priest, not accustomed to blessing tortillas was somewhat reluctant, but he agreed to do it. She took the tortilla home, put it in a glass case with piles of cotton to make it look like it was floating on a cloud. She built a special altar for it and opened the little shrine to visitors. And within a few months, more than 8,000 people came to the shrine of the Jesus of the tortilla. And all of them agreed that the face in the burn marks on the tortilla, well, that it was the face of Jesus. Except, that is, for one reporter. He thought it looked like former heavyweight boxing champion Leon Spinks. Well, John MacArthur then comments, "It seems incredible that so many people would worship a tortilla. But such a distorted concept of worship is not really unusual in contemporary society."<sup>[iii]</sup> So, some people worship a tortilla. Some bow down to rocks, statues and animals. Others give their worship to themselves, or their families or their possessions. Some worship their church, their favorite preacher or their old, moldy traditions. The truth is, everybody gives honor, respect and adoration to someone or something. To whom or to what do you give your worship? Is your worship God focused, God-directed and God-centered? Is your worship self-focused, self-directed and self-centered? Or, is your worship religion-focused, religion-directed and religion-centered? I want to challenge you to learn to worship correctly. Has the Lord spoken to your heart about this matter of worship?

- If your worship is not what you want it to be and if it is not worship that is pleasing to the Lord, come to Him and let Him help you with your worship.

- If you are like me and you want to deepen your worship experience, come before the Lord and ask Him to help you with that.

- If you just want to let out the worship that resides in your heart, you should kneel before Him and worship Him today. Do what He tells you and He will bless your worship!

[i] Wiersbe, Warren w., Real Worship (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 26.

[ii] Adapted from Gibbs, Alfred P., Worship: The Christian's Highest Occupation. [<http://baptistbiblebelievers.com/Books/WorshipTheChristiansHighestOccupation/tabid/89/Default.aspx>]

[iii] Adapted from [<http://www.backtothebible.org/index.php/Back-to-the-Bible-Radio-Program/Unacceptable-Worship-Part-1.html>]John 4:20-30

## 01.02 The Setting Of Biblical Worship

---

### Genesis 22:1-14 THE SETTING OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP

Intro: There is a hermeneutical principle known as The Principle Of First Mention. This principle teaches that the first mention of a word, or a doctrine, in the Bible, determines its meaning throughout the rest of Scripture. For instance, Egypt is first mentioned in Genesis 12:10. In that verse, Abram leaves Canaan during a time of famine and goes to Egypt. While he is there, he suffers spiritual loss and damages his testimony. Thus, Egypt is presented in a negative light and, as a general rule, that is the way Egypt is perceived throughout the Bible. The passage before us today gives us the first mention of the word “worship”. People had worshiped before the events of this passage take place. Genesis 4:1-26 shows Cain and Abel engaged in sacrifice and worship. Genesis 4:26 says, “... then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.” Genesis 5:22 tells us that “Enoch walked with God...” Genesis 6:9 tells us that Noah also “walked with God.” People had been worshiping the Lord since the very beginning, but this is the first time the word “worship” is used. This passage that describes the faith of Abraham teaches us some very powerful truths about worship. The word translated “worship” means to “bow down; to prostrate oneself before a superior; to humble oneself before God.” Abraham uses this word in the midst of the most difficult trial he ever faced. He was in the deepest valley of his life, yet he saw the experience as a time of worship. I think Abraham’s experience has something to say to us about our own worship. In fact, the truths revealed here teach us about The Setting For Biblical Worship. These verses teach us about the character, the conditions and the challenges of biblical worship. Let’s examine these truths together as we think about The Setting For Biblical Worship.

#### I. Genesis 22:1-2 WORSHIP’S SOURCE

- Abraham’s worship in these verses was based on a clear word from the Lord. Genesis 22:1 says, “God...said unto him.” Genesis 22:2 says, “And He said...” Abraham found himself engaged in the worship of Almighty God because God told him exactly what He wanted. God told Abraham what to do, “Take now thy son...and offer him for a burnt offering”. God told him where to go, “get thee into the land of Moriah...upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Abraham’s worship was based on a clear word from God.

- True worship is always guided by the Word of God. True worship is always a response to revelation. Thus, true worship is always a matter of faith, Romans 10:17. God has revealed Himself to us in His Word. We respond to that revelation by humbling ourselves to Him and bowing down before Him in reverence and adoration.

- Many will go to their churches and engage in responsive readings, dead liturgies and empty formalism, and call it worship. Others will dance around, lift their arms and shout. Some speak in tongues and faint dead away and call it worship. Still others will go to church, sit quietly in their pew, sing the songs, bow for prayer, listen to the preacher and call it worship. Does any of these methods of assembly and doing church really result in worship?

If we are going to worship the Lord, we must do it His way in the manner that he has prescribed. Following the traditions and customs of man is simply not worship. Genuine biblical worship is all that I am responding to all that God is, as He is revealed in the Bible.

· In other words, God says He loves me. God says He sent His Son to die for me. God says He will never leave me. God says that He will supply all my needs. God says He is my Father. The list could go on. When I understand Who God is and what He has done for me, I worship Him when I respond to His revelation with humility, gratitude and reverence. So, yes, the person in the emotional church can worship. The person in the formal church can worship,. The person in the church like ours can worship. The key is the attitude of the heart.

· Genuine worship takes place when my spirit responds to God's revelation of Himself in His word, and I bow myself before Him in reverence, love and adoration. So, like Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," John 4:24.

## II. Genesis 22:3 WORSHIP'S SUBMISSION

· As soon as Abraham hears the command of God, there is no hesitation. He responds in faith and submits himself to the will of the Lord. Notice how Abraham's submissive faith manifested itself.

Ø He "...rose up early in the morning."

Ø He "saddled" his donkey.

Ø He "took two of his young men with him..."

Ø He took "Isaac his son."

Ø He "calve the wood for the burnt offering"

Ø He "rose up".

Ø He "went his way unto the place of which God had told him."

· Abraham's worship manifested itself in humble submission to the will of God. Surely, Abraham could not understand the Lord's command. Surely, his heart was heavy as he went about his tasks. Surely, he was troubled and confused. Still, he did what the Lord told him to do. Abraham heard the word of the Lord and he submitted himself to that word. Abraham humbly obeyed God, and that is the essence of worship!

· Not only does worship find its root in what the Word of God says; it is also rooted in obedience to what the Word of God says. There, anyone who does not obey the Word of God cannot be a true worshiper.

It is one thing to know what God says, but it is another thing altogether to obey God, even when His commands and demands make no sense. What the Lord called Abraham to do was unprecedented. No one had ever been asked to do that before. Yet, Abraham obeyed God because Abraham trusted God to do the right thing. He trusted the Lord to know best. He humbled himself by faith and left the consequences with God.

· That kind of faith is an essential component of true biblical worship. Thus, even the smallest act of obedience to the Word of God is a form of worship! Praying, reading the Bible, tithing, witnessing, faithfulness to the house of God, all the things we ought to be doing anyway, are all acts of worship, when they are done out of a heart of love and humble submission to God.

### III. Genesis 22:2, Genesis 22:5 WORSHIP'S SACRIFICE

· Abraham's worship wasn't cheap. Abraham's worship would cost him his precious son. Notice how God approaches Abraham in verse 2. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest..."

Isaac was the light of Abraham's life. Isaac was the most precious person in the world to Abraham. Isaac was his dearest possession. Isaac represented all of Abraham's hopes for the future. To Abraham, Isaac was life itself. God commands Abraham to take that which is most precious to him and sacrifice him to God. Abraham's worship was costly. In Genesis 22:5, he told his servants, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." When Abraham spoke of "worship", he knew that true worship involved him making the greatest sacrifice possible. Abraham's heart was wrapped up in his son, yet he willingly gave God the treasure of his heart because of his love for the Lord.

· Real worship is always costly! David knew this, for he said, "...neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing," 2 Samuel 24:24. Mary of Bethany knew this, John 12:1-8. She sacrificed her pride, her glory and her treasure for the opportunity to worship the Lord Jesus. The wise men knew this, Matthew 2:1-12. These rich, wise, powerful men humbled themselves before a child and worshiped Him. They sacrificed their pride, their glory and their treasure to honor the Lord. Through the ages many millions have given the all, even their lives, as sacrifices of worship for His glory.

· We need to keep in mind that worship is a sacrifice, Hebrews 13:15. It always costs something to worship the Lord! It costs time in spiritual preparation, for no one just walks in and goes right to worship. It costs time in Bible study, for the truth must be encountered before God can be worshiped. It can cost the loss of prestige and acceptance with friends, family, society and even the church, but God's worship is worth more than the praises of men. It costs treasure, because often God will ask us to worship Him through giving to others.

· Real worship is a sacrifice, but it is a sacrifice making. This is true because through true worship God is honored and the saint who worships is blessed.

### IV. Genesis 22:5 WORSHIP'S SEPARATION

· When this small band of pilgrims arrived at the place God revealed to Abraham, a separation took place. He said, "... unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Those two young men were not a part of the worship experience. They would have hindered Abraham from doing what the Lord had called him to do. Therefore, they had to be left behind. The only two elements allowed in the place of worship were Abraham and the treasure of his heart.

· There is a lesson here for the person who would worship God today. There are many things in life that would hinder our worship. Like those two young men, things would intrude themselves into our

worship that have no business being there. We must say to those things, "Abide ye here, while I go yonder and worship."

We are all aware of the things that compete for our attention when we seek to worship the Lord. Meals have been prepared in services set aside for worship. Problems have been thought through, relationships pondered, and deals struck in services set aside for worship. All the things that would hinder us: the problems of the flesh, the mind, the world, etc., must be banished when we go to seek the Lord in worship. Anything that distracts the mind from Him is a hindrance to genuine, biblical worship.

· Hebrews 10:21-22 says, "And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith..." We have a "High Priest", that is the privilege of God's grace. Since we have been given that privilege, we have a responsibility. We are to "draw near with a true heart." This is a call to approach the Lord with a heart that is focused wholly on Him. Anything that would distract the mind must be cast out and left behind so that we, like Abraham, can go from "here" to "yonder". For Abraham, the place of worship was not "here" in the valley with the young men, it was "yonder" on the mountain with the Lord. If I am going to worship, the I too must move from "here" to "yonder". The only way I can do that is separate my mind from any that would hinder it from being totally given over to Him. (III. Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:5) · What occupies your mind when you come to worship? What has had your attention in this service?

#### V. Genesis 22:5 WORSHIP'S SELF-DENIAL

· When Abraham told to young men that he was going up to "worship", he knew that it meant the sacrifice of his son. This was nothing less than absolute self-denial on Abraham's part. He yielded himself to the will of God with no regard for his own will or feelings. He sacrificed his opinions, his desires, his will, his preferences, and his very future to the glory of God.

Abraham's worship was not about him; it was about the Lord. Abraham did not seek to worship in a way that would allow him to be exalted; he worshiped in a way that brought all glory to God. In other words, Abraham lost himself in the person of God. Abraham forgot about self and did only thing which glorified the Lord.

· The believer would worship must learn the truth of Php 3:3, which says, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." If we would worship the Lord, then we must not come to Him full of ourselves. We must come to Him full of the very thing that delights His heart. Nothing delights the heart of God more than His Son Jesus.

One more than one occasion, God said, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." God is infinitely delighted with His Son. If I will enter His presence with a mind and heart full of Christ; if I will speak of the glories of His Darling Son; if I will make must of Jesus, my worship will rise before the Lord like sweet incense.

· I am simply reminding us that worship is never about us. We can't worship as long as we are focused on self. If we would worship the Lord, we must cease to exalt self and we must focus on exalting Him and Him alone! Real worship happens when we forget about self and get lost in His glory for His for His glory!

## VI. Genesis 22:16-18 WORSHIP'S SERVICE

- Abraham climbed that mountain with Isaac. Abraham answered Isaac's fears. Abraham took his son, bound him and placed him on the altar. Abraham raised the knife and fully intended to sacrifice his son to the Lord. He held nothing back! He yielded every ounce of self to the perfect will of God. God intervened and provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice in the place of Isaac. In the end, Abraham's worship served to glorify God alone. Abraham's faith and act of selfless worship delighted the heart of God. It also brought a statement of appreciation from the Lord.
- When we devote ourselves to selfless worship we bring glory to Him. Psalms 50:23 quotes God as saying, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."

True biblical worship gives God the place of absolute preeminence in our lives. He alone is glorified in genuine worship. That is how worship serves the Lord!

## VII. Genesis 22:16-18 WORSHIPS SATISFACTION

- God will be no man's debtor! After Abraham's demonstration of absolute faith in God, God gave Isaac back to him. Abraham ascended that mountain with a heavy heart. He was going to honor God, but honoring God would cost him his son. He obeyed God, and in return, God rewarded Abraham.

He might have climbed the mountain sacred and defeated, but he came down rejoicing and thankful. He might have climbed that mountain questioning the ways of God, but he came back down understanding God better than he ever had. He might have climbed that mountain ready to give up his Isaac on the altar of sacrifice, but he came back down more thankful than ever for Isaac. When Abraham placed Isaac on the altar, God gave him back and Isaac was more precious than he had ever been before!

- One of the greatest blessings of genuine, biblical worship is that it brings the manifold blessings of God back to the believer. God will honor those who honor Him through worship. When we are willing to sacrifice all that we have, all that we are, and all that we care about on the altar of His glory, He will respond by blessing us and using us in greater ways than we could ever imagine.
- The greatest key to having God's power and presence manifested in our lives is worship. If we could just learn to take all that we are and yield it to all that He is, we would enjoy greater spiritual blessings than we have ever dreamed up. If we could learn to offer up real worship to Almighty God, He would honor us with His blessings.
- As we respond in worship to all that Jesus is, as He is revealed in the Word of God, God responds by doing for us what He did for Abraham. He gives us the Son in greater measure. That is, He gives us a greater appreciation for the Person of Christ and the gifts of Christ. When we worship Christ in light of His death on the cross, the cross becomes more precious. As we worship Him in His resurrection, His resurrection becomes more precious. As we worship Him for grace, love, salvation, eternal life, heaven, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the church, and everything else He has given to us in Christ, those things become infinitely more precious to us. When we give God pure worship for Who He is and what He has done for us, He responds by giving those things back to us in greater degree. It is not that we have more of those things, it is that those things become

more real and precious to us. That is one of the great benefits of true worship.

Conc: Abraham's worship honored the Lord. He placed all that he was and all that he had on the altar of submission and humble obedience to the God Who loved him and saved him. In response, God blessed Abraham in ways he could never have imagined. Have you examined your worship in light of what we have learned from Abraham?

- Are you worshiping Him as he is revealed to you in the Word of God, the source of worship?
- Are you absolutely submissive to His will?
- Is your worship sacrificial?
- Are you practicing self-denial and separation?
- Does your worship serve the Lord by glorifying Him?
- Does your worship provide satisfaction as he becomes more precious to you?
- Or, is there room for improvement in your worship?

If the Lord has spoken to you about your worship, come to Him today and let Him work in your heart to bring you to a place of pleasing, biblical worship.

## 01.03 The Sacrifice Of Biblical Worship, Part 1

---

### Deuteronomy 26:1-11 THE SACRIFICE OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP

Intro: In our last study on the theme of worship, we considered the first mention of the word worship in Genesis 22:1-24. In that passage, we saw biblical worship in action as Abraham willingly offered up the treasure of his heart, his own son Isaac, to Almighty God. We learned that worship is all that we are reacting to all that God is.

Today, I want to continue to talk about the meaning of worship. I want you to see that biblical worship always involves an element of sacrifice. In essence, worship is a gift we give to the God Who saved us from our wretched, lost condition. Let me remind you that worship is a distinct method of approaching God. Worship is different from prayer and praise. Prayer and praise may contain worship, but by themselves, they are something altogether different. Prayer is the obsession of the soul with its needs. Prayer says, "Lord save me!" Prayer says, "Lord give me!" Prayer asks for the things the soul desires. There is nothing wrong with that; it is what He commands and invites us to do! Praise is the obsession of the soul with its blessings. Praise says, "Thank you Lord for all that you have given me and done in me." Praise says, "Thank you for your gifts." There is nothing wrong with vocal, visible praise. He commands us to do it and it honors Him. Besides that, He is infinitely worthy of all the praise we can give to Him! Worship is the obsession of the soul with God Himself. Worship's focus is not on itself or its blessings. Worship's focus is on God alone. Worship says, "Lord, thank You for Who You are! Thank you for being holy, loving, merciful, saving, powerful, etc." Our knowledge of Him should cause us to bow before Him in humble worship! When we first come to Jesus Christ for salvation, we do so through prayer. When He saves our souls, we are thankful and we praise Him for all that He has done for us. As we grow in Jesus, read His Word and commune with Him in prayer, we come to know Him and appreciate Him even more. He becomes more precious to us as the days go by. In the beginning, we do not know all that much about Him. As the days and years go by, we learn more about Him and He becomes increasingly precious to our hearts. We become like the Shulamite woman in the Song of Solomon when we declare that He is "the chiefest among ten thousand," and we proclaim that He "is altogether lovely!". (Song of Solomon 5:10; Song of Solomon 5:16) Our souls echo the words of the songwriter who penned these words: His name is Wonderful, His name is Wonderful, His name is Wonderful,

Jesus my Lord;

He is the mighty King, master of everything, His name is Wonderful,

Jesus, my Lord.

He's the great Shepherd, the Rock of all ages, Almighty God is He;

Bow down before Him, love and adore Him, His name is Wonderful,

Jesus, my Lord.

Once a young woman was saved from an apartment building that was on fire in London. She was on the top floor of the tenement building, leaning out the window, crying for help as the flames grew ever nearer to where she was. Her situation seemed hopeless until a young firefighter climber a ladder, risking his own life, and brought the woman down to safety. In the excitement that followed her rescue, she failed to thank her savior for his heroic deed. The next day, she learned his name and where he lived and she went to his home to thank him for what he did for her. Over time a friendship developed that grew into love. The two were eventually married. The young woman never forgot that the name was her savior. She always remembered that had it not been for him, she would have burned to death in the fire. Now, however, he was more to her than just her savior. He was now her husband, her lover, her companion through all the good days and the bad days of life. That is a picture of biblical worship! The Lord Jesus laid down His life to save our souls, but our relationship involves more than that. He is our Saviour, but He is also our Friend, our Bridegroom, our Companion every day we live; the One Who supplies all our needs; our Counselor, our Guide, our Guardian, and so much more. God has given us the gift of salvation and eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord, Romans 6:23. Worship is our gift back to Him for all that He has done for us in Jesus Christ. With all of that in mind, I want to consider what the passage before us has to say about biblical worship. This text is a call to worship for Israel. In this passage, God is instituting the "Feast of the First-Fruits". When they were settled in the land and began to reap the harvests, they were to take the first portion and bring it to the Lord as an offering of thanksgiving and worship. In these verses, God tells His people how they should approach Him. One of the lessons that comes out of these verses is that biblical worship always involved sacrifice. I want to share a few truths that present themselves to us in these verses. I want to preach about The Sacrifice Of Biblical Worship. This passage has something to say about The Worshiper's Appreciation; The Worshiper's Approach and The Worshiper's Adoration. Let's look at these truths together today.

## I. THE WORSHIPER'S APPRECIATION

(ILL. As Israel is called to worship, they are reminded of the thoughts that should occupy the heart of any true worshiper. Biblical worship is far more than just gathering together to sing a few song, pray a few prayers, preach a sermon and go home. Biblical worship has its foundation a heart that is filled with love for Almighty God and what He has done for the worshiper. The children of Israel are told to approach Him with appreciation for the wonderful things He has done for them. Consider what the true worshiper is to have in his mind as he approaches God.)

A. Deuteronomy 26:5-8 For His Redemption – The Israelite is to come before God and offer thanksgiving for how God has worked in the lives of His people. The worshiper is to be thankful for how God brought His people from nothing and has given them everything. The worshiper is to be thankful for how God moved in power to deliver His people from their bondage. The worshiper is to remember that he has been redeemed by the blood of a lamb, Exodus 12 – III The Passover!) This same blessing has been given to every redeemed child of God in Christ Jesus. We were born into the slavery of sin, Ephesians 2:1-3; John 8:44. Jesus came into this world and shed His Own blood for our redemption, 1 Peter 1:18-19. He intervened in our lost condition, and called us unto Himself, John 6:44; Ephesians 2:4-9. He delivered us from the old life of sin and made us a new creature in Jesus Christ, Ephesians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17. He brought us out of Adam and placed us in Jesus, Colossians 1:13. He did all of this with a mighty display of divine, sovereign

power! When we approach Him in worship, we should always come to Him mindful of all that He did for us when He saved our souls!

B. Deuteronomy 26:1 For His Restoration – The Israelite worshiper is reminded that God brought him out of Egypt and has settled him in the promised land of blessing. So, the worshiper is to look back to where the Lord brought him from and he is also to look around at what the Lord has given him in grace. The Israelite worshiper would remember how God parted the Red Sea, fed his fathers with manna from heaven, led his people with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, gave them water from a rock and defeated all their enemies. He would remember how God brought them out of a place of desolation and into a place of blessing and he would be appreciative of all the Lord had done for them. In other words, the Lord had given Israel a heritage and they were to be thankful for it! The same should be true of us. We need to remember that the Lord brought us out of death in life. He delivered us from a place of separation and isolation, and He has brought into a place of spiritual intimacy with Him. He has restored us to a place of perfect fellowship with Himself and that truth should cause us to worship and glorify Him. (III. Ephesians 2:5-6; Ephesians 1:11)

C. Deuteronomy 26:2, Deuteronomy 26:9 For His Rewards – The Israelite worshiper was to remember that God had blessed him beyond belief. He had planted him in a place where all his needs were met. He was to remember that he had been given a land, a place of peace, prosperity and blessings. He as to be grateful for those blessings.

Isn't the same true of us? Not only did God save our souls, but he has blessed us beyond belief! In fact, Ephesians 1:3 tells us that He has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." Just consider some of what He has given you in Christ Jesus.

· Everlasting life – John 6:47; John 10:28 (III. Name is the Lamb's Book of Life – Luke 10:20!) · Adoption into His family – 1 John 3:1-3; Romans 8:15 · His presence – Hebrews 13:5 · His provision – Php 4:19; Matthew 6:25-34 · His love – Jeremiah 31:3 · His forgiveness – Psalms 103:12; 1 John 1:7 · His advocacy – 1 John 2:1 · His indwelling presence – John 14:17 · His promise of a home in glory – John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:4

Those blessings are just a small portion of all we have in Jesus. Thoughts of all that He has given us In Jesus ought to fill our hearts when we approach Him for worship!

(Note: The more we learn about who we are and what we have been given in Jesus, the more we will desire to worship Him. Therefore, we should ever meditate on His grace, His love, His redemption and all His many blessings. As we do, the heart will be moved to glorify and worship Almighty God.) II. THE WORSHIPER'S APPROACH

(ILL. While this passage tells us about the great themes that should thrill the soul of the believer, it also has something to say about the attitudes that should grip the worshiper's heart as he or she approaches God almighty. Notice the attitudes that should fill our souls as we come before Him to worship.)

A. Deuteronomy 26:2-4 We Must Come With Gratitude – The Israelite was commanded to approach God with the best of the land. Notice that he was to "take of the first of all the fruit", "put it into a basket", and "go unto the place" of worship. Each of these acts brings to mind someone who

is appreciative of all that the Lord has given him. He takes the blessings the Lord has enriched him with and he gives of them a willing sacrifice to the glory of the Lord. This is a picture of gratitude in action. When we approach the Lord in worship, we should also be grateful to Him for all that He has done for us. In a spiritual sense, we need to fill our baskets with thanksgiving for His blessings and come to His house ready to offer that thanksgiving up to Him. Far too many times, we only come to Him when we want something from Him. We should all develop a heart full of gratitude for all that He has done for us. If every individual would come into His house thankful for salvation and all the other spiritual blessings in our lives, it would transform our corporate worship. I fear that we usually come into His presence with empty baskets. We come to worship in a state of spiritual poverty, with nothing to offer Him. John 4:23 says, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." God is looking for people who will fill their baskets with gratitude for His blessings and will come into His presence with a heart full of praise and worship. In Exodus 23:15 God warned Israel that, "...none shall appear before me empty." When we come into His presence, whether we do so individually or corporately, we should come ready to worship. May we be like the little girl who came in from playing, took a chair and sat down, watching as her mother ironed. After a while her mother said, "What do you want dear?" The daughter replied, "I don't want anything, mother. I just want to sit here and look at you and love you." That is worship in a spirit of gratitude!

B. Deuteronomy 26:2 We Must Come With Obedience – The Israelites were told exactly how to come, what to bring and where to go. Only those who followed God's plan were truly worshiping God. A man might have said, "I would rather worship closer to home. Or, I would rather bring the things I desire to give God." It would not have been accepted. Worship always flows out of an obedient heart! If we are going to give Him worship, we must first learn to obey His commands. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments", John 14:15. Since worship is love for God in action; worship can be said to be obedience in action. If we are going to worship the Lord, our lives must line up with His Word and with His will. Only when we are in a place of obedience, are we truly in a place where we can worship.

C. Deuteronomy 26:5-9 We Must Come With Humility – The Israelite worshiper was commanded to recall his humble beginnings. He was to remember what he was when the Lord found him. He was nothing but "a Syrian ready to perish" until God intervened and saved him. He was to put on no airs, but he was to remember that everything he was, everything he had and everything he ever hoped to be was all the pure gift of the grace of God. The same attitude must fill the heart of the true worshiper. We must remember that God hates pride wherever it is found. Jesus told about the damnation of a lost Pharisee who came to worship with pride in his heart, Luke 18:11-12. While God hates pride, He respects and responds to humility.

· Isaiah 57:15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

· James 4:6, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

We, like the ancient Israelite, must remember that we were hell bound sinners when the Lord found us. We were sinful, vile, defiled and dirty, but He loved us and saved us from that wretched

condition. Everything we have, everything we are, everything we will ever achieve is the result of His amazing, life-changing grace, 1 Corinthians 15:10. Pride and arrogance will close the door of worship. Humility of heart will allow us to approach God and give Him the worship He desires and so richly deserves.

### III. THE WORSHIPER'S ADORATION

· When the worshiper came before God, he was to “set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God.” He did not come before the Lord with a petition on his lips, but with a present in his hands! When that worshiper came before the Lord with his gift from his field, he was giving the Lord back what the Lord had already given him. In truth, it was costing him nothing. Everything he gave had its origin with the Lord. The fact that he gave it was a symbol of his love for God and for all that God had done in his life. David expressed this thought in 1 Chronicles 29:14, “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.” They were merely giving back to God the things He had already given to them.

· Our worship is the same way! We simply take what He has given us and we offer back the first fruits of those things to Him in the form of love, adoration and worship.

So, while worship involves sacrifice, in the end, it costs us nothing. As we worship Him for Who He is and for all that He has done for us, we need to remember that the things He has given us cost Him everything! What was the price of His love? What was the cost of His grace? What was the value of your souls and mine? It is summed up for us in the following verses.

· John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

· Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

It cost God the death of His Son Jesus on the cross to give us the things we have in Him. That fact alone should drive us to our knees in thankful, broken worship.

Conc: Do you have anything in your worship basket today? Has the Lord done anything for you at all? If he has, why don't you select the best of those things and come before Him and give them back to Him right now in the form of your worship. How long has it been since you humbled yourself before Him, with a grateful heart, and thanked Him in pure worship?

If He hasn't done anything for you, why don't you come to Him today and Ask Him to save you. Then you will have a reason to worship Him too.

## 01.04 The Sacrifice Of Biblical Worship, Part 2

---

### Matthew 2:1-12 THE SACRIFICE OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP – PART 2

Intro: I would like to draw our hearts back to the theme of worship today. In our last study, we considered the “Feast of the First Fruits”, and how Israel was called upon to worship God by giving back to Him. They were to take the things He had given them, the land and their crops, and they were to bring a gift to the Lord, worshiping Him for His grace and His blessings on their lives. In the text before us today, we are allowed to get another glimpse of worship through giving. This passage is usually preached around Christmas time with an emphasis on the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. What the wise men did in these verses is something that should be done every day in the life of the believer. You are very familiar with this passage, but I want to look at it once more today. I want us to consider this passage, not from the perspective of Christmas, but from the perspective of worship. These verses teach us some valuable lessons concerning the nature of worship. As we watch the wise men worship the Lord, they reveal certain characteristics of worship that should be true in our own worship. There are eight of those characteristics that I have identified in these verses. I want to share them with you by way of introduction and then preach the message out of that eighth characteristic. Don’t get discouraged right at the outset. I am going to have a long introduction and a short message. Let me share these eight characteristics of worship with you. I will say a few words about each of them and expand a little more on the last one.

- Their Worship Was Intentional – Matthew 2:2 – These men came to Jerusalem for the sole purpose of worship. Worship was why they left their homeland. Worship was why they brought their treasure. Worship was why they journeyed. Worship was at the heart of everything we see them do in this passage. They had their hearts set on coming before the Lord Jesus to worship Him. Our worship of Him should be intentional also. We should come to His house with worship as our goal. We should approach Him in prayer with worship on our hearts. We should open His Word seeking Him in a spirit of worship. Worship should not be something that “just happens” to us; it should be something we set our hearts on. It should be something we seek. It should be something that motivates us.

- Their Worship Was Volitional – Matthew 2:2 – That is, it was an act of their wills. They determined in their hearts that they would worship Him. No one forced them to leave home and family to travel across the desert to find Jesus. No one made them give their gifts. No one held a gun to their heads and made them bow before the Lord in worship. It was an act of the will. Our worship ought to be volitional as well. We should determine in our hearts that we will not just go through the motions of worship, but that we will set our hearts about the task of loving the One Who died for our sins on the cross. We ought not sing just because the congregation is singing! We ought now bow in prayer just because it is time to pray. We should open our Bibles just because it is time for the sermon. We ought not go to church just because it is time to go to church! We should determine in our hearts that every song, every prayer, every sermon, every

deed, every day, and every breath will be an act of supreme worship designed to glorify our Redeemer and our Heavenly Father. (III. John 4:23-24)

· Their Worship Was Personal – Matthew 2:2, Matthew 2:9-11 – They did not allow others to do their worshipping for them. These men involved self in the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look what they did: they came, Matthew 2:2; they came from a great distance, Matthew 2:2; they came by faith, Matthew 2:2; they rejoiced when they found Him, Matthew 2:10; they humbled themselves before Him, Matthew 2:11; and they willingly lavished their gifts upon Him, Matthew 2:11. Their worship involved self, and they involved all the self they possessed in their worship! Our worship should also be personal. Too many people in our modern churches try to worship by proxy. That is, they let others do all the singing, and they never lift their own voice in praise to the King. They let others testify, and they never open their mouths in public to give God vocal praise for His grace and blessings in their lives. They let others give, and they never experience the blessings that come with investing in the work of the Lord. They let others work, preach and teach, and they never get involved beyond merely occupying a pew when it is convenient for them. Our worship should be personal. I do not know what the Lord has done for you, but I know what He has done for me! I know about the day He saved me. I know about the times He has moved my mountains. I know about the times He has come by and breathed new life into my wilted heart. I know about His grace, His mercy and His glory. I know these things, and the least I can do is worship Him for them! (III. Hebrews 13:15, “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” Psalms 135:1-6)

· Their Worship Was Confrontational – Matthew 2:3 – Not everyone was pleased by the worship of the wise men. We are told that Herod was “troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” Herod thought, that since he was king, he should be worshiped. These men didn’t bow down to Herod! He was troubled by the that wise men had come to town to worship a another King. The wise men did not come to town to worship Herod. They did not come to worship in the Temple. They came for one purpose, and that purpose was to bow themselves at the feet of a Baby. Not just any Baby, but a Baby Who is the Eternal God. A Baby Who is the Ling of Kings and Lord of Lords. When you reach a place where you give your unreserved, wholehearted worship to the Lord Jesus, you are going to offend some folks! Not everyone will understand why you love Him like you do. Not everyone will think Him worthy of that kind of love. Your songs, your tears, your shouts, your testimonies, your expressions of love and obedience will bother some people. I say, let them be bothered! The Lord we serve is worthy of all the praise we can give Him and an infinite amount beyond that, Revelation 5:9-14.

· Their Worship Was Emotional – Matthew 2:10-11 – When these men arrived at the place where they would find Jesus, they were overcome with emotion. The phrase, “rejoiced with exceeding great joy” has the idea of exuberant excitement! Can you see them shouting, jumping, laughing, crying and hugging? They were filled with excitement at the prospect of seeing Jesus. His worship should fill our heart with the same emotional power. Worship is an emotional business! Some people frown on emotions in worship. They say, “Oh, they are just doing that in the flesh.” Well, I can’t speak for you, but everything I do I do in the flesh. It is not always in the power of the flesh, and that is what makes the difference! There is nothing wrong with emotional worship, as long as the Spirit of God is driving that worship. After all, the Bible calls upon us to “shout” unto Him in praise, Psalms 47:1; Psalms 98:4; to “clap” our hands to call attention to Him, Psalms 47:1; to “lift”

our hands to Him in praise, Psalms 63:4; Psalms 134:2; to “laugh”, Psalms 126:2; to give Him unashamed, visible, vocal worship! That may not be your thing, but leave those folks alone that worship that way! You might not understand, but if they are giving Him worship from their hearts, it’s none of your business anyway! You worship the way He has wired you to worship and let them do the same!

- Their Worship Was Effectual – Matthew 2:3-8, Matthew 2:12 – Their worship had an effect on Herod, on Jerusalem and on the scribes, Matthew 2:3-8. It caused them to think about the things of God once more, Matthew 2:4-6. It caused them to search the Scriptures, Matthew 2:4-6. It had an effect on the wise men and their relationship with God, Matthew 2:11-12. They were brought into a place of closeness and intimacy through their worship.

God speaks to them in Matthew 2:12. It seems to me that these men left their homes to find Jesus based on an Old Testament prophecy, Numbers 24:17. There were probably documents in their homeland that they studied that had been written by Daniel, Ezekiel and other Israelites who had been there as captives. They came and they worshiped because of what they read. Their worship has brought them into a place of greater intimacy with God. He is moving in their lives in power because they humbled themselves before Him in worship. Worship is still effectual! It touches the world around us. When God’s people are engaged in genuine, spirit-guided worship, a lost world takes note. It will drive some away, but it will cause others to think about their own relationship to God, Ill. John 12:32. It will affect you too! As you find yourself drawn deeper into His worship, you will find that He will become more real to you. His presence will become more precious. His Word will become more powerful. His house will become an even greater source of joy. As you worship Him, He will respond by speaking to your heart in new and deeper ways.

- Their Worship Was Relational – Matthew 2:2, Matthew 2:9 – Their worship was guided by God and based on their relationship with Him. They gave Him worship because they were walking with Him. They gave Him worship because they were following His plan. They gave Him worship out of obedience to Him.

Anyone can sing, shout, testify and give Him fleshly worship, but only a believer who is in a vital, love relationship with Jesus can give Him pure, perfect worship. Only one who walks in obedience to His Word and will can give Him the worship He desires. That was the introduction. Now let me give you the message. While the worship of the wise men was all the things I just mentioned, and more, Their Worship Was Sacrificial as well. When these men came to worship, they did not worship on the cheap. Their worship cost them something. I want to show you the ways their worship was costly.

#### I. Matthew 2:2 IT COST THEM THEIR TIME

- We are told that the wise men came “from the east”. We are not told exactly where they came from, but nearly all scholars are in agreement that it was most like that they came from Mesopotamia. If that is true, then these men travelled several hundred miles to get from their homes to worship Jesus. It would have been a tedious journey that would have taken several months to complete. It would have required great expense and much time away from home and family. It would have been a journey fraught with danger and trouble. Yet, they made the trip and paid the price because they deemed Jesus worthy of worship.

· Worship is still costly in time. Most of us can be at church in a few minutes. It is not a long journey for us to come this way. The time requirements are not all that extensive for us. If you come to all the services, you are here 4 or 5 hours per week. Of course, many people do not think that Jesus is worth even that much time. Far too many will only give Him an hour on Sunday and pat themselves on the back because they went to church. That crowd doesn't really worship. They merely go through the motions!

· When I talk about time, I am not referring to the time it takes to drive here and sit passively while the services are conducted. Real worship is an investment in time every day you live.

It takes time to pray and seek the Lord's face. It takes time to deal with sin in your life. It takes time to prepare the heart for worship. That may be why so many come to church and never truly worship. It may just be that they haven't put any time and effort in preparing themselves to meet the King in His house. You can't live out in the world all week and walk into church ready to meet Him in worship. There must be some time spent preparing the soul. There must be time spent in repentance of sin; in feeding the soul on the Word of God; and in private worship. When you see people who truly worship in public; you are seeing people who have already spent time worshipping in private.

· Before the next service comes around, I challenge you to give Him some time in worship. If you will, it will change the way you worship when you come to His house!

## II. Matthew 2:11 IT COST THEM THEIR TREASURE

· These men came before the Lord and they gave gifts to Him. They gave Him "gold, frankincense and myrrh". All three were costly gifts that did not come cheap, yet they gave them to Jesus, Who was just a small child, and they gave them to Him with no strings attached! They walked into that house and they "opened their treasures" and "they presented unto Him gifts". They carried those gifts hundreds of miles, and they willingly gave them away because they wanted to honor Him in worship.

· That speaks to us today. We ought to look at our giving as worship. If you can't give your tithes and offerings to Him because you love Him, you would be better off to keep them for your own use. If you can't give to Him with no strings attached, you really haven't given Him anything.

It is a privilege to give to the Lord! It is a privilege to have something to give to Him. The only reason I have anything to give to Him is because He has first given to me! Everything we have is the gift of the Lord, James 1:17. Let's determine in our hearts that we will not be cheap in our giving to the Lord. He has always been extravagant in His giving to us. (III. Count your blessings!) We ought to be just as extravagant in our giving to Him! You'll never out give Him, Luke 6:38. But, it sure is fun to try, 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Go ahead and be a skinflint and God will treat you accordingly! You might hoard up some things down here, but you will have no treasure over there. How much better it is to give everything over into His hands and use what we have been given for the glory of the Lord. When we do, we lay up treasure in Heaven that can never be discounted, destroyed, or taken away. Economic downturn cannot affect what we store up in glory, Matthew 6:19-21.

## III. Matthew 2:2, Matthew 2:11 IT COST THEM THEIR TESTIMONY

- While these men gave financially, the greatest treasure they gave to Jesus that day was themselves. Think about this. These men were no ordinary men. We have been taught that there were three of them and they came alone. There is not a shred of evidence to support that teaching. It might be helpful to take a minute and talk about who these men were.

- All the evidence seems to suggest that these men represented a priestly class that held significant power in the area around ancient Babylon. These men were known in Persia as “the king makers”. They appointed and anointed the kings that ruled in their homelands. They were very powerful and influential.

It also seems clear that there were more than three of them. After all, how could three men disturb an entire city? Besides that, three men travelling through the deserts in those days would have been absolutely foolish. More likely, there was a large number of these, and most likely, they were accompanied by an armed guard. That is why Herod got nervous when they showed up. An armed guard arrived at the palace looking for a King to worship. They weren’t looking for Him, however.

- These rich, powerful, influential men stood before Herod and his officers and declared their intention to worship a child-King, Matthew 2:2. They journeyed until they found Him, and when they did, they fell down before Him and humbled themselves in worship, Matthew 2:11. The “King makers” entered the presence of the King of Kings and gave Him worship. They were declaring to all that Jesus was King and that He was worthy to be worshiped.

These wise, educated, sophisticated men laid aside all pretense and pride and they gave their adoration and worship to the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew 2:11. They “fell down” before a little boy and they honored Him as their King! The words they spoke, Matthew 2:2 and the gifts they gave, Matthew 2:11, declared their faith in Jesus as the Son of God. They literally gave themselves away at the feet of the Lord Jesus.

- That is what He expects of us! He wants us to come to the place where we have abandoned all pride and pretense before Him. He wants us to come to the place where we willingly yield up all that we have and all that we are to Him in humble adoration, praise and worship. He just wants us to completely give ourselves away to Him. There is not greater form of worship in the world, Romans 12:1-2.

Conc: Are there any wise men or women here today? If there are, those people are engaged in sacrificial worship of the King. If there are, those people are worshiping Him with their time, their treasure and their testimony. Does that describe you? If it doesn’t, it should! If it doesn’t, it can! I can’t speak for you, but if I know my own soul, I want to worship Him! I want to love Him! I want to give Him the best I have and the best I am! I want to lay it all down at His feet for His glory. If He has spoken to you about your worship, you need to do whatever it is that He is telling you to do.

## 01.05 The Scent Of Biblical Worship -

---

### Exodus 30:34-38 THE SCENT OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP

Intro: This passage falls in the middle of a section of Scripture devoted to the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a portable tent designed for the worship of Jehovah. Every piece of cloth, every board, every piece of furniture, every item in the Tabernacle was commissioned, developed and designed for use in the worship of Almighty God.

Everything which was part of the Tabernacle pointed to Jesus Christ in some way. The tabernacle was called “the tent of meeting”. It was here that Israel met with God. It was here that sacrifices were to be offered. It was here that the worship of Jehovah God was conducted on a daily basis. It was here that atonement was made for the sins of the people. When Israel camped in the wilderness, they were to camp around the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was in the center of the camp. This reminded them that the worship of God was to be at the center of their lives. The Tabernacle was the most important place in Jewish social and religious life. The Tabernacle was a place devoted to God. It was designed by God to declare God. The Tabernacle is a place worth studying. The passage we are considering today deals with the incense they burned in the Tabernacle. The incense also speaks of Jesus Christ and His worship. When the incense was burned, the smoke ascended up toward Heaven. Its scent came up before God and He was pleased. When the incense was burned, its fragrance filled the Tabernacle and everyone knew that worship was taking place. You might remember when Mary broke the alabaster box of ointment and anointed the head of Jesus, we are told that “the house was filled with the odor of the ointment,” John 12:3. Real worship has a way of making its presence known. When real worship takes place, it leaves its scent behind. I want to take these verses, which give the instructions related to the incense, and preach on The Scent Of Biblical Worship. These verses teach us some very vital truths about genuine biblical worship. I want you to see The Materials In The Incense; The Mixing Of The Incense; and The Ministry Of The Incense. Let’s consider these truths together.

#### I. Exodus 30:34 THE MATERIALS IN THE INCENSE

(III. God was very specific when He gave Moses the ingredients that were to be used in the Incense. I want to consider these ingredients, because they teach us about Jesus. These four ingredients remind us why He is worthy of our worship.)

A. Stacte – Speaks Of His Proclamations – Stacte is an aromatic gum that comes from a certain shrub. The word means “to drop”. Stacte was collected a drop at a time from the plant. This substance speaks to us about the Words of our Lord. Like the stacte dropped from the plant, the precious Word of God dropped from the lips of our Saviour! Jesus is the living Word, John 1:1; John 1:14. He has also given us the written Word. Thank God for His Word! Listen to what the biblical writers said about this book:

- Psalms 30:5, “Every word of God is pure...”

- Psalms 19:8, “The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”
- James 3:17, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Thank God for His Word! In this book, God condescends to speak to fallen man. In this book God reveals Himself to man. In the Bible God gives us His Gospel, the only plan of salvation. This book is health for the soul; food for the journey; strength for the battle; light for the darkness and hope for every tomorrow. We ought to thank Him for His Word. We ought to worship for giving us His Word.

B. Onycha – Speaks Of His Person – This ingredient was found in a certain species of shellfish that only lives in the Red Sea. The word “onycha” comes from the Hebrew root word for “Lion”. This substance speaks to us about His person. It reminds us that He is a King Who is to be revered, honored, served, loved, obeyed and worshiped. I would remind you that Jesus Christ is not long-haired, effeminate, hippy, do-gooder.

- He is “the King of Kings and He is the Lord of Lords”, Revelation 19:16.
- He is “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah”, Revelation 5:5.
- He is the One the Old Testament prophesied would come, Jeremiah 23:5; Genesis 49:10.
- He is One Who came to this world, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross, rose again from the dead and ascended back to Heaven.
- He is the One Who is coming again for His church, 1 Thessalonians 4:17-17.
- He is the One we will face at “the Judgment Seat of Christ”, 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.
- He is the One Who is coming again in power and glory to rule and reign, Revelation 19:11-16.
- He is the One Who will rule the world during the Millennium.
- He is the One Who will occupy “the Great White Throne” of judgment, Revelation 20:11-15.
- He is the One Who will be worshiped in Heaven for all eternity!
- Can I go a step farther? He is my Saviour! He is my Lord! He is my Friend! He is the delight of my soul. He is worthy of my praise and worship right now. Glory to God, we need to praise Him, love Him and worship Him right now!

C. Galbanum - Speaks Of His Pain – The word “galbanum” means “cutting” this is because this resin was obtained from a certain plant by cutting that plant open so that the resin could run out and be collected. This substance speaks of the Lord’s pain and suffering. It reminds us of His death on the cross. It reminds us that he gave His life to redeem His Bride from her sins. Let me

remind you of some of the things He suffered for us.

1. Beating - Luke 22:63-64; Psalms 129:3 2. Scourging - (Ill. The horror of this punishment) Matthew 27:26 3. Spitting - Matthew 27:30 4. Mockery - Matthew 27:26-29 5. Beard Plucked From Face - Isaiah 50:6 6. Stripped - Matthew 27:35 - (They gambled for His garments.) 7. Nailed To The Cross - Matthew 27:38; John 20:25

8. Crucifixion Itself - A death on the cross is the most horrible form of execution known to mankind! We derive our word “excruciating” from it. “Excruciating” means “out of the cross”.

9. He Suffered Pain At The Hand Of Sovereign God - Jesus actually became sin on that cross, 2 Corinthians 5:21. God judged Jesus in the place of sinners. God literally poured out His wrath into the body of His Son and Jesus suffered the undiluted, unfiltered wrath of Almighty God.

He is to be worshiped for His sufferings. He is to be worshiped for His sacrifice. He is to be worshiped for His all that He did to guarantee our salvation!

D. Frankincense - Speaks Of His Purity – Frankincense is another resin taken from a tree. When this resin was burned, it gave off a pure, white smoke. This substance speaks to us of the purity of the Lord Jesus. It reminds us that He is the sinless Son of God. He was born without the taint of human sin. He never committed a single sin. In fact, it was not possible for Him to sin. (Ill. Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5.) Jesus was and is the pure, sinless Son of God. He came into this world to give His life a ransom for the guilty. He did that when He died on the cross. He is to be worshiped for His sinless nature!

#### I. The Materials In The Incense II. Exodus 30:34-36 THE MIXING OF THE INCENSE

(Ill. These verses tell us about the ingredients in the incense. They also tell us about how the incense was to be mixed together. The ingredients teach us why the Lord deserves to be worshiped. The instructions about mixing it together teach how we are to approach Him in worship.)

A. The Personal Aspect Of Worship – The instructions given here speak to the personal nature of our worship. When we come before the Lord in worship, there are two ways we must approach Him.

1. Holy – Exodus 30:35 says the incense is to be “pure and holy”. When the Bible says that it was to “be tempered together”, it means that it was mixed with salt. Salt in the Bible is a picture of purity. This speaks of the condition of our hearts when we come before Him. If we are not in a right relationship with Him, we cannot approach Him in worship. Sin in our lives will close His ears to our prayers, Psalms 66:18. And, it will close the door of worship, Isaiah 59:2. If we would worship the Lord, we must come before Him with a holy heart!

2. Humble – Verse 36 says that they were to take some of the incense and “beat it very small”. It was to be reduced to a powder. This speaks of humility! If we would approach the Lord, we must first be holy, then we must come to Him humbly. There must be no pride or pretense in our hearts. We cannot approach Him boasting in ourselves and our abilities, Ill. 1 Peter 5:5-6. We must come to Him with a true sense of our weakness and His power. We must come before Him remembering that apart from Him, we are nothing, would have nothing, and would amount to nothing. We must

be broken before Him in worship!

B. The Perpetual Aspect of Worship – Exodus 30:36 commanded that some of the incense was to be placed before the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. Above the Ark, over the Mercy Seat, was where God met with His people. The incense before the Ark was a symbol that their worship was to be continual and perpetual. The incense was always to be there ready to be offered in worship before the Lord. In other words, worship was to be the defining characteristic of the people of God. The same is true today. The people of God are to be marked by perpetual worship. That is, we are to worship at every opportunity for public, corporate worship, Hebrews 10:25. We are to worship Him privately, John 4:23-24. We are to be a people of worship. Something is wrong with a person who possesses no desire to worship the Lord. Something is wrong when there is no desire for prayer, for Bible reading, for singing to Him and for praising Him. He is worthy of our perpetual worship. Every day of our lives should be spent in the worship of the Lord who redeemed us by His grace, Ill. \*\*\*Psalms 113:1-9\*\*\*.

C. The Proportional Aspect Of Worship – Exodus 30:34 says that the ingredients for the incense were to be mixed in equal amounts. This speaks to us about the fact that our worship should be balanced and proportional. This simply means that we are not to go off in a tangent in our worship. Some people emphasize the life of Christ while they make little of His death. Others focus on His death to the exclusion of His life. Each aspect of our Lord's life and ministry is equally important. His life means nothing if He didn't die. His death means nothing if He wasn't sinless. His sinless nature means nothing if He didn't suffer for our sins. His Word means nothing if He didn't fulfill every aspect of it. Every part of His life and ministry is vitally important and He is to be worshiped in the fullness of His ministry and glory!

I. The Materials In The Incense II. The Mixing Of The Incense III. Exodus 30:37-38 THE MINISTRY OF THE INCENSE

(Ill. Once the incense was prepared, it was to be employed in the worship of the Lord. This reminds that worship is to be given to God alone. No person, no possession and no pastime deserves our worship. The ministry of worship is clearly defined in these verses.)

A. It's Ministry Is Definite – Exodus 30:37 says that it was to be “holy for the Lord”. This incense was to be used for no other purpose than for the worship of the Almighty. It belonged to Him and to Him alone. This reminds us that worship alone belongs to God.

We live in an age when God receives very little genuine, biblical worship. The fact is, most people worship themselves in these days. Very few people in our community are bowing down to idols and false gods. Many, however, bow to money, pleasure, sports, and other things that fills their time, takes their money and occupies their minds. The things people live for are the things they worship. In essence, they are their gods. True worship belongs to God alone! He is to be loved, served and exalted. He is to be honored with every moment of our lives; with every dollar of our resources; and with every ounce of our energy. He demands it, but more than that, He deserves it! Let's give Him the worship He deserves!

B. It's Ministry Is Deadly – God says, in Exodus 30:38, that any other use of this incense would bring His judgment upon the guilty person. This reminds me of what happened to Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu. They came before the Lord and brought “incense” and “strange fire”. They went

against the Lord's command concerning His worship and God killed them outright, Leviticus 10:1-2. This serves to teach us that false worship always leads to destruction.

If you want to invite the judgment of God into your life, just give your worship to other gods. Just offer the holy incense of worship to things other than Him and His wrath will come into your life. A lot of God's children are giving their attention and affection to things other than the Lord. It is an unlawful use of worship, and it will not go unpunished. May the Lord help us to search our hearts and see where we are offering "strange fire and incense" before the Lord. May He help us to understand that He will not be tempted in this matter. He is a jealous God and He will not allow His worship to be given to another!

Conc: I don't know about you, but I want my worship to be right. I want to learn how to give Him the glory, reverence, and honor that He is due. There was a day when I was lost in sin and headed to Hell. God Almighty saved me by His grace, washed away my sins in the blood of His Son and gave me a new life. He deserves all of my worship. I want Him to have it! Has the Lord spoken to you about your worship? Are you giving Him worship for Who He is and what He has done in your life? Is your worship holy and humble? Is it balanced? Are you worshiping Him alone, or does your time, your money and your love go to other things? If your worship needs work, this altar is open. Come to Him and get the help you need right now!

## 01.06 The Significance Of Biblical Worship

---

### Exodus 33:12-23 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP

Intro: Ill. Moses and the difficult job assignment he was given by the Lord. His duty was to lead a rebellious, self-centered, stiff-necked people through a desert to the Promised Land. To accomplish this job, Moses needed a close relationship with the Lord.

Now, when we come to Exodus 33:1-23, Moses has just received the Law from the Lord. He was gone for 40 days and nights while God revealed the Law to him. While he was gone, the people made a golden calf, began to worship it as their god and began to commit grossly immoral sins. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw what they were doing, he threw down the stone tablets containing the Law and broke them. Because of their sin and idolatry, the Lord is angry with the people and He refuses to go with them into Canaan, Exodus 33:1-3. Moses responds by reminding the Lord that the Israelites are God's people and that if the Lord doesn't go with them, then Moses isn't going. So Moses and the Lord discuss the matter and God says that He will go with them and bring them into the land of promise. Please don't ask me to explain all the things that are happening in this chapter. All I know for sure is that the Lord is trying to work in the life of Moses and help him to grow. When these events occurred, it Moses was placed in a position of discouragement and doubt. He needed something from the Lord if he was to continue to lead Israel. So he asks the Lord for a little encouragement. He asks the Lord to show him His glory. God answered Moses' request and revealed His glory to him. When Moses saw the Lord in all His glory, it resulted in Moses falling down before the Lord in worship. There is a word here for our lives. None of us have ever been given an assignment quite like the one Moses received, but we have been called to follow the Lord and to represent Him in this world. There are times when this task becomes difficult and discouraging. When those times come, we also need something from the Lord. We need something we cannot produce by ourselves. We need something that will recharge our spiritual batteries and rekindle the old flames of excitement and passion for the Lord. We need something that will bring us to our knees in worship. In this encounter with the Lord, Moses discovered The Significance Of Biblical Worship. He learned that worshipping God has the ability to confirm, comfort and consecrate the hurting heart of the humble saint. I want to take this episode from the life of Moses and preach about The Significance Of Biblical Worship. I want you to see The Bold Request Of Moses; The Balanced Response Of God; The Beautiful Results For Both. Let's notice these truths together.

#### I. THE BOLD REQUEST OF MOSES

A. Exodus 3:10 Moses And His Duties –Moses was Divinely called to the task of leading the people of God to Canaan. It was not an easy task. His leadership was often called into question and his orders were disobeyed. Moses had a duty that required faithfulness and dependability. He had the task of walking in obedience to the Lord and His will.

B. Exodus 33:1-3 Moses And His Discouragement – The people had rebelled against the Lord again in Exodus 32:1-35, and as a result, the Lord wanted to destroy them at worse and remove his presence at best. They were in trouble regardless of which way that one turned out. Can you imagine how Moses must have felt? He has done his best to lead them and to follow the Lord's will and still all they did was complain, find fault, bellyache and sin against the Lord. There must have been many times when Moses wanted to throw in the towel and just quit!

C. Exodus 33:18 Moses And His Desire – Moses had a heart to know and experience God in a deeper and more profound way. Moses knew that the nation of Israel could not meet his need. He knew that just working on his leadership skills would not meet his need. Moses seems to know that the best cure for discouragement, disillusionment and dryness is a fresh glimpse of who God is and what He is all about. Moses mentions 4 areas where he desires to know God better.

1. His Ways - Exodus 33:13 - Moses wants to better understand the way God operates so that he might serve Him better.

2. His Person - Exodus 33:13 - Moses wants to better understand the Person of God so that he might enjoy a deeper fellowship with Him.

3. His Presence - Exodus 33:15 - Moses wants a clearer manifestation of God's presence so that he might follow God better. This is a plea for leadership.

4. His Glory - Exodus 33:18 - Moses wants to see the glory of God so that he will be moved to a deeper relationship in his worship life.

(Note: Moses was compelled to seek a fuller revelation of the Lord because he wanted a deeper love for the Lord. He was also drawn to know God better so that he might love God more intensely. Moses was not merely looking for information, he was seeking inspiration. This was the desire expressed by the Apostle Paul in Php 3:10-11, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." This is the same desire that should fill our hearts. I pray the Lord will increase our love for Him so that we will be drawn to know Him better. A better knowledge of the Lord will always result in deeper and more pure worship.)

(Note: Why did Moses possess such a desire to know God? His desire was born out his walk with the Lord. Moses had been blessed by the Lord and the blessings of God manifested themselves in a desire to know God better and to worship God more deeply. A few of the reasons Moses had a heart filled with worship are as follows:

1. Moses Had Been Chosen – Moses was minding his own business, keeping Jethro's sheep, when the Lord called to him out of that burning bush, Exodus 3:2. God took the first step in His relationship with Moses.

Moses followed the Lord by his own choice, Hebrews 11:24-25, but he only made his choice because God had chosen him first, Ephesians 1:4. As Alfred Gibbs said, "The movement of a soul toward God, is but the effect of the movement of God toward that soul." Everyone who worships God is someone who was first chosen and called by God.

2. Moses Had Been Converted – He had experienced the blessing of Passover, Exodus 12:13. Moses knew what it meant to be watched in the blood of the lamb. He had been redeemed out of Egypt and he was thankful. He also learned in that situation that God was as good as His Word.

These are reasons for worship that we share with Moses! The blood of the Lamb of God has given us salvation, safety and eternal security. His Word gives us the absolute confidence that He will do all that He has promised! Thinking about your redemption will make you want to worship!

3. Moses Had Been Communing – Moses enjoyed a walk of the deepest intimacy with the Lord, Exodus 33:11. This closeness with God distinguished Moses from every other person living in his day. This closeness even carried over into his death, Deuteronomy 34:5-6; Deuteronomy 10. He was still intimate with the Lord 1,500 years after he died, Matthew 17:3. This closeness to the Lord caused him to want to worship God. The more time you spend with the Lord, the more you come to love Him. The more you come to love Him, the more you are drawn to worship Him!

I. The Bold Request Of Moses II. THE BALANCED RESPONSE OF THE LORD Exodus 33:19-23; Exodus 34:5-7

A. Exodus 33:19-20 God Makes A Promise – God tells Moses that He will grant His request. He will allow Moses to catch a small glimpse of His glory as He passes by.

Why did God do this? The answer lies in verse 17. Moses had found grace in the eyes of the Lord! In other words, Moses hadn't earned this experience, it was the Sovereign choice of Almighty God. We need to understand that anything we have ever received from God, from salvation to the smallest of His blessings, have not been given to us because we have earned them. They have not been given to us because we have somehow forced the Lord's hand.

(Note: By the way, anything we ever receive from the Lord is the work of His grace in our lives. Just the fact that we are allowed to pray to Him, to worship Him and to commune with Him is amazing! Thank God for those times He condescends to us in allowing us to love, serve, and worship Him!)

B. Exodus 33:21-23 God Mentions A Place – God tells Moses that there is a place by Him where Moses can stand and see the glory of God as it passes by. That place is a cleft in the rock.

(III. There is still a place by Him. There is still a cleft in the Rock and His name is Jesus! There is only one place where man will ever see God. And, that place is in Jesus Christ!

He is the Rock, 1 Corinthians 10:4. If we would see the Father, we need look no farther than the Son! Notice what the Bible says about Jesus, John 14:9; John 1:18; Hebrews 1:3.)

(III. Rock Of Ages was written by Augustus Toplady after he had been trapped outdoors in a fierce storm. Knowing of a large rock with a cleft in it, he ran there for shelter. As he entered that fissure in the rock, the storm broke upon it with all its fury. Lightning flashed, thunder boomed and the rains fell in a torrential downpour. Toplady, in his shelter, was totally untouched. The storm poured out its fury upon the rock, but he was safe because he was in the rock. That same privilege is our in Jesus. When He was on the cross, the mighty wrath of God unleashed itself upon Him. When we are in Him, we are sheltered from the wrath of God and from the awful penalty of sin. That, my brothers and sisters, is a cause for worship!)

C. Exodus 34:5-7 God Manifests His Presence – God did exactly as He promised and allowed Moses to see His glory! God passed by, declaring His name and revealing His glory. Look at the text, and don't miss this. Verse 5 says, "The Lord...stood with him there". Verse 6 says, "the Lord passed by." Here is Moses standing on the rock surrounded by the rock, in the presence of the Lord, shielded by the hand of God and seeing the glory of God all at the same time. Can you imagine seeing the glory of God up close and personal? Moses did and it changed his life.

(III. Every now and then, we get a small dose of the manifest presence of God. Sometimes, He will come in and demonstrate His glory to His people.

I have been in services where God showed up in a mighty way. Can you begin to imagine what would happen if this were the rule and not the exception? Can you imagine what church would be like if the manifest presence of God were here? I think there would be less of us being involved and more genuine worship of the Lord. I think we would be kind of like Thomas in the upper room, John 20:24-28. What I am saying is that when a genuine move of God takes place in our church, we will become lost in the glory of Jesus. He will be our focus and the center of everything we do. I want this more than anything I know! How about you?) I. The Bold Request Of Moses II. The Balanced Response Of The Lord III. THE BEAUTIFUL RESULTS FOR BOTH Exodus 34:8; Exodus 34:29-35

(III. After this mountain top experience, Moses was never the same. No one can come face to face with the Lord and remain the same. There will always be some sign that you have been with God.

Remember Jacob at Peniel, Genesis 32:24-32? After his encounter with God he limped on his thigh. Saul of Tarsus was forever changed by his meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 9:1-8. The Lord's Disciples were marked men by having spent time with the Lord, Acts 4:13. There were some changes in Moses life as well. Notice what seeing God will do for you. There were also benefits that went in God's direction. Moses was blessed by this powerful experience, but God was benefited too. Because Moses was strengthened in His walk with the Lord, God received worship and Moses became a better servant for the glory of God.)

A. Exodus 34:8, Exodus 34:29 It Produced Humility – When we see the Lord as He is, we cannot help but see ourselves as we are! Many have very warped views of themselves! We think we are much better and much more holy than we really are. A good glimpse of God will change all of that and will produce genuine humility in our lives. When we get humble, then the Lord can use us for His glory - James 4:10.

(III. Exodus 34:28, Moses was the only fellow in camp who did not know that his face glowed with the glory of the Lord! What a lesson!

Those who think they have arrived in holiness, humility and in power with the Lord usually haven't. It is those who know they are nothing, and that He is everything, who are truly humble people!)

B. Exodus 34:8 It Produced Worship – When Moses saw the Lord as He really was, it caused Moses to fall before Him and honor the Lord. You will notice that Moses did not shout, sing or testify. When Moses saw the Lord in His glory, he responded by humbling himself. He responded by simply adoring the Lord!

What we think is worship, usually isn't! It isn't about singing, testifying, praying or preaching. All of those things may be involved in worship, but just because one or more of these takes place in a service, does not mean that real worship has occurred. Genuine worship involves the heart above all. In genuine worship, there is a desire to exalt the Lord, a desire to see Him receive the glory He is worthy of receiving. When we see Him in His glory, our worship will change. It will change on an individual level and on a public level. When we see Jesus in His glory, our worship will be about Jesus and nothing more. It will become that which the Lord desires it to be, John 4:24. It won't be about us or our fleshly displays. It will be about the Lord God Almighty and Him alone!

C. Exodus 34:29 It Produced An Outward Change – The evidence of spending time with the Lord was all over Moses! These verses seem to indicate that Moses was never the same. It could be that his face glowed until his death. The glory glow on his face was a testimony to the rest of the nation of Israel that spending time with God makes a difference. Moses was a living, visible witness to the power of being in the presence of God. The same can be true in our lives! When we walk with the Lord in the inner sanctum of the hearts, there will be evidence on the outside that we are walking with Him. Our face may not glow, but our walk, our talk, our lives will all bear witness to the fact that we are walking with the Lord in His power and presence.

D. Exodus 34:34-35 It Produced A Special Relationship With God – There was a closeness between the Lord and Moses that could not have existed otherwise. So it is with you and me, when we walk in genuine fellowship with the Lord, there is a special relationship that develops. It does not mean that He loves one more than another, but it does mean that He reveals Himself more to those who are walking in closeness to Him.

He will speak more directly through His Word. He will manifest His presence more often in your heart. He will use you more wonderfully for His glory. These things alone make walking with the Lord worthwhile.

Conc: There is much in this passage, but it all comes down to one truth: Moses was brought to a place of sublime worship, and that worship changed his life forever. Do you have any reasons to worship the Lord? If you do, are you giving Him the worship He deserves? If you don't, wouldn't you like to come to Him today and be saved? Who among us today has a heart like the heart that Moses possessed? Who among us has an overwhelming desire to see the glory of God and to get lost in His worship? If that describes you, I challenge you to get before Him now and ask Him to manifest His glory to you. The worship of God is a significant matter. It literally has the power to change our lives.

## 02.00 Great Invitations Of The Bible

---

Great Invitations Of The Bible (Expository Sermons on the Great Invitations in the Bible.) The Invitation To Commitment - Genesis 7:1-16 The Invitation To Companionship - Numbers 10:29-32 The Invitation To Cleansing - Isaiah 1:18 The Invitation To Contentment - Isaiah 55:1-3 The Invitation To Contrition - Hosea 6:1-2 The Invitation To Children - Matthew 19:13-15 The Invitation To Consider - John 1:35-42 The Invitation Of Confidence - John 6:37-40 The Invitation Of Conversion - Revelation 22:17 The Invitation Of Completion - Revelation 22:20

## 02.01 The Invitation To Commitment - Gen\_7:1-16

---

### Great Invitations

#### Sermon #1 Genesis 7:1-16 THE INVITATION TO COMMITMENT

Intro: The Bible is a book of invitations! Beginning here and continuing to the very last verses of Revelation, God is involved in the business of inviting people to come to Him for salvation, for the help they need, and for the things they lack in life. It thrills my soul to think that the Lord of Glory would invite people like you and me to come to Him. As the Lord leads, over the next several weeks, we will be examining some of the great invitations found in the Bible. I hope they will be a help, a challenge and blessing in your life.

We begin today with the first gospel invitation in the Bible. The word “come” is used some 1,972 times in the Bible. Genesis 7:1 is the first time it is used as a command and as an invitation. Here, God calls Noah and his family to come into the Ark so that they might be saved from the flood of water that He is about to send upon the earth. This invitation has my interest today. Even though it was given thousands of years ago, God is still inviting people to enter an Ark of safety. I would like to take this invitation and show you that it still stands today. I would also like to show you that this invitation will do you no good unless you accept and come in. Before Noah and his family could be saved they had to commit themselves to accepting the Lord’s invitation to enter the Ark. If you and I are going to be saved, then we have to commit to accepting His invitation as well. I would like to take these verses and preach for a while about The Invitation To Commitment. If God is calling you to come into the Ark, you should heed His call and come today.

#### I. Genesis 7:1 THE SANCTUARY OF THIS INVITATION

- The Ark must have been an unusual sight as it sat there in ancient Mesopotamia. It was a wooden box 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. It had been built by a preacher and his three sons. For the last 120 years, Noah had worked on the Ark and preached his message that a torrential rain and a terrible flood was coming upon the earth. Surely, people thought Noah and his family were mad! After all, it has never rained on the earth, much less flooded. Still, Noah labored and told his neighbors that they needed to come into the Ark when it was finished if they wanted to be saved. He told them over and over that the Ark he was building was the only hope any of them had.

- His neighbors may have thought Noah insane, and the Ark he constructed must have looked out of place sitting there on dry ground, but Noah was right about everything he did and said. The Ark he was building would be the only hope humanity had in that generation! That Ark was to be a sanctuary against the storm of wrath that was brewing against the sin and evil found on earth. As God looked upon the earth, some of the things He saw disturbed Him greatly:

Ø Genesis 6:1-4 – There was intermarriage between the godly line of Seth and the ungodly offspring of Cain. This was an attempt to pervert the human bloodline and prevent the birth of the

Messiah, Genesis 3:15. The children born of this union were evil beyond words.

Ø Genesis 6:5 – God saw the wickedness of man and knew that man was hopelessly corrupt. Every desire within mankind drew him away to evil thoughts and deeds.

Ø Genesis 6:11-12 – God looked at man and saw that man had ruined the earth. Man was unjust and violent. Man had abandoned the ways of the Lord and had turned from God completely.

Ø Genesis 6:6-7 – God's solution is to destroy mankind.

· The Bible tells us that one man, among all the men of the earth, was still walking in the ways of the Lord. God extended His grace to Noah, Genesis 6:8. We are told that Noah was “just”. This does not mean that he was sinless; it means that his faith was in God and God counted him righteous on the basis of that faith. That is the way it has always been! In Genesis 15:6 we are told that Abraham “believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” If you are saved, it is because of grace through faith! You believed God and He gave you His righteousness, apart from any works on your part, Romans 3:23-26.

· Noah is commanded to build this great Ark, Genesis 6:13-22. Noah is told that this Ark will provide him, his family and all the creatures of the earth, a place of safety and sanctuary. That Ark was the only place in the universe where Noah and his family could be safe.

· That was then and this is now and there is still a place of Sanctuary. You see the Ark Noah built was a real boat, but it was also a picture. The Ark serves as a great picture of Jesus Christ and the salvation He provides, 1 Peter 3:18-21. Notice how this Ark speaks of Jesus.

Ø Its Substance – Gopher wood – cypress, almost indestructible, durable, will not rot. Wood is a picture of humanity in the Bible. This wood pictures the humanity of Jesus Christ. Just as those trees had to be cut down to build Noah's Ark, Jesus had to be cut down to provide a place of sanctuary for you and me, Isaiah 53:4-6. (III. The agony and glory of Calvary!)

Ø Its Security – After the Ark was built, it was covered with “pitch”. This word is used seventy other times in the Old Testament and each time it is translated “atonement”. It literally means a covering. The wood alone could not keep the water out, there had to be a covering. The word “atonement” brings to mind the shedding of blood, Leviticus 17:11. It is not the humanity, or the life of Jesus that saves us, it is His death and the shedding of His blood! He did not come to set an example, He came to die, Mark 10:45. It is the blood that seals us and keeps us safe from the wrath of God, Romans 5:9!

Ø Its Size – The Ark was 450' long, 75' wide and 45' high. It could contain three million cubic feet! It was plenty big enough to hold all who would desire to enter. This is a picture of the sufficiency of Jesus! He is able to save all who will come to Him, Hebrews 7:25. There is room at His cross for you!

Ø Its Shape – It was not shaped like a boat, it would have looked like a floating coffin. This speaks to us of the fact that Jesus died for us and when we receive Him, we die to the world. When Noah entered his Ark, he was identifying with death. When we come to Jesus, we are identifying with His death on the cross and our own death to sin! (Colossians 3:1 ff)

Ø Its Structure – Genesis 6:16 – The Ark had one door; one window and three stories. These elements are a picture of salvation. The one door was set low so that all could enter, John 10:9. The window was high so that all would have to look up, Colossians 3:2. The three stories remind us that salvation is a work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It also reminds us that when a person is saved, their whole person – body, soul and spirit- is changed, 2 Corinthians 5:17!

Ø Its Sustenance – Genesis 6:21 – Noah was saved by the ship and he was also satisfied in the ship. He had everything in the Ark that he would need to survive the flood. In Jesus, the believer will find satisfaction for the soul. He is bread to the hungry and water to the thirsty. Those who come to Him will find that He is all the need to be satisfied, John 6:35.

Ø Its Schedule – Genesis 8:4 – The Ark came to rest on the seventeenth day of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. Why is that important? The seventh month is when the Passover takes place. Jesus died as they were offering the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month. He was raised three days later – the seventeenth day of the month. The Ark rested on the same day Jesus would rise again from the dead.

Ø Its Supply – Noah's name means "rest". When Noah entered the Ark, he found rest, safety and salvation. Being in the Ark saved his life; believing in Almighty God saved his soul!

· Can you see how the ancient Ark pictures Jesus? If you can, then please understand this: the wrath of God is about to be poured out on this world. There is only one place of where safety and salvation can be found. We do not have an Ark, but we do have a Savior and His Name is Jesus. He died for your sins on the cross; He rose from the dead and He is calling you to come to Him for salvation.

You can adopt any religion you choose; follow any plan you wish; believe any doctrine you want to; but if you are ever going to be saved, you must receive Jesus Christ as your Savior! Yes, it sounds like a narrow plan and it is. It is, however, the only way any soul will ever be saved, Ephesians 2:18; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:12; Acts 16:31.

· Have you entered the Ark of Sanctuary? Are you saved from the wrath that is coming upon this world? There is only one place of safety. Jesus Christ is our Ark of safety from the wrath of God, Romans 6:23.

## II. Genesis 7:1 THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THIS INVITATION

· The Ark was not Noah's idea, it was God's. If God had not spoken to Noah, he would have died in the flood too. Genesis 6:8 tells the tale, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." The one word that made the difference in Noah's life was "grace". Yes, Noah was maintaining the ways of the Lord in a wicked day, but he was still a sinner! When the Bible says that Noah "was perfect in his generations"; it means that his bloodline had not been polluted. Because of his sins, Noah still deserved nothing from God but judgment and damnation. But, God reached into Noah's darkness and extended grace to him. He told Noah about a way of salvation and then he invited Noah to come into the Ark to be saved. I have heard all kinds of different things preached about Noah, but it comes down to pure, precious, perfect, powerful grace! Were it not for the grace of God, Noah would never have known about the flood that would have killed him, or the Ark that would have saved him. Both of those insights were the gift of amazing grace!

· If you are in the Ark of Salvation today, you are there because God extended His grace to you. You didn't come to God on your own. You came to Jesus because God, in His grace, His mercy and His love, drew you to Himself, John 6:44. You are saved because God looked beyond your dead, darkened, deceived, doomed condition and He reached out to you in grace, Ephesians 2:1-10.

· We will never know about the wrath of God or the Hell that awaits the sinner unless God in grace shows us. We will never see the truth of our own sinful condition unless God in grace show us. We will never know that Jesus can save us and deliver us from Hell unless God in grace shows us.

· In salvation God comes to the lost sinner. God opens his blinded eyes. God shows him his lost condition; He convicts his heart of sin; He draws that lost sinner to Jesus; He causes him to understand that Jesus died for Him and rose from the dead. He even gives the lost sinner the faith he needs to be saved. From start to finish, salvation is the work of the grace of God, Ephesians 2:8-9! Man has no part in the process beyond simple faith; and even the very faith he uses to receive Jesus is the gift of God's grace!

· If it had not been for the grace of God Noah would have died in his sins and went to Hell. It was the grace of God that moved his to faith and action. The same is true today! Salvation is still all of grace and all of God. Hallelujah!

III. Genesis 7:16 THE SECURITY OF THIS INVITATION When God called, Noah heeded the Lord's voice. He entered the Ark and found safety and security. We are told that when it came time for the floods to come, God Himself "shut him in". I want you to notice a couple of amazing truths here.

1. God did not say "Go into the Ark". God said "Come into the Ark". He did not say, "Go into the Ark and I'll be watching you". He said, "Come into the Ark and I will be with you!" There is a big difference! Now, look ahead to Genesis 8:16. Here, God says, "Go forth of the Ark..." Do you see it? God said, "Come in here with me" at the beginning and He was still in there with them at the end! Noah was as safe in that Ark as God was! If that Ark had gone down, God would have gone down too! God was there in the beginning; He was there through the dark days of wrath; and He was there when they landed on the mountains of a new day! The same is true for us too!

2. God shut them in. He controlled the door and He determined who went in and who stay in. He sealed them in and they were safe there until they arrived at their destination. The saint of God has been "sealed unto the day of redemption", Ephesians 4:30. He has sealed us in Christ and He has sealed Jesus within Himself, Colossians 3:3. We are safe and secure.

3. Noah was kept safe in that Ark by the mighty power of God. The Lord saw to it that the Ark rode the waves safely and reached its intended destination. The saints of God in Christ are also kept by the power of God, 1 Peter 1:5.

4. As the flood waters came on the earth they rose until they were some 22 feet above the highest mountains on the earth, Genesis 7:19-20. But, did you notice that as the water rose higher, the Ark rose even higher? "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound", Romans 5:20!

I am sure the trip was rough. The boat must have pitched and rolled. Noah may have even battled a little sea-sickness from time to time. But that Ark kept its cargo safe until it reached the

mountains of rest. God never promised us a smooth voyage; but He did promise is that the landing would be safe!

Conc: Noah survived because he believed God and entered the Ark by faith. He could have doubted the integrity and ability of the Ark. He could have found failed to believe the promises of God. Noah could have stayed outside. If he had, he would have died with the rest! But, when God's invitation came to him, Noah entered the Ark by faith and he was saved.

I want to call your attention to one last thought. When God shut the door of that ark, Noah was on the inside looking out, and the world was on the outside looking in. There was only one ark and there was only one door. So there's only one way to be saved - God's way. There's only one way to God's way - the Lord Jesus Christ who said, "I am the door." (John 10:9) When the flood of God's judgment is poured out one last time on this rebellious earth, the only thing that's going to matter is this: which side of that door are you on?

One door, and only one And yet its sides are two;

I am on the inside On which side are you? Is He calling you to come into the Ark of Salvation today? Are you ready to flee the wrath that is coming on the earth? Come into the Ark and be saved today. Are you ready to make your commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ? Right now, we are in the seven day period, Genesis 7:10. The door stands open now; it will close soon; which side will you be on when it does?

## 02.02 The Invitation To Companionship - Num\_10:29-32

---

Great Bible Invitations – Sermon #2 Numbers 10:29-32 THE INVITATION TO COMPANIONSHIP

Intro: The Bible is a book of invitations. All through the pages of this great Book, God is continually inviting people to join Him in where He is going and in what He is doing. By the way, that is a great blessing! To think that God would invite me to join Him is a blessing too great for words! In this passage, Moses is talking to a man named Hobab. There is some dispute over just who this man is. Some think he is Moses' brother in law. Others think Hobab is another name for Moses' father in law Jethro. I lean toward the latter interpretation because of Judges 4:11. In that verse, Hobab is called "the father in law of Moses." We know from Exodus 18 that Jethro had visited Moses and the children of Israel. He had been a blessing and he had received a blessing. He had also given Moses a great piece of wisdom concerning how he was leading the people of Israel. In this passage, Israel is leaving their encampment at the foot of Mount Sinai. While they were there, they received the Law, built the Tabernacle and learned how to worship the Lord God. Now, they are breaking camp and heading toward Canaan. Before they leave, Moses takes the time to invite Jethro, or Hobab, to go with them to their destination.

I would like to study this invitation today. In these verses, there are several aspects of this invitation we need to investigate. There is a word here for the church. There is a word here for those who are outside the church. There is a word here for every person in this room. So, let's take some time today to look into this passage and consider The Invitation To Companionship.

### I. Numbers 10:29 COME SHARE IN OUR PILGRIMAGE

A. A Special People – Moses uses the words "us" and "we". He is inviting his father in law to join a special people. The children of Israel were special because they were A Chosen People, Deuteronomy 7:6. They were A Redeemed People, Exodus 15:13, (Ill. The blood of the Lamb – Exodus 12:1-13).

(Note: The saints of God are a special people as well. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you are special! You are special because you have been chosen by Him, Ephesians 1:4; John 15:16. You are special because you have been redeemed, or cleansed by Him, 1 Peter 1:18-19; Colossians 1:14. If you are saved, you are special, 1 Peter 2:9.)

B. A Special Place – Moses invites his father in law to join them on their journey to that land God has promised to them, Exodus 3:8. It was to a land of blessing and of victory. Some twenty times, Canaan land is called "a land of milk and honey." It was to be a good place. Best of all, it was to be their place. Moses says, "Come with us!"

(Note: We are also headed to a special place. It is not a land of milk and honey. But, it is a land of peace, joy and sinless perfection. It is a land of blessing where none of the problems and afflictions of earth can follow, Revelation 21:4; Revelation 21:27. It is a place called Heaven and it is promised to us, John 14:1-3.)

C. A Special Privilege – Hobab is not a part of that people. He is not a part of the covenant of Israel and he is not a part of the promises God has made to Israel. But, Moses has the privilege of inviting Hobab to join up with Israel and share in their blessings. Moses has the privilege of say, “Come with us and what belongs to us will become yours too!” So he says, “Come with us!”

(Note: By the way, that is our privilege as well. We have the honor of inviting all those around us to “Come with us!” This thing called salvation is something that is to be shared with others. We can give away what we have without lessening the value of what we have.

If I have a hundred dollars and give five people twenty dollars each, then I have shared what I have, but I have nothing left. But, if I share my faith and invite someone who does not know Jesus to “come with us”, I have given away what I have, but I have lost nothing! In fact, I have increased the value of what I have because I have just laid up treasure in Heaven, Matthew 6:19-21. Salvation is the only thing I know of that gets more valuable as you give it away!

While I am on the subject, let me say that inviting people to “come with us” is more than a privilege. It is also an obligation. As we move through this life, we are commanded to share what we have with those who do not have it, Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15. We are commanded to invite people to “Come with us”.) II. Numbers 10:29-32 COME SHARE IN OUR PARTNERSHIP

A. Join Our Family – “Come thou with us” – Since Hobab is not a part of Israel, he is outside of a covenant relationship with God. In other words, he is a lost man. He is cut off from all the blessings and the promises of the Lord. He has no hope of salvation apart from accepting Moses’ invitation and becoming a part of the nation of Israel. So, Moses invites him to join the family.

(Note: We need to hear this today: There is no salvation outside the Lord Jesus Christ! Please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that you can be saved by joining this or any church. I am not saying that you can be saved by observing any of the rituals of this or any church. You cannot be saved through baptism or church membership.

What I am saying is that salvation can only be found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When you believe on Jesus, you become a member of His body, or the church, 1 Corinthians 12:13. And, there is no hope of Heaven, or of salvation without a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When the Bible says, “Ye must be born again”, it means what it says! There must be a moment in time when you look to Jesus by faith and trust Him as your Savior by faith, III. Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13; Ephesians 2:8-9. When you do that, you immediately become a part of the family. As a family member, you are entitled to all the rights and privileges thereof. You become a child of God, 1 John 3:1-3. You are adopted into His family, Romans 8:15. You secure a place in Heaven, John 14:1-3. You are saved “to the uttermost”, Hebrews 7:25. Membership has its privileges! “Come thou with us!”)

B. Join Our Fellowship – “We will do thee good” – Moses is telling Hobab, “If you will come with us, we will treat you right! God is blessing us and we will share those blessings with you. We won’t hurt you, but we will do our best to be a blessing to you!” In reality, Moses is saying two things to Hobab.

1.) You need us – If Hobab wants to be saved and enjoy the blessings of the Lord, then he is going to have to go with Israel.

2.) We need you – Numbers 10:31 – This desert was Hobab’s home territory. He knew where the best camp sites were located. He knew where the best trails could be found. He knew where all the watering holes were. Moses said, “We will be a blessing to you and you will be a blessing to us. Come thou with us!”

(Note: When we invite people to come with us, we are doing more than offering them a “get out of Hell free card.” We are promising more than just blessings after this life is over. When someone joins the church, they should hear the same things that Hobab heard. They should hear us say and see us live out, 1.) You need us and 2.) We need you.

Why do people need us? The church should be able to offer people some things they cannot find anywhere else in this world. Here is what they should find in the church.

Ø Someone who genuinely cares for them – Romans 12:15; Romans 15:1-2; 1 Corinthians 13:5; Php 2:4

Ø Someone who will help them carry their burdens – Galatians 6:2 – This refers to both the physical and spiritual aspects of this truth. If we have the means to meet a need in someone’s life, then we are to do it, in good faith, 1 John 3:16-18; James 2:15-16. By the same token, we are to pray for one another and get under the load with them, Ephesians 6:18; Php 4:6.

Ø Someone who will love them unconditionally – Matthew 22:39; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8.

Ø There is far more that people should find in church. They should find fellowship, acceptance, and family. We should be able to say to every person who unites with this church: “We will do thee good!” (Ill. Far too many churches are in the business of hurting people. They hurt them by their words and by their deeds. We must get in the business of helping people! When we do, they will come and they will stay, because they will find here what they can find nowhere else in this world. Calvary Baptist, can we honestly say, “Come thou with us, and we will do thee good”? It should become our goal to be able to say that and mean it when we do!

Why do we need them? When God saves a sinner, He gives that saved on His Spirit. Along with the Spirit of God come the gifts of the Spirit. God uniquely gifts each person He saves for a specific task within His body, 1 Corinthians 12:7-27. When God saves someone and sends them to our fellowship, it is not an accident! He sends them here so that they can fulfill a special place in our ministry that no one else can fill. We need what they bring with them if we are going to be all God would have us to be. Therefore, we must learn to create an environment where people can exercise their spiritual gifts in the ministry here. We should never stand in people’s way, but we should encourage them to grow in the Lord and become all they can be. We need to give people the freedom to be who God saved them to be.

Ill. Some people are threatened by this. They seem to feel that their “grip on power” is slipping when new people or younger people begin to grow and do things in the church. What we forget is that this church is not your church. It is the Lord’s church and when He sends us someone who is gifted for a certain task, we should get out of their way and let them be who God saved them to be. Someone who cannot help another believer grow in his walk with the Lord, but is jealous of their gifts and abilities is a person with deep-seated spiritual problems. They have the spirit of

Diotropheses (3 John 1:9) and they are a danger to the church and they bear watching! Watch out for that person who always criticizes others when they strive to grow in the Lord and exercise their gifts and talents in the church. A person who manifests that kind of spirit is someone who feels like their power and position is threatened. Can we, as a church honestly say, "Come with us, and we will do thee good"? Or must we say, "Come with us and we will hold you back"; "Come with us and we will prevent you from reaching your potential"; "Come with us and we will make you wish you had never joined this church"?

I think we are the kind of church that will do our best to do good by those who come here. But, like all other churches, there is room for improvement in this area.

### III. Numbers 10:29 COME SHARE IN OUR PROMISES

(III. As Moses speaks with Hobab, he tells him, "the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel". He is inviting Hobab to share in all the great blessings that God has promised to give to Israel. When we look at an individual and say "Come with us", we are inviting them to partake of the great promises that God has given to us. Here are the promises we have, that we can share with others.)

A. Come Share The Promise Of A Home – Just as the wilderness was not the final destination for Israel, this world is not the final home of the church. We are merely passing through down here, 1 Peter 2:11. We are headed to a much better land, Php 1:23. We are given a little glimpse of that homeland in the book of Revelation. Let me just refresh your memories just a little.

1. It is a Land of Worship – Revelation 4-5; Revelation 7:9-17 – It is a land where the redeemed ones will praise their Redeemer!

2. It is a Land of Wonders – Revelation 21:1-27, Revelation 22:1-21 – Words cannot begin to describe that city! Walls of Jasper, gates of pearl, foundations of twelve precious stones; streets made of transparent gold; the presence of Jesus Christ and God the Father; and the presence of the saints of God; will make Heaven a land of wonderful beauty and glory.

3. It is a Land of Wellness – Revelation 21:4 – There will be no tears, no pain, no suffering, no sickness and no death in that land. The problems and burdens of life which trouble us here will have no effect there. They will be banned at the gate – Revelation 21:27!

B. Come Share The Promise Of Hope – The phrase in verse 29, "will give it you" is filled with promise. Moses is inviting Hobab to rest on the promises of the Lord. Moses is saying, "There is hope for tomorrow! The Lord Himself has promised us that there are better things down the road!" That is the hope of the believer! This world is a place of heartaches, trials and troubles, Job 14:1. There is sickness, death, separation and hardship. Praise God, there is coming a better day! Let me tell you what's in your future, if you are saved.

1. There will be a Day of Rest – I have already touched on it, but there is coming a day of rest for the child of God. You will lay down the burdens of this life and you will enter a place of peace, rest and safety, where you will never be troubled again! (III. Hebrews 4:9!) Some of you have fought the battles and paid the price to live for the Lord. You have carried the burden of the church, your family and your community! There is coming a day of rest! There is coming a day when you can lay down those burdens and fly off to glory!

2. There will be a Day of Reunion – Many have seen those they love leave this world in death. It was a hard day when God called that loved one to glory. The months and years that have passed haven't dulled the pain and the emptiness you feel in your heart. I want to remind you that there is coming a great reunion day, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. There is coming a day when you will meet again, in the presence of God, and you will be with those who have outstripped you in this life. Even better than that is the fact that we will see and be with our Jesus! We will look on the One Who died for our sins on the cross; the One Who saved us by His grace; the One Who washed our sins away in His precious blood! We will see Him one day!

3. There will be a Day of Reward – Others of you have served in faithful silence while others got all the glory. People bragged about the work others did while you served in silence. I want to remind you that God didn't miss a thing you did. He saw it all and He took good notes. He knows every prayer you prayed. He knows every meal you missed. He knows every dollar you gave. He saw every cup of cold water given in His name, Matthew 10:29-32. He sees it all! One day, He will balance the scales and those who have tooted their own horn; those who have received all the pats on the back; those who have been given the accolades of men, will watch their works burn to ashes, while you hear Jesus say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord". (Ill. Here is how it is going to be – 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.)

C. Come Share The Promise Of A Help – Moses tells Hobab that God hath "spoken good concerning Israel". He is saying, "The Lord did not redeem us to abandon us in this wilderness. He will go with us; He will bless us and He will help us all the way to the Promised Land." As we journey toward glory, we also have certain promises that we can count on. We have a divine Helper in this life

1. He Has Promised To Sustain Us – Just as He fed Israel in that wilderness with the Manna and the quail, He will take care of His children, Php 4:9; Matthew 6:25-34.

2. He Has Promised To Sanctify Us – He set Israel apart and made them a holy, separate people. When He saved you and me, He did the very same thing for us! He made us into a "new creature", 2 Corinthians 5:17. He expects us to walk "in newness of life", Romans 6:4. We do not have to live like the world any longer! We can be different because He has enabled us to be different, Ephesians 2:1-10!

3. He Has Promised To Satisfy Us – Israel never was satisfied with what they received from the hand of God. No matter how much they were given, they always wanted more. Those who learn to trust the Lord by faith will also learn that He can provide perfect satisfaction, Psalms 103:5; Psalms 107:9; Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 12:9.

4. He Has Promised To Secure Us – God did what He promised and He brought Israel safely through into the Promised Land. God did not save you to lose you along the way. Just like Israel, "And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers", Deuteronomy 6:23. He saved us for a purpose and part of that purpose is to deliver us safely home to Heaven! He saved us for keeps, John 6:37-40; John 10:28; 1 Peter 5:7; John 3:16.

Conc: When Hobab heard the invitation, his first response was to say “No”, verse 30. But, we find that he changed his mind and went, Judges 1:16; Judges 4:11. One of his descendants, a woman by the name of Jael, killed a Canaanite general by the name of Sisera, Judges 4:18-22. So, Hobab accepted the invitation. He was blessed along with Israel just as Moses promised him he would be.

So, here is your invitation today, “Come with us!” Come with us to Heaven if you are not saved. Come to Jesus and be saved. Come with us as we serve the Lord. He will bless you and He will bless us by your presence. Come with us as we move into the future the Lord has for this church. He has a plan for us and we can either go willingly and be blessed, or we can say “No” and miss out on all the blessings. Has God spoken to you today?

- Has He spoken to you about your soul? Come to Jesus!
- Has He spoken to you about your conduct and attitude at church? Come to Jesus!
- Has He spoken to you about some problem you are facing, or some need you have and you want to bring it to Him? Come to Jesus!
- Have He spoken to you about the need to go to others and say “Come with us”? Come to Jesus!
- Whatever the need, don’t say “No” to God. Say “Yes” to Him and come get the help you need from Him!

## 02.03 The Invitation To Cleansing - Isa\_1:18

---

Great Bible Invitations – Sermon #3

Isaiah 1:18 THE INVITATION TO CLEANSING

Intro: The prophet Isaiah ministered during a turbulent time in Israel's history. The nation had abandoned the way of the Lord and was living in open sin and idolatry. The verses leading up to our text chronicle a scene of rebellion and sin. (Isaiah 1:1-18) Ø Isaiah 1:2 – The people were in open rebellion against the Lord

Ø Isaiah 1:3 – They refused to acknowledge God and, spiritually, they were dumber than the farm animals around them.

Ø Isaiah 1:4 – They had forsaken the Lord and had provoked Him to anger.

Ø Isaiah 1:5– They had refused to respond to the Lord's attempts at chastisement.

Ø Isaiah 1:5-6 - They were sick spiritually and they desperately needed help.

Ø Isaiah 1:7-8 – Violence filled the whole land.

Ø Isaiah 1:9-10 – In many ways, they had become as vile as ancient Sodom and Gomorrah.

Ø Isaiah 1:11-15 – Their religious services were an abomination to the Lord.

Ø Isaiah 1:9 – The only thing that held the nation together was a small remnant of faithful Jews.

It sounds as though these events could have been lifted straight from the headlines of today's newspapers. We are in as bad a spiritual shape as was ancient Israel. In the midst of this sad commentary, we see an amazing scene acted out. These people had been blessed by the Lord in many wonderful ways. Israel should have been seeking God and they should have been looking for ways to mend their relationship with Him. Instead of that, we see the Lord seeking His people and inviting them to make things right with Him. This fact underscores a truth we encounter throughout the pages of the Bible.

People will not seek the Lord until they are first sought by the Lord. People will not love the Lord until they are first loved by the Lord, 1 John 4:19. God always makes the first move in this thing called salvation. After all, man is "dead in trespasses and sins" and cannot seek the Lord, Ephesians 2:1. Jesus came to the world for the sole purpose of "seeking and saving that which was lost", Luke 19:10. I know that we want to elevate man in these days. No one wants to believe that man is totally depraved and cut off from God. Most folks hold to the idea that man contains within himself "a spark of the divine" and at some point, the good that is in man will begin to seek the good that is in God. The Bible is very clear in this matter. Man is a vile sinner and there is not good in him at all, Romans 3:10-18; Romans 3:23. Man will never come to God unless God first comes to man, John 6:44.

What we see in this passage are a dirty, vile, wicked people who need to be cleansed. They are approached by the Lord and invited to come to Him for the cleansing they so desperately need. We can also see a principle that is still true today. God is still inviting dirty, sinful people to come to Him for the cleansing they need.

I want to take this passage today and point out the principles contained in The Invitation To Cleansing.

## I. THE INTENSITY OF THIS INVITATION

A. The word “come” is an “imperative”. It is a command. God is reaching out to a wayward, sinful people and He is calling them back to Him. This is amazing because God knows how they have been living. He knows how they have treated His Law. He knows the vileness and the depths of their sins. He knows how wicked they have become. Yet, He still loves them and reaches out to them in love, to extend grace and mercy to them, if they will repent.

B. The blessing in this verse is the fact that this invitation still stands! God knows all about the sins in your life and mine. He knows how far down into the cesspool of sin we have sunk. He knows that we are wicked, evil and utterly depraved. Yet, He loves us, in spite of our sinful condition and He calls us to come to Him.

Listen to the Lord’s voice as He calls lost people to come to Him, Revelation 22:17; John 7:37; Matthew 11:28. Have you heeded that invitation? Have you come to the Lord for the salvation you so desperately need? Have you received Jesus as your personal Savior?

C. God understood Israel’s condition better than they did. They thought they were doing all right. They were playing on both sides of the fence and they were happy. But, God knew that they were in deep trouble, so He reached out to them to call them home. The same is true in our lives as well. God knows our condition better than we do. You take that lost sinner. He thinks he is doing his own thing and living his life by his own terms. He does not realize that he is nothing but a pawn in the devil’s hand. He is being driven from sin to sin by forces that he cannot control, Ephesians 2:1-3.

God, however, knows the true nature of man’s condition and God has moved to do something about it, Romans 5:6-8. When Jesus died on the cross, the door of salvation was opened, and now God invited all those trapped in sin to come.

## II. THE IMMEDIACY OF THIS INVITATION

A. God’s command is for them to come “now”. There must be no delay! God could see what Israel could not see. He could see where their rebellion and sin was leading them. He could see the judgment that was about to fall upon them. He could see their condition and their condemnation! On the basis of what He could see, He presses them to make a change in their loves now.

B. So it is with those who are not right with God today. All they can see is the next step that lies before them. All they can feel is the pleasure of their sins. All they can think about is the here and now. They give no thought to what is awaiting them down the road.

If wayward people could see down the road, what they would see would terrify them. If they could see what lies just around a few more bends in the road, they would repent of their sins and run to Jesus for cleansing. That person who is lost would see an eternity in Hell. They would see themselves in a place of eternal torment, where they will forever be separated from family, friends, peace, hope and God. They would see themselves damned, doomed and destroyed in Hell, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Psalms 9:17; Matthew 13:42; Revelation 14:11. That saved person who has walked away from God would see the chastisement of God unleashed on his or her life, Hebrews 12:6-11. They might even see themselves filling a premature grave, 1 John 5:16; 1 Corinthians 5:5. They would see the terrible consequences that are going to be suffered by their families because they refuse to get right with God.

C. God knows how bad it is going to get. He knows the pain and suffering that is coming. He knows about the judgment that is about to fall, so He calls the wayward ones to come to Him. He calls them to come now, without delay, for He knows that delay is dangerous.

If you are not right with God this day, the time to come to Him is now! Listen to what the Bible says about this matter: Genesis 6:3; Proverbs 27:1; 2 Corinthians 6:2. (III. The Rich Fool – Luke 12:16-20) (III. <<<James 4:13-16>>>) III. THE INTIMACY OF THIS INVITATION

A. The invitation is “Come now, let us reason together”. The phrase “let us reason together” is legal terminology. It means “let’s settle this matter before a court of law; let’s try our case in court”. The people of Israel had broken their covenant with the Lord. They had failed to hold up their end of the contract and God has initiated legal proceedings against them. He is bringing them up on charges. He has declared His case against them, v. 1-17, and He now invited them to defend themselves. They are in serious trouble! God has the goods on them and they called to answer for their sins.

However, the phrase “come now” is an invitation for these people to “walk with the Lord”. He is not inviting them to a debate. He is not opening the matter up to negotiations. He is inviting them to come to His way of thinking. He is inviting them to agree with Him, Amos 3:3. He is giving them an opportunity to say, “You are right and we are wrong. We are sorry and we are ready to go your way.”

He is offering them a chance to settle their case out of court. If they will be reasonable and honor their covenant with the Lord, He will drop the charges and restore them to a place of fellowship. If they will repent of their sins and change their ways, God will receive them and restore them. This is an intimate invitation to Israel to change their ways and to get in line with God. He is saying, “Let’s walk together, and we can work this thing out.” That is grace!

B. God’s invitation to follow Him is still an intimate thing! God does not call groups to come to Him; He calls individuals to come to Him. His call is personal, individual and intimate. When He calls, He always points out the areas of disagreement and He invites the wayward one to come to a place of agreement with God. That is the very nature of Holy Spirit conviction, John 16:7-13. It is a very intimate thing.

III. People sometimes leave church saying, “That preacher was preaching to me! Who told him what I had been doing?” That is the Holy Ghost of God trying to get your attention. The preacher doesn’t know anything about you at all; but God does! And He extends an intimate invitation to you

to come to His way of thinking. He is offering you and chance to settle your case out of court. You see, if your case ever goes to trial before Him, you will lose, Revelation 20:11-15.

C. Have you ever heard that intimate, individual call to come to Jesus for salvation? When that call came, did you respond by coming to God? Have you settled your case out of court? It's not too late! God is still inviting wayward souls to come to Him and to His way of thinking. If you will come, He will receive you and save your soul!

#### IV. THE INCREDIBILITY OF THIS INVITATION

A. God's promise to Israel, if they will come to Him, is that all their sins will be washed away. Verse 15 tells us that their hands are stained with blood. They are dirty and unclean in the sight of the Lord. But, if they will just come to Him, and heed His invitation, He will cleanse them completely. The words "scarlet" and "crimson" refer to dye that was extracted from both shellfish and a certain type of insect. When white garments were dyed with these colors, they could never be made white again. These colors were both colorfast and indelible. Once they were dyed no human means could ever return them to their pure state.

God describes the sins of Israel as being like a garment stained scarlet and crimson. They were dirty and nothing they could ever do would take the stain away. In ancient times once a garment was stained, it could never be made perfect again. Yet, if they would just respond to Him and repent of their sins, He had the power to make them "whiter than snow", and as pure as "wool". He had the ability to take the stain of their sin away and make them clean again! Their rituals would not make them clean. Their religious observances would not make them clean. The only hope these people had was to accept the Lord's invitation. If they would just do that, He would make the stain of their sin disappear forever!

B. Let every person under the sound of my voice here these words: This invitation still stands! There is nothing you can do to take away your sins. At best, you and I are dirty and filthy in the sight of the Lord, Isaiah 64:6. We cannot cleanse ourselves by religious deeds or rituals. When we try to erase our sins by our own efforts, all we succeed in doing is making the stain deeper!

But, if we will listen to His call and come to Him by faith. God has the power to cleanse away forever the stain of our sins! He is able to take our sins and put them away from us as "far as the east is from the west", Psalms 103:12. He is able to wash us in the precious blood of Jesus and declare us holy and clean, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. He is able to cleanse us from all sin, 1 John 1:7. He is able to deliver us from condemnation and the threat of Hell we were under, Romans 8:1; Romans 5:9. He is able to make us perfectly, utterly, eternally clean, through the blood of His Darling Son!

C. Do you know for sure that your sins have been washed away? When God looks down at you, does He see your sins, or does He see the righteousness of His precious Son, Romans 4:21-25?

Conc: That is an incredible invitation! I remember the day when I heard Him call for me. He invited me to come over to His way of thinking. He promised me cleansing, salvation and eternal life if I would come. My sins were so vile; I was headed to Hell and I knew it, yet His invitation was so sweet that I had to answer it. I came to Jesus by faith and I am saved today. My sins have been washed away and I am whiter than snow. Though I was dirty, vile and guilty, God has settled my

case out of court and I am saved today.

I am glad that I took advantage of His invitation. I am glad that He gave me the faith to say "Yes!" when He called. What about you? Have you heard Him calling you? What have you done about His invitation? Some of you have answered it and you are saved today. Some have heard Him calling you to come back to Him and you have answered that call and come back to Him. You have been restored.

Some hear that call today. God is calling you to be saved right now. If I were you, I would heed the invitation and come to Him. Notice verses 19-20. If the people came to God at His call, He promised to bless them. If they refused to come, then all they could expect was His judgment. What will it be for you? Will it be the blessings of the Lord, or will it be the all-consuming judgment of God? It all depends on what you do with the invitation. If He is calling you, then you need to come. Come today and settle your case with God out of court. Get is settled now and never worry about it again!

## 02.04 The Invitation To Contentment - Isa\_55:1-3

---

Great Bible Invitations – Sermon # 4

Isaiah 55:1-3 THE INVITATION TO CONTENTMENT

Intro: Ill. Philip Parham tells the story of a rich industrialist who was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat. “Why aren’t you out there fishing?” he asked.

“Because I’ve caught enough fish for today,” said the fisherman.

“Why don’t you catch more fish than you need?” the rich man asked.

“What would I do with them?”

“You could earn more money,” came the impatient reply, “and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you’d have a fleet of boats and be rich like me.” The fisherman asked, “Then what would I do?”

“You could sit down and enjoy life,” said the industrialist.

“What do you think I’m doing now?” the fisherman replied as he looked placidly out to sea.[1] Few people ever reach that level of contentment. In fact, one poet put it this way: As a rule, man’s a fool When it’s hot, he wants it cool. And when it’s cool, he wants it hot, Always wanting what is not.[2]

Isn’t that the truth? We live in a world filled with discontented people. Everywhere you look, people are striving to get more stuff. They are laboring to have more things. Not many people in this world seem to be completely content and satisfied with their place in life. Why is that?

I think the answer lies in the fact that people are looking for true contentment in places, people and things that can never provide contentment to them. Look at Isaiah 55:2 of our text. It answers this question for us in clear language.

1. People Seek Satisfaction In Their Possessions – They think that their “things” will give them contentment. They spend their time making money so they can spend the money they make accumulating more “things”. People are looking for contentment in the “things” they possess.

What people fail to realize is that possessions are temporary at best. They wear out and must be replaced. All those “things” that we hold in so high a regard are going to be left behind one of these days. You won’t take a house, a car, a gun, a bass boat, or whatever your “thing” is, into eternity with you. Every “thing” you and I possess will be left behind one day! And, if a person acquires too many possessions, they may find that the “things” they think they own will end up owning them! As a man by the name of Bill Earle once said, “If your outgo exceeds your income, your upkeep will be your downfall.” Possessions can never satisfy the deepest needs of the soul!

2. People Seek Satisfaction In Their Pursuits – According to this verse, they “labor for that which satisfieth not”. They spend all their time and energy pursuing “things” that can never give them satisfaction of soul. Work, hobbies, sports, and the pleasures of life will never satisfy the deepest needs of the soul. The more you invest your time and effort in these things, the more they will require from you. Regardless of what you pursue in life, you will find, in the end, that your pursuits will pursue you. Whether it is work or pleasure, it will consume your life if you let. If you seek satisfaction in these things, you will discover that it will take more and more of these things to bring contentment into your life. And, just like possessions, the pursuits of life will end when this earthly life ends. In these verses God reveals the true source of permanent satisfaction. He issues an ironclad guarantee of perfect, eternal contentment to all who will hear His voice and respond to His invitation. I want to take these verses and preach on The Invitation To Contentment. Let me show you where God says true contentment can be found. Notice some of the components of God’s gracious invitation to contentment.

#### I. Isaiah 55:1 THE OFFERS OF THIS INVITATION

(III. When God issues His invitation in these verses, He makes a couple of wonderful offers that are too good to pass up.)

A. The Right Provisions – There are three basic substances that God offers in this verse. He offers these substances to all who will come to Him. Let’s examine these in a little detail.

1. He Offers Water – Water is one of the most important substances to us humans. Our bodies are comprised of 60-70% water and it takes a lot of it to keep us alive. The average human can live three days without water. We have to have water to live.

Water in the Bible is often a picture of the new birth. When Jesus talked with Nicodemus in John 3:5, Jesus said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” It is a picture of the Gospel message; the very message that must be received by faith in order for a person to be saved. When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in John 4:13-14, He said, “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” The word “drinketh” in verse 13 is in the “present tense”. It refers to continual action. In other words, “Even if you drink continually from Jacob’s well, you will just get thirsty again.” The word “drinketh” in verse 14 is in the “aorist tense”. It refers to a one time for all time action. In other words, “If you take just one drink of the well I offer, you will never thirst again!”

Jesus promises complete contentment to everyone who will drink of the water that He offers. Unlike physical water, which one must drink again and again, the spiritual water that Jesus offers will forever satisfy the soul who will take just one drink of it. Jesus makes this offer throughout the Bible, John 7:37; Revelation 22:17. His offer of soul-satisfying water still stands today.

2. He Offers Wine – In biblical times, wine was just as important as water. Most of the water was not fit to drink, so wine was added to the water. The wine killed the bacteria and made the water drinkable. In the Bible, wine is often used as a picture of joy, Psalms 104:15. It was used at times of feasting and happy celebrations. Wine is also a picture of the Holy Spirit, Who enters a child of God at the moment of salvation and allows the redeemed one to experience “joy unspeakable and

full of glory”, 1 Peter 1:8. God doesn’t just save us; He also fills us with His joy. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that gives us peace and comfort as we travel toward glory, John 14:16-18. On the Day of Pentecost, the Jews thought that the Spirit-filled disciples were drunk with new wine, Acts 2:13. Peter told the crowd that these men were not drunk with wine; they were under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Just as wine controls the drunkard, the Spirit controls the saints of God, Ephesians 5:18.

III. Jesus took six empty stone pots at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, commanded them to be filled with water and transformed that water into wine. That is just what He does with His children. He takes our old stony hearts, fills them with the saving, satisfying water of His Gospel and transforms us by His power. He places His Spirit within us and then He pours us out to His glory in the world.

3. He Offers Milk – Milk is essential for healthy growth. Milk is the first substance newborn babies receive for their nourishment. Milk is the provision of the mother for the hungry baby. Milk contains all the essential nutrients needed to transform a baby into a healthy child.

Milk in the Bible is a picture of the Word of God. Not only does God give us the water of life that saves us and the Spirit of God that gives us joy; He also gives us the Word of God that helps us grow up strong in the things of God. The Bible is referred to as milk, 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12-13.

There are many people in the family of God who have not had the benefit of a formal education. Some did not learn to read or write very well. The world looks at them as ignorant and unlearned people. In truth, they are far wiser in the things of God than this world will ever be. They know the way of salvation, righteousness and faith. They know this because they have been drinking deeply of the good milk of the Word of God.

B. The Right Price – The world makes you pay for everything you get. Religion will make you labor for every blessing you think you will receive. Sin, the flesh and the world all make you pay dearly for any promise of contentment they may offer you. On the other hand, God places every offer He has on the table as a free gift. He offers salvation and contentment to all who will come to Him free of any charge. (III. Revelation 22:17; Romans 3:24)

Since God’s gifts are free, anyone can receive them. God doesn’t require money, righteousness, good works or any other resource. He wouldn’t accept those things even if they were offered to Him. The only currency God requires is the currency of faith! He will open the storehouse of His blessings to all those who will exercise simple faith in His offer and come to Him. That is an offer anyone can afford!

How can God make such a free offer to people like us? He can do that because His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, went to Calvary, died on the cross and paid the whole price of redemption. As the song writer said, “Jesus paid it all; All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain; He washed it white as snow.”

## II. Isaiah 55:2-3 THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THIS INVITATION

(III. What does the person who accepts this free offer receive? These two verses reveal at least three opportunities that await those who receive the Lord’s free offer.)

A. The Opportunity For Salvation – God promises those who come to Him that their “soul shall live.” This is a picture of salvation! The soul in its natural state is separated from God, Isaiah 59:2, and in terrible danger, Ezekiel 18:4. Every soul born into this world is born with a sin-stained soul, Romans 3:10-23. Every soul born into this world is headed to a place called Hell, Romans 6:23, Psalms 9:17. When a person receives God’s free offer and drinks the “water of life”; when that person believes the Gospel of grace, that person is saved. We throw the word “saved” around a lot in church and it is a special word to every redeemed child of God. The word “saved” means “to rescue from all harm and danger.” That word is special to my heart! When God makes His offer to a lost soul and that person accepts Jesus as their Savior, they enter into a salvation relationship with God. At that moment, they are delivered from the condemnation of sin, Romans 8:1. They are saved from the awful wrath of God, Romans 5:9. They pass from spiritual death into spiritual life, John 5:24. They become a brand new creature, 2 Corinthians 5:17. They are set free and they receive salvation. Thank God for salvation!

B. The Opportunity For Satisfaction – Isaiah 55:2 tells us that those who receive God’s offer can let their “soul delight in fatness.” The word “fatness” means “abundance”. When God saves a soul, He gives that soul new life. He also gives that soul a far better life, John 10:10. He causes the saved soul to rest in what it has in Jesus. The saved one is no longer seeking satisfaction in the world. It is not longer looking for happiness and peace in pleasure, sex, drink and drugs. The redeemed soul finds everything it needs in Jesus to enjoy true peace and satisfaction. The list of blessings the saints enjoy is far too long for one sermon. Just to name a few: peace, joy, rest, acceptance, blessing, love, and salvation. No wonder those who know the Lord are a happy, satisfied people.

C. The Opportunity For Security – God’s promise is that He will “make an everlasting covenant with you”. A covenant is an agreement God makes with His people. Some covenants are conditional. God promises He will bless His people if they will walk to a certain standard, etc. This covenant only has one requirement. When a person accepts God’s free offer and they drink the “water of life”, God makes an unconditional, everlasting covenant with them.

Call it what you will, “eternal security”, “once saved always saved”, “eternal life”, etc. it all means the same thing. Those who come to God and accept His offer experience salvation and are promised that their salvation will last for all eternity! This is the great promise of the New Testament! Those who receive Jesus as their Savior need never fear that He will take their salvation away from them, John 6:37-40; John 10:28; 1 Peter 1:5.

### III. Isaiah 55:1-3 THE OBLIGATIONS OF THIS INVITATION

(III. This is a tremendous offer! All the things we need for our eternal salvation offered to us at the right price. So, what is required to accept this offer? There are three requirements mentioned in these verses. But, don’t worry; God’s requirements are not hard to meet.)

A. There Is Something You Must Have – Verse one tells us who this offer is for. It is for “every one that thirsteth”. Thirst is a common human need. Every person on the planet experiences the desire to quench their physical thirst. However, the thirst we are talking about here is spiritual in nature. While everyone experiences physical thirst, not everyone experiences the same level of spiritual thirst. Some people have their thirst satisfied by the sins of the flesh and the world. That kind of

person does not see their need. They have no desire for a new life and they have no reason to come to God.

But, every now and then a person will develop a spiritual thirst. They will look at the life they are living and become unsatisfied. They will want more than they have. They will realize that something is missing. Those are the people who become candidates for God's offer of salvation.

You see, God's offer is only for sinners. He did not come to this world to save people who think they are righteous, Mark 2:17; Luke 19:10. God cannot and will not save a person who does not see their need. He will, however, save all of those who see their need and who will come to Him. This desire and this thirst for God are not natural experiences. They are the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life. When the Spirit of God begins to deal with a human heart, He will convict that person of their sin and of their need. He creates within them the thirst for more and the desire to come to God, John 16:7-11. (Ill. The one of the greatest days in your life is the day when the Spirit of God draws you to come to Jesus, John 6:44.)

B. There Is Something You Must Hear – Four times in these verses God tells Israel that they need to hear His message, (Ill. "Ho"; "Hearken diligently"; "Incline your ear"; "Hear"). If they will hear Him calling they can come to Him and get what they need for their soul's salvation. Four times in these verses, He calls them to "come" to Him. Once, He invites them to "eat".

If there is a thirst in your soul for a different life; if you are dissatisfied with the way you are living and with your prospects for eternity, it is the Lord speaking to you. If you will hear His voice, and come to Him, He will save you and give you eternal life. All it takes is a positive response to His call and salvation becomes a reality, Acts 16:31; Romans 10:13; John 3:16. Is He calling you?

Conc: A wise woman who was traveling in the mountains found a precious stone in a stream. The next day she met another traveler who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveler saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give it to him. She did so without hesitation. The traveler left rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime.

But, a few days later, he came back to return the stone to the wise woman. "I've been thinking," he said. "I know how valuable this stone is, but I give it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious. Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me this stone." That wise woman could let go of that precious stone because she knew true contentment in her heart. She didn't need riches to give her joy. She had joy in her heart.

What about you? Do you have true contentment today? Have you heard God's call to your heart to come to Him for salvation? Has He given you contentment in your soul? If you He has, then you are truly blessed among men! You should thank Him and praise Him today!

If you are not satisfied, and you hear His voice speaking to you, you need to come to Him and call on Him for salvation. Is He calling? Do you need the contentment that He offers? Wouldn't you like to be able to enjoy true soul satisfaction? You can, if you will come to Jesus Christ today.

[1] Our Daily Bread, May 18, 1994 [2] Bits & Pieces, June 22, 1995, p. 5

## 02.05 The Invitation To Contrition - Hos\_6:1-2

---

Great Bible Invitations – Sermon # 5

Hosea 6:1-2 THE INVITATION TO CONTRITION

Intro: I would just remind us today that the Bible is a book filled with invitations. The first one is found in Genesis 7:1. In that verse God invites Noah and his family to come into the Ark for salvation from the flood. The last invitation is found in Revelation 22:20. In that verse John issues an invitation for the Lord to return quickly. I like both of those invitations. In fact, as I study the invitations I find throughout the Bible, I am discovering that I like them all. In this passage, the prophet Hosea calls out to the people of Israel. They have wandered far away from the Lord and he issues a call for them to come back to God. It is a call for both personal and national revival. Israel had forsaken the way of the Lord and they had turned away from Him to worship the idols and false gods of the Canaanites. This invitation is a call for them to repent of their sins and to turn their hearts back to the one true God.

Hosea 6:2 of this passage is a prophecy of a future day when Israel will return to the Lord and He will heal them and restore them to a place of blessing. There is coming a day when the Jewish people will once again return to the Lord.

While these verses were written to people who lived 2,500 years ago, they still have a message that speaks to our need today. Just like ancient Israel, America needs a revival! Our nation has drifted far away from its religious roots. This country has given itself over to sin and evil of every description. The horror of abortion; the abomination of sodomite marriage; the rampant rise in sin and perversion of every flavor, declare that our nation is miles away from God and needs to find a place of repentance and redemption.

America needs a revival! She needs to be pulled back from the brink of disaster. But, before there will ever be a national revival in America, there must first be a revival within the churches of America. And, before there will be a revival in our churches, there must be revival in the hearts of individual believers. This passage is call for the people of God to humble themselves before God to seek His face for forgiveness and restoration. It is, in essence, an Invitation To Contrition.

Contrition is a word you don't hear very often. It describes something you don't see very often either. The word "contrition" means "sincere sorrow over sin, with a desire to repent of that sin." It describes people who are broken hearted that they have wronged God. They are sorry for what they have done and they want to make things right with Him.

It is a state of heart that God will honor, Psalms 34:18, "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." And, Psalms 51:17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

It is the people in possession of a contrite heart who will experience revival. Isaiah 57:15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and

holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

I think this message is one that we need to hear today. We are living in a time when there is very little contrition and sorrow over sin. People, even church people, can live any old way and never feel any remorse over their waywardness. These verses have something to say about that. I want to show you ways God reaches out to those who are far away from Him. I want to preach on The Invitation To Contrition.

## I. Hosea 6:1 a GOD’S PLEA TO A WANTON PEOPLE

(III. The word “wanton” means “deliberate and without provocation or reason; sexually lawless; extravagant living”. “Wanton” comes from an Old English word that means “to be undisciplined”. The people of Israel had every reason to serve and honor the Lord by their lives. Yet, for no reason, they had abandoned Him and turn to follow other gods. They were a wanton people! They had no discipline in their spiritual lives)

A. The phrase “let us return” implies that a closer relationship than the current relationship once existed. There had been a time in Israel’s past when they were closer to the Lord than they were now. There had been a time when they had followed His Law, sought His face and honored Him above all others. Now, they are far away from Him. They have allowed their relationship to grow cold. Their love for Him is not as strong as it used to be. They had become a wayward, wicked people. Their condition is clearly laid out in Hosea 6-7.

1. Hosea 6:4-11 – They were like “the morning cloud” and “the early dew”. Their devotion to God was like the early morning dew that sparkles like millions of jewels under the gleam of the sun, but soon burns away. Their devotion to God was shallow and temporary. They talk about getting right with God, but their repentance and devotion was fleeting at best!

2. Hosea 7:1-7 – They are called “a heated oven”. Like an oven heated to its maximum temperature during the night so that it would be ready for the baker in the morning, Israel burned with a passion for sin. The use of the words “adulterers”, “wickedness” and “wine” bear this out. They should have had a passion for the things of God, but they loved their sin far more than they loved Him.

3. Hosea 7:8 – Israel is called “a half-baked cake”. The people of this time cooked their bread on heated rocks. A cake not turned would burn on one side and be raw on the other. Israel was burned on her earthly side through sin and compromise with the enemies of God. Yet, toward the Lord, they were cold and uncooked. They were guilty of compromise, because God wants our whole body, soul and spirit to be dedicated to Him.

4. Hosea 7:9-10 – Israel is describes as a man whose strength has ebbed away, and he is unaware that time and age have taken their toll. Israel has lost their power with the Lord and they aren’t even aware of it. Like Samson, they “wist not that the LORD was departed from” them.

5. Hosea 7:11-12 – Israel is like a “silly dove”. Instead of looking to the Lord and trusting Him, they flew to Egypt for their help, and then they flew to Assyria. Yet, had they listened to the Lord’s prophets, they would have known that these nations would have failed them. They disobeyed God by making covenants with heathen nations.

6. Hosea 7:13-16 – Israel is like a “deceitful bow”. They cannot be trusted to serve the Lord and remain faithful to Him. They had been given His Law and they had received His training. They should have been able to hit a bull’s eye, and walk with the Lord in holiness. Yet, they were a fickle people.

B. This was the condition of Israel. There had been a time when they had walked close to the Lord, but now they had drifted far away from Him. As we look at them, let us not fail to look at ourselves!

How many in this very room can remember a day when you were closer to the Lord than you are today? Can you remember a day when the things of God were more precious to you than they are now? Can you remember a time when His house, His Word, His business, and time spent with Him thrilled your soul far more than they do now? As I mentioned those six descriptive phrases God used to describe Israel, can you see parallels within your own life?

- Is your devotion to God shallow?
- Do you have a greater passion for sin than you do the things of God?
- Have you compromised with the world?
- Have you lost your power with the Lord?
- Are you like a silly dove flitting here and there looking for help in every source but the Lord?
- Are you like a deceitful bow that cannot be trusted to hit the target of righteous, faithful living?

C. If you find yourself in that condition today, you know you are not where you need to be with the Lord. Like the people in the church in Ephesus, you have “left your first love”, Revelation 2:1-7. You may be going through the motions, but your heart is not aflame with a passionate love for the Lord Jesus Christ and the things of God. You have allowed your soul to drift away from God and this is His call to you to come back to Him! If I were you, I would respond to Him by coming back home today!

## II. Hosea 6:1 b GOD’S PLAN FOR A WAYWARD PEOPLE

A. The reason Israel is interested in returning to the Lord is found in two words used in Hosea 6:1. The word “torn” means “to rend, to tear, to be torn in pieces.” The word “smitten” means “to strike, to beat, to hit, to slay or kill; to attack and destroy.” These words describe what Israel had been going through at the hand of God.

Hosea 4:1-2 indicate that sin had become a way of life for the people of Israel. Hosea 4:3-10 tells us that God will judge Israel for their sins against Him. He will bring harsh chastisement upon them because they have refused to walk in His ways. Hosea 5:12-15 describe the Lord as a lion that comes upon this wayward people to tear them and punish them for what they have done. Then, after inflicting judgment, the Lord will withdraw His presence from them to wait for them to seek His face. It is clear from these verses that Israel is going to pay a terrible price for their sinful ways.

B. Just as surely as the Lord brought harsh judgment upon the nation of Israel for their disobedience; He will do the same to those who are saved but who refuse to walk in His will. The Bible is clear, the Lord will bring chastisement into the lives of all those who try to walk away from

Him, Revelation 3:19; Hebrews 12:5-12; Proverbs 3:11-12; Proverbs 15:10; Proverbs 15:32; Job 15:17. You are deceiving no one but yourself when you think you can turn your back on the Lord and get away with it. There is a price to pay for disobedience!

C. The painful effects of chastisement can be clearly seen in the lives of many of the people in the Bible. Consider David. His sin with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 brought the chastisement of God into David's life and family for many years. An infant son was taken in death; a son grew up a rebel to his father; another son raped his sister and was murdered by another brother. Psalms 51:8; Psalms 38:3 make it clear that David was suffering under the chastisement of God Almighty.

We need to understand this truth: no one ever gets away with sin! When we allow sin to grow in our lives, we are inviting God to chastise us. He will use whatever means He finds necessary to get our attention. Like Absalom did to Joab, God will burn your barley fields if He has to in order to get your attention, 2 Samuel 14:28-32. He is not afraid to pull your heartstring, if He has to, to get to you. There are families that have suffered financial ruin because of their sins against God. Others have endured sickness and death because someone refused to make things right with God, 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 John 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:30. God knows how to get our attention. He will do whatever He has to do to get us where He wants us to be!

### III. Hosea 6:1-2 GOD'S PROMISE TO A WOUNDED PEOPLE

A. Some people see these words as foolish thinking on the part of Israel. They think the people are trying out a religious formula. They are saying, "If we act in a certain way then God is obligated to respond to us in a certain manner." While this may be true, there is a ray of hope here for those who have allowed sin to come between them and the Lord.

Israel has suffered at the hand of the Lord, but if they will return to Him with their whole heart, He will minister to their needs. The word "heal" means "to make healthy and whole". The word "bind" means "to tie up a wound". Yes, God had afflicted them and smitten them, but He would prove to be their salvation and healing if they would on come back to Him. If they would return to Him, God would minister to them personally. He would meet their needs quickly and He would restore them to a place of help and blessing.

B. If we will hear His voice; see where we have strayed from Him and return to Him, He will restore us to wholeness once again. We need the blessings mentioned in these verses. Let's look at them for just a moment.

1. Those who have been enduring God's chastisement need His "healing" and "binding" ministry. Those who have been "torn" and "smitten" by Him need His personal, healing ministry in their lives. You can have that in your life if you will come to Him!

2. Each one of us needs God to do in us what Israel expects Him to do for them. They expected Him to "revive" them; to "raise them up"; to cause them to "live in His sight". These three things are the very essence of genuine revival! When He gives us new life; causes us to stand for Him once again; and causes us to walk in His presence, He has given us a revival! That is just what we need in these days!

C. More than anything in this world, we need to come to a place where we get honest about our condition before the Lord. He already knows what kind of shape we are in, and so do we! When

we come to the place where we can confess our need of revival, our need of Him and the depths of our sins, we will have the move of God we need. His promise to us is clear, 2 Chronicles 7:14. He is as eager to hear us and heal us as should be to be restored, 1 John 1:9. When we are ready to come home, He is ready to receive us, Ill. Luke 15:11-24.

Conc: Now, we all agree that we need revival. We need revival in our churches, our nation and in our personal lives. The only way God is ever going to send real revival to us is when we heed His call and humble ourselves before Him in contrition and broken-hearted repentance. Has the Lord spoken to your heart about your walk with Him today? Can you remember a time when you were closer to Him than you are today? Can you look back at a time when you were more excited about Him than you are today? Aren't you tired of a powerless life? Are you tired of God's efforts to get your attention? Wouldn't you like to have His blessings rather than His chastisement?

Come home! Let Him heal you and bind up your wounds. Let Him restore unto you the joy of His salvation. Let Him give you the peace, joy and blessing you have squandered out there in the far country. Come home!

Lost friend, you can come to God today. If you are tired of a life of sin and long for more, you can come to Jesus if He is calling you. You can be saved today if you will come to God.

Remember, Psalms 51:17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

## 02.06 The Invitation To Children - Mat\_19:13-15

---

Great Bible Invitations – Sermon # 6 Matthew 19:13-15 THE INVITATION TO CHILDREN

Intro: As we continue to examine the great invitations of the Bible, we have arrived at one of the most precious and most ignored invitations in the Word of God. It is The Invitation To Children.

Jesus had just finished teaching about the very serious matter of marriage and divorce. As soon as that discussion is finished, Jesus turns His attention to some little children that are being brought to Him by their parents. It was a Jewish tradition to bring small children to a great rabbi so that he could bless them and pray for them. It was also common for parents to take their children to the synagogue, where each of the elders would take the child in his hands and pray for the life of the child. This is much the same thing that we still do today when we dedicate a child and parents to the Lord.

These parents are severely rebuked by the Lord's disciples. Apparently, they felt that the Master's time was too valuable to spend on small children. Jesus, in turn, rebuked them for their attitude regarding these children. He told the disciples in no uncertain terms that little children were what the kingdom of Heaven was all about.

It is appropriate that Jesus should give us this teaching about little children just after He spoke about the marriage relationship. The statement "and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:15) is literally fulfilled when a married couple come together to produce a child.

Now, let's face it: children can be noisy in church; they require a lot of special attention and special programs; and they cannot contribute to the financial burden of the church. But, children are not a curse to be endured, they are a blessing to be enjoyed! Psalms 127:3 says, "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." We are blessed by all the little ones around here! This passage has something to say about children and about the Savior's invitation for them to come to Him. Now, lest you think this message is only for the children, there is a word here for every person in this room today. Let's take a few minutes to examine the elements of this great invitation. I want to preach on The Invitation To Children.

### I. A WORD ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY

(III. This passage clearly reveals certain responsibilities that both the parent and the church have toward our children. Let's consider them for a moment.)

A. We Are Responsible For Evangelizing Our Children – This passage nowhere implies that Jesus was saving these children. He was merely praying for them and pronouncing a blessing on their young lives. This scene teaches us that these parents cared enough about the spiritual condition of their children to bring to Jesus so that they might be blessed through His praying and His touch. From the earliest passages of the Bible believers have been challenged to share the things of God with their children, Deuteronomy 6:1-8. The New Testament renews that challenge to parents, Ephesians 6:4. Parents should do everything in their power to ensure that their children are

exposed to the Gospel. That means bringing them to church on a consistent basis. It means giving them the opportunity to be in Sunday School and VBS. It means praying for them and with them and opening the Bible with them at home. It means being open about your own faith. It means being consistent in your own life as a believer. Sunday School teachers and VBS workers should share the Gospel with the children of this church. The Gospel should be preached from this pulpit. Still, the primary responsibility for evangelizing the children of this congregation rests on the shoulders of Mom and Dad.

**B. We Are Responsible For Educating Our Children –** By bringing their children to Jesus, these parents were telling their children that they saw something special in Him.

Like those ancient parents, believers in our day have the responsibility of modeling our faith in Jesus so that the younger generation can see that He is worth knowing. If my faith does not change my life and cause me to be a better person, my children will pick up on that. I can talk about my faith, but if I do not live out my faith, it translates into hypocrisy in the eyes of my children. They are very quick to spot a phony! We are responsible for educating our children about the things of God. In Ephesians 6:4, the word “nurture” refers to “the whole training and education” of a child. It is not the public school teacher’s responsibility to see that our children come to Jesus. It is our duty to bring them face to face with a saving Lord. If we make much of Jesus in front of them, they will be far more likely to come to Him at an early age and remain faithful to Him as they mature.

**C. We Are Responsible For Encouraging Our Children –** When these parents came to Jesus with their children they were encouraging them to approach Him as well.

Christian parents are told in Ephesians 6:4 to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The word “admonition” has the idea of “encouragement”. We ought to encourage our children to seek the things of God. Teach them to pray at an early age. Make the Bible a big part of their daily life. Pray with them. Bring them to Sunday School and preaching. Involve them in church activities like the youth group and VBS. Bring them to revival services. Expose them to everything of a godly nature that is available. One of the best things a mature believer can do for children is for them to be in love with Jesus Christ. When mature adults love Jesus with a sincere devotion, it encourages children to love Him too!

## II. A WORD ABOUT REDEMPTION

(III. While this text certainly highlights adult responsibilities toward a child’s spiritual foundation, it also speaks about the matter of salvation.)

**A. What It Implies –** The fact that children are invited to come to the Savior implies that children need a Savior. Now, most folks don’t like to hear this, but children are sinners too, Psalms 58:3; Psalms 51:5; Job 15:14; Proverbs 22:15; Isaiah 48:8; Ephesians 2:3. While children may possess a certain innocency, they still stand in need of salvation. That is why parents and other concerned adults must do all they can to bring children face to face with the claims of the Gospel. It is not our duty to save them, but it is our duty to expose them to the Word of God. When children hear the Gospel preached, taught and lived out, they are far more likely to come to Jesus at an early age, Romans 10:17. Here is what Paul told Timothy about exposing children to the Word of God, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto

salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Timothy 3:15.

B. What It Involves – Whenever a discussion about childhood salvation comes up, someone always mentions “the age of accountability”. When I was growing up, the magic “age of accountability” was twelve. When a child reached the age of twelve, it was time for them to get saved, join the church and be baptized. It surprises some people when they find out that the Bible does not mention a specific “age of accountability”. A child becomes accountable for his or her sins when they come to a place where they can understand the difference between right and wrong and when they are able to choose between right and wrong, Isaiah 7:16. The term “age of decision” might be better than the “age of accountability”. When a person reaches a level of mental understanding regarding the nature of sin and its consequences and are able to make a decision for or against Jesus Christ, they have reached the “age of decision”.

So, when is that age? Well, it is different for every child. I have a Pastor friend who was saved at the age of 6. I have known other people who did not come to a realization of their condition until they were well into their teens. Some people, such as those with severe mental handicaps, may never come to that place. To all the children in this room today, let me say something to you. When you reach a place in your life where you understand that you are a sinner; where you understand that you are going to Hell because of your sins; and where you understand that Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead to save you, you need to be saved. You need to come to Jesus and be saved. Parents, just because your children are young, do not assume that they do not need to be saved. Children grow up quick these days and they need to know about Jesus Christ. Tell them about Jesus from the day they are born and watch God save them at an early age!

(Note: Let me touch on something else while I am here. I received a phone call from a father this week that has a six-year-old son. This boy came to his father and told him that he wanted to be saved. The father acted wisely because he questioned his son to see what he understood and when he did, he found out that the little boy did not understand what sin was. It was clear that this young man is interested, but not quite ready. It probably won't be long!

Now, when children come to you talking about salvation, you should never put them off. Take the time to ask them some pointed questions like: What does it mean to be saved? Why do you feel that you need to be saved? Can you explain to me how a person gets saved? Can you explain to me what sin is? There are many other questions, but you get the idea. If they do not understand, keep praying for them and talking to them about Jesus. They will come back when they are ready. When they are ready to receive Jesus, be careful that you point them to Him and allow them to come to Him by faith. In other words, do not put words into their mouths. You might help them to understand the kind of things they should pray about; things like confession of sin, expression of faith in the finished work of Christ, asking the Lord into their hearts, etc; but never, never, never tell them exactly what they should say. If they understand what they are doing and they are really under Holy Ghost conviction, they will know what they need to do.)

(Note: What about children who die before they reach the “age of decision”? What happens to them? I think the Bible holds that answer for us. When David lost an infant son in 2 Samuel 12, he was convinced that his son had gone to be with the Lord, 2 Samuel 12:23. Children and others who cannot choose for themselves are not saved, but they are “safe” in Jesus Christ. III. Romans

5:17-21. The saving power of the atoning work of Jesus is applied to them. When they die in that “safe” condition, they are regenerated and taken to Heaven! Parents who have lost children to death, miscarriage, or still birth should never fear because their little ones are in Heaven with the Lord Jesus today. Is it possible that the high infant mortality rates in many countries today is actually the grace of God at work? Is it possible that He is taking the little children home to Heaven while they are still in an innocent state? If they reached maturity in a pagan culture they might never hear about Jesus. While abortion is a horrible crime against humanity, God’s grace is also in view here. Every one of those innocent, aborted babies goes to be with Jesus. We will meet them one day! What a gracious Savior we serve!)

C. What It Illustrates – This whole matter of children coming to Jesus was used by our Lord to illustrate the way all believers must come to Him, Matthew 18:1-6. In this passage, Jesus says that all who come to Him must come as a little child. He is referring to a few of the special characteristics that separate children from adults. Children are trusting, humble and dependent. Those are the requirements for a person to come to Jesus. The simple, unvarnished faith of a child is seen in the following little story. Celeste Sibley, one-time columnist for the Atlanta (GA) Constitution, took her three children to a diner for breakfast one morning. It was crowded and they had to take separate seats at the counter. Eight-year-old Mary was seated at the far end of the counter and when her food was served she called down to her mother in a loud voice, “Mother, don’t people say grace in this place?” A hush came over the entire diner and before Mrs. Sibley could figure out what to say, the counterman said, “Yes, we do, sister. You say it.” All the people at the counter bowed their heads. Mary bowed her head and in a clear voice said, “God is great, God is good, let us thank Him for our food.”[1] For a person to be saved, regardless of their age, they must be willing to humble themselves before God. They must be willing to lay down their pride over the lives they have lived and the achievements of that life. They must humble themselves by acknowledging their sins before God. They must be willing to admit that their works and religious activity can never save them. Contrast this image childlike faith with the very next passage. When the Rich Young Ruler came to Jesus in Matthew 19:16-22, he would not turn loose of his pride, his money or his self-righteousness. He left with all his possessions, but he left without Jesus! A person must look to Jesus by faith, trusting Him and His finished work on the cross completely for their soul’s salvation. This requires the childlike qualities of trust, humility and dependence. This is the only way anyone ever receives salvation.

### III. A WORD ABOUT THE REDEEMER

(III. This passage not only speaks about responsibility and redemption, it also has something to say about the Savior. Watching Jesus minister to these children, we get a glimpse of aspects of our Lord’s personality.)

A. Matthew 19:13 We Can See His Heart – The disciples thought Jesus was too busy for a bunch of children. When the Bible says, “brought unto Him”, it has the idea of a long line of children being brought to Jesus. Parents from all over the area had brought their children to Jesus so that He could pray for them and pronounce a blessing over them. When the disciples rebuked the parents in verse 13, they were themselves rebuked in verse 14. In Mark’s account of these events, he says that Jesus was “much displeased”. This means that Jesus was very angry with the disciples for trying to prevent children from coming to Him. Children hold a special place in our Lord’s heart! In

fact, Matthew 18:6 reminds us that harsh judgment awaits those who abuse little children. Jesus always defends the defenseless! This scene reveals a lot about Jesus. Children cannot serve Him like those who are older. They cannot contribute as much money as those who are older. It appears to me that Jesus holds a special place in His heart for children. Still, He loves them and reaches out to them in grace. This just reminds us that God is not interested in what we can do, what we can give or how old we are. He simply invited people to come to Him on the basis of pure grace! Jesus loves lost sinners and He invites them all to come to Him, Revelation 22:17, Matthew 11:28; John 3:16.

B. Matthew 19:15 We Can See His Hands – This verse says “and He laid His hands on them”. This indicates that He placed took the time to bless each individual child that came before Him. No matter how young they were or how insignificant they appeared, Jesus cared about them took time for them.

Never think for an instant that Jesus doesn't care about you. He loves you and He will not turn you away if you will come to Him. No matter where the path of life has taken you; no matter what you may have done; no matter how insignificant you may feel; Jesus Christ will save you and change your life if you will come to Him. He cares about your condition and He will take the time to touch your life if you will only come to Him by faith.

Conc: Regardless of whether you are saved or lost, young or old, Jesus cares about you. There are some children in this room who have expressed an interest in coming to Jesus. If He is calling you, today would be a great day to come to Him. While this message has been about children, it isn't only for children. If you have never been saved, regardless of your age, you need to come to Jesus today. He died on the cross to save you if you are lost.

If your life has gotten complicated by living in an adult world and you need some help from God today, you can get it. If sin has crept into your relationship with Jesus and is hindering your walk with Him, He can forgive that today. If you will come to Him, you will find that His grace will be sufficient for you. If there are needs in your life, you can come to Him like those little children did two thousand years ago and you can find the help you need!

[1] Bits & Pieces, May, 1990, p. 10.

## 02.07 The Invitation To Consider - Joh\_1:35-42

---

Great Bible Invitations – Sermon #7

John 1:35-42 THE INVITATION TO CONSIDER

Intro: One of the most amazing truths I have ever encountered in the Bible is the truth that God invites people to come to Him. Of course, He has to make the first move. Man is a sinner and his sinful condition has left him spiritually dead, Ephesians 2:1. Man cannot make an independent move toward God. God takes the initiative and He reaches out in love, grace and mercy to call lost sinners to Himself. In this passage, Jesus invites two religious men to consider what has been said about Him. This passage highlights the condition of man and the compassion of the Savior. Jesus says six words in these verses. He says “What seek ye” in John 1:38. And, He says “Come and see” in verse 39. These two statements have my interest today. Jesus is inviting all those who do not know Him to come to Him and to examine Him. He wants lost men to know Who He is and what He can do for them.

Let’s take a little time today to look into these verses. In them we find another of the great invitations of the Bible. I want to share with you some of the blessings contained in these verses as we study together The Invitation To Consider.

I. John 1:35-37 CONSIDER THE CLAIMS

(III. This simple statement by John the Baptist is pregnant with meaning. In these words, John sets forth two important truths regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.)

A. He Is The Savior Of Sinners – The definite article “the” identifies Jesus Christ as “the one and only” Lamb of God. Man has a problem; Jesus is the only solution to that problem.

Man’s problem is that he is a sinner, Romans 3:10-13; Galatians 3:22. Man’s problem is complicated by the fact that his sin is leading him to Hell, Romans 6:23, Psalms 9:17; Revelation 21:8.

Jesus Christ is the only solution to man’s sin problem, Acts 4:12; John 14:6; John 10:9; 1 John 5:12. That sounds narrow minded in this day and age, but it is the truth!

B. He Is The Sacrifice For Sin – When John called Jesus “the Lamb of God” he was saying a mouth full. This name pictures Jesus as a sacrificial animal. It may have been a lamb that died to cover the naked bodies of Adam and Eve in Eden, Genesis 3:21. It was a lamb that was offered as the first sacrifice in the Bible, Genesis 4:4. It was a lamb that redeemed the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, Exodus 12:1-51. It was a lamb that had been promised to Isaac as Abraham led him up to Mount Mariah, Genesis 22:8. Countless lambs had been slain in Israel as sin offerings down through the centuries, Leviticus 4:1-35. The prophet Isaiah pictured the coming Messiah as a slain lamb, Isaiah 53:4-6. When Jesus came into this world, He came for the sole purpose of going to the cross to die for sin, Mark 10:45; John 18:37. Only His death can satisfy

God, 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10. Only His blood can cleanse the sinful soul, 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5. Jesus is God's final answer to the question Isaac posed to Abraham as they climbed that mountain all those long years ago, "Where is the lamb?" Jesus is the Lamb, He is the only Lamb God will accept.

(Note: Consider the claims the Bible makes regarding Jesus. Have you trusted Him as your Savior? In the words of that old hymn, "Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you washed in the blood, In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb? Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?") II. John 1:37-39 a CONSIDER THE CALL

A. John 1:37 The Interest Of The Disciples – III. The Context of John 1:19-34. These two disciples heard John give a public declaration of the identity of Jesus in John 1:19-34. Now, they are given some private direction concerning Jesus, John 1:35. John is saying to them, "Go follow Him, He is the One." They heed the call and they begin to follow Jesus. At this point, these two men are just two regular, religious men. Neither is saved by grace. Neither is a child of God. What they have heard about this Jesus has made them curious about Him. The Word of God has been used to prick their hearts and they become interested in Him. That's how people come to know the Lord! The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to show the lost person their need of a Savior. He uses that Word to point them to Jesus, John 16:7-11. He uses the Word to create a hunger within them for something they do not have. He gives them the desire for more! This is an essential component of salvation, John 6:44; John 6:65. When the Spirit of God begins to create this hunger within a heart it is called conviction. The sinner becomes convicted about his sinful condition; his condemnation in Hell; his need of a Savior; and of his need to get to Jesus Christ! (III. Being "under conviction" is a horrible feeling, but the day God reveals your sin to you in one of the greatest days of your life!)

B. John 1:38 a The Investigation Of The Disciples – Jesus knows these men are behind Him and He turns to speak to them. He asks them a strange question, "What seek ye?" This question is the same as saying "What are you looking for?" Jesus does not ask this question for His Own benefit. He is omniscient and He knows why they are there. He asks it for their benefit.

These men are hungry for a relationship with God. This is clear from the fact that they have been following John the Baptist. He has been teaching them that Messiah is coming and they are longing for a relationship with that Messiah. When Jesus asks them "What seek ye?" He is asking them to examine their motives for wanting to follow Him.

If they were looking for a revolutionary leader who would through off the yoke of Rome and liberate the Jews, then they were following the wrong man. If they were looking for one who would carry on the traditions of Judaism and dead religion, then they were following the wrong man. If, however, they were looking for a new life; for eternal life; for salvation and hope for the future, then they were following the right Man. These two men had no idea how their lives were about to change!

(Note: What are you looking for today? What are you looking for in your life?)

If you are looking for someone who will make your life easier, Jesus isn't for you! If you are looking for someone who will solve all your problems, Jesus isn't for you! If you are looking for someone

who will make you feel better about yourself, Jesus isn't for you either! If you are looking for a little religion on Sunday so that you can feel better about the way you live Monday through Saturday, then Jesus just isn't for you!

But, if you are looking for Someone Who will love you unconditionally, Jesus is for you! If you are looking for Someone Who can save your soul, give you eternal life and provide you a home in Heaven, then Jesus is for you! If you are looking for Someone Who can forgive your sins and change your life, then Jesus is just Who you are looking for!

What you get out of life depends on what you are looking for in life. So, what are you looking for? Chances are, you will find it!)

C. John 1:38-39 The Invitation To The Disciples – These men respond to Jesus' question with one of their own, "Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?" This is a telling question. First, they call Him "Rabbi". This word, as we are told, means "Master". It was a term of respect. It is clear that these men held Jesus in high regard. When they asked Him, "Where dwellest Thou", they are asking more than just "Where do you live?" These men had heard about Jesus and they wanted to know more. They needed to ask Him some questions and hear Him tell them Who He was and why He came. They are requesting an extended interview with Jesus. His response is simple, yet it is profound. Jesus simply said, "Come and see". This simple phrase literally means "Come with me and you will see!" This is an invitation for them to examine Jesus for themselves. They have heard about Him from others; now they are invited to see for themselves.

(Note: That invitation still stands! Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior? Have you responded to His invitation for you to "come and see"? He is still calling those who do not know Him to come to Him for salvation, Revelation 22:17. If you will come when He is calling, you can and will be saved, John 6:37.

It is one thing to hear about Jesus Christ and what He can do. It is another thing altogether to experience Him for yourself and know what He can do in your life. I praise God for every testimony of salvation recorded in the Word of God. But, I am even more thankful for that day when Jesus invited me to "Come and see". I am glad Jesus saved Paul, John, Peter and the rest, but I rejoice that He saved me! I am glad that God gave you a testimony, but I am glad that He gave me one too! Now, when you share yours, it bears witness with mine and I can rejoice in what Jesus did in you, because He did it in me too! Hallelujah! This thing we have is better "felt that telt!") III. John 1:39-42 CONSIDER THE CHANGES

(III. This day became the day of salvation for these two men. When they met Jesus for themselves, their lives changed forever. Two of those changes are highlighted in these verses.)

A. John 1:39 b They Wanted To Stay With Jesus – John tells us that it was "about the tenth hour" when these men followed Jesus to the place where He was staying. This could mean ten o'clock in the morning, if John is using Roman time. Or, it could mean four o'clock in the afternoon, if he is using Jewish time. From the wording of the verse, it seems to me that it was four o'clock in the afternoon. It was getting close to dark and these men were anxious to talk to Jesus. They spent the rest of that day, and probably that night, in His presence. They spent the rest of their lives in His service!

Andrew took the Gospel into Greece and was crucified there upside down, on an x-shaped cross. John was close to Jesus all the days Jesus lived. He was known as the disciple “whom Jesus loved”. John laid his head on the breast of our Lord at the last supper, John 13:25. John was there then Jesus stood trial before the Jewish High Priest, John 18:15. John was the only disciple to go to Calvary, He was at the foot of the cross when Jesus died, John 19:26. He was the first disciple to the tomb the day Jesus rose from the dead, John 20:4-5. John lived well into his nineties and wrote down the Book of Revelation while he was a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos for his testimony of Jesus Christ.

(Note: John never got over the day he met Jesus for himself. He never got over the day he was saved! He was an old man when he wrote the words we are reading today and he still remembered that it was “about the tenth hour”. Jesus saved his soul and changed his life and he wanted to stay with Jesus!

That’s how Jesus affects those He saves. III. Mark 5:1-20 – The Gaderene Demoniac was a man who endured terrible spiritual bondage. The demons that possessed his body controlled and ruined his life. He was a vicious, violent, dangerous man who lived among the dead in the graveyard. He was separated from his family and from society. Men had even tried to capture him, but he had escaped from their bonds and continued to live his life of terrible torment. He spent his days and nights crying out and cutting himself.

Then one day, Jesus showed up. He spoke to this man, delivered him from his demons and saved his soul. Jesus absolutely changed his life! Verse 15 tells us about the radical changes Jesus made in this man’s life. We are told that he was found “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind”. When Jesus was forced to leave that place, this delivered man wanted to go with Jesus too, Mark 5:18.

That’s just how it is! When you meet Jesus and He changes your life, you will want to stay with Him. There are some people who came to an altar, made a profession, joined a church and were baptized, but they are nowhere to be found. I doubt that even the FBI could find them! People who don’t want to stay near Him probably don’t know Him, 1 John 2:19.

Then there’s the rest! There are some who were “sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore, very deeply stained with sin, sinking to rise no more”. But, they remember the moment when they met Jesus and they sing of the moment when, “the Master of the sea, heard my despairing cry, from the waters lifted me, now safe am I”. They met Jesus Christ and their life changed forever. Now, you can’t run them off! They love the Lord. They love His people, His house, His Word, His music; they love everything that has to do with Him!

You don’t have to hunt for them! They met Jesus and their life changed! They want to stay close to Him all the time! Your desire for Jesus and for the things He loves says a lot about your relationship with Him!)

B. John 1:40-42 They Wanted To Share Jesus – As soon as these men had met Jesus, and their own salvation was settled, they wanted to share Him with others. In fact, every time Andrew appears in the Gospel record, he is bringing someone to Jesus. He went first his brother Simon Peter and brings him to Jesus, v. 41-42. When Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, he was doing something great for the church! Peter became a great preacher of the Gospel and God used him

to bring thousands into the church. In John 6, Andrew is the one who brought the lad who had the little loaves and fishes to Jesus. In John 12 it is Andrew who helps a group of curious Greeks make contact with Jesus. When Andrew met Jesus Christ a burden was created within his heart to share his Savior with everyone he met.

That's what Jesus will do for you! He is too good to keep to yourself. When you meet Him, you will want others to meet Him too. There will be a burning desire within your heart to share this great Lord with all you meet. This desire to share the Savior with others is a good indication of your relationship with Him!

Conc: "Come and see" – Jesus is still inviting people to consider Him. We are living in a world where people are seeking answers. They are looking for direction, fulfillment and hope. If you are among that number and you are looking for more from life, you need to know that His invitation to "Come and see" still stands.

- You have tried everything else and nothing has scratched the itch within your soul. Come to Jesus!
- You've tried church and it didn't work. Come to Jesus!
- You've tried sin, alcohol, drugs, sex and every worldly thing you can imagine, but nothing has worked. Come to Jesus!
- You need help and you can't seem to find it anywhere. Come to Jesus!
- Maybe you've tried Jesus in the past and He didn't work. The problem was not with Him, it was with you. This time, don't just "try" Him, surrender to Him totally and let Him save you and take control of your life. Come to Jesus!

If there are needs of any kind, whether you are saved or lost, if you need help, come to Jesus!

## 02.08 The Invitation Of Confidence - Joh\_6:37-40

---

Great Bible Invitations – Sermon #8

John 6:37-40 THE INVITATION OF CONFIDENCE

Intro: We have just read one of the most profound passages in the Bible today. These verses contain truths that will never be fully comprehended by the mind of man until we stand complete in His image in glory. In these verses short verses there are 110 words. 98 have just one syllable. Eleven have two syllables. One has three syllables. Jesus uses the simplest language possible, yet He teaches us a truth that is so deep that no man who has ever lived can comprehend it completely. Still, it is truth so simple that even small children can grasp the heart of it. In these verses we find yet another invitation from our Lord. It is an invitation designed to inspire confidence. These words speak of the confidence that rested within the heart of our Savior as He looked toward Calvary. These words speak of the confidence that sinners can have as they see the horror, and understand the penalty, of their sins. These words speak of the confidence that can be possessed by the saints of God as they journey toward their home in Heaven. This is The Invitation Of Confidence and it has much to say to us today. Let's take some time and consider together the great blessings that our Savior has embedded for us in His words.

I. John 6:37 a THE SAVIOR'S GIFT

(III. Jesus has just declared His identity to the Jews. He has declared Himself to be the Bread of Life, John 6:35. He tells them very clearly that any one who will receive Him will neither hunger nor thirst. Then, in verse 36, Jesus makes a sad statement. He says, "ye also have seen me, and believe not". This statement brings into sharp focus the fact that the Jews had rejected Jesus as their Messiah. In fact, John went so far as to say, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not", John 1:11.

Some people might have seen this rejection by the Jews as an indication that the ministry of Jesus Christ was a failure. The very people He had come to turned a deaf ear to His preaching. If anyone thought the ministry of Jesus was a failure, they were missing the big picture. The first part of John 6:37 tells us about the Father's gift to the Son. This gift is given to Jesus as His reward for all that He suffered here on earth. This gift is the proof and the promise that His mission into this world was not in vain. This gift, though hard to comprehend for us mortals, is a greater blessing than we can fathom. Let's examine it for a moment.)

A. The Character Of This Gift – "all that the Father giveth me" – The character of this gift is seen in the word "all". That word encompasses within it every sinner who will ever be saved. That word speaks of every redeemed sinner from the sweet little girl saved in her Sunday School class, to the brazen streetwalker saved from a life of debauchery. That word speaks of that small boy who places his faith in Jesus and is saved at a young age; it also embraces that drunkard who has lived his life in a drunken stupor. That word speaks all of those who would ever place their faith in Jesus for salvation.

If you are saved, or if you will ever be saved, you are God's gift to His Son! You are God's love gift to Jesus for coming into this world and dying on the cross. From my perspective, that doesn't seem like too much of a gift. I know what I was when the Lord found me, Romans 3:10-23. And, I am pretty sure that you weren't much better than I was! So, God gave us to Jesus and He died for us on the cross. It sounds like Jesus got the short end of the stick, but He got just what He wanted, Luke 19:10; Hebrews 12:2.

B. The Contributor Of This Gift – “the Father giveth Me” – I have already made mention of this, but God is the One behind the gift. Yet, the entire Trinity is involved in this great gift of salvation. The Father gave us to His Son in eternity past, Ephesians 1:4. Jesus died for us when He went to the cross, John 15:14-16. The Holy Spirit drew me to Jesus and saved me when I was a sinner, John 6:44; John 6:65.

I believe the Word of God is very clear about the matter of salvation. No one simply chooses to be saved; they are chosen! No one just comes to Jesus Christ of their own free will. The sinner's will is fallen and he is incapable of coming to Jesus on his own. The sinner cannot respond to Jesus unless Jesus first comes to the sinner. Left to himself, the lost sinner will always seek the things of the world and of the flesh, Ephesians 2:2-3. Like it or not, the lost sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1, and he cannot come to God. In this thing called salvation, God must make the first step. He calls us to Jesus so that we might be saved! (Ill. 1 John 4:19)

C. The Consequences Of This Gift – “All...shall come to me” – The work that God began in eternity past will be carried out fully in time. Every person the Father has given to the Son will be saved by the grace of God! According to this verse “all...shall...come”. I came to Him because He first came to me! When we speak of these matters, we have stepped out into deep waters. We are treading in waters that the greatest human minds have not been able to fathom. We are discussing concepts so difficult to understand that few can articulate them accurately or with understanding. We are talking about the great matters of election and human responsibility.

There can be no doubt that salvation is based on God's choice. Salvation is a matter of grace and He saves whomsoever He will! But, there is also no denying the fact that man is responsible to believe in Jesus and to receive Him as Savior. Here is the truth; if anyone is saved it will be because of God's free grace. God will get all the glory! If anyone goes to Hell; it will be their own fault! They will have no one to blame but themselves.

God makes a universal offer of salvation to all people. He cries that “whosoever will” may come! Anyone who will come to Jesus will be saved. Those who will not come to Jesus will never be saved. That is the bottom line!

(Ill. Once when Spurgeon commented on God's election and human responsibility, he described them as a pair of railroad tracks. They run parallel to one another and never meet, but if you look far enough into the distance, they appear to come together. These doctrines are confusing and often appear to be contradictory in this life, but in eternity they will make perfect sense! On one occasion someone asked Spurgeon how he reconciled the doctrine of election with the doctrine of human responsibility. Spurgeon said, “I never reconcile friends!” While we may not understand election, predestination and human responsibility, they are all still biblical doctrines that must be believed. As Spurgeon said on another occasion, “If you try to explain election, you will lose your

mind; but if you try to explain it away, you will lose your soul.” We have a hard time understanding these things down here, but we must still believe them!)

(Note: This is a verse brimming with confidence. It looked, from a human perspective, like the ministry of Jesus was a failure. Jesus knew, however, that God had given Him many sheep. He could face the rejection and go to the cross to die knowing that His death would not be in vain, but that He would actually save every one that the Father and given to Him.

## II. John 6:37 b THE SAVIOR’S GRACE

(III. Jesus had confidence because of the Father’s gift. He knew that His death would accomplish salvation for the elect. But, sinners also have confidence in this thing called salvation. We can have confidence because of the Savior’s grace.)

A. The Extent Of His Grace – “him that cometh to me” – The phrase “cometh to me” is essential. It declares the way of salvation! Being saved is not about joining a church, being a better person, stopping sinning, or doing good things. Being saved is coming to a Person. Being saved is about coming to Jesus Christ by faith. That phrase is explained in verse 40. The phrase “every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life” describes the plan of salvation. All you have to do is see Jesus for Who He is and place your faith in Him. When you do that, He will save your soul. Of course, all those who see Jesus as He is will see themselves as they are! When they see the holiness of the Savior, they can be no longer blind to the wickedness of self! This realization of sin leads the sinner to come to Jesus Christ for salvation. Being saved is not some difficult, mystical process. You don’t have to “pray through” to be saved. You don’t have to memorize the “sinner’s prayer”. You don’t have to walk the “Roman Road”. All you have to do is look away to Jesus by faith and trust that His death on the cross and His resurrection are sufficient to save your soul, Romans 10:9. The rest is up to Him!

B. The Energy Of His Grace – “I will in no wise cast out” – Jesus promises all those who hear God’s call and come to Him that He will not turn them away. The words “cast out” have the idea of “driving someone away”. They are violent words! The lost sinner need never fear coming to Jesus: He will not drive them away! Regardless of where the path of life has taken you, Jesus will not turn you away if you will come to Him. The personal pronoun “him” covers a lot of ground! Jesus opens the door for any person, from any race, any place, or any background to come to Him. He doesn’t care what you have done. He doesn’t care who you are. He promises you that if you will come to Him, He will not turn you away from His offer of salvation. Your past sins are no hindrance to His saving grace! Your present condition is no hindrance to His saving grace! Your future failures are no hindrance to His saving grace either! If you will come to Him, He will not turn you away, but He will save your soul.

III. When Jesus was here in earth, He raised three people from the dead. He raised the daughter of Jairus, Mark 5:41-42. He raised the widow of Nain’s son, Luke 7:11-15. He also raised Lazarus, John 11:1-57. Each of these individuals was dead. Now, these three shared a similarity and they shared a difference. The one thing similar between their cases was the fact that each one was dead. Lazarus, who had been dead four days, was no deader than the widow of Nain’s son or Jairus’ daughter, they were all dead. The only difference was in the degree of their decomposition. The same is true when it comes to lost sinners. Every lost sinner is dead in trespasses and sin,

and none is deader than another. The lost church member is just as dead as the drunkard, the harlot or that good old redneck boy. If they are lost they are all dead. The only difference in them is the degree of their decomposition. While the lost church member is dead is just as dead as the drunk, the drunk smells worse! His sins have worked more corruption in his life than they have in the life of the lost religious person.

So, it doesn't matter who you are or where you've been. If you are lost, Jesus will save your soul if you will come to Him by faith. That is His promise! He will not cast you out!

### III. John 6:38-40 THE SAVIOR'S GUARANTEE

(III. The truth that "all the father gives" to Jesus "will come" to Jesus gives the Savior confidence. The truth that "him that cometh to" Jesus He will "in no wise cast out" gives confidence to the repenting sinner. The rest of our verses give great confidence to the saints of God. In these verses we find the personal guarantee of our Savior to all those who come to Him.)

A. John 6:39-40 a Confirmed By His Plan – God's plan is to save the sinner by "grace through faith". When lost people come to Jesus for salvation, God will save them. When He saves them, He saves them for time and eternity. It is the Father's will that Jesus should "lose nothing". The word "lose" has reference to being lost in Hell. When Jesus saves a soul, the saved person will never, ever be lost again!

Jesus said that this was the Father's "will". There are two Greek words translated "will" in the New Testament. One is the word "boulomai", pronounced "boo-lom-ah-ee". This word refers to a "wish or a fond desire". The other word is the word "qelema", pronounced "thel-ay-mah". This word refers to "what one has determined will be done". The boulamai is a hope so thing while qelema is a divine, sovereign declaration of that which will come to pass!

God does not just hope that none of His people will be lost. He has declared that not a single one of those He has saved by His grace will ever be lost! God did not send Jesus to this world to live and die so that some people might be saved, if they can hold out. God sent Jesus here to die for His people so that everyone who looked to Jesus by faith for salvation would have the guarantee of eternal life. That is His plan!

B. John 6:40 b Confirmed By His Promise – "may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" – What a promise! Jesus tells all those who trust Him that they are safe in this world and in the world to come. If you are saved, you are saved forever! Call it "once saved always saved". Call it "eternal security". Call it "eternal life". Call it anything you want to, but when you are saved, you can never be lost again. The Bible is very clear about that. Consider the following verses:

· We are kept by His power – 1 Peter 1:5 · We are promised "everlasting life" – John 3:16; John 5:24 (III. 11 times!) · We are promised "eternal life" – John 10:28; 1 John 2:25 · We are promised that we will "never perish" – John 10:28

· We are promised that we cannot be "plucked out" of His hand – John 10:28-29 (III. "Pluck" = "To seize or carry off by force")

There are many more, but you get the picture! When He saved us, He did so forever! Praise His name! By the way, if you ever do lose your salvation, you can never be saved again, Hebrews 6:4-6!

C. John 6:38 Confirmed By His Performance – It is God’s will that we will never be lost again. It is the Savior’s promise that we will never be lost again. These things are guaranteed by the Savior’s performance. When Jesus came to this world, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life and died on the cross, He did those things to purchase our salvation. When He died on the cross, Jesus was able to declare “It is finished”, John 19:30. That simply means that He perfectly completed the task that had been assigned to Him.

He came to this world to pay our sin debt and He did just that. He came to this world to shed His blood so that God’s wrath might be turned away from all those who receive Jesus and He did just that, Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10. (III. “Propitiation” = “Satisfaction” Jesus satisfied the just demands of a holy God and now all those who receive Him as their Savior are guaranteed eternal life!)

Now, if you want to miss hell and go to Heaven, you must come to Jesus! If you want your sins to be forgiven, you must come to Jesus! If you want to be saved by the grace of God, you must come to Jesus!

Conc: What kind of confidence do you have today? If your life came to an end today and you went out into eternity, what kind of confidence do you have? Have you trusted Jesus as your personal Savior? Have you “come to” Jesus as these verses invite you to? Are you saved by the grace of God?

I praise the name of Jesus that He died in our place. He paid it all, all to Him we owe! Now, all we have to do to be saved is come to Him. If you are lost today, you need to come to Him. Is He calling you? Is He speaking tenderly to your heart and drawing you to Himself? Don’t delay! Run to Jesus and be saved! Don’t put it off! Don’t wait for a more convenient day! Come to Jesus now! Has He spoken to you? Come to Jesus! Do you want to thank Him and love on Him for what He did for you? Come to Jesus! Do you want to come back home to Him and make some things right? Come to Jesus! Have you wandered far away from home? Come to Jesus! Whatever the need, come to Jesus!

## 02.09 The Invitation Of Conversion - Rev\_22:17

---

### Great Bible Invitations – Sermon #9 Revelation 22:17 THE INVITATION OF CONVERSION

Intro: For many Sunday mornings I have been preaching from the great invitations of the Bible. Beginning in Genesis 7:1 with God’s invitation for Noah and his family to “come” in to the Ark, the Bible is literally filled with invitations for people to come to God. It would seem from this evidence that God is interested in calling people to come to Him.

Even on the last page of the last chapter in the last book of the Bible, God is still inviting men, women, boys and girls to come to Him. In this verse the Spirit of God takes one last opportunity to swing open the door of salvation so that He might invite lost people to enter.

You see, God is interested in your salvation. He cares about you and where you will spend eternity. How do we know God cares? We know God cares because of His Words – John 3:16. We also know God cares because of His Works – Romans 5:8. God proved His love for you and me when He sent His Son Jesus into this world to die for us on the cross.

But, God knows that just because He cares does not mean that you will be saved. He knows that you must respond to Him by repenting of your sins and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross to pay for man’s sin. He rose from the dead to guarantee us everlasting life. He even went back to Heaven to pray for you. But, if you refuse the Lord’s invitation to come to God, you will still not be saved. This invitation is vitally important. In the words of our text we have one of the clearest calls to salvation that can be found anywhere in the word of God. I would like to take the time today to look into the words of this text and point out a few details of The Invitation Of Conversion.

I. THE CAUSE OF THIS INVITATION “The Spirit and the Bride say Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.”

A. What we have in these two sentences is a two-fold invitation.

1. The Holy Spirit and the Bride of Christ are inviting the Lord Jesus to return to this earth. Jesus has just made a promise in Revelation 22:12-13 that He is going to return. He is coming with His reward, Revelation 22:12. He is coming to bring about the consummation of all things, Revelation 22:13. He is coming to bring the light of His glory to a world trapped in darkness, Revelation 22:16.

So, the Holy Spirit and the Bride of Christ extend an invitation to Jesus to hasten His return. The Spirit does so because He longs for Jesus to be enthroned as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He desires the Lord’s glory! The Bride of Christ invited Him to hasten His return because she longs to be with the One Who loved her enough to die on the cross to save her from her sins. Every person who hears the good news that Jesus is coming again is to join the chorus and invite Him to return too. The word “heareth” means to “understand”. Not everyone who hears the message understands the message. But, those who do are to desire the Lord’s return.

2. This is also an invitation for those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior to come to Him and be saved. Each of the persons mentioned in this verse is involved in inviting people to Jesus. The Spirit of God invites people through His convicting ministry, John 16:7-11; John 6:44. The Bride of Christ invites people through her witnessing ministry, Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20. Every one who grasps the message is to be a missionary, inviting others to come to Jesus. This is a great challenge to the church! We should ever be in the business of inviting people to come to our Savior. Everything we do should revolve around getting the Gospel out. We are living in a world that is growing darker by the day. We hold the light in our hands and in our hearts. We must take it to a world that needs to hear about One Who can save their souls!

B. The reason this invitation is inserted here is because Jesus is coming again! When He left this world 2,000 years ago, He left here with the promise that He would return some day, Acts 1:8-11. This promise has been restated time and time again in the New Testament, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Revelation 1:7. The Spirit longs for this day because Jesus will be glorified. The Bride longs for this day because she will be reunited with her redeemer. The world longs for this day because it will be delivered from the curse it has endured for at least 6,000 years, Romans 8:22. The return of Jesus is the blessed hope of all those who know Him as their Savior, Titus 2:13.

There is, however, a sad side to His return. When Jesus comes, He is coming for His people. Only those who know Him as their personal Savior will be taken with Him. Only those who have been saved by His grace will be taken when He comes to gather His people. The rest will be left behind to endure the horrors of the Tribulation period.

C. This invitation is given because Jesus is coming and only those who know Him are going to Heaven with Him. Are you in that number?

II. THE CANDIDATES OF THIS INVITATION “And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will...”

A. This invitation to come to Jesus is made available to two types of people.

1. Him That Is Athirst – This refers to those who are sick of drinking from the stagnant pools of this world and long for something more.

2. Whosoever Will – This speaks to anyone who is willing to come to Jesus.

B. This world and its allurements promise satisfaction to those who pursue them. But, neither this world nor anything it can offer will ever be able to provide complete satisfaction. The pools of sin and self-satisfaction offered by the world offer the promise of unending pleasure and satisfaction, but they only deliver disappointment and death.

· How many people have sought satisfaction in a bottle only to discover too late that it was a terrible trap designed to destroy hope, home and health?

· How many have looked for satisfaction in drugs only to realize too late that they too were a snare for the mind, body and soul?

- How many have given themselves to the pleasures of sexual excess in search of happiness, only to reap an unwanted pregnancy, some tragic disease or a heart and mind that are forever scarred?
- How many have drunk deeply of the pools of self and sin only to come away disappointed and dissatisfied with what they found there?

These are the people our Lord is addressing in this verse. He is addressing people who have looked everywhere for fulfillment, satisfaction and happiness. They are invited to come to Jesus to find the things they desire. Those who understand that there must be more to life are invited to come to Jesus. If there is a hunger in your soul for more than you have, you are invited to come. If you have tried everything else in this world and you are fed up with the lies and emptiness of sin and what it has to offer you, you are invited to come. If you are longing for more than you have now, you are invited to come.

(III. I stood this very week beside the bed of a man who has traveled the world performing before millions of people. He has made millions of dollars. He has been places, seen things and done things that you and I can only dream of. Yet, that man, who has enjoyed so much of this world's pleasures, was brought to a place where he needed something his money, his fame, and his connections could not provide. He needed Jesus and I watched him pray to the God of Heaven for the help he needed. Praise the Lord, there is help for the thirsty!)

C. According to this verse anyone who is willing to come to Jesus is a candidate for salvation. This invitation is extended to "whosoever will". Any person from any place, any race, any class, or any level of sinfulness can be saved if they will come to Jesus. He will never turn anyone away, John 6:37.

He isn't interested in your money. He doesn't care about the amount of education you possess. He isn't concerned about your background. He does not care about the color of your skin. He doesn't even care about the terrible things you may have done. He loves you like you are and His invitation is for you to come to Him if you have a desire to do so.

D. Are you a candidate for this invitation? Are you thirsty? Are you willing to come to Jesus? If so, you can be saved, if you will come!

### III. THE COST OF THIS INVITATION "freely"

A. The word "freely" means "a gift". It refers to "a gift that is given to someone without reason. It speaks of something that is given just because the giver can give it."

B. The gift of salvation we have been talking about is offered to "his that is athirst" and to "whosoever will" without charge. God presents His gift of salvation to all those who will receive it without charge. III. Isaiah 55:1. Salvation is given as a free gift because Jesus has already paid the entire bill. Salvation may be free for us, but God paid a high price to achieve it. When Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood, He forever satisfied God's demands regarding sin, 1 John 2:2. He paid the price for sin, and now, there is nothing for the lost sinner to do but accept the invitation and come to Jesus. (III. I praise God that salvation is a free gift!)

C. Salvation may be free, but it anything but cheap. When the gift of salvation is received, it offers the recipient more than he or she can ever imagine! A brief look at some of the benefits of salvation makes this truth crystal clear.

1. Ever sin is immediately forgiven – Psalms 103:12 1 John 1:7.
2. Adopted into the family of God – Romans 8:15.
3. Becomes a child of God – 1 John 3:1-2.
4. Receives eternal life – John 6:47.
5. Given the promise of eternal salvation – John 10:28; 1 Peter 1:5.
6. Made a citizen of Heaven – Php 3:20.
7. Promised a mansion in Heaven – John 14:1-3.
8. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12:13; John 14:23.
9. Promised His presence in this life – Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20.
10. Promised His provision in this life – Matthew 6:25-34; Php 4:19.
11. Given peace with God – John 14:27.
12. Made a new creature – 2 Corinthians 5:17.
13. Given a brand new life – 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.
14. Name written in the Lamb's book of life – Luke 10:20; Php 4:3.
15. Seated with Christ in heavenly places – Ephesians 2:6.
16. Receive the blessed hope of the Rapture – Titus 2:13.

D. Those wonderful things there are all the possessions of every person who comes to Jesus for salvation. But, there is more! The things I mentioned are just the beginning. According to Ephesians 1:3, when we are in Jesus, we possess “all spiritual blessings”. All of this becomes ours when we accept the invitation to come to Him!

E. Have you received the free gift of grace that offers you everything God has?

#### IV. THE CATCH OF THIS INVITATION “Let him take the water of life...”

A. Have you ever noticed that any offer that seems too good to be true usually is? Have you noticed that most offers come with a catch? When someone make an offer that just seems too amazing to be believed there is usually a hook somewhere. This offer God makes is no different! There is a catch to His free offer of salvation.

B. The catch is found in the word “take”. The word “take” means “to embrace, to lay hold on.” Remember, God is offering people a free gift. But, a gift is not a gift until it is received. It is merely the offer of a gift. The only catch to God's free offer of salvation is that it must be received. The person who desires salvation must “take the water of life”. The phrase “water of life” refers to the

Gospel message. The Gospel message is a clear, simple message. It is articulated in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. The Gospel message is this: God loved lost sinners so much that He sent His Son Jesus into this world. Jesus went to the cross and died in the place of sinners. He was innocent, but He died for the guilty, 2 Corinthians 5:21. His death on the cross paid the price for sin and forever satisfied God. After He died He was buried. Three days later Jesus rose again from the dead. Then, He ascended back into Heaven, where He lives today to receive and save all those who receive the message of God. When this message is preached, the Spirit of God creates a desire within the hearts of lost people to come to Jesus. All those who will come to Jesus and receive the “water of life” will be saved. Here is what must happen for the lost sinner to come to Jesus, Romans 10:9; Romans 13:1-14. If that takes place, salvation will always be the result!

C. Have you received the gift? Have you drunk deeply of the “water of life”? God gave everything He had to save your soul. Have you received His gift for your soul's salvation?

Conc: This invitation is 2,000 years old, yet it still stands today. The Holy Spirit and the Bride of Christ are still looking for Jesus to come. The Spirit and the Bride, along with all those who have heard the truth, are still inviting lost sinners to come to Jesus for salvation. The question is, have you ever received the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ? Have you heard the Gospel message? Have you seen your need of Jesus? Have you reached out by faith and taken the free gift of salvation? God loved you enough to give His Son for you. Jesus gave His life on the cross to save you. The Spirit of God is inviting you to come to Jesus and be saved. All that remains is for you to take the gift God is offering to you.

If you would like to receive the gift, you can come to Jesus today. If you would like to thank Him for the gift, you can come around this altar and thank Him for all that He has given you in Jesus today. If you have wasted the gift, and you would like to get some things settled with the Lord, you can do that today. In this season of giving and receiving, be sure that you do not miss out on the greatest gift of them all! Come to Jesus now, if He is calling you.

## 02.10 The Invitation Of Completion - Rev\_22:20

---

### Great Invitations Of The Bible – Sermon #10 Revelation 22:20 THE INVITATION OF COMPLETION

Intro: While this precious verse may be short in length, it is long in content. It serves as a worthy rearguard to the book of Revelation and to the entire Word of God. This verse contains within its sixteen verses both the last promise and the last prayer in the Bible. In these words, we have our Lord's clear, powerful promise that He will come again. We also have the prayer of John the Beloved disciple as he invites the Lord to do just that. In John's words, we can hear the echo of the heart cry of every saint of God down through the ages. There is a desire within the heart of every child of God to leave this world to be with the Lord Jesus. There is a hunger within our hearts for the Lord Jesus to come again, so that we can leave this world of tears, death, sickness and pain to go to Heaven where none of those things will ever be found.

Before I was saved, I used to hear people and preachers talk about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. In those days, thinking about His return filled my heart with fear. I knew I was lost and I knew that I would be in serious trouble if the Lord came with me in that condition. Then, one day, the Lord saved my soul. When He did, He changed my thinking regarding His return. Instead of dreading it, I began to anticipate it. Instead of it filling my heart with fear, it fills my heart with joy. Now, I do not look upon His return with fear, I look upon His return with great excitement! I know that when He returns to this world I will be leaving with Him. I know that Heaven will be my destination and I am excited about that!

Apparently, John was excited about that thought as well. When Jesus Christ makes His promise to come again, John immediately extends and invitation to the Lord to come. John says, "Amen!" John says, "Even so", which means "Yes!" John is looking and longing for Jesus to return. So am I! If you are saved, I sure you are too.

So, let's take a look at the last invitation in the Bible. Let's examine the thoughts found in it. I would like to preach for a while on the subject of The Invitation Of Completion.

#### I. THE BASIS OF THE INVITATION

(III. John bases his invitation for the Lord to come on two sure foundations. John is not praying for something that may or may not happen. John bases his invitation to the Lord Jesus on two great realities.)

A. It Is Based In The Lord's Promises – The Lord Jesus makes a clear promise in this verse, "Surely, I come quickly." He makes the same great promise in Revelation 22:7 and Revelation 22:12. Jesus is letting John, and the rest of His saints, know that he is coming again! This was not the first time that Jesus Christ had made this promise, John 14:2-3; Matthew 24:44. As Jesus ascended back in to Heaven, two angels spoke to the Lord's disciples and reaffirmed His promise to return, Acts 1:9-11. The Lord's return was the hope of the Apostles, 1 Thessalonians 4:16;

Hebrews 9:28. His return has been the blessed hope of the believer for 2,000 years, Titus 2:13. Jesus is coming, and those who are wise are looking for Him! When Jesus uses the word “quickly”, He is not talking about swiftness of time. After all, He has been gone 2,000 years. The word actually means “without delay”. Jesus is telling us that when everything is in place, He will return without delay. We are often guilty of using the phrase, “If the Lord tarries...” Jesus does not, cannot and will not tarry, Hebrews 10:37! He will return right on schedule!

(III. In Kentucky there is a home for mentally handicapped children. It is operated by a Christian family. They care for those special boys and girls and they teach those boys and girls the Scriptures, and among other things they teach those boys and girls the truth that Jesus is going to come again. According to the family that operates that home, they have a hard time keeping the window panes clean in that place. Those little boys and girls are constantly putting their little hands and their little faces on the windows looking for Jesus to come. It ought to be that real to every one of us today!)

B. It Is Based In The Lord's Purposes – John calls for Jesus to return because John is thinking like Jesus. What this: John has been exiled on Patmos because he was fearless preacher of the Gospel. While there, John has been given this incredible vision of the future. He has seen the end of the world! John has seen the entire church age. He has seen the Tribulation Period. He has seen the rise and fall of the Antichrist. John has even seen the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. John knows that God has a purpose in the Lord's return! He knows that the Lord's return will spell the end of sin; the end of Satan and the end of sorrows in this universe. John knows that when Jesus Christ comes again, He will be glorified and exalted. John desires that more than anything, so he calls on the Lord to come!

You and I know that Jesus is not glorified in this world today. He is denied and rejected. He is hated by many and most people want Jesus and all mention of His name driven from the public arena. But, when He comes again, there will be none of that going on! When He comes again, He is not coming as the meek and lowly Jesus. He is not coming as the humble carpenter of Galilee. When Jesus comes, He is coming as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords! He is coming in glory, in victory and in power. He is not coming to ask for a vote of confidence from humanity. He is coming to reign! (III. Revelation 19:11-21) There will be no cross for Jesus when He comes the second time! He will wear many crowns, Revelation 19:12! When Jesus comes again, He will complete God's plan for the ages and He will be glorified. To see Him honored, loved, lifted up, magnified and glorified should be the desire of every child of God, 1 Corinthians 10:31. To see the eternal purposes and plans of God brought to pass should be the prayer of every saint.

He is coming! When He does, He will be glorified and we will cry, “Amen” and worship Him!

## II. THE BURDEN OF THE INVITATION

A. Even as John adds His “Amen” to the promise of the Lord Jesus, he knows the return of Jesus will not be a blessing to all men! The phrase “even so” literally means, “Yea; yes; verily”. It shows strong agreement with something that has been said. Yet, that phrase as always seemed to express an underlying burden. It is as if John is saying, “Come Lord Jesus! I want you to come. Not everyone is ready; not everyone is looking for you; not everyone will be saved, but come. Get glory to Yourself!” Maybe I am reading more into the verse than is there, but I detect a hint of a

burden in John's words.

B. I share that burden today. I suspect that you do as well! I know that if Jesus were to come today to get His church, some people in this room would not get to go with us. There are some here who have never been saved and you would be left behind.

I know that if you are left behind, you would never have another opportunity to be saved, 2 Thessalonians 2:11. You will have no desire for God, the Bible, the church or the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are left behind you will die in your sins and you will spend eternity in Hell. I do not want that to happen!

I know that if you are left behind, you would have to go through the Tribulation Period. It will be the most horrible period of time that you can imagine. The world will be plagued by disease, war and a rise in evil. Over one-half the world's population will die as God pours out His wrath on a Christ rejecting world. If you are left here, you will suffer in ways that you cannot begin to imagine! I do not want that to happen!

I know if Jesus were to come today, I would have relatives, friends and acquaintances who would be left behind. That would be a terrible tragedy. I do not want that to happen, and neither do you!

C. My advice to you, if you are not saved, is that you give your heart and life to Jesus Christ today! I invite you to come to Him, confess yourself a sinner and call on Jesus for salvation. He will not turn you away, John 6:37. He will save you, Romans 10:9; Romans 10:13, and you will be ready for His return when it happens! Don't deceive yourself! Jesus is coming and you need to be ready!

### III. THE BLESSING OF THE INVITATION

(III. There is a positive side to the return of Jesus! John has been allowed to see all the way to the end of time. He knows what is waiting on him and the rest of God's children. John also remembers what it was like to be with Jesus, 1 John 1:1. He remembers the day Jesus saved his soul, John 1. He remembers the thrill of time spent with Jesus. He remembers their closeness, John 13:23. He remembers the horror of being at the cross and watching Jesus as He died, John 19:28-30. He remembers the thrill of going to the tomb three days after the crucifixion to find that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, John 20:1-8. He remembers standing there on that hillside, watching as Jesus ascended back into Heaven, Acts 1:9-11. He remembers and he longs to be with Jesus once again. So, when he hears Jesus say, "Surely, I come quickly." John cries, "Amen!" This word means, "So be it; let it be; it is so!" John is using the word as an exclamation of excitement! He is saying, "Amen! Let it be! Come on Jesus! I am looking forward to your return!"

You and I haven't had all the experiences that John had with Jesus. But, those of us who are saved have had a few! We remember when He lifted us out of sin and saved us by His grace, Psalms 40:1-3. We recall the times of close communion when He let us feel His presence, His grace and His power. We remember all the times when He spoke sweet peace to our souls. We cling to the memories of His grace, His blessings, His presences, His promises and His providence. We remember and we long for that blessed hour when He will appear and deliver us from this world and from this flesh.

It will be a time of blessing for the saints of God when Jesus Christ comes again. Let me remind you of some of the blessings that we will enjoy.)

A. The Blessing Of Resurrection – When Jesus comes, all those who have died in faith will be raised from the dead. Now, their souls are already with the Lord in Heaven, 2 Corinthians 5:8; Php 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:14. Their bodies are buried in the ground. When Jesus comes, He will bring with Him their redeemed souls. He will raise and glorify their bodies. He will reunite body and soul and take both back home to Heaven with Him, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16! There is coming a “great gettin’ up morning” for all God’s children one day! It will be a changing day for all the departed saints of God, 1 Corinthians 15:42-57!

(III. Dr. R. G. Lee the silver tongued orator who pastored Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, TN for many years, used to preach about the dear black lady who cared for him when he was a little boy. He talked about how the time came for her to die. She had been so faithful and such a godly woman, and she had worked there on the farm in South Carolina where he had been brought up. He told about how his mama took that dear old lady, laid her head down on the pillow and smoothed out her hair and Dr. Lee said that dear, dear saint of God looked up into the face of his mother and said to her, “One of these days before long now I’m going to exchange this old weary, worn out wagon for a chariot of gold.” Amen! So am I! That is our blessed hope!)

B. The Blessing Of Rapture – Of course, not all of God’s children are going to die, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52! Some are leaving this world in the rapture, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. Some folks doubt the rapture of the church because they say, “The word rapture is not in the Bible!” Right they are! The words “caught up” translate a certain Greek word that means “to seize; to carry off by force; to claim eagerly for oneself; to snatch up or away.” When the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin, that word, “arpadzo” was translated “rpto”, which is the word that “rapture” comes from.

Here is the truth of the matter. Jesus Christ is returning someday in the clouds above this earth. He will gather His children, those who have been saved by His grace and washed in His blood, and He will take us home to Heaven to be with Him there forever! Those who go in the Rapture will never taste death. Those who go in the Rapture will be here one moment and the very next instant they will be in Heaven. The saints of God are leaving this world in an instant one day! Are you ready to go? You need to be because Jesus will not send an announcement; He will simply show up and take His people away with Him.

C. The Blessing Of Reunion – When Jesus returns and raises the dead and raptures His people, it will be a time of reunion. In 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the Bible says, “we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Did you notice that two reunions are going to be taking place on that day?

First, we will be reunited with our departed loved ones and fellow saints. Won’t that be a great day? Imagine that moment when you lay eyes on those who have gone one. Imagine seeing them in glorified bodies, raised to live forever! What a day that will be!

Then, we are told that we will be with Jesus forever! One day, these eyes shall behold the One Who climbed Calvary’s cross to pay my sin debt! I want to see the One Who loved me more than His Own life! And, I will! Here is what Job said about that day a long time ago, “25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me,” Job

19:25-27. What a day, glorious day, that will be!

D. Jesus is coming! He is coming soon! He is coming for His people, a people who have made their preparations to meet Him. He is coming for a redeemed people. He is coming for those who are saved by His grace. Are you among that number? Have you trusted Jesus as your Savior? Will you be ready when He comes?

Conc: Jesus is coming! When, you ask? I do not know. Neither does anyone else! We are not to get caught up in watching the signs and trying to figure out when Jesus will come.

Those of us who know Him are to be laboring diligently until He returns to claim His people. III. The folks in Texas who sold their homes, quit their jobs and gave away their personal possessions to go out on a hillside on a certain day to meet Jesus because their Pastor said He would come then. We are to be busily engaged in His work of worshiping Him and sharing His Gospel until He comes.

If you don't know Him, you need to be saved. You need to know that Jesus Christ died on the cross and shed His blood so that your sins might be forgiven and so that you might be saved from your sins. If He is calling you, you need to come to Him today!

Jesus is coming! Are you ready to meet Him?

## 03.00. Prayer Series

---

Prayer Series by Rev. Alan Carr The Place Of Prayer - Luke 18:1 The Privilege Of Prayer - Psalms 55:16-17 The Pattern For Prayer - Matthew 6:9-13 The Problems Of Prayer - Psalms 66:18

## 03.01. THE PLACE OF PRAYER

---

### Luke 18:1 THE PLACE OF PRAYER

Intro: From the beginning of time, men have prayed, Genesis 4:26. In all types of places, at all times and in every conceivable situation, men have prayed. Christian and heathen alike have spent massive amounts of time in the pursuit of prayer. However, few people have made prayer their supreme priority. Those who have, stand out as bright lights in a dark world. Many have chosen to pray when it was convenient, or when they were undergoing a time of great stress and trial, (Ill. Geneva Aviation Codes and prayer on a stricken airliner.) Yet, it is clear from this verse that Jesus wants prayer to hold a preeminent place in our lives. Tonight, we are going to consider the Place Of Prayer. We are going to see that God expects us to be in constant contact with Him.

Before we begin to talk about the place prayer ought to hold in our lives, we need to understand exactly what prayer is. Knowing what prayer is will help us to see that it deserves an elevated place in each of our lives. What is prayer?

1. Prayer Is An Invitation To God - Not coercion, not coaxing, but simply inviting God to take over. It is me admitting my weakness and His power. (Ill. Jairus - Mark 5:22-23)
2. Prayer Is Work - True praying is not for the lazy. You see, true prayer may require you to get up early, or stay up late. A prayer is never really finished until it has grown feet and gone to work. (Ill. Widow who raised 15 children!) (Ill. The Cities of Refuge - Deuteronomy 4:41-42)
3. Prayer Is A Battle - Satan does not fear nor withstand our prayerlessness, but he will bitterly oppose our prayer efforts. Prayer is our greatest weapon in the battle between good and evil.
4. Prayer Is Power - (Ill. Moses, Daniel, 3 Hebrews, Elijah, Paul and Silas, Edwards, Mueller, Etc.) Prayer is the greatest power we have upon this earth.
5. Prayer Is A Developer - Prayer is that essential ingredient that completes the character. It is impossible to grow in grace without the aid of prayer!
6. Prayer Is The Christian's Wardrobe - While dwelling in the cold world, the praying Christian need never fear becoming cold. The praying church will never become a museum for frozen saints.
7. Prayer Is The Fragrance In Christian Activity - (Ill. Artificial flowers) True prayer envelopes all that we do in the breath of Heaven.
8. Prayer Is Communication With Heaven - There is an unbroken line between earth and the Father. When we pray, we are brought into His presence, we are in touch with God Himself. (Ill. Tin Can Telephones) With these facts in mind, let's look together at the place of prayer.

### I. PRAYER MUST BE A PRIORITY

A. This theme is repeated throughout the Bible - Luke 18:1, Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17. (We are to remain in a constant spirit of prayer. III. Fisherman and storm) B. Many in the bible have placed a high priority on prayer:

1. Job - Job 1:5 2. Abraham - Genesis 12:7-8; Genesis 13:4; Genesis 13:18; Genesis 22:9 3. Moses - Exodus 33:11; Exodus 17:11

4. David - III. The Psalms are filled with many references to David's prayer life. III. 2 Samuel 12:22-23. Prayer is also the secret of David's fearlessness.

5. Elijah - 1 Kings 17:1; 1 Kings 18:36-38 6. Daniel - Daniel 6:10

7. Jesus - Matthew 14:23; Matthew 26:36-39; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; Luke 9:18; Luke 9:29, Etc. Jesus relied on prayer. III. If the Son of God had to pray, how much more people like us?

C. Jesus takes it for granted that His people are going to pray - Matthew 6:5

D. Is prayer a priority in your life? It should be, for it is your lifeline to the Father - III. Jesus Matthew 11:25-26.

II. PRAYER MUST BE A PREREQUISITE A. We should do nothing in any area of life without first taking the time to saturate the matter in prayer.

B. Even Jesus preceded His activity with prayer.

1. Before feeding the 5,000 - John 6:11 2. Before raising Lazarus from the dead - John 11:41 3. Before His trial and crucifixion - Luke 22:41-45 4. Before becoming sin on the cross for us - Luke 23:34

C. Especially in the realm of spiritual activity is prayer important! When we attempt to perform spiritual work in the power of the flesh, we are doomed to failure, or self-glorification. However, if we will carry out God's work in the power of prayer, we will certainly succeed and He will get all the glory! (III. J. Wilbur Chapman and his prayer warriors; III. D.L. Moody and his pray-ers) D. The Preparation gained in the closet of secret prayer is far more valuable than that gained in the study!

III. PRAYER MUST BE PRACTICED

A. It isn't enough to know prayer formulas, rules and promises. To make prayer truly effective, we must practice prayer. We must get ourselves busy in the business of prayer! (III. There are too many needs and too little time!)

B. When we are not in the custom of praying, we may need to pray desperately and not know how - (III. 2 men and mad bull!) C. Weak praying begets weak living! We must be diligent in our praying if we want to be effective for the Lord.

D. On a scale of 1 - 10, how would you rate your prayer life?

Conc: III. African villagers and "You have grass in your path." What place does prayer hold in your life tonight? Let's agree together right here that we will make praying our top priority!

## 03.02. THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

---

### Psalms 55:16-17 THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

Intro: III. The context of Psalms 55:1-23. David relates his troubles, Psalms 55:1-14, and then he spells out the doom of the wicked, Psalms 55:15. After feeling downcast and defeated, David remembered the privilege of prayer. Too many believers forget the tremendous, glorious privilege that belongs to us as children of God. We have a privilege that is unequaled by any other in the world. Tonight, I would like to talk to you about the privilege of prayer. Allow me to share with you why prayer is a privilege.

#### I. Psalms 55:17 PRAYER ALLOWS ACCESS TO GOD

A. When we pray, we are addressing the Creator - (III. The false gods - Psalms 15:1-5. III. To whom we are praying - Ephesians 3:20; Isaiah 40:12; Colossians 1:16-17.

B. Prayer Brings Us Into His Presence - Hebrews 4:16 (III. Ephesians 2:6 - I am in Jesus, when I pray, the Son intercedes and the Father sees me through the filter of His Son and He hears me. This literally allows me access into the throne room of Heaven!)(III. He is always there for us - III. Little boy and the king's garments!)

C. Our Access Is By Royal Invitation - (III. Ancient kings were largely unapproachable - III. Esther 4:1-17) God invites us to come before Him - Psalms 50:15. Ours is a great privilege!

II. John 15:17 PRAYER IS AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS A. Prayer is not just the activity of the spiritual giant. Prayer is open to all saints, without exception!

B. Many great Bible prayers fell from the lips of the ordinary:

1. Hannah - 1 Samuel 1:1-20 2. The Publican - Luke 18:13 3. The Dying Thief - Luke 23:42

C. Never feel that you have no right to pray! God calls on you to pray, your family needs you to pray, your community needs you to pray, this church needs you to pray! (III. Young servant girl and newspaper ministry!) D. Prayer is a privilege that deserves to be exercised!

III. Jeremiah 33:3; Isaiah 65:24 PRAYER ANTICIPATES GOD'S ANSWER A. Prayer is a privilege because has promised that He will hear and that He will answer!

B. This should give us confidence when we pray - John 14:13-14; John 16:23-24. (III. We are not just talking to the air!)

C. III. God desires to answer our prayers more than we want them answered, III. Luke 12:32. That is why the prayer of faith is possible - James 4:2-3.

IV. Matthew 17:20 PRAYER ACHIEVES THE IMPOSSIBLE A. III. The Context! Prayer has the ability to unleash the supernatural in this natural world!

B. Notice:

1. Elijah on Mt. Carmel - 1 Kings 18:36-46 word prayer!

2. Abraham for Sodom - Genesis 18:23-32 3. Moses for Israel - Exodus 32:1-14 4. Jesus for the Multitude - John 6:11 5. The Thief for His Own Soul - Luke 23:39-43 C. How many of us are living "impossible" lives tonight because of the supernatural power of prayer?

D. Never say God cannot do it! Prayer is a privilege because it has the ability to achieve the impossible! - James 5:15 V. 2 Thessalonians 3:1 PRAYER ADVANCES THE KINGDOM OF GOD A. Our prayers can be effective in places where we cannot go physically. (III. Prayer in Ohio intervene in India!)

B. This is why prayer warriors are needed and why they are essential! III. Matthew 6:5-6. True power lies not in the preacher, the church, etc. The real power source is those who know how to use the prayer closet!

C. Prayer opens door, hinders evil, touches the sick, convicts the sinner. Prayer works! Our need is for more people to PRAY! (III. Paul was a prayer warrior! Romans 1:9; Romans 15:30. He believed in the power and the potential of prayer. (III. Literally everything we do must be bathed in a sea of prayer!)) D. Being useful in His kingdom makes prayer a great privilege!

VI. 1 Kings 18:1-39 PRAYER ADVERTISES GOD'S GREATNESS

A. III. The Context. When Elijah prayed and God answered, the people glorified the Lord. Prayer advertises His greatness as few other things can!

B. How?

1. Prayer Declares His Grace - He allows sinners access.

2. Prayer Declares His Goodness - He is willing to hear and answer.

3. Prayer Declares His Greatness - Prayer says, "He is worthy to be bowed down before." Romans 14:11

4. Prayer Declares His Glory - It is through the avenue of prayer that God reveals Himself, His purposes and His ways to man. Prayer unleashes the power of Almighty God on the earth! (III. Matthew 18:19) 5. Prayer says "I can't, but I know One who can!"

C. Prayer is a privilege because it gives us an opportunity to exalt our Heavenly Father! By their simple willingness to place their faith in God, the saints honor Him!

Conc: III. Voting. It is the privilege of the American citizen. I exercise that privilege because I want to impact our government. Prayer is the privilege of God's saints. When we exercise this great privilege we can impact earth and Heaven. We can reach beyond today and touch tomorrow. Prayer is a great privilege, let's exercise it at every opportunity!

## 03.03. THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER

---

### Matthew 6:9-13 THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER

Intro: This passage is often referred to as the Lord's Prayer. In reality, it is the Disciple's Prayer. It was given to them as a pattern for them to follow when they prayed. Therefore, we could rightly call this prayer the Model Prayer. This prayer is often wrongly used, however. We are not to just mindlessly repeat it from rote memory, but we are to use it as a framework upon which we can build a prayer life that is offered to God, heard and answered by Him, and one that glorifies His Name. Tonight, as the Lord gives me liberty, I am going to share with you The Pattern For Prayer.

#### I. Matthew 6:9-10 OUR PRAYERS SHOULD BE TO A PERSON A. Matthew 6:9 a WHO?

1. Father - Implies a relationship. The new birth is required for answered prayer - John 14:13. 2. Our - Speaks of the community of faith. Our prayer life should encompass the entire family of God. III. Too often, we are guilty of selfish praying! (III. Me and my needs first and only! - Php 2:4!)

B. Matthew 6:9 b WHERE? - Heaven! Speaks of God's position as Sovereign. He is on Heaven's throne and is worthy of our faith. He is an able God! Faithlessness has no place in our prayer lives - Hebrews 11:6; James 1:16-17; Romans 14:23. (III. We can pray on His promises - John 16:23; 1 John 5:14-15) C. Matthew 6:9 c HOW? (2 things to remember as we come before His presence!)

1. Hallowed - Reminds us of His holiness. God is a holy God and must be approached in fear and reverence! (III. Isaiah - Isaiah 6:5; III. Job - Job 40:4) To truly hallow His name means that we see Him as Lord over all. When His name is hallowed, we can never say, "No, Lord!" we can never say, "Not me Lord!" The only word that fits with Lord is "Yes, Lord!" To Hallow God, we simply ascribe to Him the honor and glory and majesty that is and has always been His. We become engaged in the praise of His Person - III. Matthew 6:13.

2. Name - When we come before Him, we need to remember that our only access to God lies in that name which is above every name - Php 2:9-11; John 6:23. Jesus is our only access and road of approach to the Father - 2 Timothy 2:5.

#### D. Matthew 9:10 WHAT? - 2 Great ideals must be paramount in our minds as we approach God.

1. Thy Kingdom Come - (III. A truly Awesome concept.) This is a three-fold request: a. A Request For Jesus To Return To The Earth - The word "kingdom" does not refer to a geographic location, but to dominion and sovereignty. When we pray "Thy Kingdom Come," we are praying for Christ's rule upon the earth. This coming Kingdom points ahead to the time when Jesus will rule and reign upon the earth in perfect glory, peace and righteousness - III. What a day! b. This Is A Personal Request - We are literally praying for the Kingdom of God to be realized in our own lives. If you are saved, the Kingdom of God is in you - Luke 17:21. Simply put, when we pray this prayer, we are asking Jesus to have supreme rule in our lives. We will never be effective as saints of God until we are able to pray, "My kingdom go and Thy Kingdom come!" (III. This is the whole intent of Matthew 6:33!) (III. He must have the key to every room in our lives! That is, He not we must be in absolute

control of our lives!) c. This Is An Evangelistic Request - As we are yielded to God and He is ruling and reigning in our lives, we can play a part in bringing other to Him. You see, another way God's Kingdom is brought to the earth is when a new soul is brought to Him through salvation. Another Temple is filled with the glory and presence of God. Therefore, when we pray for the lost, we are praying for God's Kingdom to expand in the earth! We are to pray evangelistically - 1 Timothy 2:1-4! (Ill. Stephen - Acts 7:60!) When we pray as we ought, we are focused on seeking the Kingdom of Almighty God.

2. Thy Will Be Done - This is a cousin to the previous line, for when God's Kingdom is realized in the world, His will will be done here as it is done in Heaven. This phrase is also telling us to place God's will paramount in our lives. It is the prayer prayed in the will of God that receives the answer of God - 1 John 5:14-15. (Ill. His will in Heaven - Psalms 103:20-21!) Prayer never changes God's mind, but it does hasten His activity in the world. Prayer moves Heaven in the earth! (Ill. Reasons for unanswered prayer - James 4:3) Ill The key is to be lost in His will!

## II. Matthew 9:11-13 OUR PRAYERS SHOULD INCLUDE PETITIONS

A. We Should Pray About Physical Needs - There is no sin and no shame in asking God to meet our physical needs. He has promised to supply them all - Php 4:19; Psalms 37:25; Matthew 7:7-11; Romans 8:32. (Ill. "This day," We need to take today's need to God, but leave tomorrow's need until tomorrow. To worry over tomorrow is a sin - Matthew 6:33-34. God's call is for us to rest in Him to today and trust Him totally for tomorrow as well.)(Ill. This portion of the text is encouraging us to look to God as the "giver" - Deuteronomy 8:18. We need to look to Him for those things we lack, He has what you need - Psalms 50:10; Romans 8:17.

B. We Should Pray About Our Spiritual Needs - More spiritual needs are mentioned here than physical ones. The reason? Our spiritual needs are greater by far than our physical needs. Notice some spiritual needs that we need to pray about.

1. Forgiveness For Self - Ill. "Debt" = Something owed that must be paid back. It can be translated as "sin, trespass, shortcomings, resentments, what we owe to God, or anything we have done wrong." We all need to seek God for the forgiveness of our personal sins - 1 John 1:8-10. (Ill. Even Paul admitted that he was imperfect - Php 3:12) When we spend more time in His presence, we become more aware of His holiness and our sinfulness. Someone has said, 'The greater the saint, the greater the sense of sin and the awareness of sin within.'

2. Forgiveness Of Others - An unforgiving spirit will totally destroy one's prayer life. (Ill. What a man said the John Wesley.) Society exalts vengeance over forgiveness, but society is wrong! Unforgiveness will eat you alive spiritually, filling you with bitterness, anger, rage, anxiety, depression, etc. Paul calls it a "root of bitterness," Hebrews 12:15. (Ill. The way of a root!) There are three great reasons why we should practice the forgiveness of others. a. You Are Never More Like God Than When You Forgive - What kind of God do we serve? He is loving, gracious, kind and forgiving! When we forgive others, we are exercising true godliness, Ephesians 4:32. Ill. Matthew 9:10 - What is being done in Heaven? Worship, Exaltation of Jesus, Forgiveness of sin! You are literally bringing Heaven to earth when you forgive a brother in Christ - Matthew 18:18! b. It Is Only Reasonable That Those Who Are Forgiven Forgive - (Ill. Matthew 18:21-35) He has forgiven us a massive debt, we can surely forgive our brother a much smaller one! c. Failure To

Forgive Results In Chastening - (Ill. Matthew 18:31-35) When we choose not to forgive, we will be tortured by bitterness, resentment, and loss of fellowship with God. In fact, when we refuse to forgive, we are usurping the place and power of God Himself - Romans 12:19-21. We are playing God and none of us is qualified for that job.

3. To Be Delivered From Temptation - Ill. Everyone is tempted, but God tempts no one - James 1:13. Our prayer should be that God will direct our paths so that we may avoid the places of temptation, Psalms 37:23. This is a prayer to maintain close fellowship lest we be tempted - James 1:14.

4. To Be Delivered From Evil - Literally, this is a prayer for help in avoiding sin, 1 Corinthians 10:13. This is a plea for God to change us, hedge us, keep us, and walk with us that we might be sheltered from the power of the Evil One! This is help to avoid the pitfalls of sin!

III. Matthew 9:13 b OUR PRAYERS SHOULD INCLUDE PRAISE A. For His Sovereignty - He is to be praised for the King He is. He deserves to be glorified.

B. For His Power - He is to be praised for His abilities and for the times in which He has demonstrated His power in our lives!

C. For His Glory - He demands and deserves all the glory in every situation in life. He should be glorified on earth as He is in Heaven!

Conc: Our praying can be defined as an activity that must include ACTS. That is an acrostic that is rendered thusly:

A - Adoration - God must be worshipped C - Confession - Our sin must be dealt with T - Thanksgiving - We must always possess a thankful heart before

Him.

S - Supplication - There is room to tell Him what we need.

Another letter could be added to the front, and that is the letter F. It stands for Faith, without which we can expect nothing from God - Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23. How's your praying look when it is compared to the model?

## 03.04. THE PROBLEMS OF PRAYER

---

### Psalms 66:18 THE PROBLEMS OF PRAYER

Intro: Prayer is godly, beneficial and necessary. I hope your prayer life has been jump started this week, and that you have a deeper burning desire to be in constant, effective prayer.

Now, we all know that genuine prayer has the power to accomplish great things. In truth, there is no limit to the potential of prayer, James 5:16; Matthew 17:20. However, while prayer is unlimited in it's potential, it can be severely hindered or even rendered totally ineffective. Tonight, I want to take to time to point out some attitudes and activities that can, and do, create problems in our praying. Tonight, we will talk about the Problems of Prayer.

#### I. James 4:3 SELFISHNESS

Anytime we bring a prayer before the Lord that is based in wrong motives, we can be certain that it will fail. We must be certain that our prayers are for His glory, 1 Corinthians 10:31, and that our motives are pure. (III. His kingdom must be paramount in our thoughts.) II. Ezekiel 14:3 IDOLATRY An idol is anything, or anyone that takes God's place in our lives, or weakens our dependence upon Him to any degree. He is to have the first place and anything that comes before Him is an idol. (III. People's idea of what an idol is!) (III. Some very real idols in our society - any idea, object, philosophy, habit, occupation, sport, loyalty or person that lessens our loyalty to God.) (III. Alan Redpath, "Our God is the person we think most precious, for whom we would make the greatest sacrifice, and who moves our heart with the greatest love. He, or it, is the person who, if we lost him, would leave us desolate." Unless God is in the Number 1 position, our prayer life will be hindered. (III. He will not share His glory with another - Exodus 20:1; Isaiah 42:8.

#### III. Mark 11:25 UNFORGIVENESS

God forgives and He expects His people to be in the forgiving business as well - Ephesians 4:32. Any other response by the child of God will prove to be a hindrance to effective praying.

IV. Psalms 66:18; Isaiah 59:2 UNCONFESSED SIN The primary hindrance to prayer is found in the area of unconfessed, unrepented of sin. Even though we have been saved and forgiven, unconfessed prayer will still come between the Lord and us. (III. We are justified by faith, we continue in fellowship by confession - 1 John 1:9) All sin in our lives must be brought into the light of God's judgment - Proverbs 28:13. You may have unconfessed sin in your life that is hindering you tonight. You may be committing a sin and not even realize that you are sinning, but it is hindering your prayer life, It is making the heavens appear to be brass. Perhaps we need to pray as the Psalmist did - Psalms 139:23-24.

V. 1 Peter 3:7 PROBLEMS IN THE HOME When there is a problem between a husband and a wife, or between the occupants in the home, effective prayer will be hindered! (III. Literally "one flesh" When there is a break in fellowship, we are out of line with God's pattern for our lives and therefore, we are in sin!) Notice some particular features of this verse:

1. It is addressed specifically to husbands - Why? The husband is responsible before God as the head of the home - Ephesians 5:22-23.

2. Men are told to "dwell with them: - Literally, "to be aligned to." The husband is to take the time to find out all he can about his wife. He needs to know what makes her tick. Until we are able to understand our wives, we can never be in line with their feelings and needs. When the home is out of alignment, hindered prayer results!

3. Men are told to do this "according to knowledge" - Literally, "with understanding" Most women need more than most men are willing to give. Men need to be sensitive to their partner's needs. (III. Two-way communication is essential to keeping an open relationship and an open prayer line to God!)

4. Men are told to give honor to their wives - Honor means to "hold in high value." "Weaker vessel" refers not to moral or spiritual weakness, but to physical strength. The picture is of a delicate, priceless, extremely fragile vase. We must realize that our wives are something of intense beauty and value, but something that is infinitely fragile and easily shattered. We men need to learn how to hold our wives in honor. Otherwise, she will be broken before you and your own spiritual life will be shattered. (III. How He treats His bride - Ephesians 5:25!) 5. Discord in the home hinders our fellowship with God.

#### VI. James 1:5-8 A LACK OF FAITH

Without question, faith is an essential part of prayer. The lack of faith hinders God's ability to move in power - Mark 6:5 God demands our faith in prayer. However, God can do a lot with a little - (III. The loaves and fishes - John 6!) - III. Matthew 17:20. Even our doubts and weaknesses, when sowed with a little faith can reap a harvest of glory in our lives - III. Mark 9:14-29! (III. The early church Acts 12!) God honors faith because genuine faith honors Him - Mark 9:23; Matthew 21:22.

Conc: Prayer can change the world, but only an unhindered prayer can reach God's ear! Has the Holy Spirit struck a nerve in your life tonight? If so, I invite you to come before Him and deal with those shortcomings He has revealed, so that you and I might enjoy unhindered, effective praying.

#### Psalms 66:18 THE PROBLEMS OF PRAYER

Intro: Prayer is godly, beneficial and necessary. I hope your prayer life has been jump started this week, and that you have a deeper burning desire to be in constant, effective prayer.

Now, we all know that genuine prayer has the power to accomplish great things. In truth, there is no limit to the potential of prayer, James 5:16; Matthew 17:20. However, while prayer is unlimited in its potential, it can be severely hindered or even rendered totally ineffective. Tonight, I want to take the time to point out some attitudes and activities that can, and do, create problems in our praying. Tonight, we will talk about the Problems of Prayer.

#### I. James 4:3 SELFISHNESS

Anytime we bring a prayer before the Lord that is based in wrong motives, we can be certain that it will fail. We must be certain that our prayers are for His glory, 1 Corinthians 10:31, and that our motives are pure. (III. His kingdom must be paramount in our thoughts.) II. Ezekiel 14:3 IDOLATRY

An idol is anything, or anyone that takes God's place in our lives, or weakens our dependence upon Him to any degree. He is to have the first place and anything that comes before Him is an idol. (III. People's idea of what an idol is!) (III. Some very real idols in our society - any idea, object, philosophy, habit, occupation, sport, loyalty or person that lessens our loyalty to God.) (III. Alan Redpath, "Our God is the person we think most precious, for whom we would make the greatest sacrifice, and who moves our heart with the greatest love. He, or it, is the person who, if we lost him, would leave us desolate." Unless God is in the Number 1 position, our prayer life will be hindered. (III. He will not share His glory with another - Exodus 20:1; Isaiah 42:8.

### III. Mark 11:25 UNFORGIVENESS

God forgives and He expects His people to be in the forgiving business as well - Ephesians 4:32. Any other response by the child of God will prove to be a hindrance to effective praying.

IV. Psalms 66:18; Isaiah 59:2 UNCONFESSED SIN The primary hindrance to prayer is found in the area of unconfessed, unrepented of sin. Even though we have been saved and forgiven, unconfessed prayer will still come between the Lord and us. (III. We are justified by faith, we continue in fellowship by confession - 1 John 1:9) All sin in our lives must be brought into the light of God's judgment - Proverbs 28:13. You may have unconfessed sin in your life that is hindering you tonight. You may be committing a sin and not even realize that you are sinning, but it is hindering your prayer life, It is making the heavens appear to be brass. Perhaps we need to pray as the Psalmist did - Psalms 139:23-24.

V. 1 Peter 3:7 PROBLEMS IN THE HOME When there is a problem between a husband and a wife, or between the occupants in the home, effective prayer will be hindered! (III. Literally "one flesh" When there is a break in fellowship, we are out of line with God's pattern for our lives and therefore, we are in sin!) Notice some particular features of this verse:

1. It is addressed specifically to husbands - Why? The husband is responsible before God as the head of the home - Ephesians 5:22-23.
2. Men are told to "dwell with them: - Literally, "to be aligned to." The husband is to take the time to find out all he can about his wife. He needs to know what makes her tick. Until we are able to understand our wives, we can never be in line with their feelings and needs. When the home is out of alignment, hindered prayer results!
3. Men are told to do this "according to knowledge" - Literally, "with understanding" Most women need more than most men are willing to give. Men need to be sensitive to their partner's needs. (III. Two-way communication is essential to keeping an open relationship and an open prayer line to God!)
4. Men are told to give honor to their wives - Honor means to "hold in high value." "Weaker vessel" refers not to moral or spiritual weakness, but to physical strength. The picture is of a delicate, priceless, extremely fragile vase. We must realize that our wives are something of intense beauty and value, but something that is infinitely fragile and easily shattered. We men need to learn how to hold our wives in honor. Otherwise, she will be broken before you and your own spiritual life will be shattered. (III. How He treats His bride - Ephesians 5:25!)
5. Discord in the home hinders our fellowship with God.

## VI. James 1:5-8 A LACK OF FAITH

Without question, faith is an essential part of prayer. The lack of faith hinders God's ability to move in power - Mark 6:5 God demands our faith in prayer. However, God can do a lot with a little - (Ill. The loaves and fishes - John 6!) - Ill. Matthew 17:20. Even our doubts and weaknesses, when sowed with a little faith can real a harvest of glory in our lives - Ill. Mark 9:14-29! (Ill. The early church Acts 12:1-25!) God honors faith because genuine faith honors Him - Mark 9:23; Matthew 21:22.

Conc: Prayer can change the world, but only an unhindered prayer can reach God's ear! Has the Holy Spirit struck a nerve in your life tonight? If so, I invite you to come before Him and deal with those shortcomings He has revealed, so that you and I might enjoy unhindered, effective praying.

## 06.01 QUESTIONS FOR MODERN DAY PHILEMON'S

---

### Philemon 1:1-25 QUESTIONS FOR MODERN DAY PHILEMON'S

Intro: III. The context of the book. This little letter is called the greatest piece of writing ever put on paper. Even unbelievers have seen the greatness of this little story. There are several ways to preach from this book. In fact, one of the greatest examples of redemption and reconciliation in the entire Bible is right here, III. The Story. Tonight, I want to take a little different approach to this book and instead of trying to identify with Onesimus, I want us to try and identify with Philemon. Here is a Christian man who has been greatly wronged and is called upon to put it all behind him and forgive. I believe that there are some lessons here for every believer tonight. Please give me your attention as I preach on the subject, Questions For Modern Philemon's.

#### I. Philemon 1:11, Philemon 1:18 HAVE YOU EVER BEEN WRONGED?

A. III. The Context. Apparently, Onesimus had stolen property from Philemon and had run away, costing Philemon much money. (III. The average price of a slave was 500 denarii) B. Being wronged by our fellow man is an unfortunate fact of life! Luke 17:1; Matthew 18:7.

C. When we are wronged, we must know how to react. If we react as the world teaches, then we jeopardize our testimony. If we react as the Bible teaches, we glorify God and point men to a Savior who can make a difference in the lives of men. Notice the next three questions that Paul asks:

#### II. Philemon 1:12 DO YOU HAVE THE CAPACITY TO FORGIVE?

A. III. The Context. Receive = "To take to oneself, To take by the hand, To grant access to one's heart." Literally to totally forgive and be reconciled to another.

(III. The difficult position Philemon was forced into - If he was lenient, other slaves would do the same, if he was harsh, he would hurt his ministry.)(III. Paul's solution - Philemon 1:18-19). When we are wronged, do we have the capacity within us to forgive the offender? We are commanded to! (Matthew 18:20-35; Luke 17:1-5) We have a good example to follow - III. Jesus - Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-13.

C. When we forgive, as Jesus did, then we are walking in love toward man and God - 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Matthew 22:39. (Now is the time to bury the hatchet!) III. Philemon 1:15-16 DO YOU HAVE THE CAPACITY TO ACCEPT OTHERS?

A. III. Context. When Onesimus left, he was a sinner and a slave, when he came back, he was a saint and a brother to Philemon. Paul's request was for Philemon to receive Onesimus as a brother in Christ.

B. Are we able to receive all men? Can we receive them regardless of what they have done, what color their skin is, where they come from, etc?

C. As Christians, we are to practice the same type of acceptance that Jesus practiced, regardless of what they have done to us - Ephesians 1:6; Galatians 3:28! (Ill. The Prodigal Brother Luke 15:25-32!) D. Others should not have to meet our standards to be accepted by us - James 2:1-9 IV. Philemon 1:17 DO YOU HAVE THE CAPACITY TO LOVE LIKE JESUS?

A. Ill. The Context. Philemon had no problem loving the saints, v.5 The true test of His faith would come when he was required to love Onesimus with the same degree of love. Philemon had some big shoes to fill!

B. The test of our faith is our ability to love others as Jesus loves them. Unconditionally, unreservedly, wholeheartedly!

1. Applied to the saints - 1 John 2:10; 1 John 3:11; 1 John 3:14; 1 John 3:17-18; 1 John 4:7-8; 1 John 4:11; 1 John 4:20-21 2. Applied to all men - Matthew 22:39

C. When we are able to love others, in spite of what they have done to us, then, and only then are we living out the Gospel.

Conc: As you sit here tonight, are you aware of someone who has hurt you? Perhaps you have entertained thoughts of revenge. Maybe you've held a grudge against that person for some time. Let me tell you this, when you hold a grudge you are not hurting the person you are angry with, you are hurting yourself. You can never experience the fulness of God's forgiveness until you practice it in your life. There is no better time to begin than right now. How did you answer these questions?

## 06.02 THE MAN WHO COULD NOT GOVERN HIMSELF

---

### Philemon 1:24 THE MAN WHO COULD NOT GOVERN HIMSELF

Intro: Many years ago, a man by the name of Robert Robinson was riding in a stagecoach. Another passenger in the coach was humming a verse of the hymn “Come Thou Fount Of Every Blessing.” She asked Robinson what he thought of the hymn she was humming. His answer was a strange one. He said, “Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then.”

You see, the old man riding in that stagecoach had written that hymn years earlier. At the age of 19, Robinson had been saved out of deep sin through the preaching of George Whitefield. Later, he became a preacher in the Methodist church. He wandered from the Methodists to the Baptists and eventually wound up in the Unitarian church. The Unitarians deny the deity of Jesus Christ. Robinson was a man who knew about wandering and about the terrible price it can bring. He died a miserable, wayward soul.

He wrote the hymn the lady was humming when he was a young Pastor, still in love and in communion with the Lord Jesus. The third verse of that hymn goes like this:

Oh to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be,  
Let Thy good ness like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee.

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love,  
Here's my heart Lord, take and seal it, Seal it for thy courts above.

Today, I want to introduce you to a man named Demas. He is a man mentioned only three times in the whole New Testament, but the three short verses that mention his name reveal a man who also wandered faraway from the Lord he once loved and served. It is interesting to note that the name Demas means “The governor of the people.” We are going to meet a man who not only did not live up to his name, but he was a man who could not even govern himself. As we get to know Demas a little better today, I am sure that some here will also see themselves. That is a good thing, because there are many who have wandered away from that place of closeness and intimacy with God. By the Lord's help, from the life of this man named Demas, I want to preach today one The Man Who Could Not Govern Himself. I want to look at this man's life and share three simple principles with you that will help keep you and me from ending up like Demas. Why do we need this? We are all prone to wander away from God. The principles gleaned from the life of Demas can prevent us from doing that!

### I. A PERFECT START DOES NOT PROMISE A PERFECT ENDING

Philemon 1:24

(III. In 1936, the Olympic Games were held in Berlin, Germany. Hitler thought that this would be the perfect showcase for his “Aryan Race.” However, Hitler was surprised by the likes of Jesse

Owens, a black American athlete and others. Among the true surprises of that Olympics was the defeat of the heavily favored German Women's 400 meter relay team by the underdog Americans. When the starting gun sounded, the Germans quickly went ahead of the Americans and held first place until the baton was passed to the last runner. The Germans had a seven yard lead, but the anchor runner dropped the baton and the Germans were disqualified. The German team had executed a perfect start and had run a good race, but, in the end, they learned the terrible truth that a perfect start does not promise a perfect ending.)

- When we first meet Demas, he is called a "fellowlabourer" by Paul. That phrase literally means, "A companion in the work." There, we find Demas mentioned along with Luke, Mark and Aristarchus. All three of these men were well known in the early church! Mark wrote a Gospel. Luke wrote the Gospel that bears his name and the book of Acts. Aristarchus served time in prison with Paul, Colossians 4:10. All three were traveling companions of the great Apostle. From that it would appear that Demas was well known, well respected and well liked during this portion of his life and work. But, as close as Demas was to Paul and as much as he grew in the Lord, apparently it did not last. For in 2 Timothy we read these words, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," 2 Timothy 4:10.

- We have no record of how Demas came to know the Lord Jesus as his Savior. We can only hope that he did. It would appear that all those around him thought he was the real deal as well. But, the time came when Demas fizzled out as a servant of the Lord. He was going along well, but he burned out and fell out. His life illustrates a principle that many would rather not have to live by: How you finish is just as important as how you begin.

- How many times have we seen this truth at work in the church? A person will come to the altar, pray a prayer, stand up tell the church they got saved, and they take off like a shot from a cannon. But, a few months later, or a couple of years later, they are nowhere to be found! What happened? They forgot that how you finish is just as important as how you begin!

- Jesus talked about this kind of person in the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:13, "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." He is talking about that person who hears the Word gets all excited about it and starts out to go with the Lord, but when trials, temptations and troubles come, they fall away. They are kind of like a bottle rocket. A lot of sizzle, a lot of flash, a lot of noise, and then they are gone! We might call them a flash in the pan.

- Jesus even had this kind of person among His Own disciples. I am sure all the disciples thought Judas Iscariot was a saved man. They must have trusted him; after all, they let him carry the money for the group. But, Jesus knew something about Judas that the rest of them did not know. Here is what Jesus said about him, "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve," John 6:70-71.

- What can we learn from this part of the life of Demas? Here are a couple of things you can take home with you.

1. Be absolutely sure you come to Jesus the right way in the beginning. That is, be sure you are saved. How? Acts 16:31; John 6:37-40; Romans 10:9; Romans 10:13. You can't meet Jesus by

joining the church or by being baptized. You don't come to know Him by doing good things or by becoming a better person. You must be born again, John 3:3; John 3:7.

2. Understand that the Christian race is a marathon and not a sprint. God did not save us for a life of ease, so that we could float off to heaven after a few days. Friend, there will be some trials and troubles along the way. All I am saying that that we need to settle in for the long haul and run this race with patient endurance, Hebrews 12:1-2; Hebrews 3:12.

3. Take the time to encourage others in their own race. There are some people around us today that are struggling. How do I know? Well, their church attendance isn't what it should be. If they don't come to worship, then they probably do not pray or study their Bibles like they should. They are probably having a difficult time making it. Those who are running the race might need to take the time to be an encouragement to them, Galatians 6:1-2. Others are young in the Lord. They too need an encouraging word. Listen to Hebrews 3:13 and do it!

4. Remember that even if you did start out right, you can always fall along the way! Don't let pride, self-righteousness or blindness to your own faults cause you to stumble and fall, 1 Corinthians 10:12; Proverbs 16:18; Matthew 26:40-41. It could happen to you and it might have already happened in your life.

## II. THE DOWNWARD SLOPE IS GRADUAL BUT SLIPPERY

Colossians 4:14

(III. I remember reading about a man who fell to his death from the face of Stone Mountain in Georgia. It seems that this man had climbed to the top of the mountain on one of the hiking trails. When he got to the top, he wanted to peer over the edge, so he began to move slowly in that direction. Since the top of the mountain was rounded, he was too far down the face of the steep mountain before he realized it. When he tried to go back up, he found the face too steep to climb. He clung to the side of the mountain unable to go either up or down until all of his strength ran out and he fell to his death.)

· When we first met Demas, he was serving along side Paul and he was commended for his service. When he is mentioned here, he is still with Paul, but something seems to be wrong now. There are no glowing words of commendation. The Bible simply says "...and Demas." It seems that Demas was still reporting for duty, but that his heart is not in it like it used to be. This change in his heart will soon show up in the rest of his life. The day will soon come when Demas will walk away from the work of the Lord.

· I am sure this was a slow process in the life of Demas. I do not believe that he woke up one morning and said, "I think I'll become a backslider today." No, it was far more subtle. Perhaps Demas allowed himself a little leeway here and then a little there and before he realized it, he was under the control of his passions and not under the control of the Spirit of God. He learned the harsh lesson that "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," Galatians 5:9.

· Maybe he fell into what John Bisango calls "Listen Bad Temptation." Dr. Bisango says our first problem is that we listen to the temptation of the flesh. Then, the next three steps follow shortly thereafter.

1. B – We believe the deception of the flesh. In our spiritual world something has happened. Deception and belief have joined together, and sin is conceived.

2. A – We act out the sin. Now, it moves beyond contemplation o implementation.

3. D – We discover death, which is the consequence of our sin. It's the same for Demas or for you or me. It is not physical death, but death of a more subtle kind. Death to a tender conscience. Death to sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Death to usefulness in the kingdom of God.[1]

· I would agree with Dr. Bisango. Sin does not become full blown in an instant of time. It is something that grows until it consumes our very lives. This is the lesson of James 1:14-15. When you start down the pathway of playing around with sin and temptation, you will find that it is a slippery slope with a very hard stop at the bottom!

· Therefore, we believers need to learn the lessons that are given to us throughout the pages of the Bible. David fell into sin when he entertained temptation in his life, 2 Samuel 11:1-27. Samson fell when he was asleep. We need to keep our relationship with Jesus in good order! Perhaps Demas became guilty of trying to do the work of the Lord in the power of the flesh. Whatever happened in his life, he began a slow, steady turn away from the Lord. Friend, don't let that happen in your life!

(III. Acts 20:9 tells us about a young man by the name of Eutychus who fell asleep while listening to Paul preach. The Bible says that he fell out of a third floor window and died. Paul went down to him and by the power of God raised him back to life again. But, I want to let you in on a little known theological truth. Here it is: Do you know why Eutychus fell out of the window? You had better get out your pen and paper for this one. You don't want to miss this. I went through 11 years of Bible College to learn this. There was more of Eutychus hanging out of that window than there was of Eutychus hanging in!

It was a gradual process, but it cost Eutychus his life. Don't let the same thing happen to you. You see, backsliding begins very subtly. You begin to miss a Wednesday evening, a Sunday night or a Sunday School class here and there, and before you know it, you are out of church. You miss a day or two praying and studying your Bible and before you know it, your mind isn't on the Lord, but on the things of the world. You start to pay attention to that pretty young lady at work and before you know it, you are in trouble. The devil never lays all of his cards on the table, but he comes slyly by enticing the heart and the mind, and before you realize it, you are in serious trouble! Just ask David. Just ask Samson. Just ask some people in this room today!) III. YOUR DIRECTION ALWAYS DETERMINES YOUR DESTINATION

2 Timothy 4:10

(III. If I want to leave here and travel to California, I can go to Hickory and take I-40 West. That road will take me all the way to California. However, I cannot take I-40 and go to Florida. I cannot take I-40 and get to New York. The road I take always determines where I will end up! The same is true in the spiritual realm and that truth is illustrated by the life of Demas.)

· The last reference to Demas in the New Testament tells us that he abandoned Paul and went back to the world. Evidently, the temptations and pull of the world proved greater than his commitment to the Lord and he eventually fell away. No doubt this started in the life of Demas in a

very subtle manner. Maybe he just allowed his heart to grow colder and colder until his love for the world eclipsed his love for God. Whatever happened, Demas chose the wrong path somewhere along the way and ended up in a place that he never intended to be.

- We need not kid ourselves, God created us to love, but we cannot truly love God if we are in love with the world, 1 John 2:15. When we love Him as we ought to, there will be little room within our hearts for this world or what it has to offer. But, when our love for Him wanes, then something else will fill its place. When you and I choose a path through life that leads us gradually away from the Lord and steadily toward the world, we should not be surprised when we wake up one day and find ourselves miles away from the Lord.

- Think about the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-24. When he left the father's house, he was just seeking a good time. He just wanted to live it up for a few days. But, before too many days had passed, he found himself in a place he could never have imagined. He learned the lesson that "Sin will take you farther than you want to go; keep you longer than you want to stay; and cost you more than you want to pay."

- When you and I choose to walk in the "broad way" of sin and not in the "narrow way" of righteousness, we should not be surprised when our path leads us far away from the Lord, cools our heart and moves us deep into sin!

(III. Often, when an Eskimo needs to kill a wolf, he will take a knife and sharpen it until it is as sharp as it can possibly be. Then, he will coat that knife with seal or walrus blood, allowing it to freeze. Then he will dip it and freeze it again and again, until the blade is hidden under several layers of blood. Then he takes the bloodied knife and freezes the handle into the middle of a block of ice. He will then set the block of ice out into the open.

Wolves have a tremendous sense of smell, so the wolf will come along, smell the blood and will begin to lick the blood off the blade of the knife. The wolf will lick that blood with its warm tongue, until it reaches the sharpened blade of the knife. By the time the wolf's tongue touches the blade it is numbed by the cold. When it finally reaches the knife, it keeps on licking, not realizing that he is now tasting his own blood from his own tongue as the knife cuts into its flesh. The warm blood sends the wolf into a feeding frenzy and he licks until he eventually bleeds to death. Why? Because of its uncontrolled desire to get to that blood at all costs. When you and I feed the flesh what it wants, we will find that its appetite grows beyond our control. It will demand more than we can give it! Be careful what you allow into your life. It might be your pleasure today, but it may become your master tomorrow!)

Conc: Demas was a man who could not govern himself. As a result, he found himself far away from the Lord in a backslidden condition. Did Demas ever make things right with the Lord? We do not know. But, if he did, then he had to make a totally change. He would have had to turn away from the world and renew his love relationship with God.

Friend, where did this message find your heart today? Are the cold tendrils of sin trying to wrap themselves around your heart? If you can see yourself beginning to go down the slippery slope toward sin, it is not too late to turn back to the Lord. He will receive you and forgive you. Maybe you have realized that you are not even saved today. If that is the case, He will forgive you and receive you into His family if you will come to Him. Maybe you have someone in your life and you

love them, but you can see them beginning to take the wrong path in life. I challenge you to come before the Lord and lift their name up to God in prayer.

[1] Bisagno, John R. Principle Preaching (Nashville: Broadman, 2002), 199.

## 07.00. Sermons From Ruth

---

Sermons From Ruth Expository Sermons An Example Of A Steadfast Life - Ruth 1:1-22 Three Tombstones In A Washpot - Ruth 1:1-7 Three Widows In A Washpot - Ruth 1:6-18 Coming Home The Hard Way - Ruth 1:19-22 Searching For Grace - Ruth 2:1-3 In The Field Of Grace - Ruth 2:4-17 Good News From The Field Of Grace - Ruth 2:17-21 Abiding In The Field Of Grace - Ruth 2:21-23 Looking For A Little Rest - Ruth 3:1-2 Getting Ready To Meet The Master - Ruth 3:3 Finding Your Place At His Feet - Ruth 3:1-11 Redeemed, Redeemed By Love Divine - Ruth 3:9-18, Ruth 4:1-12 Redeemed! How I Love To Proclaim It! - Ruth 4:1-17 Ruth: From Brokenness To Blessedness - Ruth 4:13-17 Somebody Pinch Me Please - Ruth 4:13-22

## 07.01. An Example Of A Steadfast Life - Rth 1:1-22

---

### Ruth 1:1-22 AN EXAMPLE OF A STEADFAST LIFE

Intro: There are many stories in the Bible that serve as an encouragement to our hearts. The story of Ruth is no exception. Many look at this little book, which was written during the time of the judges, and see nothing more than a love story. However, while there is a love story of sorts in this book, that is the most shallow interpretation. The bigger picture is that of a lost sinner who, through divine guidance and providence, is brought into a relationship with Jehovah and is made to be an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are taught in this book that God is not just the Savior of Israel, but that He is the Savior of the entire human race!

I wish there was time this evening to preach this entire book tonight, but there isn't. What I would like to do is to look into the verses we have read this evening and pull out a little snapshot of the heart of this woman named Ruth. In these verses, and throughout this book as well, we see in Ruth a tremendous example of a steadfast life. She teaches us about remaining faithful even when others around us do not. As we have time this evening, let's look into these verses and examine this Example Of A Steadfast Life.

#### I. Ruth 1:1-7 RUTH'S CONDITION

A. Ruth 4:4. Her Ancestry - Ruth was a member of a condemned nation. She and her people were sinful and had been judged and condemned by the Lord. Her's was a desperate and lost condition.

(III. In this, Ruth is a picture of each of person who is outside of a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. We were helpless and condemned before God. That condemnation fell upon us because of the sin of Adam, Romans 5:12, and we were all abiding under the wrath of God, John 3:36. The fact is, we were nothing but lost and undone sinners, Romans 3:23.)

B. Ruth 1:5 Her Adversity - This verse tells us that Ruth's husband and his brother both have died. These young women are left widows with no means of support and with no hope for the future. They faced a terrible trial. It seemed that there only hope was to return to the home of their father and hope another man would eventually marry them.

(III. Again, in her condition, we can see a picture of humanity. The Bible tells us that life will be filled with troubles and afflictions, Job 14:1. This is especially true in the lives of the lost - Proverbs 13:15.)

C. Ruth 1:6-7 Her Ambition - Naomi has heard that the famine that caused her family to leave Bethlehem to begin with has ended and that there is bread in the land. So, she rises up to go home, and her two daughter-in-laws rise up to go with her.

(III. This is purely conjecture, but it seems that Ruth and Orpah had seen or heard something from the lives of the backslidden Israelites that spoke to their hearts. It may be that even while they were in a condemned land that they continued to speak of Jehovah. Maybe it is the fact that these

girls have married into an Israelite family. Whatever the case it is worthy to note that both of these young women, in the beginning, made the decision to follow Naomi back to Israel.)

(III. That is precisely how the new life begins! A conscious decision is made to leave the old life behind and to go with Jesus into a new life in Him. I wonder have you made that decision in your life? That is the starting point. That is where new life begins. We must be sure that we have indeed decided to follow Jesus.) I. Ruth's Condition II. Ruth 1:8-15 RUTH'S CHALLENGE

A. Ruth 1:8-9 An Expectation - As they begin their journey, Naomi encourages both of these girls to return to the home of their mothers. She prays that the Lord will bless them, but she intends to send them away. Such is the condition of Naomi's heart that she would try to keep these women from going with her into the promised land of blessing.

(III. Basically, this boils down to a challenge to the commitment made by these women. They are challenged to give up their resolve to follow Naomi and they are tempted to turn back to a life of heathenism and wickedness. Hey folks, in case you haven't noticed, life is filled with challenges. Satan would love nothing better than to get you side-tracked and mess up your Christian life. He will confront you with challenge after challenge to get you to turn your back on the Lord. How you respond to these challenges reveals a great deal about the level of your commitment. In these verses, we get an opportunity to see Ruth's heart put on display.)

B. Ruth 1:10-13 An Explanation - Naomi tries to persuade these women to go home because she has no more sons to marry the women and give them children under the law of the Levirate Marriage. And, even if she remarried and had children, these girls couldn't be expected to wait until these new sons were grown.

(III. This is just another attempt to get these girls to go back to their families. You see, if you do not respond to one of Satan's challenges, he will try another. His ambition is to get you to fail and to discredit the Lord Jesus through your life.)

(III. How do you react to the challenges you face? Many people react to challenges by turning away from the Lord. You can see it happening in their lives. However, like Job, the challenges of life should drive us closer to the Lord - Job 1:20-21.) (III. Let's examine the responses of these two women.)

C. Ruth 1:14 a An Evacuation - When Orpah heard this speech, she kissed her mother-in-law and turned around and went home.

(III. I am afraid that there are a lot of people around who are just like Orpah. They face the challenges of life by defecting and going back to do their own thing. Please don't let this be the way you react to life's challenges. The problem with Orpah was that her heart was still filled with love for the old gods and the old people. She was still a Moabite. Her heart had never been changed!)

D. Ruth 1:14-15 An Examination - After Orpah leaves, Ruth clings to Naomi. She is determined to stay with her mother-in-law. This allows us a glimpse into her heart. She shows us, by here actions that which is the best response in a time of challenge. The heart Ruth reveals to us is one of absolute devotion and commitment. You see, instead of driving us away from our commitments, the challenges of life should cause us to cleave to Him more strongly. In her commitment, Ruth

demonstrates the fact that her heart had been changed and she was willing to follow a new Lord into a new land to live a new life.) I. Ruth's Condition II. Ruth's Challenge III. Ruth 1:16-22 RUTH'S COMMITMENT

A. Ruth 1:16 She Commits To A New Land - She is willing to follow Naomi where ever she goes. She is willing to leave Moab behind forever and to follow Naomi to Israel.

B. Ruth 1:16 She Commits To A New Leadership - She is willing to submit to Naomi and to allow Naomi to guide her life. (III. This is seen in the various times that Naomi gives Ruth advise concerning the manners and customs of Israel.)

C. Ruth 1:16 She Commits To A New Lifestyle - She is willing to give up all the old ways of Moab and to conform her life to the way people live in Israel. She is ready to make a dramatic change in her life.

D. Ruth 1:16 She Commits To A New Lineage - Ruth is willing to cut all ties with Moab. She wants to be a part of the nation which she has married into. She is ready to claim a new lineage.

E. Ruth 1:16 She Commits To A New Lord - This is perhaps the greatest statement Ruth makes. She is willing to give up the gods of Moab and follow the true and living God of Israel. This statement is her declaration of faith in Jehovah God.

F. Ruth 1:17 She Commits With No Limits - She tells Naomi that she is willing to commit to this new plan for life for as long as she lives. She even invokes the curse of God upon her life if she lets anything but death come between her and the commitment she has made.

(III. As we consider the commitment Ruth made to Naomi, it paints a picture for us of the commitment we should be willing to make to the Lord Jesus Christ.

- We should be willing to cut all ties with the old life and enter into a new land of blessing before the Lord.
- We must be willing to commit to His leadership for our lives.
- There should be a commitment to a new lifestyle based on the Word and will of God.
- We should also consider ourselves dead to the old life and alive in a new relationship to the Lord Jesus. Our lineage has changed!
- Obviously, this all means that there must be a new Lord, a new master Who dominates every area of our lives.
- Then, we should be willing to commit to the Lord and His will without any restrictions. Our commitment to Jesus Christ must be complete. It must be absolute and it must be final!
- Does this describe the life you live? Or have there been areas where you can see you commitment slacking off? Can you honestly say that no matter what happens in life, you are 100%, absolutely and completely dedicated to serving Jesus, both now and forever?

Conc: Ruth lived a consistent and steadfast life. She was brought into Israel, married an Israelite man named Boaz and became a part of the covenant people of the Lord. She became the

great-grandmother to King David and an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of this came to pass in her life because she was unwilling to change her mind, change her devotion or to change her direction. She kept on going in the face of adversity and she did not give up. Can the same be said about you this evening? Are you living a life that is steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, 1 Corinthians 15:58? Or has your devotion to the Lord tended to fluctuate with the changing tides of life? You know, you need God today, but you don't serve Him tomorrow. Where is your heart tonight? Are you more like Orpah who chose the easy path? Or, are you like Ruth who persevered through her difficulties to win the ultimate victory of faith? Are there issues that you need to get settled with the Lord this evening? If so, this altar is open for your use. Please use it as the Lord leads.

## 07.02. Three Tombstones In A Washpot - Rth 1:1-7

---

### Ruth 1:1-7 THREE TOMBSTONES IN A WASHPOT

Series Intro: The little book of Ruth has been called "the greatest piece of literature ever written." Another writer called the story of Ruth "the Cinderella of the Bible." It is the story of how a pagan girl named Ruth came to be part of the covenant people of Israel. In the 100 verses that make up the book of Ruth, we see this young woman as she is pursued by grace, and brought out of her wretched condition. This is a story of redemption, of love, of grace and of hope. It is a story we need to become familiar with on a very intimate level.

Over the next several weeks, as the Lord leads, I will be preaching verse by verse through this book. I am titling this series of sermons: Pursued By Grace.

Sermon Intro: In Ruth 1:1-7 we are introduced to the family of a man named Elimelech who lived during the days of the judges, Ruth 1:1. It is the sad tale of a man who chooses to walk out on the Lord and on God's plan for his life. As a result of his decision, he and his family pay a terribly high price.

We are told that Elimelech takes his family to a place called Moab. Moab was located just across the Jordan River, east of the Promised Land. It was inhabited by people who worshiped pagan gods. The Moabites were the descendants of a man named Moab who was the son of an incestuous relationship between Lot and one of his daughters, Genesis 19:30-38. They were a proud people noted for their lawlessness, immorality and brutal violence, Leviticus 18:24-25; Deuteronomy 9:4-5; Isaiah 16:6; Psalms 60:8. They attacked and opposed Israel, seeking to destroy the people of God, during Israel's wilderness wanderings, Numbers 23:1-30, Numbers 24:1-25, Numbers 25:1-18; Deuteronomy 23:3-6. This was a people opposed to God and His ways. In Psalms 60:8, God says this, "Moab is my washpot..." This phrase means that they were a despised thing, compared to a vessel containing water to be used by a slave to wash the feet of a conquering hero. God says that they are nothing and that they will be reduced to the lowest form of slavery! Yet, they were a people who could have been saved had they repented of their sins as Ruth did.

It is to this despised and wicked nation that Elimelech moves his family. Here we see a picture of that person who willingly turns his back on the things of God and pays an awful price. If this section of scripture teaches us anything, it teaches us that living in a backslidden condition carries with it devastating consequences, but repentance and restoration are always a possibility. With this information in mind today, let's look into this passage of scripture today as I preach on the thought Three Tombstones In A Washpot.

I. V. Ruth 1:1 a A TIME OF DESPERATE CIRCUMSTANCES (III. There was a three-fold famine in the land.)

A. A Material Famine In The Land - Ruth 1:1 describes the situation that Elimelech and his family faced by telling us that there was "a famine in the land." A famine is an extended dearth. A time when food is in serious shortage. While there was a shortage of foods in the land at that time, it wasn't the only famine the people of Israel faced.

B. A Moral Famine In The Land - Ruth 1:1 tells us that this story takes place during the time of the Judges. The attitude of the people during those days is summed up in the last verse of the book of Judges, Judges 21:25. It can best be described as a time of turbulence and social upheaval. They were days marked by lawlessness, idolatry, false religion, theft, drunkenness, homosexuality, sexual perversion, violence, national division, civil war and extreme unbelief. Days, it would see, that are not too different from the days in which we find ourselves. Of course, when man "does that which is right in his own eyes", what else should we expect?

C. A Missionary Famine In The Land - Often, in the Old Testament period, God used famine as a tool of discipline. When His people strayed away from Him, He would reach out to them to call them back to Himself by orchestrating a famine, Deuteronomy 11:16-17; 2 Chronicles 7:13-14.

(Note: Often, as we pass through this life, God will orchestrate these famine experiences for us as well. It may take the form of a financial famine, when there is more month than money. It may take the place of a physical famine where health and well being become elusive. There may be a spiritual famine when the heavens become brass and the Lord seems very far away. Whatever form it takes, it is a famine in your life. God's intention during those times of life is not to drive you away from Him, but it is to draw you nearer to Him. He may be trying to correct you, Revelation 3:19; or He may be trying to perfect you, 2 Corinthians 12:9. How you react to your famine experience determines whether it becomes a time of blessing in your life or a time of devastation.)

## II. Ruth 1:1-2 A TIME OF DANGEROUS CHOICES

(III. As we will see in these verses Elimelech did not respond correctly to what the Lord was doing in his life. Notice three mistakes he and his family made during this famine experience.)

A. Ruth 1:1 Chose To Leave The Promised Land - Ruth 1:1 tells us that this man made a conscious decision to leave "Bethlehem-Judah" for the country of Moab. The name "Bethlehem" means "House of Bread" and the name "Judah" means "Praise". At the present time neither of those places were living up to their names. There was no bread in "The House Of Bread" and there was no reason for rejoicing in "Praise". However, while the geographic locations failed to live up to their names, so did Elimelech! His name means "My God Is King." If that had been true about this man, he would have known that God's valleys do not last forever and that God would have taken care of His people. After all, Elimelech had a close relative name Boaz. He stayed in Bethlehem and seemed to do quite well in spite of the famine, Ruth 2:1. Yet, Elimelech chose to leave his inheritance in the promised land and head off to a land where God would not bless him!

(III. This is a scene repeated countless times in the family of God! Here is a person who proclaims themselves to be a "Christian". That is a name that means "Christlike One." Yet, when a famine comes in their life, they run out on God. Maybe things didn't go their way at church. Maybe a trial arose in their life and they were blind sided by it. Maybe they were placed in a financial crisis and placed God after income. Maybe they just came to love the world more than they loved the Lord. Whatever the reason, they chose to walk out of the promised land of God's blessing and to head

off into the world to live life on their own terms. There is a word for that kind of behavior: Backsliding! I am afraid that more believers are in that shape than are willing to admit it this morning!)

B. Ruth 1:1 Chose To Live In A Polluted Land - To leave Israel to go to Moab was to violate the clear commandment of the Lord, Joshua 23:7; Joshua 23:12. Yet, Elimelech chose the forbidden path to Moab over contentment in the things of the Lord. To leave one's inheritance as Elimelech did was equivalent to denying the faith of Jehovah. It was a total turning from God to the world. You see, for Elimelech and his family, this move to Moab involved total separation from the things of God. They could not worship at the Temple, they could not bring their offerings, they could keep the feasts that were commanded by the Law. They were totally isolated from everything that stood for God. Not only that, by moving his family to Moab, Elimelech exposed his family to evils they would have avoided had they stayed in Israel. For instance, both of those boys married pagan women. It is never right for a child of God to marry an unbeliever, 2 Corinthians 6:14. These men violated the will of God by intermingling with this pagan race, Ezra 9:1-2; Nehemiah 13:23.

(III. Again, how many times do we see this same thing repeated in the lives of those who call themselves God's children? When a believer walks away from the things of the Lord, he or she cannot possibly serve the Lord as they should. Friend, there is no way to be right with the Lord as long as you are separated from the things of God! When His house, His word, His work, His worship and His will are not priorities in your life, it doesn't matter what your mouth says, your life says that you are away from the Lord! The believer who walks away from the things of the Lord is saying, "God wasn't as good to me as I thought He should be. He isn't worthy of my love and devotion." It is a choice that always leads downward. If you walk out on God, you will find yourself doing things you never thought possible! You will see yourself involved in wrong relationships and worldly activities. It is a dangerous thing to choose the world over the Lord!)

C. Ruth 1:2 Chose To Linger In A Prodigal Land - This family went to Moab and there they stayed! The word "continued" means "to exist or to become." This may indicate that not only did Elimelech and his family go into Moab, but that Moab got into them as well. Who knows how far into the sin and society of Moab this family fell. I am sure when they left they told themselves that it would only last a short time. But the days turned into weeks, the weeks into months and the months into years. Before they knew it, 10 years had passed, Ruth 1:4, and they were farther away from the Lord than could have ever imagined themselves being.

(III. What an example of the deceptive nature of sin! There are people in this room who are in Moab this morning in your heart and you can't even see it! For whatever reason, you have decided that God and His plan for your life doesn't suit you. Maybe you are struggling against something He had brought to pass in your life. Whatever the reason, you are away from Him today. You probably never thought you would get as far as you have, or that you would stay as long as you have.

Here's how it works. Someone gets offended in a church. A little spiritual famine. Maybe that person has always been very active and faithful to the things of God. Now, they are offended and they leave that church. Maybe they aren't offended, maybe they "fell led" to go somewhere else. (Note: I always get nervous when someone tells me that! It usually means they are headed to Moab!) Anyway, they wander around trying to find a new church home. But, they only visit other

churches on Sunday morning. After a while, they find a church to settle down in. They join that church. But, now they only attend on Sunday morning. They just can't seem to get back "in the habit" of attending regularly. Why? They went to Moab and have never come back!

Maybe it happened like this: it got to be a burden to get to church Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. So you decided to take a Wednesday here and there. Before you knew it, you were missing a Sunday evening as well. Then, all of a sudden, Sunday morning became too much. Now your attendance at church is just hit and miss. You never intended it to happen, but you went to Moab and you never came back!

That's not your story? Then try this one on for size. A financial need arose in your life. You know, a famine of sorts. Instead of considering that maybe God sent it to help you grow in Him, you went out and got you a second job. Now, you know it will involve your missing church now and then, but you got to make ends meet. Right? Well, before you know it, you are out of the church, out of the Lord's will and in trouble spiritually. What happened? You went down to Moab and you never came back! Of course, it could be like this: you started to allow little things in your life that had always been out of the question. Before you knew it, you were doing things you never thought you would ever do again. You began to let little words slip. You tolerated sinful programs on TV. You indulged the crude speech and wicked humor of your friends. Then, you found yourself living just like the lost world around you. You never thought it would happen, but you went to Moab and you "continued" there! You need to come back!

Before I leave this thought behind, I want to remind you that going to Moab doesn't always involve an actual, physical move. There are folk who attend church regularly, who pay their tithes, who live clean, moral lives, but they are in Moab this morning. You see, we go to Moab spiritually when we allow our attitude to get bad. When we become critical, quick to find fault in others, but remain blind to the fault in our own hearts, we have gone to Moab. When we use our tongues as weapons instead of witnessing tools, we have gone to Moab. When we harbor grudges and ill will toward others, we have gone to Moab. Not all the prodigals leave the Father's house physically, though they are miles away spiritually.

Friend, I may have described your situation today. In doing so, it is not my intention to rub salt in your wounds. My goal is to help you get out of Moab and back to the "House of Bread" and the place of "Praise". Sometimes, the only way that will ever happen is for us to be confronted about our sins and our backsliding!

### III. Ruth 1:3-5 A TIME OF DEADLY CONSEQUENCES

(III. Sin always carries with it harsh consequences. This was the case in the life of Elimelech and his family as well.)

A. Ruth 1:2 There Was Discipline In That Home - Before Elimelech loaded up his family to move to Moab, it is likely that he had already moved away from God in his heart. You see, no one just wakes up one morning and decides to leave God behind! It is a slow subtle process that builds until the believer has moved farther away from the Lord than he could have ever anticipated. The reason I say there was discipline in that home lies in the names of Elimelech's sons. Their names were Mahlon which means "Sick" and Chilion which means "Pining, or Wasting Away." It may be that these two boys were just the victims of circumstance. But, if you believe that, then you don't

believe in a God of providence! I think God was trying to get Elimelech's attention long before he ever left for Moab.

(III. Friend, He will do the same in your life as well. When a backslidden spirit begins to manifest itself in your life, God will begin the process of speaking to your heart. He may do it in a still small voice like He did with Elijah, 1 Kings 19:12. Or, He may do with the thundering voice of a prophet as He did with David, 2 Samuel 12:7. He may use subtle means, or He may use direct means, but if you are His, He will reach out to you to bring you home again, Revelation 3:19; Hebrews 12:6-11.)

B. Ruth 1:3-5 There Was Death In That Home - In spite of his relationship to the Lord, in spite of the blessings of God, in spite of the intervention of the Lord in his family, Elimelech moved to Moab. What was a reality in his heart became a reality in his life! After he was there for some time, he died. After a while, his sons were also taken in death. It is my opinion that God used the ultimate form of discipline in the lives of Elimelech and his family in order to bring the remainder of the family back to God. You see, the famine in Bethlehem was a call to repent. Those sick sons were a call to repent. God gave this family ten years of rope, but time finally ran out and they paid the ultimate price for their disobedience.

It is sad, but it is also true, God will use whatever means that He deems necessary to bring you home again! If you are His, you will not run from Him forever. He will discipline your life and if you do not repent, He will take you home, 1 John 5:16; 1 Corinthians 5:5.

C. Ruth 1:5 There Was Defeat In That Home - Naomi and her two daughters-in-law were left desolate. In that society, the poorest of the poor were widows with no children to care for them. These women were left with nothing but desolation, discouragement and defeat. It didn't have to be, but because of the sin in their hearts and the choices they made in life, they were forced to pay a horrible price. All Naomi had to show for her disobedience and backsliding were three tombstones in the land of Moab. All she had left were her daughters-in-law and she couldn't even provide for them. These women were in a desperate condition.

(III. Such is the nature of sin! It never brings anything good into our lives. While it may give those who wander off into it some pleasure in the flesh in the short term, Hebrews 11:25, all it can produce in the long term is death, defeat and discouragement. If you want to destroy your family, devastate you life and doom those you love, just wander off to your Moab and stay there. There is a price to pay! You see, sin brings its own club, Proverbs 13:15; Romans 6:21. So, put the things of God last in your life and see how your children treat them when they grow up. Go ahead and indulge your flesh and its sinful appetites and see what good comes of it. When sickness, when chastisement, when defeat, disillusionment and discouragement come, just remember, you are reaping the harvest you foolishly sowed, Galatians 6:9. Brother, the time to repent is now!) IV.

#### Ruth 1:6-7 A TIME OF DELIBERATE CHANGES

(III. These last two verse of our text this morning will help us to leave this message with a little hope. Out of death and defeat we can catch a glimpse of life and victory in the actions of Naomi.)

A. Ruth 1:6 A Time Realization - Somehow or another Naomi heard that the Lord was again blessing His people. In truth, He had never stopped blessing! Did you know His chastisement is also His blessing? If he didn't love you He would chastise you when you failed. Anyway, someone

came into Moab with the good news that God was blessing back in Israel. This sparked a desire in her heart to go home. Maybe she remembered what it was like to be close to the things of God. Maybe she remembered the sacrifices and the worship. Maybe she missed the sweet fellowship she had enjoyed with the people of God. Whatever the thoughts were that went through her head, she finally woke up in Moab and wanted to go home. This is what happened to the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:17, "And when he came to himself..." (Ill. Being in a Backslidden condition is a form of insanity.) When that boy saw where he was and what he was missing out on, he wanted to go home. So it was with Naomi.

(Ill. Sooner or later, that time of realization comes to all those who wander away from the Father's house. There will come a time when the fog and haze of sin will clear away for a moment and in that moment of clarity, the backslider will just where he is and how far he has fallen. He will hear the tender voice of the Lord saying, "There's bread in my house. Come home!" That moment is a defining moment in the life of the person who is away from the Lord! If they, like Naomi, will remember and will arise and head back, they will reenter the realm of blessing and hope. If they continue on in their sins and their wanderings, they will open themselves up to progressively harsher chastisements. What is the Lord saying to your heart today?)

B. Ruth 1:6-7 A Time Of Repentance - The Bible says that she "Arose...that she might return from the country of Moab", Ruth 1:6; and "Wherefore she went out of the place where she was..." Naomi rose up and left Moab behind! She experienced a change of heart that resulted in a change of action. She is a picture of someone repenting of their time in Moab and returning home.

(Ill. Friend, if you are guilty of going away from God into Moab, then you need to do what Naomi did! Can you see that it was better back at the Father's house? Can you remember the times when the Lord met with your soul in sweet communion. Are you looking back at a time when you were closer to the Lord and served Him more faithfully and fervently than you do today? It is time to come home! It is time to bring that sin, that attitude, that problem, that hurt, whatever it is to the altar and let God have it! It is time to repent of your sins and come home to the Father! It is time to leave your Moab behind you, to get out of that place and to get back to the Lord! If you will, He will receive you and He will balance the books of your life, 1 John 1:9.)

C. Ruth 1:7 A Time Of Returning - Naomi rose up and went on her way to return to the land of Judah. She was headed back to the land of "Praise". She was going back to where she should have been all along! She was going home!

(Ill. Did you know that God never saved you so that you could wander off into sin? He saved you so that you might worship Him in spirit and in truth. He saved you so that you might be used of Him for His glory. He saved you so that you might live a life filled with joy, peace and the glory of God. But, that will never be true as long as you choose to remain in Moab. You see, dwelling in Moab will rob you of your peace, of your joy, of your praise, of your usefulness to the Lord. It will kill anything in you that God can use to help you and to bless you. If you are there today, please return to the place of praise. Please come back to the Father today!)

Conc: When Naomi went into Moab, by her own testimony, she went in full, Ruth 1:21. When she came out, she came out empty. All of her hopes, all of her dreams and all of her tomorrows were reduced to three tombstones in a washpot called Moab. When she left that country she left

everything she valued behind. When you go to Moab, you always leave something! Naomi left three tombstones in her Moab, what will you leave behind? Will you leave your testimony? Will you leave your innocence? Will you leave your health? Will you leave your wealth? Will you leave your family? What will your journey away from God cost you? Whatever it is, it will cost less to come home today than it will if you wait to a later date. You will leave less behind if you come now than if you wait until later. God can salvage more from your life now than He can if you linger in that polluted country. By the way lost friend, this message is for you too! God is calling you to leave your wretched life of sin behind and to come to Him and be saved. If you linger there away from Him, you will pay the ultimate price. You will lose your soul in Hell! It doesn't have to be that way. If the Lord is calling you to be saved, get to Him today and let Him take care of that for you!

## 07.03. Three Widows In A Washpot - Rth 1:6-18

---

### Ruth 1:6-18 THREE WIDOWS IN A WASHPOT

Intro: The book of Ruth opens with a tragedy and ends with a victory. It is the story of how God took a Moabite girl by the name of Ruth, brought her out of death and darkness and made her part of the covenant people of Israel. It is the story of how this woman was transformed from a lost sinner to an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the story of a sinner being pursued by grace. This passage opens with three widows, Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. These three widows have just lost their husbands. Now, they are left destitute in the country of Moab with little or no hope for the future. Ruth and Orpah were natives of Moab, but Naomi was a native of Judah. She was a Jew and she knew the Lord. And she had no business being in the land of Moab, a place called "God's washpot.", Psalms 60:8. By the way, the term "washpot" is a term of utter contempt! By calling Moab this, God says they are lower than the lowest slave, but are like the pot the slaves use to wash the feet of superiors. Now, after the death of her husband, Ruth 1:6-7 tell us that she is determined to return to the place where the Lord was blessing His people. The Bible presents three women for us in this passage. Three women who are in a terrible situation and are widows because they are paying the price for sin. All Naomi has to show for her time in Moab is three tombstones in a washpot called Moab. How they respond to their situation can teach us much about how we should react when we find ourselves away from the Lord and in trouble because of sin. Let's take the time this morning to observe these three women as we consider the thought Three Widows In A Washpot.

I. Ruth 1:8-13 ONE WIDOW IN THE PLACE OF DEFEAT (III. Naomi is a picture of a child of God who has grown cold and backslidden on the Lord!)

A. Ruth 1:13 b The Cause Of Her Defeat - Can be traced to Ruth 1:1-5. There is always a high price tag on sin! (III. Galatians 6:9; Proverbs 13:15) No good will ever result from a child of God returning to the world!

B. Ruth 1:8-13 a The Completeness Of Her Defeat - As you listen to Naomi's words, you can easily see that she is completely defeated and stripped of hope.

1. Ruth 1:8-9 No Hope For Today - She has nothing with which to take care of herself or her daughters-in-law. She has no income, no place to live. She has nothing left but the Lord. She doesn't realize it now, but He is always more than enough!

2. Ruth 1:11-13 a No Hope For Tomorrow - Even her future is bleak. She has no husband, will have no more sons, she has nothing to look forward to in her life but grief and pain over the price being paid to sin! When she speaks of her future, she is speaking of the law of the Levirate marriage, Deuteronomy 25:5. (Note: Naomi is more concerned with the material than she is with the spiritual. Sin always warps your system of priorities and your concepts of right and wrong, Isaiah 5:20.)

C. Ruth 1:8-9, Ruth 1:15 The Consequences Of Her Defeat - Naomi actually encouraged Ruth and Orpah to return to their pagan gods and wicked lifestyles. She tells them that they will be better off in Moab. They might not be accepted in Israel. They will find husbands of "their own kind." She has lost all her ability to be a powerful witness for the glory of God. Naomi is proof of the truth that a sad and sin sick believer is a poor advertisement for the Gospel, Php 1:27; Matthew 5:13-16. (Note: No child of God should ever be guilty of hindering others from coming to Jesus Christ! We are to try to bring them in, not turn them away!) II. Ruth 1:14-15 ONE WIDOW IN THE PLACE OF DEPARTURE

(III. Orpah is a picture of a lost person who looks into the things of God and turns back to a life of sin without believing or embracing them.)

A. She Returned To Her Relatives - Often family ties and affections are a hindrance to some people's receiving the Lord.

B. She Returned To Her Religion - Evidently, even after all she had heard and seen of the God of Israel, her gods were still the object of her love and devotion.

C. She Returned To Her Reality - Orpah would have never been happy in Israel. She was still tied completely to Moab in her heart! (III. The tragedy of a lost church member!)

(Note: Orpah is a picture of that person who is a "mere professor" of faith in the Lord. She walked away from the light and is never heard from again. Her eternal destiny is not hard to figure, Psalms 9:17. Friend, don't turn your back on Jesus, He is the only hope you have, John 14:6.) III. Ruth 1:15-18 ONE WIDOW IN THE PLACE OF DECISION

(III. Ruth is a picture of that lost sinner who looks into the things of God and believes them by faith. She is a real possessor. She enters the family of God and makes a total commitment to follow the Lord forever!)

A. Ruth 1:16 a Ruth Decides To Follow - Even though Naomi has nothing to offer her, come what may, Ruth decides that she will follow Naomi. Evidently, something (Someone) had worked in her heart! She is proof positive that God will speak to the hearts of sinners regardless of what His people do! (Note: Thank God for those who love Him even when He doesn't give them things!) (Note: How important was this decision? It determined that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem.) What have you decided concerning Jesus?

B. Ruth 1:16 b Ruth Decides By Faith - She adopts a new family and a new Lord by faith. She received a new life and a new Lord because she exercised faith! (Note: Everything changes at Calvary! 2 Corinthians 5:17; Luke 4:18; Romans 6:6 - In Jesus, we are new and free!)

C. Ruth 1:17 Ruth Decides Finally - She makes a total commitment that extends all the way to death. She devotes every second of every remaining day to walking with the Lord. For her, there would be no looking back! (Note: What's back there anyway? Death, Defeat, Darkness and doom!)(Note: Genuine Christianity is about a total commitment, Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:26-27; Luke 14:33.) Is your all His? Are you all His?)

Conc: Which of these poor widows best represents the life you are living right now? Are you like Naomi, a person who knows the Lord but needs to return to the place of blessing? Could you be

an Orpah, you have looked into the things of the Lord and have decided not to follow Him, but have chosen your life and your sin over the will of God? Or, would you be like Ruth, you have made your decision to follow the Lord, come what may, until He takes you home? Which of these women best represents the life you are living right now?

If you are saved and away from the Lord, I invite you to come home. If you are lost and are thinking about a life of faith, I invite you to receive Jesus today. If you are saved, secure and settled I invite you to come before Him to worship, praise and thank Him for grace.

## 07.04. Coming Home The Hard Way - Rth 1:19-22

---

### Ruth 1:19-22 COMING HOME THE HARD WAY

Intro: A foolish old farmer, so the story goes, concluded one day that the oats he had fed his mule for years were simply costing him too much. So he hatched a plan: he mixed a little sawdust in with the feed, and then a little more the next day, and even more the next, each time reducing the amount of oats in the mix. The mule didn't seem to notice the gradual change, so the farmer thought things were fine and kept decreasing the proportion of oats. But weeks later, on the day he finally fed the poor beast nothing but sawdust, the mule finished the meal and fell over dead. A silly tale, perhaps, but it serves as a parable of the backslider--the Christian who slips further and further away from God through unrepented sin or neglect. Though we know our souls cannot survive on spiritual sawdust, we may well convince ourselves that a little won't hurt too much, and a little less real spiritual food won't be missed. Then, over time, the proportion of sawdust increases while the oats gradually disappear. Before long, the change is complete, and our starved, sawdust-stuffed spiritual life has collapsed.

Surely this is how Naomi found herself in Moab with a dead husband and two dead sons. She never meant for it to happen, but one day she woke up to find that she was miles away from where the Lord wanted her to be. This passage is all about how Naomi found her way home to Bethlehem and to the place fo blessing.

I know that I am preaching to some people who have allowed a little sin here or a little slackness there and today, you find yourself in a place, spiritually, that you never thought possible. You look around at all that you have lost as a result of your you backslidden condition and you wonder if there is hope for your spiritual restoration. The answer to that question is "Yes!" And this passage has something to say about how that can happen in your life. Let's watch as Naomi returns to Bethlehem and think on the thought "Coming Home The Hard Way."

#### I. Ruth 1:19 a THE ARRIVAL IN BETHLEHEM

(III. The trip from Moab to Bethlehem would have taken between 7-10 days. It would have required them to cross the river Jordan and to climb the 2000 plus feet in elevation required to reach Bethlehem. It would have been easy to stop short of the city, but they continued until they were where they were supposed to be! III. Repentance is the same way! Don't stop until you have come all the way back!) (Note: There is no record of their conversation as they traveled. This reminds us that a person's repentance is a private matter. It is between them and the Lord and we cannot judge their condition by what they do or by what they don't do!)

A. To The City Of God's Praise - (Judah = Praise) Bethlehem was the place where the Lord was honored and exalted. There was no praise in Naomi's heart when she was in Moab. That child of God who is away from the Father's house cannot have a heart of praise, nor can their life be honoring to the Lord!

B. To The City Of God's Presence - (Ruth 1:6) God had visited His people in Bethlehem. While Naomi was in Moab, she was away from the Lord's presence! When a saint is away from the Lord's will, he cannot enjoy the presence of God! (Ill. Jonah - Jonah 1:3) When a believer returns, he can once again enjoy the blessed presence of the Lord, Psalms 16:11.

C. To The City Of God's Provision - (Bethlehem = "House Of Bread") It was in the city of Bethlehem that Naomi would find the best of God's provisions. It was there where she could be fed! So it is with the saint. God's best blessings are reserved for those who will stay close to where He is working!

D. To The City Of God's People - She returned to a place of kindred spirits and like-minded people. In Moab she was different! In Bethlehem, she belonged! So it is with the wayward child of God! Can you think of those who have wandered away from the place where God meets with His people? Thank God, they (or you) can come home again!

## II. Ruth 1:19-21 THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO BETHLEHEM

(Ill. "Moved about them". Means the city was disturbed and in an uproar. Naomi's return to Bethlehem alone, broke and in the company of a Gentile made news all over town!)

A. Ruth 1:21 She Spoke Of God's Providence - "The LORD hath brought me home again." She told of how the Lord worked to bring her home. I wonder how many times she had to tell of the death of her husband and her sons? (Note: It was still home! Ill. "I will return to my father's house.", Luke 15:1-32.) (Ill You can run from the Lord, but you cannot hide - Ill. Jonah!)

B. Ruth 1:20-21 She Spoke Of God's Punishment - "Hath testified; hath afflicted" She seems to blame all this on the Lord, but it was all the result of her own choices! (Note: Her words reveal her heart, "I went out...") (Note: "Naomi" = "Pleasant"; "Mara" = "Bitter") (Note: Evidently, Elimelech was a wealthy man when he left Bethlehem for Moab, Ruth 1:21 She left full and returned home empty. The Lord will fill you up, but the plan of the devil is to empty you out!) (Note: God knows how to get our attention!)

C. Ruth 1:21 She Spoke Of God's Patience - She brought about her own troubles, but the Lord worked hard in her life to bring her home! Why her and not Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion? Perhaps his heart was fixed, but Naomi's was still teachable, she had not allowed her heart to be hardened. (Ill. A Seared Conscience - 1 Timothy 4:2.) (Note: Thank God for His patience in our lives!) Ill. Ruth 1:22 THE ANTICIPATION IN BETHLEHEM

A. It Was A Time Of Blood - The time of barley harvest was also the time of Passover. A time to shed the blood of the lamb and commemorate the deliverance of God's people from sin, Exodus 12:1-51. It is a picture of coming home through the blood, 1 John 1:7-10. Thank God ,the blood of the Lamb is sufficient to take care of the sins of the wayward saint!

B. It Was A Time Of Bounty - This was also the time of the Feast of the Firstfruits, Leviticus 23:1-14. A time when the first of the barley harvest was offered in a wave offering before the Lord as an of gratitude for the harvest that was about to be reaped. When the priest made the wave offering, he was saying, "This is just the first, there is more in the way!" (Note: Jesus is presented as the "Firstfruits from the dead" in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 15:20; 1 Corinthians 15:23!) (Note: It is always a time of harvest when a wandering child returns home!) (Ill. The Prodigal!)

C. It Was A Time Of Beginning - Naomi wanted her name to be changed to "Mara." But, when the Holy Spirit mentions her in Ruth 1:22, He calls her "Naomi". She may have been "bitter" in heart, but the Lord had some "pleasant" blessings ahead for this woman. (Note: "Is this Naomi?" The people of Bethlehem were amazed at her appearance and problems, (Ill. Sin brings along trouble!) but the Lord was about to give her blessings and glories that she could not have been imagined! While people may mourn over the troubles of the sinner, but there is joy in heaven over a repentant sinner, Luke 15:7.)

Conc: My friends, where has this message found you today? Has sin and worldly living stripped you of all the Lord has done in your life? Do you need a fresh start today?

Two thousand years ago Jesus Christ told the story of a boy who left his father's house to find fun and adventure in the world. When he had lost everything he owned and wound up in a place he never thought he would be, he decided to go home. What he found was a father ready to forgive him, love him and restore him to a place of perfect fellowship and blessing. Is that what you need today? If so, then what you need is just steps away. Will you come?

Others need to come to the Lord for salvation. You have nothing but the sorrow of sin today and the prospect of Hell tomorrow. Jesus Christ died for you. If you will come to Him today, He will save you by His grace.

## 07.05. Searching For Grace - Rth 2:1-3

---

### Ruth 2:1-3 SEARCHING FOR GRACE

Intro: There are three primary personalities that are presented in the book of Ruth. First, there is Naomi. She is a picture of a backslidden believer. In chapter one, we are shown how she wandered away from the Lord and the terrible price she paid for her sins. We are also shown how, in the end, she returned to the place of blessing. She is a lesson in hope for everyone who has turned their backs on the things of the Lord.

Another of the persons we meet in this book is a man named Boaz. He is a clear picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. More will be said about him later in this message and in future sermons. The third main character of this story is a Gentile girl named Ruth. She is a young lady from a pagan country who comes to know the true God. She is a picture in this passage of a brand new convert, a young Christian who is just beginning to learn about and grow in the things of the Lord. She is just beginning to experience the great blessings of the Lord and His grace. As we look in on the activities of Ruth in these verses, we see a woman who is searching for grace. I want to point out some elements of her search this morning. As I do, I want you to know that these elements reveal what ought to be the goal and focus of every genuine believer. Let's look in on Ruth as we see her Searching For Grace.

#### I. Ruth 2:2 THE PURPOSE IN HER SEARCH

A. She Was Searching For Food - Ruth wants to go to the fields and glean ears of corn. She and Naomi need food to eat. The main thrust of her search is to find food for the body. (Note: She illustrates that desire that is birthed in the heart of the child of God at conversion: a desire to know more about the Lord and to grow in Him. Ill. Job 23:12; Jeremiah 15:16; 1 Peter 2:2. Ill. Php 3:10. It is learning to partake of the Word of God that causes growth in the life of a believer!)

B. She Was Searching For Favor - "I shall find grace" Ruth was looking for some land owner who would be pleased to accept her and to allow her to glean in his fields. In spite of her nationality. In spite of her past. In spite of who she was, she was looking for grace. (Note: She pictures that new born child of God who wants more than anything to please the Lord. Every dilemma is faced with regard to "What would Jesus do?" There is an overwhelming desire to just "please the Lord". This is part of having the "first love", Revelation 2:1-7.) (Note: Many, like Ruth, worry about being accepted by the Lord. Friend, your past is no longer an issue if you are saved by the grace of God. He has given you a brand new start, 2 Corinthians 5:17.)

C. She Was Searching For Fulfillment - Her statement "Let me now go", shows that she is itching to be a blessing to Naomi. Ruth simply wants to serve. (Note: In this she is again a picture of a new believer. When a person is saved by the grace of God, they want to do something for the glory of the Lord. They want to serve Jesus, Ill. Demonic - Mark 5:18-20.)

#### II. V. 3 THE PROVIDENCE IN HER SEARCH

A. Involved God's Command In The Past - Ruth went to a field and began to glean. She was allowed to do this because of a command that God had given in the ancient past, Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:19-22. God had worked in her past to take care of her present need. (Note: The same is true in the life of the believer. Our present standing in Jesus was made possible because of what God did in the ancient past, We were chosen and elected in the past, Ephesians 1:4-6; Jesus was provided for our salvation before man ever sinned, Revelation 13:8, 1 Peter 1:18-20. Everything we have and are today is a product of the past work of the Lord, and of His grace, 1 Corinthians 15:10.)

B. Involved God's Control In The Present - This verse says that it was her "hap" to go into a field owned by this man named Boaz. From a human perspective it looked as though it was purely coincidental. However, for God's perspective, it was sovereignty in action. He had already determined that there was going to be a wedding, and a baby for Ruth! Ruth doesn't know it, but the Lord is pulling all the strings of her life to get her in the right place at the right time. (Note: Just as the Lord worked in Ruth's life He works in each of our lives. Nothing happens by accident! The words accident, happenstance and coincidence do not exist in God's dictionary! He moves powerfully and providentially to bring about His will in your life and mine! That is why we can have confidence as believer! God is always working and moving in our lives to accomplish one goal: He is reproducing His Son in every saint of God, Romans 8:28-31.) III. Ruth 2:1 THE PERSON IN HER SEARCH

(III. She thought she was looking for a meal, but God was about to introduce her to a man. She went to find some food, God was about to give her a new family. Note: Although Ruth doesn't know it right now, this Boaz is the real object of her search. Notice what the Bible teaches us about this man.)

A. He Was A Related Man - This verse tells us that he was a "kinsman." He was just what Ruth needed, although she didn't know it. Boaz was qualified to perform the function of the "Kinsman Redeemer" to these widows, according to the Law of God, Numbers 27:8-11. (Note: Boaz is a type of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. He became a "kinsman" to us so that He might redeem us from our sins, Php 2:5-8.)

B. He Was A Rich Man - He was "a mighty man of wealth". This means that Boaz possessed all the necessary resources to carry out the task of redemption. (Note: Jesus Christ also is a man of sufficient resources to carry out the plan of redemption. He possesses perfect righteousness, 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22-24; Isaiah 53:4-6. He possesses everlasting love for the fallen, Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 5:8, John 3:16. He possesses infinite grace, sufficient to save any soul that will bow to God in faith and repentance, Ephesians 2:8-9. (III. Paul - 1 Timothy 1:12-17!) He completed God's plan for your redemption in its entirety, Hebrews 10:11-14, Hebrews 9:24-28; and now God is satisfied, 1 John 2:1; Isaiah 53:11.) (III. Salvation may be free, but it wasn't cheap! Still, you can be saved today if you will come to Jesus by faith!)

C. He Was A Respected Man - We are told that Boaz was "a mighty man". His name means, "In it is strength." It sounds as though he was a respected man. Some scholars believe that Boaz and Ibzan, an Israelite judge, Judges 12:8-10, are the same fellow. It is this man that Ruth will meet, fall in love with and come to know intimately. (Note: Again, he is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ in that God has given Jesus an exalted Name, Php 2:9-11. Men may mock Him and use His name

as a byword, but in Heaven, that Name evokes worship and celebration! Of course, on day, He will receive the respect He is due from all men, Romans 14:11, III. Revelation 5:1-13! It is far better to do it now than to wait until that day!)

Conc: I want to conclude this section from Ruth with three questions. They are simple. You know the answers and all you have to do is be honest in dealing with them.

1. Are you saved, not a church member, not a good person, but truly born again?
2. If you are saved, can you honestly say that you are growing in the Lord as you should be? It is God's command and desire that we grow, 2 Peter 3:18.
3. Are you hungry for something in your spiritual life that you do not have right now? If so, it is available from the Lord, Psalms 84:11; Matthew 11:28. God has what each of you is looking for this morning if you will come to Him and get it.

## 07.06. In The Field Of Grace - Rth 2:4-17

---

### Ruth 2:4-17 IN THE FIELD OF GRACE

Intro: Ruth is a widow from Moab. In the mind of the average Israelite, she is less than nothing. A person to be despised and rejected. She is just a pagan sinner looking for a little grace. Ruth 2:2-3 tell us that she has gone to hunt for food. This involved her entering fields that belonged to total strangers, falling in line behind that man's servants who were reaping the fields and trying to find a little grain here and there. She was looking for just enough to make a meal for herself and her mother-in-law. Ruth 2:2 tells us that she went out looking "for grace". Ruth 2:3 tells us that she found it! Even though Ruth didn't know it at the time, God was directing her steps to bring her face to face with a man by the name of Boaz. When she went to glean in his field, she entered the field of grace.

Boaz is a clear picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. His actions in his field that day show us how the Lord Jesus acts toward those who are in His field, the church. I want us to consider Ruth and Boaz today as we find them In The Field Of Grace. Notice the picture Boaz paints of Jesus and the lessons he teaches us about our Lord!

I. Ruth 2:4-7 HIS CONSIDERING WORK A. V. 4-5a He Is Present In His Field - (Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20) 1. His Present Is Personal - Revelation 2:1

2. His Presence Is By Proxy - Even though Jesus is in heaven today, His Spirit is ever present with the church - John 14:16-18.

3. His Presence Is Pleasant - (Note: The gracious greeting between Boaz and his servants.) (Note: Jesus never brings strife or trouble, but always the breath of Heaven and the fragrant breezes of glory! - Psalms 16:11.)

B. Ruth 2:5-7 He Is Perceptive Concerning His Field - The heavenly Boaz misses nothing that transpires in His field, Proverbs 15:3; Matthew 10:29-31. The Lord's eyes are on His church and He misses nothing that happens. But, He is also interested in the individual!

1. Ruth 2:5 b His Perception Is Personal - (Note: Ruth caught his eye!) (Note: Jesus loves the individual! You have caught His eye! He cares about you! Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 8:38-39)

2. Ruth 2:6-7 His Perception Is Powerful - (Note: Boaz knew about her background, her activities and her motives.) (Note: Jesus knows everything there is to know about us, and yet He still loves us and desires to be with us. I find that amazing!) (Note: He calls us saints and we are so sorry. He calls us friends and we are such failures. That is grace, pure and simple!)

II. Ruth 2:8-9 HIS COMMANDING WORK

(III. Boaz has a few works of counsel for Ruth. These commands are designed to encourage her in her work of gleaning. They also speak to us today as well.)

A. Ruth 2:8-9 a Concerning Ruth's Steadfastness - She is commanded to glean in his fields only. Ruth doesn't know it, but Boaz has plans to take care of her. If she will abide in his field, she will enjoy the best he has to offer. (Note: The same is true for the child of God. If we will abide faithful in His field, He will bless us beyond our wildest dreams. The reason so many miss out on the Lord's best for their lives is that they glean here and there and never settle down and make the Lord's will their number one priority! We cannot glean here and there and expect God to bless us! God is looking for faithful stewards - 1 Corinthians 4:2.)

B. Ruth 2:9 b Concerning Ruth's Safety - Boaz has commanded the men to leave her alone. Boaz is making sure that no one takes unfair advantage of Ruth. He is telling her not to worry, he has taken care of the details for her. She can trust him to look after her. (Note: What a lesson for the church! We can trust our Lord to take care of us! He is more concerned over our welfare than we are, Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4:17.)

C. Ruth 2:9 c Concerning Ruth's Supply - Boaz makes sure she knows that he has everything she needs to be satisfied. She didn't even have to work to get any of it! (Note: So it is with the children of the Lord. He has all we need to be satisfied as we walk through this world. If only we would learn to appropriate that which He has already provided! Jesus has and is all we need! He is rest for the weary, Matthew 11:28, Psalms 23:2-3. He is refreshment for the thirsty, John 7:37, Psalms 23:2. He is food for the hungry, John 6:35; Psalms 23:5. He is healing to the injured, Psalms 23:5. He is hope for the discouraged, Psalms 23:5-6. He is shelter for the frightened, Psalms 23:4. He is all you need! Have you discovered that truth yet? It is summed up in Psalms 23:1 - "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.") III. Ruth 2:10-14 HIS COMFORTING WORK

A. Ruth 2:10 Her Amazement - Ruth finds herself humbled by her grace. (Note: There are times when the thought of what He has done for you and me is overwhelming! Php 2:5-11; Isaiah 53:1-12. Does grace still amaze you?)

B. Ruth 2:11-12 His Announcement - Boaz tells Ruth that he knows about her deeds and he knows about her faith in the Lord. He prays that she will receive a full reward for the service she rendered to Naomi! (Note: Just a word here for the struggling saint! Friend, people may call into question your actions and your motives, but the Lord knows your heart, 1 Samuel 16:7. One day, there will be a full reward given to the faithful child of God, 2 Timothy 4:6-8!)

C. Ruth 2:13 Her Appeal - She is still looking for grace and doesn't even realize that she has walked right into the middle of a field full of grace! She just wants to "please him." He has been good to her and she wants to do that which pleases him. (Note: This needs to be the goal of every child of God! Stop trying to live pleasing to every body in the world and just live to please the Lord! Friend, that will make your life real simple, real fast! He is already pleased positionally. We are as righteous as we are ever going to be, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. However, day by day, we need to live our lives in such a way that we please the Lord. How? By loving Him, worshiping Him, by putting Him ahead of everything else in this world.)

D. Ruth 2:14 His Acceptance - There are a few things that Boaz did in this verse that prove beyond all doubts that Ruth found favor in his eyes.)

1. He Sat With Her - He invited her to join him at the meal table and sat close enough to her to pass the corn. He didn't care about her past. She had captured his heart. (Note: You past in no

barrier between you and the Lord when it has been dealt with in salvation. You are brought into a position of nearness to Him. (III. John at the last supper - close enough to feel the breath of the Lord on his head, John 13:25.) He sits with us today!)

2. He Supped With Her - He allowed her to dip her bread in his vinegar. This was an intimate meal! This speaks of close fellowship. (Note: there are times in life when the Lord will "sup" with His children, Revelation 3:20. He desires that we be close to Him so that He might fill our lives with His best!)

3. He Sufficed Her - When Ruth left that table she was satisfied! (Note: There is no need for an child of God to unfulfilled as a believer. The Lord has provided all the resources we need to filled above measure with His goodness and glory. Our duty is to receive what He gives us and to enjoy it to the full! We have already been blessed to the full, Ephesians 1:3. There is no excuse for defeat and dissatisfaction in the Christian life.) IV. Ruth 2:15-17 HIS CONCEALING WORK

(III. After Ruth left the table, Boaz continued to work in her absence. He was even working behind her back to take care of her.)

A. A Work Of Providence - He made some decisions behind the scenes that affected her life. He was working for her good, even when she did not know it! (Note: The Lord is always working behind the scenes in your life and mine to bring about His best for us. This is called Sovereignty and Providence. (III. Joseph - Genesis 50:20.)

B. A Work Of Provision - Boaz commanded his men to drop "handfuls on purpose." Why? He wanted Ruth to get so much in his field that she would not want to go anywhere else! (Note: That is how the Lord operates on our behalf! He is so good to His children, that no one in their right spiritual mind would ever consider gleaning anywhere else.) (Note: Praise God for His "Handfuls on Purpose", those times when He blesses you just because He can!)

C. A Work Of Plenty - When Ruth left that day, she left carrying a half-bushel of grain. More than enough to feed them for a week. (Note: There are times in life when the Lord will simply load your wagon! He will give you more than you need.)

Conc: Ruth had no worries when she was in the field of grace. No one harassed her, no one hindered her. She rested when she was weary. She ate when she was hungry. She drank when she was thirsty. Every need was met by Boaz. Friend, when you are saved and are gleaning in the field of the Lord's grace, you will find all you need. Are you in that field? Are you gleaning in that field? Would you like to get into that field? If so, there's still plenty to go around in the field of grace owned by our heavenly Boaz. If you need grace, you come to Him. In His presence, you will find all you will ever need!

## 07.07. Good News From The Field Of Grace - Rth 2:17-21

---

### Ruth 2:17-21 GOOD NEWS FROM THE FIELD OF GRACE

Intro: Ruth the Moabitess has gone to the field of Boaz to glean barley. While she was there, she met the owner of the field. She caught his eye. She ate lunch at his table and he personally served her the food. When she left the field that day, she left with more than she bargained for. She returns home that evening weary and tired from her labors, but she has a tale to tell. All day, her mother-in-law Naomi would have been waiting for her to return with enough grain for a little meal. When Ruth does return, she is loaded down with enough grain to last them a week. Not only does she have grain, but she has some good news to tell as well.

I want to share that good news with you today. It is news that we all need to hear, because this Good News From The Field Of Grace will help each of us to grow in our own walk with the Lord. There are some mighty big truths here for those willing to grab hold of them this morning. Allow me to share with you this Good News From The Field Of Grace.

#### I. Ruth 2:17-18 GOOD NEWS ABOUT THEIR PROVISIONS

A. Ruth 2:17 Provisions That Were Designed To Satisfy - When Ruth returns home, she has 25lbs of barley. This is more than enough to feed these 2 women for a week. She went looking for enough for one meal and returned with enough to feed them for a week. Boaz wanted her to get so much in his field that she would never even dream of gleaning anywhere else. (Note: Our Heavenly Boaz is determined to bless His people, Ephesians 1:3. He wants to give you so much that you will never think of going anywhere else to glean.) (Note: Ruth's words to Naomi in Ruth 2:21 serve to show them that the blessings would continue until the end of the harvest. The Lord doesn't intend to stop blessing you until you leave this world. Then, the real blessings begin, Ephesians 2:7!)

B. Ruth 2:18 Provisions That Were Designed To Show - Can you see Ruth as she throws that 25lb across her shoulder and heads into the city? Everyone who sees her pass by knows that she is that Moab girl. They know she has nothing and by now most of them know she has gone to the field of Boaz to glean. They can see that she has received a blessing just by watching her go past. It might be that Boaz was making a statement to the community. That sack of grain trumpeted, "I've got my eye on Ruth, and I'm going to be a blessing to her life." (Note: God's blessings in your life are designed to show a lost world just how good God is. He blesses His people to create a desire for Him in the hearts of those who do not know Him. That is why He gives us grace for living. He wants to use us as living testimonies to His grace, His power and His glory, Matthew 5:16. As we live out the real blessings of God, the world is going to be affected by God's work in us! What are the real blessings of God? "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Galatians 5:22-23! A child of God who displays these graces in his or her life is a child of God who walks in victory!)

C. Ruth 2:18 Provisions That Were Designed To Share - Not only does she share the bounty of her provision with Naomi, but she also shares the remaining part of her portion that she was given by Boaz in Ruth 2:14. Ruth isn't selfish, she wants to share what she has with Naomi. (Note: We are not to simply hoard up the blessings of the Lord, but we are to share them with others. Whatever we have been blessed with by God has been given to us to use for His glory. Whether it be a talent, God's truth, a gift, financial resources, etc. His blessings are given to us so that we might share them with others.) (Note: Ruth got what she did because she was willing to work for it! She gleaned and she got! The same is true in spiritual matters! You get out of something about as much as you put into it! Whether it be prayer, worship our just victory in your daily life, it isn't for the lazy! God's best is reserved for those who are willing to deny themselves, take up His cross daily and follow Him, Matthew 16:24.) II. Ruth 2:19-21 GOOD NEWS ABOUT A PERSON

A. Ruth 2:19 A Person Who Is Interested In The Situation - When Naomi sees all that Ruth has returned with, she is overwhelmed and begins to magnify the person who has given so much. She can easily see that you don't get this much by merely gleaning! She knows that someone has blessed them with an open hand! She blesses the person who "has taken knowledge of thee". The word "knowledge" conveys the idea of "paying attention to; to acknowledge; to notice". Naomi realizes that the person who gave them this grain has noticed Ruth and wanted to be a special blessing to her. Naomi doesn't know it yet, neither does Ruth, but Ruth has been noticed by one who is interested in knowing her better, Ruth 2:5, Ruth 2:8-9, Ruth 2:14, Ruth 2:21. He is interested in her situation! (Note: The Lord Jesus is interested in you this morning! Wherever you may be in your spiritual journey, Jesus is interested in knowing you better. If you are lost, He is interested in knowing you in salvation. If you are cold and backslidden, He is interested in knowing you intimately. If you are defeated, He is interested in leading you to the place of power and victory. The question is: Are you interested in what He has to offer you?)

B. Ruth 2:19 A Person Who Is Involved In The Situation - Not only is Boaz interested in Ruth's situation, he is now involved. He has opened his hands and his heart to her and is taking steps to improve her condition, Ruth 2:11; Ruth 2:15-16. He is busy working behind the scenes to do what Ruth needs. He is involved in her life. (Note: Our heavenly Boaz is also involved in your life. Oh, there are times when He cannot be seen and there are times when His Hand is not visible, but you can rest assured that He is actively working on your behalf to fulfill His plan for your life! III. Psalms 121:1-8.)

C. Ruth 2:20-21 A Person Who Is An Instrument In The Situation - Boaz doesn't even realize the extent that he is being used in the lives of these two women. He had become an instrument in the hand of the Lord. There are three ways in which Boaz is being used by God as an instrument of blessing.

1. He Is An Instrument Of Revival - If you will look at Ruth 1:20-21, you will see that Naomi is a defeated and discouraged woman. She is this way because of her backslidden condition. However, when Ruth returns from the field of grace with the good news of Boaz, Naomi is once more restored to the place of worship and victory. God has used this man to encourage the heart of one of His children. (Note: You might be in a position this morning in which you have allowed your heart to grow cold and hard toward the things of the Lord. I just want to remind you that if you are His, He knows where you are and one day, He will show up and set things right in your heart

and life. Just because you are down, you are not out! One of the first steps in getting back in the place of His best blessings is to come before Him and deal with whatever is lacking in your life. This is the challenge for the Word of God - 1 John 1:9; Psalms 51:7-12!)

2. He Is An Instrument Of Redemption - As Naomi listens to Ruth speak, the wheels of her mind are turning. She hears the name Boaz and says that he is "near of kin". This means that she thinks he might be a distant relative of theirs. Then she remembers who he is and says, "he is one of our next kinsmen". Now, she begins to realize all that the Lord is doing. In His providence, He has brought Ruth into contact with one who has the right of redemption according to the Law, Leviticus 25:25-34. You can almost see her regaining her spiritual confidence. (III. The Levirate Law of Redemption.) For a man to be a Kinsman Redeemer three things had to be true:

A. He Had To Be Related - Boaz is related, Ruth 2:1. (Note: So is Jesus - Php 2:5-11; John 1:1; John 1:14!)

B. He Had To Be Able To Redeem - Boaz is a mighty man of wealth, Ruth 2:1. (Note: Jesus is able to redeem all who come to Him for salvation - Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 10:10-14.)

C. He Had To Be Willing To Redeem - Everything Boaz is doing suggests that he is willing to do anything to get to know Ruth. (Note: Jesus was more than willing to pay the price for our redemption - John 18:37; Romans 5:8; Isaiah 53:4-7.)

(Note: These women needed a redeemer. If they didn't find one, they would live their lives in poverty. If you are not saved, you need a redeemer! You have one if you will accept Him. His name is Jesus and He died for you!) (Note: If you will take a minute to think back over what the Lord has done for you if you are saved, you will have to admit that you have many reasons to praise His Name and to rejoice in Him this morning! Are you doing it?)

3. He Is An Instrument Of Refreshment - Ruth tells Naomi in Ruth 2:21 that she will be going back to the field of grace to work until the harvest has ended. In other words, they are going to enjoy plenty because of this man named Boaz. I would imagine that every day he reminded the reapers to drop the "Handfuls on Purpose" for Ruth. Everyday he would see that she had parched corn, a cool drink of water and all the grain she could carry when she left the field. He was going to be a blessing to Naomi and Ruth. (Note: Just a reminder to you who are living on spiritual scraps this morning, Jesus wants to load your wagon! He has glory, and power, and victory and blessing for every one of His children, Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 15:57. But, it isn't for the lazy. For Ruth to get what Boaz wanted her to have when would have to go to the field of grace day by day and work. So it is in the spiritual realm. If you want the best, then you have to pay the price in prayer, holiness and time spent in communion with the Lord. Your walk with the Lord is no stronger, no deeper, no greater than you want it to be! If there is a lack in your life spiritually, it's not everyone around you! If you want to see the problem, look no farther than the nearest mirror. Better yet, look no farther than your own heart, for there lies the problem and the solution. III. Your help lies in David's Psalm of repentance - Psalms 32:1-11.)

Conc: Did you need to hear some of these truths this morning? Does your relationship and fellowship with the Lord need help today? The first step to take is a step in His direction. If He has challenged you as a believer about your personal walk with Him, then come to this altar and do something about it! If He has showed you that you are lost and headed to Hell, then get down here

and receive Jesus as your Savior and let God change the outcome and direction of your life. There's good news from the field of grace! But, it will never help you until you deal with it on a personal level!

## 07.08. Abiding In The Field Of Grace - Rth 2:21-23

---

### Ruth 2:21-23 ABIDING IN THE FIELD OF GRACE

Intro: Ruth has been gleaning in the field of Boaz, while there she got more grain than she bargained for. She also caught the eye of the wealthy field owner, a man by the name of Boaz. He works things out for her so that she leaves his field with more enough grain to feed her and her mother in law for a week or more! She also leaves that field with instructions from Boaz. You see, this man is falling in love with Ruth and he is determined to get to know her better. Before she leaves, she is invited by Boaz to abide in his field until the harvest has ended. He wants to take care of Ruth and see that she has all she needs and more! He wants to be blessing to her life.

I would remind you that Boaz is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. In these verses, we see a portrait of how the Lord works with His people and how His people should respond to Him. You see, like Boaz, the Lord Jesus possesses a big field of grace and He wants us to abide in it. If we will abide in the field of grace, He will see to it that we get everything we need and much more. Allow me to point out the great blessings that are contained in these verses. I want to preach for a few minutes on the subject Abiding In The Field Of Grace.

#### I. Ruth 2:21 RUTH IS INVITED TO ABIDE

A. It Was A Personal Invitation - "He said unto me" - Boaz is interested in Ruth as an individual. He wants to know her better. He is concerned about her. (Note: Jesus Christ is a personal Savior! He is interested in a personal relationship with each of us, Romans 10:13. He is interested in us personally. He wants out walk with Him to be an intimate one, John 15:5-6. III. Revelation 3:20.)

B. It Was A Precise Invitation - Boaz told her exactly what she was to do, "Abide in my field." He left no question as to what he expected from Ruth. (Note: So it is with Jesus. He wants us to be in an intimate, abiding relationship with Him, John 15:4; John 15:15-16.) (Note: Jesus doesn't want His people gleaning in His field one day and another field another day. He wants us to live a live that is consistent. One that feeds off of our relationship with Him. One that requires Him to exist. He wants there to be a hunger in the heart for Him, Psalms 42:1-2.)

C. It Was A Promising Invitation - "until they have ended all my harvest." Boaz wanted Ruth to know that she was invited to glean in his fields until everything had been gathered. This promised her that she would enjoy plenty until the harvest was over. (Note: The relationship Jesus wants to have with His children is not a short term situation! He wants us to abide in His field until all His harvest has ended. That is why He has promised us that He will never leave us, Hebrews 13:5. That is why He has promised us that He will never cast us away, John 6:37.) (Note: Those who enter into this kind of relationship with the Lord Jesus find themselves in a fertile field of grace, where is presence and His blessings are rich and real! His blessings do not have to be hit or miss, but they can be as constant as the North Star!) II. Ruth 2:22 RUTH IS INSTRUCTED TO ABIDE

A. The Character Of The Field - Ruth is told that "it is good". This is a good field! It was a proven field, Ruth 2:17. It was a productive field, Ruth 2:1-23; It was a promising field, Ruth 2:21. This speaks to the quality of the field! (Note: The field of grace that Jesus expects us to abide in is a field of the best character. Staying with Him will produce the fruit of His image in your life, Romans 8:29. Gleaning in any other field leads to destruction and death, Proverbs 16:25. The character of the Lord's field is that it is a good field. It is the best field. For those who have gleaned there and tasted the fruit thereof would never think of gleaning anywhere else. When you can have all that Jesus offers, why would you settle for anything else?)

B. The Completeness Of The Field - Ruth found more than just food when she was in the field of Boaz. She found peace, safety, security, hope, refreshment, relationships, hope, promise, goodness, kindness, and blessing, Ruth 2:9-17.) This speaks to the quantity of the field. (Note: When you glean in the field of the Lord Jesus and determine that you will abide there through the times of bounty as well as the lean times, you will find that His field contains all you need to sustain you through all times.) (Note: Is Jesus all you need? That's not nearly enough! Is Jesus all you want? That's not far enough either! He wants us to come to the place where Jesus is all we have, Hebrews 13:5 b! Paul said it best, Php 1:21. Where are you in that process?) When we come to the place where Jesus is all we have, we will find that we have all we want and all we need. He offers completeness for all those who glean in His field, Php 4:11-13.

C. The Company Of The Field - When Ruth was gleaning in the field of Boaz, she had precious relationships with the men in the field, Ruth 2:4-7, Ruth 2:9; with the maidens in the field, Ruth 2:8, Ruth 2:22; and with the master of the field himself, Boaz, Ruth 2:7-18. (Note: When we learn to abide in the Lord's field, we are also privileged to enter into some glorious relationships. First, there is the relationship with the people of God! Our fellowship together is precious! We are a body, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. We are part of a fellowship, 1 John 1:3. Thank God for His people! They are precious! Secondly, we have a relationship with the Master of the field, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a close relationship, 1 John 1:3, John 15:5. It is a permanent relationship, John 6:37; John 14:16. The relationships of His field are precious beyond words!) III. Ruth 2:23 RUTH IS INCLINED TO ABIDE

A. Her's Was A Continual Work - Ruth entered that field every day and gleaned faithfully until the harvest ended. (Note: That is what Jesus expects all of His people to do! He wants us to glean in His field faithfully every single day! He would have His people dedicated, consecrated, and consistently gleaning in His field, carrying out His will until He comes. III. Ephesians 2:8-10)

B. Her's Was A Completed Work - She was steadfast and dedicated until the work was finished. (Note: The Lord would have His people continue in His harvest work until He ends all the harvest. He is looking for those who will begin well, glean well and finish well. I want to be able to say what Paul said when he reached the end of the way, 2 Timothy 4:6-8.)

C. Her's Was A Consecrated Work - This verse tells us that she "dwelt with her mother in law." She was a young, beautiful, widow. She caught the eye of Boaz, and she probably caught the eye of other men in Bethlehem. Still she walked in integrity and maintained her purity through those difficult, lonely days. This speaks volumes about Ruth's character! She willingly submitted herself to the field, the future, her family and her new faith. In doing so, she sets the example for you and me. (Note: As we glean, we are to be faithful to do His will as we pass through this world. Are you

doing that? We are also to walk in integrity. We are to keep our lives clean and pleasing in the sight of the Lord for the glory of God. He would have His people be holy, 1 Peter 1:16. There are many who need to come before Him and make a fresh commitment to glean in His will, in the field of grace until the harvest is ended!)

Conc: Ruth committed herself to staying in the field of Boaz. She did not wander from field to field, but she settled down and worked in the fields of grace. I wish God's people could catch a vision of that truth today! Far too many of God's people are wandering here and there, gleaning in this field and then another. Would to God that we would just determine in our hearts that we are done playing with this thing and settle down to serve Him and glean in His field until He comes for us.

If you are not saved, I invite you to enter the field of grace by faith. He will save you today if you will come. If you are saved and have strayed from His field, I invite you to return, there is plenty for you to glean here. If you are doing your best to be consistent and faithful, I would encourage you to carry on. I've read the book and it won't be long until the harvest has ended and we are called to the big house.

## 07.09. Looking For A Little Rest - Rth 3:1-2

---

### Ruth 3:1-2 LOOKING FOR A LITTLE REST

Intro: When you hear the word "rest" what images come to mind? For me, the word conjures up images of me in my recliner, or of me stealing a few precious minutes on my "meditation sofa" in my study. For others, rest is a walk in the woods, or a few hours with a fishing rod in their hands. Still others rest by working in the garden and yard. For many, however, rest is an elusive thing. They do not know where to find it. Such is the case for the heroine in our text.

Ruth is a hard working widow from the country of Moab. She has been engaged in bone weary activity all through the long harvest season. She needs rest! She has been carrying the load of providing for herself and her mother in law, Naomi. She needs a rest! She has been living with the memories of a time when life was kinder, when there was a husband to love, when there was the hope of children to raise, when she taken care of and when she had the security all women long for. She needs a rest! In this text, she begins the process of obtaining that rest.

Surely, by this time, Ruth has resigned herself to the idea that she will live out her life with Naomi. She must think that she will be required to shoulder the burden of caring for herself and her mother in law for many years to come. Little does she know that she is about to enter into a place of rest. She is about to have her burdens lifted and she is about to enter a relationship that will change everything in her life. In this passage, we are confronted with the idea of "rest". For Ruth, this rest was that of security and family. For us, it pictures something far more wonderful and precious. The rest is a portrait of that which the lost sinner finds when he enters a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. From this text, I want us to see the benefits that result from our entering into a "rest relationship" with Him.

Today, I would like to preach for a while on the subject, "Looking For A Little Rest." If you are tired and weary in and of the life you are living, then there will be help offered to you this morning. Let's observe the truth contained in this text.

#### I. THE PROPOSAL FOR REST

A. The Nature Of This Rest - When Naomi speaks of "rest", she is speaking of a marriage. As a Gentile widow in that Jewish society, Ruth had few prospects. She is in desperate need of someone who will take her as his wife and provide her with the rest she needs. She is talking about a state in which Ruth can enjoy the security and peace that would accompany such a relationship. The word used here is very expressive. It has the following uses in the Bible:

- The absence of movement
- Being Settled
- Finality
- Victory

- Salvation
- Wholeness, or a state of well being
- Security
- A place to settle down, a home. (Ruth 3:1)

In other words, Naomi was hoping to provide Ruth with a relationship that would provide all of this for her. (Note: This what the world is after as well! For Ruth this would be found in a marriage relationship. For people in general, this will only be found in a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ! He promises all of this and more!)

B. The Necessity For This Rest - Ruth is in desperate need of such a relationship. You see, the harvest has ended, and with it, she has also seen the end of her supply from, and relationship with, Boaz. As a widow, Ruth has no means of supporting herself and her mother in law Naomi. She is in poverty and she needs help. She needs someone to come alongside of her and to take an interest in her and her need. She literally needs a Savior! (Note: Humanity desperately needs a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ! Why? Because of our Condition - Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-3. Because of our Condemnation - Romans 6:23, John 3:18; John 3:36. Unless we come to Christ, we are destined to live our lives in the poverty of spiritual darkness. Unless we meet Him by faith we are destined to go to Hell for all of eternity. We need the rest He offers us in Himself, Matthew 11:28.)

## II. THE PROMISE OF REST

(III. Naomi tells Ruth that she wants to find Ruth a husband because he can provide her with the things which she cannot provide for herself. She says "that it might be well with thee." This phrase literally means, "that you may have the best." This is a promise that is full of meaning for this young widow.)

A. The Promise Of Hope - If Ruth were to find such a marriage relationship, she would find relief from her past, her poverty and her pain. She would find the cure for her work, her worries and her wanderings. Instead of being a dead-end, life would suddenly have meaning for her. There would be hope for the future. Life might not be an endless series of days trying to scratch out a living in that unforgiving society. She might just find love! She might just have children! She might just find joy! (Note: Those who come into a love relationship with the Lord Jesus find far more than they counted on! They find that their lives are forever changed by His power. They find that they are loved, forgiven, part of something big and eternal. They find peace, joy and hope. They find not just the promise of rest, but they experience reality of rest first hand!)

B. The Promise Of Help - The rest promised Ruth a man who would meet her needs! A man who would love her and provide for her. A man who would take care of her and offer her the kind of security she could only dream about. It was the promise of help as she went down the path of life. (Note: What a picture of all the saints find in Jesus! He gives us hope day by day, but He also offers help along the way. No longer are we forced to go the way alone, now we have a companion, Hebrews 13:5. The saints need never fear being cast out, John 6:37. The saints need never fear where the road of life will take them, for Jesus scouts the way and plans the path. Thank God for His help as we travel toward glory.)

C. The Promise Of A Home - A marriage rest would provide Ruth with a new home. She would have a place to settle down and enjoy the blessings of her new relationship. (Note: The saints have a resting place as they travel through this world. That is true. However, I ma glad that I can remind you that there is a home awaiting us at the end of the way, John 14:1-3. A home where the burdens, pains and trials of life will not be allowed to follow, Revelation 21:4.) III. THE PLACE OF REST

(III. Naomi reveals the name of the person she has in mind to be Ruth's husband. She has already picked out Boaz. After all, he is kin folks. He has the finances to take care of the need and he seems interested in Ruth. Ruth's rest will not be found in a place, but in a person.)

A. He Had The Right Reputation - His reputation is stated in Ruth 2:1 and demonstrated through his actions. He displayed compassion, wisdom and grace in his dealings with Ruth. He cared about Ruth in spite of her past, in spite of what the community though about her or in spite of what she could offer him. He loved her like she was and he acted in grace toward her. (Note: Our heavenly Boaz, has the same reputation. Jesus loves the sinner, Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 5:8. He deals with us in grace, Ephesians 2:8-9. And, in spite of our past, or even what we could offer Him, He still reaches out in love to save all those who call on Him by faith!)

B. He Had The Right Relationship - Boaz was a "kinsman." That is, he had the right of redemption. Because he was so closely related, he could make a difference in Ruth's life. (Note: I would just remind you that our heavenly Boaz is also related to us, Php 2:5-11. Jesus became a man so that He might give His life a ransom for the elect. Thank God, He has the right relationship! No one else could have done what He did for sinners!)

C. He Had The Right Resources - Boaz was "mighty man of wealth." He could afford to pay the price to redeem Ruth. (Note: Our Boaz, the Lord Jesus, is also a mighty man of wealth! Even though He owns all things, His financial resources could not buy our redemption. Thankfully, the very thing we needed is what He has the most of! The lost sinner needs righteousness to face God, Matthew 5:20. However, the best we can produce in the righteousness category is vastly insufficient, Isaiah 64:6. However, Jesus is abundantly and perfectly righteous! When He died for us, the righteous died for the unrighteous, 2 Corinthians 5:21. Now, all those who trust Jesus by faith have their unrighteousness replaced with His righteousness, Romans 4:20-25. In Who's righteousness are you trusting this morning?)

D. He Had The Right Resolve - Boaz gave every indication that he was interested in a relationship with Ruth. He gave to her freely. He was kind and compassionate toward her. He gave her a standing invitation to enter and glean in his field. He wants her to know she can come to him for what she needs. (Note: Everything Jesus Christ has done for humanity has been designed to show us that He cares. He has done everything in His power to show us that He desires a relationship with us. All that remains is for lost men and women to turn to Him by faith and receive what He offers them, Matthew 11:28. He offers hope, He offers salvation and He offers rest. His offer still stands today, John 7:37; Revelation 22:17.)

Conc: Are you at rest this morning? Now, I am not referring to physical rest. I am referring to spiritual rest! Is your spirit at rest? Is all well between you and the Lord? Have you entered into that relationship with Him that brings His best into your life? What I am asking is this: Are you truly

saved by the grace of God? If the answer is "No", then you can be today if you will come to Jesus by faith. If the answer is "I don't know" than you probably need to be saved. If He is in you, you will know it. I certainly don't know your hearts, but you know your heart and God knows your heart. If there is a need, you come to Him and find rest.

## 07.10. Getting Ready To Meet The Master - Rth 3:3

---

### Ruth 3:3 GETTING READY TO MEET THE MASTER

Intro: To this point, Ruth's relationship with Boaz has been that of servant and master. She has been gleaning in his fields, and he has been very kind to her, but the relationship is not what either of them wants it to be. All through the long harvest season, Ruth has contented herself with going to the field of Boaz and gleaning. Boaz has done everything in his power to let Ruth know that he wants a deeper relationship with her. He has gone above and beyond everything the Law required of him. He has gone out of His way to reach out to Ruth and be a blessing in her life. If the relationship is going to progress beyond where it is at the present, the next move is hers. These verses are all about the details of seeking to take their relationship to the next level. These verses tell us about how Ruth came to find herself at the feet of Boaz.

There are many people in our world who claim a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. They say they are saved and they enter His field on occasion to glean a little of His barley here and there, now and then. There are many in this situation who feel that their relationship with the Lord Jesus has grown stagnant and isn't progressing as it should. All the while, Jesus has done everything in His power to let you know that He wants a deep, close, abiding relationship with you. After all, He died for you. If you are saved, He personally called you to Himself. If you are saved, He lives in your heart right now in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He wants you to be close to Him and done everything He can to make that a reality in your life. However, before that can ever become a reality for you, you are going to have to make the next move. I will remind to again that you are only as close to the Lord as you want to be! I would also remind you that there is a place for you at His feet.

Before Ruth could get the help she needed from Boaz, she had to make the proper preparations for that meeting. This verse details the preparations she was to make so that she could find herself at the feet of Boaz. As we consider what Ruth did to meet Boaz, we see some parallels with what we need to do if we would find ourselves at the feet of Jesus! Notice what Naomi told Ruth to do.

These verses tell us all how to find ourselves there, at His feet, in that place of blessing, closeness and power. If you want to get to His feet; if you want to know Him, His presence and His power; then the truths contained in these verses will help you to begin to make that a reality in your life. These truths, if believed and implemented, will cause you to find yourself in your place at His feet. Let's think together for a moment about this thought: Getting Ready To Meet The Master.

I. INVOLVED RUTH'S CLEANSING The first step was for Ruth to get as clean as she could. (Ill. A little personal hygiene goes a long way!) Before the believer can get to the feet of Jesus, there must be a period of personal cleansing. The life needs to be searched and anything that is displeasing to the Lord must be confessed, repented of and put aside, 1 John 1:9. (Ill. God's method for dealing with sin - Proverbs 28:13.)(Ill. Psalms 32:5 - David dealt with his sins - where he fell short; his transgression - times when he willingly stepped over God's boundaries; and his

iniquities - the particular bent in his nature toward evil. He took all the necessary steps to come clean with the Lord.) (III. Could be physical, spiritual, or mental in nature, III. Galatians 5:19-21.) II. INVOLVED RUTH'S CONSECRATION

Ruth is to anoint herself. This was command for Ruth to put on some good smelling. After all, she was going out to catch a husband and she needed to smell good! (III. The believer is to be a sweet smell in the nostrils of the Lord as well. If we expect to find ourselves at His feet, enjoying the best He has for us, then we are to live a life that comes up before God like a sweet smelling incense, 2 Corinthians 2:15.) (III. Anointing oil also was used to set things apart for particular service. I.e. The implements used in the Temple; priests, kings, 1 Samuel 16:1-23, etc.) (III. God's people are to separate themselves from every evil attachment, 2 Corinthians 6:17.) III. INVOLVED RUTH'S CLOTHING

Ruth was not to wear her common ordinary clothing. Not her working duds, but her best is in view here. You see, Ruth had entered Israel wearing the garments of a widow. She had gleaned for months in the garments of a worker. Now, she is counseled to put on the garments of a woman. She is after a husband and she needs to dress appropriately! (III. Christians have a dress code as well! Folk get nervous when you go to talking about their apparel, but it is important nonetheless! Christians are counseled to dress modestly, 1 Timothy 2:9. While the emphasis here for Ruth was on the external garments, I think the emphasis for you and me is on the internal garments of the soul. God truly does have a dress code for His children - Colossians 3:1-11; Romans 13:11-14. In light of this, how appropriately are you dressed?) IV. INVOLVED RUTH'S COMMITMENT

Next Ruth is commanded to leave the place where she is residing and "get thee down to the floor." If she was ever going to rest at the feet of Boaz, she would have to be committed enough to the idea to leave where she was to go where he was. (III. The same is true in our own walk with Jesus. Many time He is over there and we are over here. He calls to us, but like Solomon's bride, we refuse to go to where He is, Song of Solomon 5:2-8. Listen how He calls us to come to Him, Revelation 3:20! Until we make that commitment to go to Him regardless of the cost or the effort, we will never find ourselves at His feet enjoying His best!) V. INVOLVED RUTH'S CONDUCT In Ruth 4:4 Naomi counsels Ruth to wait until Boaz is alone and finished with his public business before she approaches him with her request. This is not to be a public spectacle, it is to be a private communion. In other words, she is not to make a scene in public and put him on the spot. She is to wait until she can meet with him in private. (III. Although our corporate worship experience takes place in the public arena, every saint of God in this room must develop a time of private, intimate fellowship and worship with the Lord Jesus. Until you learn to spend time with Jesus, alone, you have never learned to worship! You will never find yourself at His feet until you learn to get there in private! Notice what David said about the matter, Psalms 63:6; Psalms 138:2. Jesus said the Father was looking for those people who will worship Him, John 4:23-24. If you had to rate your worship, devotional and personal walk with Jesus Christ on a scale of 1 to 10, where would it fall?)

Conc: Are you ready for a more intimate, closer walk with Jesus Christ? If so, then I challenge you to make the right preparations. As you prepare to meet Him, He stands ready to meet you, James 4:8!

I would just remind you again, you are as close to Jesus as you want to be! If you are saved and struggling in your walk with Him, evaluate your life and make all the necessary adjustments so that you might come to Him. If you do not know Him as your personal Savior, I invite you to come to Him and trust Him with the care of your eternal soul.

Regardless of who you are or where you are in your walk with the Lord, today is your opportunity to begin the process of making it all it should be for the glory of the Lord!

## 07.11. Finding Your Place At His Feet - Rth 3:1-11

---

### Ruth 3:1-11 FINDING YOUR PLACE AT HIS FEET

Intro: There are many places where we can spend the seconds, minutes, hours and days that make up our lives. We can spend them in the world pursuing sin and its pleasures. We can spend our lives chasing prosperity. We can spend our time enjoying recreation. It can be spent working, with family, helping others. And, some of those are good and valid things. However, the best way to spend every second of your life is to spend it at the feet of Jesus. When we are there, He gives meaning to all the other things we do in life. In fact, being at His feet enables every area of our life to have more meaning. This passage finds Ruth getting to the feet of Boaz. When she got there, everything in her life changed forever. Her experience in getting to His feet teaches us lessons about getting to the feet of Jesus that we need to learn. Let me share the truths in this passage with you today. I want to help you to find your place at His feet. That is the message I want to bring today Finding Yourself At His Feet.

#### I. Ruth 3:1-4 THE POSSIBILITIES FOUND AT HIS FEET

A. The Possibility Of A New Home - Ruth is a widow. With Boaz, she has the opportunity to experience the joy of a new marriage relationship with someone who can love her, provide for her and comfort her. (Note: All those who come to Jesus by faith receive a new home here (in Jesus - Colossians 3:3) and in Heaven, John 14:1-3.)

B. The Possibility Of A New Hope - Ruth is a widow. As a widow, her life will be nothing more than endless days of suffering, poverty, loneliness and defeat. If she can enter into this relationship with Boaz, her entire future will be forever altered. (Note: Ill. Where the sinner is and will be without Jesus, Ephesians 2:12; Psalms 9:17. In Jesus, the saints find a new future! Life has meaning and there is hope for tomorrow! Ill. All we have in Him.

- All Spiritual Blessings - Ephesians 1:3
- Eternal Salvation - John 3:16; Hebrews 7:25
- A close relationship with the Father in Heaven - Ephesians 2:13-17
- Absolute security - John 10:28-29
- An ever present Lord - Hebrews 13:5
- An Advocate in Heaven - 1 John 2:2
- A High Priest In Heaven - Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34
- A Friend that sticks closer than a brother - Proverbs 18:24

C. The Possibility Of A New Happiness - Ruth will never be fulfilled and happy in her current condition. She needs the love and security that can only be offered by someone like Boaz. (Note:

In Jesus, the saints find true joy, 1 Peter 1:8. This is something that sin, with all its pleasures, Hebrews 11:25, cannot offer! There is great joy in knowing Jesus!) II. Ruth 3:4-9 THE PRESENTATION MADE AT HIS FEET

A. Ruth 3:4 It Involved Research - Ruth was commanded to watch the place where Boaz laid himself down. Of all the men there, she was to isolate him and see where he was resting. If she was going to get at his feet, she had to find him. (Note: So it is with God's children. If we will obtain the blessings found at His feet, we must first find those feet. In the matter of salvation, there is no finding Him. He does all the finding of the lost sinner, John 6:44, Ephesians 2:1. But, for the redeemed, there is a sense in which we must find Him. You see, there are times when we all walk away from where we should be, when that happens, we are going to have to make the effort to move from where we are to where He is. He could force you to get there, but that would not be pleasant at all.)

(Note: A word is in order concerning the place she found him. Boaz was in the threshing floor taking care of business. He was in the threshing floor. This was a place, usually located on top of a hill, where the gathered grain was processed.

Ordinarily, the threshing floor was circular, with either a hard clay or bedrock surface. The grain would be cut, gathered in sheaves and transported to the threshing floor. Once there, the sheaves would be placed on the floor and trampled under the feet of oxen pulling a sled. This would crack open the heads of grain and help separate the kernel from the husk. The workers would then take a flail, or a fan and toss the grain into the air. This work was usually started late in the afternoon when breezes were likely to be blowing across the hilltops. As the grain was tossed into the air, the wind would carry the lighter husks away and the heavier kernels would fall back to the floor. This process continued until all the husks and chaff had been blown away. The grain was then gathered into heaps.

Families would participate and after the threshing was finished, a time of celebration and praise would begin. At the conclusion of their feasting, the women and children would leave the floor to sleep nearby in tents, while the men slept around the heaps of grain. They slept with their heads near the grain and their feet away from the grain. They slept in this close proximity to the grain in order to protect it from theft.)

(Note: The picture in this for us is of the price Christ paid so that we might have a relationship with Him. You see, for the grain, the threshing, or winnowing process was quite severe. The grain was trampled and tossed and torn to pieces so that the kernel, the life giving center, might be exposed. By the same token, our redeemer, the Lord Jesus entered His Father's threshing floor when He went to the cross for us. There, He was trampled, tossed and torn to pieces so that life might be given to those who come to Him. When this was accomplished and He cried "It is finished!", there began a time of rejoicing and blessing that will never cease. Just like Boaz, our Jesus "ate, drank, rejoiced and slept" for us in God's threshing floor! Notice His meat and His drink - John 4:34. Notice His rejoicing - Hebrews 12:2; Notice His sleep - John 19:30. His trip to the Father's threshing floor makes it possible for us to get at His feet. See where He has been and you will know where He still is today, Luke 2:49!)

(Note: Like Ruth, we should mark where He has been and let that be a special place in our hearts. May His death on Calvary never become "old hat" to the children of the King!)

B. Ruth 3:5-6 It Involved Resolve - When Ruth heard what was required, she said, "I will do it!" This would require much courage and humility on the part of Ruth. It required her wanting to be with Him so much that she made the effort to go there. It required her to humble herself to lie at his feet. It also required great courage for her to approach this wealthy and important man. (Note: The same sort of resolve is required for a person to come to Jesus, whether it be for salvation, or for a closer walk. It requires us to make a move toward Him. It requires us to humble ourselves at His feet. It requires us to have the courage to admit that we have a need in our lives. But, for those who will make up their minds to get to Him regardless of the cost, the rewards are priceless!)

C. Ruth 3:7-9 It Involved A Request - III. The context and the fears of both Ruth and Boaz. Then he awakes and she pops the question! Her request to be covered by him is a request for marriage. (Note: There is nothing immoral in Ruth's actions. This was common practice in those days.) (Note: Ruth's actions teach us a valuable lesson about getting at the feet of Jesus. She just came to Boaz, humbled herself to him and asked for that which she needed! What a lesson! If you want to be closer to Him, then all you need do is get at His feet and ask. If you want to be saved, than all you need do is come to His feet and ask! The reason we do not have the things we want spiritually is often a result of our not taking the time to ask for them, James 4:2.) III. Ruth 3:10-11 THE PROMISES RECEIVED AT HIS FEET

A. Ruth 3:10 a He Received Her - Imagine the fears that must have occupied her mind as she lay there. "What if he rejects me?" "What if he misinterprets my actions?" "What if he publically humiliates me?" "What if he drives me away and refuses to have anything further to do with me?" She needed not worry, for when he speaks, he says "Fear not!" Boaz wanted to be close to her too, as much or more than she did! (Note: You need never fear Jesus turning you away! He loves you too much to do that, John 6:37. When you come to Him humbly, honestly, openly and willingly, you will get what you come after. If you need salvation, you can get it at His feet. If it is a closer walk that is your goal, you will find it at His feet. You need not fear rejection, but you should prepare for a big change of life!)

B. Ruth 3:11 b He Reassured Her - Boaz responds to Ruth's request by telling her that he will do everything necessary to see that they are together. He will take care of all the matters involved. She had been told that if she could just get to his feet, he would tell her what to do, Ruth 3:4. She got there and she was told to trust Boaz, he would see to all the details! (Note: What a truth! If we can ever just get to His feet, we will find that He is willing to do everything to see to it that our relationship is everything that it should be. You see, all the Lord wants from us is our love. He wants us to be at His feet. When we are there, He will take care of all the details of life, Matthew 6:25-33. By the way, His name is still Jehovah-Jireh, Genesis 22:14. Those who are at His feet know that they can simply trust Him to see to all the details of life!)

C. Ruth 3:10-11 c He Rejoiced Over Her - Boaz praises Ruth for her love for him and for her godly lifestyle. Her behavior and godly life have worked together to bring all this to pass for her. (Note: The smile of the Savior is the great reward for those who pay the price to get themselves at his feet. Regardless of the price, regardless of the effort, His smile, His blessings, and His closeness are worth it all! You see, nothing gives Him more pleasure than being able to take your life and

mine, hold it out before the world and say, "This is what I can do with a life laid at my feet!"; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 4:7.)

Conc: When Ruth made the effort to get at the feet of Boaz, everything in her life changed. Our heavenly Boaz, the Lord Jesus Christ can and will do the same for you, if you will get at His feet. Who possesses the courage and the resolve to move from where you are right now to get to His feet? If you have never been to His feet, then I invite you to come right now for salvation. If you have been there and have wandered away, then I invite you to return to His feet and rediscover the blessings that can only be found there. If you are at His feet right now, then I invite you to come before Him, thank Him for allowing you to be there and ask Him to help you remain as close to Him as you need to be.

## 07.12. Redeemed, Redeemed By Love Divine - Rth 3:9 to Rth 4:12

---

Ruth 3:9-18, Ruth 4:1-12 REDEEMED, REDEEMED, BY LOVE DIVINE

Intro: Ruth has come alone way since she left the country of Moab. She has come all the way from being a lost, sinner girl in a doomed country to finding herself at the feet of a wealthy land owner by the name of Boaz. Because she is at his feet, she is about to get the help she needs. You see, she is looking for a redeemer. Someone who can give her back all the things that sin and death have taken from her. She has found herself at the feet of the redeemer. She is about to find herself in the middle of his redemption. If Ruth had a favorite song, it might have contained a line that went something like this; "I'm redeemed by love divine!"

Now, this passage has a lot to say to us about the redemption we enjoy if we are saved, and can come to enjoy if we are lost. In this passage, we are given a clear picture of how redemption operates and of what is required to receive it. Let's look in on the wonderful world of redemption. I want to preach for a while on this thought, "Redeemed! Redeemed! By Love Divine!" If you are saved, I hope it will help you to be more appreciative of that which you have in Jesus. If you are not saved, I hope this message will cause you to want to be redeemed.

### I. Ruth 3:9-18 THE PROPOSAL OF REDEMPTION

A. Ruth 3:6-9 Ruth's Request For Redemption - Here we see Ruth asking for just what she needs: redemption. (Note: Salvation is as simple as our asking for it, John 6:37; Romans 10:13; James 4:2. Jesus Christ has done everything that is necessary to save the soul of the lost sinner; all the sinner has to do is humble himself before the Lord and ask for salvation.)

B. Ruth 3:10-18 Ruth's Reassurance Of Redemption - After Ruth makes her request, she receives some precious assurances from Boaz. He wants her to know that she can count on him and the redemption he will provide for her.

1. Ruth 3:10-13 Reassured By His Promises - His promise to her is that he will do whatever is necessary to see that she is redeemed. Notice that he promises to do "all" that she needs done. (Note: So it is with Jesus! He has done all that is required to make redemption a reality for everyone who calls upon Him in faith, John 6:47; Romans 10:9.) (Note: Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 10:10-14 speak of the redemptive price Jesus paid for us. His precious, shed blood is the price, payment and promise of our redemption, 1 Peter 1:18-19; Hebrews 9:22.)

2. Ruth 3:14-17 Reassured By His Provisions - When Ruth leaves the threshing floor the next morning, she leaves with the promises of Boaz, but she also leaves loaded down with his provisions. He places 88 pounds of barley on her back. Imagine her walking back through the city. Everyone who sees her knows where she has been and that there is about to be a wedding. When she arrives home Naomi asks the question, "Who art thou my daughter?" She is asking, "Are you going to be Mrs. Boaz?" Ruth just says, "Look at the provisions he has given me and tell me what you think! Yes Mama Naomi, there's going to be a wedding!" (Note: The Lord gives His children

many proofs that they are His, Psalms 68:19. His provisions are both internal - Romans 8:16; Hebrews 13:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; and external - Matthew 6:25-33. If you are His child, you will know it for sure!)

3. Ruth 3:18 Reassured By His Persistence - Naomi tells Ruth to sit tight, because Boaz would not rest until he had finished her redemption. (Note: The child of God can rest in the sure knowledge that Jesus will not rest until every single one of His children are home in glory, Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:5. He is a "man with a mission", John 6:37-40; John 10:28-29.) II. Ruth 3:12-18, Ruth 4:1-10 THE PROBLEMS OF REDEMPTION (III. Before Ruth's redemption can be settled, there are a couple of problems that must be dealt with first.)

A. The Problem Of The Requirements - For a man to fulfill the role of the Kinsman Redeemer, there were a few requirements that he had to meet.

1. Redemption Required A Relationship - According to Leviticus 25:25, the kinsman redeemer had to be a near relative of the person being redeemed. Boaz fulfilled this requirement, Ruth 2:1; Ruth 2:20.

2. Redemption Required Resources - That same passage teaches that the kinsman redeemer had to have the funds to buy back the sold possession. Boaz fulfilled this requirement also, Ruth 2:1.

3. Redemption Required A Resolve - Leviticus 25:25 and Deuteronomy 25:5-10 teach that the kinsman redeemer had to be willing to buy back the inheritance of his kinsman. Boaz also fulfilled this requirement, Ruth 3:11.

(Note: For the saints of God, Boaz is a picture of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Savior also fulfills all the necessary requirements to qualify as our redeemer. He has a relationship to us, Php 2:5-8. He has the proper resources - Hebrews 7:25; Ephesians 3:20. And, He was willing to pay the price for our redemption - Mark 10:45; John 18:37. Jesus alone is qualified to be the Redeemer of mankind!)

B. The Problem Of The Relative - Boaz tells Ruth that there is just one problem with his plan to redeem her. It seems that there is one fellow in town who is closer kin than Boaz and that he must have the first shot at her redemption. He meets the requirement of relationship. He must also meet the qualification of resources. The question that remains is does he meet the requirement of resolve? Is he willing to redeem? III. The Context of the meeting between Boaz and the near kinsman. The proposal is made and the kinsman wants to redeem. Note: This must have stung the heart of Boaz! When the nearer kinsman hears that he must not only buy the land, but that he must also marry Ruth and raise up children in the name of her dead husband, he backs away from the deal and declares himself unable to redeem. He plucks off his shoe and hands it to Boaz as a symbolic way of saying, "I can't redeem her, but you can. She is yours!" (Note: For us, the nearer kinsman is the Law! It laid claims on us, but was not able to redeem us. All it could do was condemn us as unworthy in its sight. Like this kinsman, the Law made a feeble effort at redemption, but it was unable to carry through to the end of the matter. This is what Paul tells us about the Law, Romans 8:3.) (Note: Just for the record, there are lots of kinsmen out there who lay claims to us and try to redeem us. Things like the flesh, religion, good works, etc. They all make claims that they cannot keep. Salvation is found in one place and one place only. It is found in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 4:12; John 14:6; John 8:24.) III. Ruth 4:11-12 THE

## PROCEEDS OF REDEMPTION

(III. After the deal was made and redemption was accomplished, a couple of very important things took place. We might want to understand them, because they affect us as well.)

A. Ruth 4:11 Ruth Is Elevated - When the people gathered there see what has happened, they begin to rejoice. They call Ruth "woman" and not "the Moabitess." They compare her with Leah and Rachel, the wives of Jacob, who gave birth to the twelve sons of Jacob, and in effect, all of Israel. They have elevated her standing! (Note: The same thing happens in the life of the sinner who comes to Jesus for redemption. We are transformed from "sinners" into "saints". We are no longer outcasts from God, but now He calls us His "sons", 1 John 3:1-2. This great change is declared forcefully by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11! III. Galatians 4:5-6)

B. Ruth 4:11-12 Boaz Is Exalted - While the people elevate Ruth, the main focus of their rejoicing is Boaz. They praise him for that which he has done in the life of Ruth. He has done a wonderful thing and the people praise him for it. (Note: Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith paid the ultimate price for our redemption. Because of this, He is worthy of praise and exaltation. He receives this from His Father, Php 2:9-11. He deserves it from those He has redeemed, Hebrews 13:15. Are you exalting the heavenly Boaz?)

Conc: Ruth's life changed that day at the gates of Bethlehem! She had a redeemer. She had a husband. She had a new life. She could sing with gusto the chorus, "Redeemed, Redeemed, by love divine."

What about you? Do you know the Kinsman-Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ today? Can you sing this song?

I'm redeemed by love divine, Glory, glory Christ is mine.

All to Him I now resign, I have been redeemed!

If you can't I invite you to come to Jesus, get at His feet and ask Him to redeem your soul. You can be redeemed today, if you will come to Him!

## 07.13. Redeemed! How I Love To Proclaim It! - Rth 4:1-17

---

### Ruth 4:1-17 REDEEMED! HOW I LOVE TO PROCLAIM IT!

Intro: The little book of Ruth begins with a series of tragedies. In Chapter one, there is a Famine, there is a backslidden Family, there are three Funerals, there is great Fear and there is a Final goodbye. We are introduced in Ruth 1:1-22 to a young widow named Ruth. She is from the land of Moab. Therefore, she is a woman under a curse, Deuteronomy 23:3. She was no doubt born into idolatry. Yet, by the providence of God, she marries into a family of Israelites. These people, though they are backslidden, introduce young Ruth to Jehovah. Ruth, after the death of her husband, follows her mother-in-law Naomi back to the land of Israel. There, they proceed to try and make a living as best as they can, Ruth 2:2. This first portion of Ruth is a sad spectacle. It presents in graphic detail just what happens in lives that are lived outside the will of God! Thankfully, God had plans to help Naomi and Ruth!

Because their husbands were dead, these women had no way of reclaiming the family land. You see, when the children of Israel went in and possessed Canaan, the land was divided up among the 12 tribes. Within these allotments, the land was divided up by families. No man was allowed to sell his land outside his tribe. In the case of financial difficulty, a man might be forced to mortgage his land. In this case, he lost all rights to the land until it had been redeemed by paying off the mortgage, or until the Year of Jubilee, when all debts were cancelled anyway. Apparently, this is what had happened to the land that belonged to Elimelech. As women, Naomi and Ruth had no way of getting back the land that had belonged to their husbands. Thankfully, where man fails, God prevails! Even though these women were helpless, God had already made provision for them.

Here is where the law of the Kinsman-Redeemer comes into play. The Kinsman-Redeemer was a relative who protected the needy members of his family. There were three things that the Kinsman-Redeemer could redeem, or buy back.

1. A relative sold into slavery - Leviticus 25:47-49.
2. Preserve the lineage of the family by marrying the widow of a deceased relative and providing an heir to the family possessions - Deuteronomy 25:5-6. Children produced from such a union were considered to be the offspring of the deceased man.
3. Land that had been sold outside the family - Leviticus 25:25.

It is against this backdrop of tragedy and trials that we are introduced to a man named Boaz. He is a near kinsman to Naomi's dead husband. In this short, but powerful book, we get to watch as the Kinsman-Redeemer works on behalf of these two poor widows. He willingly exercises the rights and duties of the Kinsman-Redeemer. He makes the difference in their lives and presents for us a thrilling picture of a great Kinsman-Redeemer, the Lord Jesus. In order for a person to be a Kinsman-Redeemer, he had to have three qualifications:

1. He had to be a near relative.
2. He had to be willing to redeem.
3. He had to be able to redeem.

Boaz fulfilled all of these requirements. And, as we shall see, so did the Lord Jesus, our heavenly Redeemer!

Let's focus in a few of the events of this wonderful little book as we think on the idea of Redeemed!  
How I Love To Proclaim It!

#### I. Ruth 4:4 BOAZ HAD THE RIGHT TO REDEEM

A. His Right As A Member Of The Family - (His Right By Lineage) - This Kinsman-Redeemer had to be of near kin unto the needy relative. Boaz fulfilled this obligation, Ruth 2:1, Ruth 2:20, Ruth 4:4. Since he was a near kinsman, Boaz had every right to intervene for these women.

(III. Jesus, our Kinsman-Redeemer possesses this right on behalf of the sinner. Why? Because He is near of kin unto us. 2,000 years ago, in the same little town of Bethlehem, Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, spoke His goodbyes to the Father in Heaven and came to this world, not to live as a God among men, but to be born as a man, John 1:1; John 14:1-31; Php 2:5-8. As a member of the human family, Jesus has the right to be our Redeemer!)

(III. Note: There was one of nearer kin than Boaz, Ruth 4:3-6. However, he refused to do his duty as a redeemer because he did not want to marry Ruth! He knew she was a cursed woman from a cursed people. He knew she had absolutely nothing to offer him. After all, she was poor! This man had the right, but he could not do the job! So it is with humanity. There are other things around us that promise redemption. Things like the Law and religion, but these things can never deliver! They are powerless to help to powerless! When the Law sees the sinner, it merely amplifies our inadequacies. When Religion sees the sinner it merely looks at us for what we can give to it. Neither can redeem!

Boaz, on the other hand, knew who Ruth was, Ruth 2:6. He knew her past. He knew her condition. He knew what she had to offer. He knew about the curse that was on her people. However, he didn't care! You see, unlike the other kinsman, Boaz was like Ruth! Look back at his lineage, Ruth 4:21; Matthew 1:5. When you look at this, it becomes clear that Boaz wasn't concerned about marring his inheritance, his own mother was a woman of unclean birth. His mother was Rahab the harlot, Joshua 2:1-24! So it is with our Heavenly Boaz! His own mother was a common sinner! Therefore, He has compassion on the lost. The Law makes demands that we can never meet. Religion promises that which it cannot deliver. Jesus, on the other hand, provides what we need, freely and fully!)

B. His Right As A Man Of Faith - (His Right By Law) - Another Reason Boaz did what he did was because the Law of God demanded it. It appears, from reading this book, that Boaz was a godly man. His desire was to carry out the will of God. He was a man of faith.

(III. Again, in this, He pictures the Lord Jesus Who came to this earth willingly to take the place of sinners on the cross. Did He have to? No! But, in the counsel halls of glory, before the mud seals

of this world were ever fashioned, the Godhead knew there would come a day when the world would need a redeemer. When the call was made "Who will go for us?" Jesus Christ responded with, "Here am I, send Me!" This is born out by Revelation 13:8, which tells us that Jesus was already dead in the mind of God before the foundation of the world.

You see, the Law demanded death for sin, Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23. Jesus went to the cross for us so that He might discharge the Law of God. He had the right to die in our place because He is family and because He fulfilled the requirements of the Law!) I. Boaz Had The Right To Redeem II. Ruth 4:4-9 BOAZ HAD THE RESOLVE TO REDEEM

A. His Desire For The Task - Naomi knows that Boaz is a near kinsman, she is then instructs Ruth to go to him and to cover herself with his cloak. This was a woman's way of asking a man to perform the duties of a Kinsman-Redeemer unto her. She was literally proposing marriage to Boaz. Boaz reacts by expressing his joy at being chosen by Ruth and by letting her know that he would be delighted to redeem her and all her inheritance.

(III. Jesus Christ did not have to be hog-tied and forced to go to Calvary! The Bible says that He went there without a word, Isaiah 53:7. When He stood before Pilate, Jesus never tried to defend Himself and get out of the death that was coming, John 18:27. He desired the death that He died because He wanted to pay the redemption price for you and me, Hebrews 12:2. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was of a willing nature. He did it because He wanted to!)

B. His Devotion To The Task - Ruth 3:18 tells us that Naomi is convinced that Boaz will get right to the business of redemption. Ruth 4:1-4 bears this out. When the morning comes, Boaz goes to the city gate. A place where the elders congregate, where judgments are made and where business is conducted. Boaz goes there and begins the process of redeeming Ruth. It appears that nothing would delay or stop Boaz from completing his mission on behalf of Ruth.

(III. Again, the similarity between Boaz and Jesus is hard to miss. The Bible indicates that Jesus was determined to go to the cross and die, Isaiah 50:7; Luke 9:51. The Bible makes it plain that Satan tried to destroy our Lord while He walked in this world, Matthew 2:16; Matt. 4:37-38. There were other times when Satan tried to distract the Lord from His appointed task, Matthew 4:1-11; John 6:15, John 18:10-11. However, Jesus allowed none of these things to sidetrack Him. He came for the purpose of dying for sin and that is exactly what He intended to do!)

C. His Discharge Of The Task - Ruth 4:9 tells us that Boaz stayed with the task until it was completed. He was able to tell the elders at the gate that he had paid the purchase price and that the redemption had been accomplished! Now, all that had belonged to the family of Elimelech belonged to Boaz. Now, Ruth was no longer a widow doomed to a life of poverty. She was the wife of a mighty and wealthy man!

(III. Jesus, our Heavenly Boaz, also stayed with the task until it was perfectly completed. Outside the gate of Jerusalem, in the presence of witnesses, He paid the price by giving His life on the cross for you and me. When the task had been fully accomplished, and the Heavenly Father had been fully satisfied, Jesus proclaimed an end to the transaction, John 19:30! Thank God, redemption is fully paid for and complete!) I. Boaz Had The Right To Redeem II. Boaz Had The Resolve To Redeem III. Ruth 4:9-10 BOAZ HAD THE RESOURCES TO REDEEM (III. Ruth 2:1 makes it clear that Boaz was a wealthy man. He had the financial resources to carry out the

redemption.)

A. Ruth 4:9 The Resources To Purchase Ruth's Property - Ruth 4:9 tells us that Boaz purchased all that had belonged to Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon. In other words, Boaz bought out the whole inheritance of this family, lock, stock and barrel! Think for a minute about Orpah. She went back to her family in chapter 1. If she had followed Naomi back to Bethlehem, it seems clear that Boaz would have redeemed her too!

(III. Like the family Ruth married into, you and I were born into a family that was down and out! You see, our father, Adam, sinned against the Lord and brought death, destruction and damnation upon all his children. He left us spiritually destitute and without hope! Thank God, that is where Jesus stepped in! Everything Adam lost in the Garden of Eden, Jesus purchased back on the cross. Adam gambled away fellowship with God, Jesus bought it back. Adam gambled away life, Jesus bought it back. Adam gambled away peace with God, joy, blessing, righteousness, etc; but Jesus bought it every bit back for us when He went to the cross and died for us! Jesus has the resources to carry of a transaction of this magnitude!)

B. Ruth 4:10 The Resources To Purchase Ruth Personally - Boaz had the resources to be able to make Ruth his wife. He wanted to buy back the property, but he also wanted to buy the person!

(Jesus also has the resources to buy the person. When a sinner trusts the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, that sinner becomes a redeemed member of the family of God. He is forever purchased and forever changed by the blood of Christ. Jesus specializes in taking old, hell bound sinners, saving them by His grace and transforming them into the children of God. When He pays the price, He purchases the whole person, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Titus 2:14. Glory to God, I am glad that Jesus is able to "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him", Hebrews 7:25.) I. Boaz Had The Right To Redeem II. Boaz Had The Resolve To Redeem III. Boaz Had The Resources To Redeem IV. Ruth 4:10, Ruth 4:13 BOAZ HAD THE REASONS TO REDEEM

(III. There are probably many reasons why Boaz did what he did. However, looking at the text tells me of two very important reasons that must not be overlooked. For Boaz, there was more to his actions than keeping the Law, or just the fact that he was a relative. He had two compelling reasons for redeeming Ruth. These reasons also speak to our hearts this evening.)

A. The Reason Of Giving Love - Ruth 2:5, Ruth 2:8-13, Ruth 2:14-17, Ruth 3:10-15 - All of these verses seem to indicate that Boaz has fallen in love with Ruth. He loved her in spite of her lineage. He loved her in spite of her poverty. He loved her in spite of the fact that she had nothing to offer him but herself. He loved her with a selfless love that sought nothing but her best interests! He cares about her and wants to provide for her needs. Therefore, he willingly pays the price for her redemption and buys her unto himself.

(III. This is just what motivated Jesus to do what he did for you and me! He was born in this world, He lived in poverty, He endured rejection and shame, He went to the cross for one primary reason. And, that reason is love - Romans 5:6-8. He, like Boaz, loves us in spite of all those things that we have against us. He loves us in spite of all we do wrong. He loves us even though we are poverty stricken and we have nothing to offer Him but broken lives and shattered hopes. He loves us, therefore He willingly paid the redemption price on the cross!)

B. The Reason Of Giving Life - Ruth 4:5, Ruth 4:13 tell us that another reason Boaz wanted to marry Ruth was to bring life out of death. Without a Kinsman-Redeemer, the family of Elimelech would die out. That family would perish from Israel. Boaz cared about that family and wanted to preserve life!

(III. This is why Jesus went to the cross. This is why He suffered and died for us! His desire is to take those that are dead in sins, Ephesians 2:1, and who are headed to Hell, Psalms 9:17, save them by His grace and bring life out of death, John 5:24. He wants to give life to those trapped in death! This is just what He does for every one who received Him as their Savior and Lord. He provides salvation full and free. He produces life in the place of death. He makes dead men live! III. Like Lazarus, sinners are trapped in death! Jesus comes to their tombs and calls their names. When they hear Him and respond, He gives them life eternal through faith.)

Conc: Notice Ruth 4:13. From Ruth 2:1-23, Ruth 3:1-18, Ruth 4:1-13, Boaz is the center of attention. (III. Just like Jesus ought to be!) However, this poor, heathen girl is now the bride of a wealthy redeemer. She comes back into focus. My how things have changed for Ruth! This book opens with a funeral and closes with a wedding! I want you to notice one thing with me right now. Notice in Ruth 4:13 what the Bible tells us about these two and their relationship. It tells us that there is an intimacy that is now possible. It tells us that Boaz is able to do what he could not do in Ruth 3:10-14. Now, Boaz is able to take Ruth into his arms and love her. You see, all the barriers that were between them have been removed! They were separated by race, social status, morals, etc. Now, they are one flesh! She is as rich as he is! She is able to have fellowship of the most intimate kind with Boaz. They have been brought together in a intimate relationship!

That's what you have in Jesus this evening if you are saved! You, who were once separated from Jesus by a gulf of sin and poverty have now been brought near to Him. You are as rich as He is. You are no longer separated, but are in an intimate relationship with Jesus our Kinsman Redeemer! Now, we are no longer doomed! Now, we are no longer poverty stricken! Now, we are no longer as good as dead! Now we live in Jesus. Now, we can rest in His bosom and we can experience the intimacies of His redeeming love! Thank God for redemption! Redeemed! How I love to proclaim it! Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Redeemed through His excellent mercies, His child and forever I am! Are you?

## 07.14. Ruth: From Brokenness To Blessedness - Rth 4:13-17

---

### Ruth 4:13-17 RUTH:FROM BROKENNESS TO BLESSEDNESS

Intro: W. Herschel Ford tells this story: "Many years ago a young preacher in England pitched his tent in an area where there was no church. Each night he preached the gospel there. Among the converts was a boy whose mother was dead and whose father was a saloon-keeper. After the boy's conversion he pleaded with his father to attend the services with him, but his father cursed him and told him to forget it.

"On Saturday night the boy said, 'Please pray for my daddy. I want so much for him to be saved.' On Monday someone told this man that his son had requested prayer for him, and when the boy came home from school, his father said, 'If you want to be a Christian, go ahead, but leave my name out of it.'

"The next Saturday night the boy's heart was breaking for his father, so he again asked for prayer for his father. Again on Monday someone told the father, hoping that this would touch and convict him. When the boy came in from school, the man beat him until the boy's blood stained his shirt. Then man threw a bucket of water on him and kicked him, and then went to the saloon. The boy stumbled to his knees, climbed into bed and sobbed.

"That night the father, feeling sorry for the way he had treated the boy, slipped into the boy's room and found him with tears still coursing down his cheeks. The father fell onto his knees and said, 'Son, I'm sorry for what I did. I will never do it again. Son, are you really a Christian?'

"The boy replied, 'Yes, Daddy.'

"Can you pray, son?' the father asked.

"Yes, sir,' replied the boy, 'I have learned to pray a little.'

"After all I've done, can you pray for me?'

"Yes,' said the boy. They got down onto their knees, and the boy prayed, 'Dear Lord, save my daddy. I want him to be a Christian.'

"The man began to sob, then said, 'Son, tell me how to become a Christian.' The boy explained repentance and faith. The father said, 'I'll do that right now. I am sorry for all my sins. I'm trusting Christ with all my heart.'

"The next morning the father put on his best suit. He said, 'I want you to take me to that preacher.' They told the preacher their story, and soon the man was again confessing his faith in Christ. Then they went down to the saloon. There the man took an ax and demolished the bar and broke every bottle of whiskey in the house.

"Handing the keys of the building to the preacher, the man said, 'It's all yours now. Use it in any way you please.' Today that building houses a church, and the former saloonkeeper became an officer in that church.

"Why did it all happen? Because the man had been born again and Christ had changed his life."

Nothing in life has the power to make so profound a change as that which Jesus Christ can make. This truth is vividly portrayed in this little book. In these 4 short chapters, Ruth is shown moving from Brokenness to Blessedness. In her story, however, something far more wonderful and blessed is in view. In this book, we see Christ's power to change lives and His power to transport us from the brokenness of sin to the blessedness of His salvation. This morning, my prayer is that the Lord will speak to your heart about your relationship with Him. If you are unsaved, please allow God to show you what He can do for you. If you are saved this morning, be sure you are where the Lord wants you to be and rejoice in what He has done for you. Now, let's look at Ruth: From Brokenness To Blessedness.

#### I. Ruth 1:1-22 RUTH: THE DESTITUTE WIDOW

A. Ruth 1:1-5 Her Pain – (Ill. The trials of this little family.) Ruth's life at this point pictures the live that is lived apart from the will of God. (Ill. Proverbs 13:13) (Ill. Ruth had many strikes against her:

1. She was a Gentile.
2. She was a stranger from the covenants of Israel.
3. She was lost in sin.

What a picture of the person outside Christ! They too are lost in sin, separated from God and doomed to an eternity in Hell – Ephesians 2:12; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23)

Ill. Following the terrible Mexico City earthquake of 1985, live satellite coverage carried the news of Mexico's anguish to a watching world. A pastor was sitting in front of his television set stunned by the extent of the damage. Mountains of broken concrete filled the screen. Rescue workers dug frantically. Fires raged. Smoke and dust filled the air. Then suddenly in the lower left-hand corner of the screen appeared the words "Courtesy: SIN." The letters S-I-N actually stood for Spanish International Network, but for a moment it meant something different to that pastor. It reminded him that in some way all trouble, pain, and suffering can be traced back to the problem of sin. That's not to say that God judged Mexico City with an earthquake. We don't know that. But if sin directly or indirectly caused such a tragedy, or even the more disastrous quake described by John in Revelation 6:12, it deserves to be treated with contempt, not courtesy.

B. Ruth 1:6-18 Her Pledge – (Ill. Naomi is a picture of the backslidden Christian. She gives her daughters-in-law some very poor advice. She actually pleads with them to remain in their homeland and with their false gods – Ruth 1:15. Ill. Never take advice from a backslider! His advice is always flawed!) (Ill. This is THE pivotal point in the life of Ruth. She makes a conscious decision to follow the God of Naomi!) (Ill. God calls all men to come unto Him – John 1:9; Revelation 22:17. Yet, only a conscious decision to receive Christ into one's heart and life results in eternal salvation, (Ill. Acts 16:31) Have YOU made that decision?

C. Ruth 1:19-22 Her Poverty – Left with no husband and no means of support, Naomi and Ruth are left financially bankrupt. (III. This is a further portrait of the sinner apart from God. The lost person is totally bankrupt spiritually. He has no access to God, no ground from which to ask anything from the Lord. He can produce no good – Isaiah 64:6. He needs someone to stand between himself and God – (III. The Daysman – Job 9:33.) III. Jesus is the only mediator – 2 Timothy 2:5.

## II. Ruth 2:1-23 RUTH: THE DESPARATE WORKER

A. Ruth 2:1-3 Her Providence – (III. In order to feed herself and Naomi, Ruth goes off to glean in the fields – Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:19-21) (III. Ruth 2:3 – Ruth's coming into the field of Boaz was no coincidence! It is an example of the amazing providence of Almighty God. May I remind you that God is in control of every area of life – Psalms 37:23. There is no such thing as a coincidence in the economy of God!) (III. All of our lives are tributes to the wonderful providence of God. Pause to remember what He did to bring you to Jesus!

B. Ruth 2:4-9 b Her Protection – (III. Ruth 2:5 – Ruth caught the eye of Boaz and he was very interested in her. III. Jesus Christ is interested in every one of us! He desires to bring us into a wonderful, personal relationship with Himself.) (III. Ruth 2:9 – Boaz made sure that nobody bothered or hindered Ruth as she gleaned. III. How Jesus keeps us along life's way so that we might be brought into that special relationship with Him. III. Why you have lived until this day!) C. Ruth 2:9-20 Her Provision – Notice how Boaz met the needs in Ruth's life.

1. Ruth 2:9 He Quenched Her Thirst – He made sure she had access to the water supply! (III. Jesus has all the resources needed to satisfy the soul of man!)

2. Ruth 2:14 He Fed Her Hunger – Boaz made sure that Ruth was eating at his table. (III. Jesus takes a man from feeding upon the refuse of the world and He sits us at His table – III. Luke 15:11-24.) (III. Compare where you were to where He has placed you today! III. Mephibosheth – 2 Samuel 9:1-13!)

3. Ruth 2:15-20 He Filled Her Basket – (III. "Handfuls of Purpose" – Boaz instructed the reapers to pull some ears off the sheaves and drop them for Ruth. She left that day with far more than she bargained for – III. Ephah – About 1 weeks rations.) (III. Every person who meets Jesus gets their basket filled to overflowing! We always get more than we expect or deserve – Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 2:9; Romans 8:17!)

D. Ruth 2:21-23 Her Persistence – Ruth stayed close by the man who was blessing her life. (III. There is a lesson right here for every Christian who will heed the message of God! We have no business gleaning in another's field! (III. Jeremiah 2:5; Jeremiah 2:13; Jeremiah 2:19) Has God been less than adequate in your life? If the truth were told, God has blessed you above measure and you have no excuse for straying so far away from Him!) (III. Some of God's people need to come home today!) III. Ruth 3:1-18 RUTH: THE DESIGNING WOMAN

A. Ruth 3:1-5 The Plan – (III. Naomi concocts a plan whereby Ruth is brought closer to Boaz.) III. This ought to be our heart's desire! To get just as close to Jesus as is humanly possible! Are you as close as you should be? Are you at least as close as you used to be? I'll guarantee you that you are as close as you want to be!

B. Ruth 3:6-9 The Performance – (Ill. Ruth proceeds to carry out Naomi’s plan. In doing so, she placed herself perfectly for a deeper fuller relationship with Boaz. In observing Ruth’s actions, the Christian can learn how to get closer to the Lord.

1. Ruth 3:3 She Was Washed – To be in a right relationship with Jesus, we must be washed from our sins – Revelation 1:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. We must also strive to maintain that cleanliness that will guarantee continued fellowship.

2. Ruth 3:3 She Was Anointed – This is a picture of being filled with the Spirit. If we sincerely desire to be as close to Jesus as is possible, then we must walk in His Spirit, Ephesians 5:18.

3. Ruth 3:3 She Was Clothed – This speaks of the robe of righteousness that declares our righteous standing before the Lord.

4. Ruth 3:8 She Was At His Feet – A picture of humility and submission. For Jesus to stand tall in our lives, we must be willing to place ourselves at His feet – (Ill. John the Baptist – John 3:30.) (Ill. Matthew 23:12; 1 Peter 5:6) I must get very little so that He can be very large!

5. Ruth 3:9 She Was Covered – (Ill. Her social standing, her past sins and idolatry, her birth as a Gentile, were all covered by Boaz!) This is a picture of God’s perfect, eternal salvation. All my past with it’s scars and failures is forever gone, taken away by the Blood of the Lamb and the all-covering Grace of God!

C. Ruth 3:10-18 The Pay Off – The plan worked and Boaz agreed to be the redeemer for Ruth and Naomi. (Ill. Her love for Him was evident!) Thank God, Jesus was willing to come and pay our redemption price before we ever even gave Him the first thought, much less ever loved Him – Revelation 13:8, 1 John 4:19. By the way, He still loves sinners today! He even loves you!

#### IV. Ruth 4:1-22 RUTH: THE DELIVERED WIFE

A. Ruth 4:1-8 The Proposition – (Ill. The Law of the Kinsman Redeemer) Boaz did it all by the book. Ill. The little stinger in Ruth 4:5 to persuade the other man to step out. (Ill. Everything Jesus did, He did by the book! He fulfilled all the Law and paid the price for sin and He did it legally!)

B. Ruth 4:9-13 The Purchase – (Ill. Boaz was willing to pay any price because of his love for Ruth.) (Ill. Jesus and the great price He paid to redeem the souls of fallen men – Php 2:5-8) (Now, all those who trust Him are redeemed from sin and become part of the Bride of Jesus! Ultimately, headed to an eternal home in Heaven! Ill. All the many, many benefits of the saved!)

C. Ruth 4:14-22 The Profit – Ruth, the Gentile, became the great-grandmother of King David, Ruth 4:17-22, and an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew 1:5. (Ill. What a difference Jesus makes! He puts His treasure into our trash, 2 Corinthians 4:7, and changes every aspect of our lives, 2 Corinthians 5:17! Jesus is in the delivery business – Ill. Mark 5:1-20, especially Mark 5:15!)

Conc: I can’t think of anything better than being saved by grace! Having been on the outside looking in, it sure does feel good to be on the inside looking up! Regardless of where you are today, Jesus can do in you life, and much more, what Boaz did for Ruth. He can redeem you, bring you close to Himself and bless you beyond your wildest dreams. All He is waiting on is you! Will you come to Him today? He wants you!

## 07.15. Somebody Pinch Me Please - Rth 4:13-22

---

Ruth 4:13-22 SOMEBODY PINCH ME PLEASE!

Intro: We have all had experiences in life that were almost too good to be true. In the midst of that experience have ever said, or heard someone say, "Somebody pinch me please! I must be dreaming."? Well, I suppose that is what Ruth is feeling when you reach the concluding chapters of this book. She finds herself in a situation that is almost unbelievably good!

You see, in the verses of this little book, Ruth has worn the garments of a Widow, Ruth 1:1-22; of a Worker, Ruth 2:1-23 and of a Woman, Ruth 3:1-18. But, in this concluding section of the book, we see Ruth wearing the garments of a Wife! For her it must have been like a fairy tale! She must have felt like Cinderella as the handsome prince swept her off her feet to live happily ever after, which is just what they did!

Well, this morning as we look at these verses which form the culmination of Ruth's journey from Widow to Wife, I want you to see that there are some parallels between her experience and ours. If you stop and think of all the redeemed enjoy in Jesus, you could almost feel like you were in a fairy tale this morning. Sometimes, as I ponder all that Jesus has done for me and in me, I just want to say "Somebody pinch me please!" If you will join me for a few minutes, we will look at three experiences that Ruth had in these closing verses that may have left her wondering if she was dreaming. As she pondered all that Boaz had done for her, she may have said, "Somebody Pinch Me Please!"

### I. Ruth 3:13-14 RUTH AND HER WAITING EXPERIENCE

A. She Waited By Faith - Ruth 3:13 - Boaz told her to "tarry this night." His promise to her was that when morning came, he would see to her redemption one way or another. (Note: May I remind you that we are in the night right now? We are to wait patiently upon our Heavenly Boaz to "see to" the needs of life! I would just remind you that He is still "Jehovah-Jireh" - "The LORD Will See To It". Therefore, no matter how dark the way becomes, remember that when the morning comes, He will meet all the needs of life, Psalms 30:5.) (Note: You can trust Jesus to finish that which He has started in our lives, Php 1:6. Nothing that arises in life will ever stop the fulfillment of God's plan for you and me!)

B. She Waited At His Feet - Ruth 3:14 - Ruth spent the night at the feet of Boaz just as she had been instructed! She knew that as he would do just what he promised! (Note: I would just remind the saints that Jesus Christ is a refuge from the stormy winds and raging seas of life, Psalms 61:1-4; Psalms 46:1; Psalms 62:7-8! There is no better place for the suffering saint to be than near His feet. Stay in that place where you can feel His closeness. Until He comes mark yourself off a place at His feet and determine in your heart that you will be moved by nothing this life throws at you!) II. Ruth 4:13 RUTH AND HER WEDDING EXPERIENCE

A. It Was A Time Of Glory For The Groom - Boaz saw his plan completed when Ruth was redeemed and when she became his bride. He paid the price for her because of his love for her and he was magnified as a result, Ruth 4:11-12. (Note: The word "took" means "to carry away, to fetch". What a picture of that which our heavenly Boaz will do for us when He returns for His bride - 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Corinthians 1:1-31 The. Ruth 4:16-17; Revelation 19:1-9. He will catch us away and He will see His plan completed when His bride is safe with Him in glory! Friends, if you are saved, you are going home! On that day, He will receive all the praise He is worthy of today!)

B. It Was A Time Of Grace For The Bride - In spite of her past, Ruth was accepted in Boaz! When she was redeemed, a legal transaction took place, Ruth 4:1-11. When the near kinsman plucked off his shoe as a sign that he could redeem Ruth, Boaz took that shoe and kept it as evidence that he was the Redeemer and that Ruth had been forever redeemed from her past! (Note: In Jesus, and through His blood, we are accepted, Ephesians 1:6. The Bible reminds us that in spite of what we were, in Jesus we have been forever redeemed, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Peter 1:18-19. His grace has changed everything for those who trust Him for salvation, Ephesians 2:8-9; Ephesians 2:12-18.) (Note: We do not have a shoe to prove that we belong to Jesus, we have something far better than that! We have the Lord Himself, seated at the right hand of the Father, ever living to make intercession for us, Hebrews 7:25. We have an "Advocate" in heaven Who bears in His body the marks of the cross, 1 John 2:1; Revelation 5:6.) (Note: In spite of what we were, and still are at times, we are going to stand in Heavenly places by His grace! In fact, I am already there this morning, Ephesians 2:6.)

III. Ruth 4:14-22 RUTH AND HER WORSHIP EXPERIENCE

(III. After the redemption was concluded and the marriage was finished, there was a time of worship that began. Notice what prompted their praise.)

A. Ruth 4:14 It Focused Itself In A Sovereign - This verse indicates that God received the praise for the transaction! This is justified because He established the plan that brought Ruth and Boaz together, and He is exalted because of it. (Note: May we never forget that all we have in Jesus is because of God's eternal decree, Revelation 13:8. And, that He is worthy to be praised because of it, Revelation 4:1-11; Revelation 5:8-14!)

B. Ruth 4:15-22 It Fixed Itself In A Son - The child that Ruth and Boaz had together was named "Obed". This is a name that means "Worshipping". This son firmly fixed Ruth's place in Israel! You see, her redemption gave her legal standing in the courthouse records, but this child gave her a connection with the royal family! Obed was King David's grandfather! This made Ruth David's great-grandmother! But, better than that, she is named in Matthew 1:5 as one of the ancestresses of Jesus Christ! This little boy changed everything for Ruth! So, for Naomi, Ruth and everyone involved, Obed became a "restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age". Knowing the son was a blessing to them all! (Note: Genuine worship will always erupt out of a personal relationship with the Son of God! When you know Him, you know One Who is The Restorer of Life and the Nourisher of all Ages! If you know Him, you should rejoice in that fact! If you do not know Him, then you need to know that you can, and to know Him changes everything, 1 John 5:12!)

Conc: As her life progressed, there were probably many days when she said to herself, "Somebody pinch me, I must be dreaming!" Such is the power of grace in the life all who are pursued and captured of it!

Grace can take you from nowhere as a nobody and it can change your life, redeem you from death and place you in the family of the King! Are you living your life in the grace of God? Would you like to know Him? Do you need to get at His feet this morning? Whatever your need, it will be met by coming to Him and trusting Him to do the amazing in your life!

## **08.00 The Bible: God's Perfect Word**

---

The Bible: God's Perfect Word The Perfection Of The Holy Scriptures - 2 Timothy 3:14-17 The Preservation Of The Holy Scriptures - Psalms 12:6-7 The Purpose Of The Holy Scriptures - 2 Timothy 3:14-17 The Profit In The Holy Scriptures - 2 Timothy 3:14-17

## 08.01 THE PERFECTION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

---

### The Bible: God's Perfect Word - Sermon #1 2 Timothy 3:14-17 THE PERFECTION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Series Intro: We have met here tonight because we believe the Bible. We believe in the God of the Bible; the Christ of the Bible; the plan of salvation revealed in the Bible; and everything else written in the Bible. To a finer point, we believe the King James Version of the Bible to be the very Word of God in the English language.

We hold up our Bibles and we say, "This book is the Word of God! I believe it is true from cover to cover. It is without error and it is absolutely perfect." I believe that too, but I fear that many do not know why they believe that. Friends, everything we believe either stands or falls on the accuracy of the Bible. Therefore, it is imperative that we know why we believe what we believe about the Bible.

I would like to take the next few mid-week services and preach a topical series entitled The Bible: God's Perfect Word. I would like for us to consider the doctrine of "Bibliology". That is a word that means "The study of the Bible." I think it would be good for us to get to know our Bibles better. We need to know where it came from; why it can be trusted and why it carries ultimate divine authority. So, have your Bibles ready and follow with me as we study The Bible: God's Perfect Word.

Sermon Intro: A good word that describes the Bible is the word "unique". The dictionary defines the word "unique" as follows, "1. only one: being the only one of its kind 2. better than others: superior to all others 3. unusual: different from others in a way that makes something worthy of note." It is the only book of its kind in existence! Several features point out its uniqueness, and by way of introduction, I want to share those features with you today.

- The Bible was written over a period of 1,500 years
- The Bible was written by over 40 different authors (Among them were kings, military leaders, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, tax collectors, poets, statesmen, musicians, scholars and shepherds.)
- The Bible was written in many different places, at many different times and by people experiencing many different moods.
- The Bible was written on three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe.
- The Bible was written in three different languages: Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic.
- The Bible is written with many different literary styles: Prose, poetry, historical narrative, romance, law, biography, parable, allegory and prophecy.
- The Bible addresses hundreds of difficult issues without a single contradiction.

· The Bible is a book of great diversity, yet, in spite of this, it unfolds a single continuous story, and it does so without ever contradicting itself.

· The Bible has for its main character God Himself, made known through the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, the Bible is a unique book! But, this uniqueness was not accidental, it was purposeful. How can this be? The Bible achieves its uniqueness through a process known as Inspiration. It is that process that I would like for us to investigate together today. Our text, verse 16, says that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God”. The word “inspiration” literally means “God breathed”.

If God has given His Word, delivered by His very breath, then it stands to reason that the scripture He has given us is absolutely perfect. Let’s look into the matter of inspiration and think together for a while about The Perfection Of The Holy Scriptures.

## I. THE PROCESS OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

(III. What process did God use to get His Word into the hands and hearts of men? There are three terms that must be addressed as we deal with this matter of Inspiration.)

A. Revelation - The first step in getting the word of God on paper is the process known as revelation. This is the process whereby a man hears from the Lord just what the Lord wants written down. At varying times, God used varying means to give His revelation to men.

· He spoke through angels - Genesis 18:1-33; Genesis 19:1-38; Luke 1:1-80, Luke 2:1-52; Matthew 28:1-20; etc.

· He spoke through an audible voice - Genesis 3:9-19; Genesis 6:13-21; Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 20:1-17; Joshua 1:1-9; 1 Kings 17:2-4.

· He spoke in a still, small voice - 1 Kings 19:11-12 · He spoke through nature - Psalms 19:1-14 · He spoke through animals - Numbers 22:28 · He spoke in dreams - Genesis 28:12; Matthew 1:1-25, Matthew 2:1-23; Matthew 2:19-22

· He spoke through visions - Isaiah 6:1-6; Daniel 7:1-28; Daniel 8:1-27; Daniel 10:1-21; Acts 16:1-40, Acts 19:1-41 · He spoke through Christophanies – Genesis 18:1-33; Exodus 3:2; Daniel 3:25; 1 Kings 19:7

We do not know the exact process by which God spoke to the original authors, but we have God’s Word on the fact that He did, 2 Peter 1:21, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” So, revelation is God telling a man what He wants written down.

B. Inspiration - The second step in the process is inspiration. This is man writing on paper what God has told him to say. As we have already seen this process is said to be “God breathed”.

· The Bible clearly claims inspiration for itself, 2 Timothy 3:17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 1:1.

· Paul believed his writings were inspired, 1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:15.

- Peter believed his writings were inspired, 2 Peter 3:2.
- Peter believed the writings of Paul to be inspired, 2 Peter 3:15-16.

Somehow God superintended the process of getting His word into a man and then through that man onto paper. Inspiration has been defined as, “God’s superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs”, Charles C. Ryrie.

But, the question comes, how did He do this? Well, of course, there are many different views, but only one correct view. Let me share a few of those with you.

- Natural Inspiration – This theory holds that there was nothing supernatural involved in the writing of the Bible. Men were inspired in the same fashion as Shakespeare, Milton; Dante; etc.
- Spiritual Illumination - People who hold this view believe that the people and the words were inspired. They believe that any devout Christian can be inspired to write more Scripture.
- Partial Inspiration - This view says that only the elements in the Bible related to faith are inspired. There may be scientific or historical error, but God has preserved the message of salvation. The problems with this view are clear! If you cannot believe even a part of the Bible, how can you believe any of the Bible?
- Conceptual Inspiration - The concepts of scripture and not the words are inspired. God just gave a man an idea and he wrote what he thought about that topic.
- Divine Dictation - The biblical writers were merely automatons in the hand of God. He came upon them and overrode them. He moved the pen and merely used their body as a vehicle to write His Own Words. If this is true, then why do John, Paul, Peter, James, Matthew, Moses, etc all reveal differing styles?

All of these, among others, are false views of inspiration. Allow me to share with you the biblical view of inspiration. Most fundamentalists believe in what is called the “Verbal, Plenary Inspiration of the Bible.” This simply means that we believe that “all” (plenary) the very “words” (verbal) of the Bible are inspired. This is the claim of the Bible, 2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 4:4; John 6:63, and it is the position we gladly affirm this evening.

What this means is that God gave His Word to human authors. But, He did not override their personalities. He did, however, guide their choice of words. When they had written down all that God had given them in His revelation, they had produced a perfectly inspired record of God’s revelation. God breathed His Word through human vessels giving the world a perfectly inspired statement of His Word to men!

C. Illumination - The third process in getting the Word of God to men is the process known as illumination. This is “the process by which God uses the inspired written record of His revelation to speak to the hearts of individual people.” This is when the Holy Spirit causes the light to come on in the human heart and men see themselves as they are and Jesus as the need of their heart. It is also the process whereby the Spirit of God allows us to understand the truth of the Word of God. Thus, the cycle of inspiration is complete. Since inspiration is our topic this evening, we will leave

the subject of illumination until a later time.

## II. THE PROOFS OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

(III. Now that we have something of an idea of what inspiration is, how can we be sure that our Bibles are genuinely inspired by God? Well, the bottom line is that it does come down to faith, but faith is never a blind leap into the dark. Our faith can rest not just in the fact that God personally breathed His Word through men, but that His Word will stand up to several important tests as to its perfection. Let me share a few of those with you.)

A. It Passes The Historical/Archeological Test - For many years people laughed at Bible believers because the Bible referred to places, people and events that had no basis in recorded history. However, through the good grace of God, He has allowed the archeologists' spade to uncover many items from the ancient past that confirm the factual nature of the Word of God. Not a single piece of evidence had ever surfaced that contradicts the Bible at any point of its history.

(Note: Consider these important discoveries:

- For years men said that a place called Ur of the Chaldees never existed. Then proof was discovered that proved it did.
- The historicity of Joseph's rule in Egypt confirmed by a tablet found in Yemen. It seems that a clay tablet was found in the tomb of a rich woman who record here efforts to buy grain from a man named Joseph in a land called Egypt.
- The seal of Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe has been found.
- Jezebel's makeup saucers have been found.
- Brick in Egypt have been found that were made without straw.
- The death of Jesus has been proven to be a historical fact.
- The list could go on for hours, but suffice it to say that the Bible has been and continues to be proven accurate in every detail it records!)

(Note: This kind of accuracy is something else that no other religious text in existence can claim. III. The Book of Mormon!) The Bible can be trusted!

B. It Passes The Scientific Test - Others have mocked the Bible and claimed that it was woefully inaccurate in matters of science. However, time has once again vindicated the accuracy of the message of the Bible.

- The Bible says the earth is a sphere, Isaiah 40:22. Man discovered this in the 15th century.
- The Bible says the earth is suspended in space - Job 26:7. Sir Isaac Newton discovered this in 1687.
- The Bible claims the number of the stars is innumerable, Genesis 15:5. Abraham could only see about 1,200 stars in his day. Now, we know that there are trillions of stars in the heavens.

· The Bible contains rules regarding medicine and sanitation that were thousands of years ahead of their time. (III. Washing and quarantine)

· Many, many more specific items could be mentioned here, but these should suffice to show the superiority of the message of the Bible. The Bible can be trusted!

C. It Passes The Prophecy Test - There are literally thousands of prophetic predictions made in the Bible. Some of these prophecies are quite dramatic in nature. For instance, Isaiah mentions Cyrus the Persian King, by name, 125 years before he was born. Not a single one prophecy made in the Bible has ever failed, or will ever fail, to come to pass! Some of the most remarkable prophecies are those related to the Lord Jesus Christ. For instance, if you were to take just a few of the most specific prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus and His birth and earthly life, you can see how astonishing the accuracy of the Bible truly is. Consider just these seventeen prophecies:

1. He would be born in Bethlehem, Micah 5:2 2. He would be preceded by a forerunner, Isaiah 40:3

3. He would enter Jerusalem on a colt, Zechariah 9:9 (By the way, Jesus entered Jerusalem on the exact day Daniel had prophesied hundreds of years earlier, Daniel 9:25-27.) 4. He would be betrayed by a friend, Psalms 41:9 5. His hands and His feet would be pierced, Psalms 22:16 6. He would be wounded by His enemies, Isaiah 53:5 7. He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, Zechariah 11:12 8. He would be spit upon and beaten, Isaiah 50:6 9. The betrayal money would be cast down in temple and would be used to buy a potter's field, Zechariah 11:13 10. He would be silent before His accusers, Isaiah 53:7 11. He would be crucified with thieves, Isaiah 53:12 12. People would gamble for His garments, Psalms 22:8 13. His side would be pierced, Zechariah 12:10 14. No a bone in His body would be broken, Psalms 34:20 15. His body would not decay, Psalms 16:10 16. He would be burial in the tomb of a rich man, Isaiah 53:9 17. Darkness would cover the earth, Amos 8:9.

Someone has calculated that the odds of just these seventeen prophecies coming to pass is 1 chance in 480 Billion X 1 Billion X 1 Trillion! That is the number 480 followed by 30 zeros! In other words, it would be like taking one grain of sand, painting it gold, and hiding it somewhere among the 200 million stars and the millions of planets, moons and asteroids of the Milky Way, then blindfolding a person and sending him out to find that one golden grain of sand. The odds are the same that he would find it!

Even if you just take eight of the prophecies that refer to Jesus, it can be illustrated by the following. Suppose we filled the entire state of Texas two feet deep with silver dollars. We marked one with an "X" and stirred up all the silver dollars throughout the state. Then, we blindfolded a man and allowed him to go anywhere he wishes in the state of Texas, stop, reach down into the silver dollars and pick one out. The odds that he would find the one marked silver dollar are 1 in 1017, or one in one hundred quadrillion, or one in 100 million billion. Those are the odds!) The Bible can be trusted!

D. It Passes The Unity Test - What God begins in Genesis, He ends in Revelation. (III. Genesis 1:1; Revelation 21:1; Genesis 1:27-28; Revelation 21:9, etc.) This is in spite of the fact that it took 1,500 years to write the Bible. It is the unfolding of a single story from beginning to end. This could never be duplicated by any human work! The Bible can be trusted!

E. It Passes The Honesty Test - If this were merely a human book, it would gloss over the failures of the people found within its pages. However, the Bible does not hide Noah's drunkenness, Samson's lust, David's adultery, Elijah's depression or Peter's denial. It tells the truth from cover to cover! The Bible can be trusted!

There are many other areas in which the Bible could be put to the test, but I just want you to know that it passes them all with flying colors! No human book could accomplish this! Just what I have mentioned this evening is proof positive that we have in our hands a divinely inspired Bible!

### III. THE PRODUCT OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

(III. We know what inspiration is and we can see the God's fingerprints all over His Word. If we accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, what does that teach us? What can we take away from such an examination? We are left with three precious truths that must never be taken for granted.)

A. The Bible Is Infallible - This word means that the Scriptures are incapable of failing! Everything the Bible says is truth and all everything it promises will come to pass! The Scriptures are in every sense perfect and they are a perfect revelation of the mind of God to man!

B. The Bible Is Inerrant - E.J. Young defines inerrancy this way, "By this word, we mean that the Scriptures possess the quality of freedom from all error. They are exempt from the liability to mistake, incapable of error. In all their teachings they are in perfect accord with the truth." When people say that the Bible contains mistakes and errors, they are calling the very character of God into question! We are told that God simply cannot tell a lie, Hebrews 6:18. If He claimed inspiration for His Word, then that Word must be inerrant. If it isn't then God lied when He claimed to have inspired the original text.

C. The Bible Is Complete - When the Apostle John laid down his pen at the close of the book of Revelation, the revelation in the Scriptures was perfect and fully complete. There has not been a single inspired word since that time and there never will be. God has finished His Scriptures and we hold in our hands the perfect and complete record of that revelation. If you lived 10,000 life times and read every book ever written and that would ever be written, you would never again encounter another book like the Bible. In fact, you would never again encounter any other Scripture. The Bible is complete!

(Note: The final analysis is this: when you read your Bible, you are reading the very words of God! You can base your faith upon it! You can trust your eternity to it. You can embrace its message knowing that it reveals the very mind of God to man! It cannot fail! It cannot err! It will never be corrected, updated or amended! It is complete and it is perfect!)

Conc: I trust this hasn't been too academic. I hope this message has served to help to further anchor your faith in the blessed Word of God. I thank Him for His perfect Word! I am thankful that this book has revealed the sin of my heart and pointed out that I was headed to Hell! I am also thankful that God illuminated my heart to allow me to see not only myself and my need, but also Jesus Christ, the solution to my problem.

There may be someone here that has never been saved. Jesus loves you my friend and He wants to reveal Himself to you. Won't you come to Him and be saved today? Others here are guilty of

neglecting their Bibles. Won't you come and confess that to Him and begin a new love affair with the inspired Word of God? Others may like to just come and bow before Him and thank Him for His perfect Book!

## 08.02 THE PRESERVATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

---

The Bible: God's Perfect Word - Sermon #2

Psalms 12:6-7 THE PRESERVATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Intro: Last time we examined evidence for the inspiration of the Word of God. We learned the blessed truth that God literally "breathed" His Word through human personalities to give us an inerrant, infallible and inspired record of His revelation of Himself and of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not wish to be repetitive, but I do feel that we need to review a few of the terms we encountered in our study, and I would like to add a new term to list.

- Revelation - The process by which man heard from God exactly what God wanted written down.
- Inspiration - The process of man actually writing down what God wanted said. This is God filtering His Word through human personality.
- Illumination - The process by which God uses the inspired record of the revelation of Himself to speak to the hearts of humanity. To this list, I would like to add the word Preservation. This is the process by which God has supernaturally protected His word through many reproductions and translations. The idea of preservation holds that God has faithfully superintended His Word down through the ages, so that even today, some 3,500 years after portions of the Bible were written down, we can say that what we possess, what we love and what we read are the very words of God!

Now, we have already discovered the tremendous truth that the original autographs, that is, the writings of the original authors were divinely inspired. Sadly, none of those original autographs have survived to this day. In other words, you can't go anywhere in this world and find a scrap of paper containing the actual writings of Paul, John, Moses, Peter, James, Daniel, Isaiah or any of the other biblical writers. Since that is true, how can we be confident that the Bibles we possess today are in fact accurate and are the very Word of God? Just as the inspiration of the Scriptures can be decisively proven using both the internal evidence of the Bible itself and the external sources of historical and scientific evidence, it can also be proven that the Bible has been divinely preserved down to this very day. With that in mind, let's take some time this evening to examine this issue of The Preservation Of The Holy Scriptures.

### I. SCRIPTURE HAS BEEN PRESERVED BY GOD'S PROMISES

(III. Let's examine the internal evidence from the Bible itself. The Bible contains several passages that affirm God's intention to preserve His inspired Word for all generations.) A. Old Testament Promises Of Preservation

- Psalms 12:6-7, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation

for ever.”

- Numbers 23:19, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”
- Psalms 89:34, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”
- Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”
- Psalms 119:89, “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.”

#### B. New Testament Promises Of Preservation

- Matthew 5:18, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”
- Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
- Titus 1:2, “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”
- 1 Peter 1:25, “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

C. To my mind, the conclusion from these verses is crystal clear: God had indeed promised to preserve His Word! The internal evidence is overwhelming! I have given you nine passages that explicitly state God’s intentions in this matter. The question I have for you is this: How many times does God have to say anything before we can conclude that He means it? Once! We have the promise of God, Who cannot lie, Hebrews 6:18, Who identifies Himself as the “Faithful and True Witness”, Revelation 3:14, that He will forever perfectly preserve His Word, and that is good enough for me. However, while that may be all the evidence Bible believers need, that is not all the evidence we have!

## II. SCRIPTURE HAS BEEN PRESERVED BY GOD’S POWER

A. Jeremiah 36:1-32 tells the story of God giving Jeremiah revelation and inspiration to write a portion of the Word of God. Jeremiah writes as he is commanded and king Jehoiakim listens to the word of God. He receives illumination from the Lord, but he rejects the message. He takes the scroll Jeremiah has written and he literally cuts it to pieces and burns it in the fireplace, Jeremiah 36:23. Apparently, he thinks that destroying the written word will erase what God has said. However, God’s word is settled, not on earth, but in Heaven, Psalms 119:89. God merely sent His word again through the prophet Jeremiah, Jeremiah 36:28. Despite the actions of Jehoiakim, God preserved His Word! That is just one small picture of what God has always done in regard to protecting and preserving His Word down through the ages.

B. Down through the ages, there have been several concerted efforts by pagan unbelievers to eradicate the Word of God.

· In A.D. 303, the Roman emperor Diocletian ordered the confiscation and destruction of all the Christian scriptures. Thousands of early copies and possibly some original autographs were burned. However, the Word of God was not eradicated! Earnest believers protected the Word and hid it away in the catacombs, in caves and in graves. Thus the Word of God survived that attack!

· The French humanist Voltaire once said, "Another century and there will not be a Bible on the earth." Two centuries have gone, and the circulation of the Bible is one of the marvels of the age. After he died, his old printing press and the very house where he lived was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and made a depot for Bibles. On December 24, 1933, the British Government bought a book called Codex Sinaiticus from the Russians for half a million dollars. On the same day, a first edition of Voltaire's work sold for eleven cents in Paris bookshops.

· Joseph Stalin This bloody butcher took over all of Russia upon the death of Lenin in the late twenties. From this point on until his death in the fifties, Stalin instituted a "ban the Bible" purge from the U.S.S.R. such as had never been witnessed before. The miserable man literally attempted to wipe the Word of God and the God of the Word from the Russian people's minds. Did he succeed? A recent poll taken in Russia shows that today more people than ever believe in God and His Word.

· For thousands of years the enemies of truth have sought to destroy the precious Word of God. Every attempt to do so has failed miserably as the Bible continues to be read and loved by millions of people.

C. In 1526, William Tyndale had produced the first English translation of the Bible to be printed on a printing press. This new version was hated by the Roman Catholic Church and in particular by the Bishop of London. A certain man named John Packington, who knew the Bishop and his hatred of the Tyndale translation, but who was also secretly a friend of Tyndale, went to the Bishop of London and told him he knew how to get all of Tyndale's Bibles. The Bishop told him to get them and that he would gladly pay whatever they cost. The Bishop of London promised to buy them with the intention of burning them at Paul's Cross Cathedral in London. Packington went to Tyndale and told him of the deal he had made with the Bishop. Tyndale responded by saying that he knew the Bishop would burn his Bibles. However, printing the Bibles had left Tyndale deeply indebted.

Tyndale decided to sell the Bibles to the Bishop of London. He saw several advantages in doing so. First, he could use the money to pay his way out of debt and have even more Bibles printed. Secondly, when the people of England saw the Bishop of London burning the Word of God they would be come enraged. So, the enemy of the Word of God actually allowed Tyndale to pay off his debts, correct the text of his translation and print three times the number of Bibles that had been destroyed!

Later, when some of Tyndale's associates were arrested and asked where they received the money to print their Bibles, they answered that the money came from the Bishop of London. This one instance is proof that God is able to preserve His Word despite the attempts of all its enemies to destroy it.

### III. SCRIPTURE HAS BEEN PRESERVED BY GOD'S PROVIDENCE

(III. Despite the fact that God promised to preserve His Word and that He has exerted His divine power to preserve His Word, there still may be some doubt in a few minds about whether or not we have an accurate record of God's inspired in our hands today. Well, we do not have the time needed this evening to examine all the evidence that exists for the preservation of the inspired Word of God, but we do have time to look at a small portion of the evidence that exists.)

(Note: Let me say first of all that the Old Testament text has never really been questioned as to its authenticity. The Jewish scribes were faithful copyists of the divine text. You may have heard of all the extensive efforts they went to in order to ensure that their copies matched the originals in every detail. They actually had men whose only job was to count the letters in the copies. They counted the “jots and tittles”, Matthew 5:18, or the “little horns” that formed parts of the letters themselves. If the number of letters, of jots and tittles, did not match the number in the original, the copy was destroyed! If there was even one error, no matter how small in the text, the copy was destroyed and the copyist started over. These Jewish scribes were so faithful to the Word of God when they came to the name of God, they would wash themselves, and get a new pen before they wrote God’s name. Then they would discard that pen and use another to proceed. Due to their meticulous care of and reverence for the Old Testament Scriptures, the Hebrew text, called the Masoretic text, has never been questioned!) The issue we face is related to the New Testament. The question is this: can we, with confidence, really say that we have a copy of the inspired word of God? Let’s take a moment to examine the evidence. Every English Bible in existence today came from one of two streams of Greek texts. One stream is called the Alexandrian Text, while the other is called the Byzantine Text. The Byzantine Text has come to be known as the Majority Text or the Textus Receptus (The Received Text). There is no way, in the time we have allotted, that we can examine all the nuances of each textual line. However, we can look a couple of astounding particulars that should help the issue to become clear.

A. The Perversion Of The True Text - (The Alexandrian Text) - This text family receives its name from the fact that it originated in Alexandria Egypt. It was the work of such early church fathers and Clement and Origen. Both of these men are held in high esteem by biblical scholars, but it should be noted that both of these men rejected a literal interpretation of the Bible, leaning instead toward an allegorical interpretation. This simply means that they believed the Bible was a collection of spiritual stories designed to teach truth. Much could be said about these men, but it is enough to know, for now, that they did not accept the Bible as it was literally written. This fact alone makes the texts that they had a hand in creating suspect. This family of texts rests on about 45 manuscripts, many of which are very ancient, some dating back to around 330 AD. The two primary texts in this family are called Sinaiticus (Codex Aleph) and Vaticanus (Codex B). These are the oldest known manuscripts in existence. Both date from the 4th Century. Codex Aleph was discovered in the 1840’s at a monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai by a man named Count Constantin von Tischendorf. He saw several old leaves from ancient books in a pile to be used to start fires in the kitchen. Upon inquiry, he discovered that they had an even older book in the monastery. The monks then showed him the manuscript known as Sinaiticus. This ancient manuscript contains over 12,000 corrections and revisions by someone other than the original copyist. It also contains several spurious books such as The Shepherd of Hermes, The Gospel of Thomas and the Didache. All of these books have been rejected by the believing church for nearly 2,000 years.

Codex B was discovered in the Vatican library in 1481. It too, dates from the 4th Century. This manuscript is the one most relied on by modern Bible translators. This codex has been heavily corrected by Roman Catholic copyists. By the way, the King James Translators knew of the existence of Codex B, but chose to avoid it.

What is interesting is that these two manuscripts, which form the basis for all modern versions of the Bible, disagree with one another over 3,000 times in just the four Gospels alone! There are 43 other manuscripts that support this textual family. Remember, every new version of the Bible, with the exception of the NKJV (It gets its footnotes from the Alexandrian line of texts), was translated from Greek texts based on these manuscripts. A whopping total of 45 manuscripts stand behind all the new versions of the Bible.

These texts were taken, translated, collated and come to us today in the form of the Nestles-Aland 27th Greek Text. This text is considered the standard by most Bible scholars. Yet, it still only rests on some 45 manuscripts!

B. The Preservation Of The True Text – (The Traditional Text) - The other text family had its origin in the city of Antioch in Syria. The scholars in Antioch took a more literal approach to biblical interpretation. They considered the Bible to be more than mere allegory; they believed it to be the very Word of God. As a result, they were diligent in seeing to it that they were faithful to copy it correctly, employing many of the same techniques of their Jewish predecessors. It is this textual line that has given the world many of the great Bible translations: The Erasmus Greek Text, 1522 (Later to become known as The Textus Receptus, 1633); Martin Luther's German Bible, circa 1530; Tyndales Bible, 1522; Coverdales Bible, 1535; The Geneva Bible, 1560 and the King James Bible, 1611.

While the new versions rest on a total of 45 manuscripts, those versions that were translated from the Majority Text rest on over 5,210 manuscripts! The overwhelming number of manuscripts agrees with the Majority Text. By the way, when the Nestles-Aland 27th Text is compared to The Textus Receptus, you find that there are some 3,000 words omitted in the Nestles-Aland text and some 20 verses are also omitted. Among the verses omitted are: Acts 8:37 and 1 John 5:7.

C. This is astounding when you consider that Caesar's Gallic Wars, which was written in 52 BC has only 9 good manuscripts supporting it and the oldest dates from some 900 years after the time of Caesar! The Iliad by Homer was written in 900 BC. There are only 643 copies. The earliest copy was made about 400 BC. The textual tradition of the Iliad ranks a distant second to the NT tradition when you consider MSS numbers, age of documents, and quality of texts. Tacitus was a Roman who lived from about AD 55-117. His two long works are Histories and Annals. Only four and one-half of the fourteen books of Histories survive, while only ten of the sixteen books and two partial books of Annals survive. The text for both depends on one ninth century MSS and one eleventh century MSS.

D. When you total it all up, the New Testament rests on over 86,000 fragment and manuscripts. There is more evidence for the accuracy of the New Testament than there is for any ancient writing, period! Do we have the Word of God? Absolutely!

E. While the Majority Text has much more evidence in its favor against the Alexandrian Text, some would argue that the Alexandrian texts are older, and therefore they are more reliable. Well, older is not always better! The simple explanation as to why more early manuscripts from the Alexandrian line exist is that the Majority texts were worn out through use. The fact that many, many more copies of this line exist is proof positive that it was favored by the ancient church over the Alexandrian line of manuscripts.

Conc: I have merely scratched the surface of this matter of the preservation of the biblical text. However, I hope you can walk away this evening confident of the fact that you hold in your hands, and hopefully in your hearts, the very Word of God. By the way, don't let it bother you that the two lines of texts seem to be so different. When all the manuscripts are collated and laid along side the Majority Text, they are found to be in agreement 98% of the time! Of the 2% that disagrees, most is trivial in nature. The bottom line is this: of all the manuscripts in existent of all variations, the difference between them that could be called "substantive" is a mere 1/10th of 1 percent! That is a total agreement among all the textual lines of 99.9%!

If the two textual lines are in fact so close, then does it matter which version you use today? I think it does! The overwhelming majority of the evidence rests in the corner of the Majority Text and thus in the King James Version. For me the argument has been forever settled! The new versions may contain the Word of God in so far as they are accurately translated, while the King James Version is the Word of God!

I close with this question: has God perfectly preserved His word to this day? All the evidence says He has! Therefore, read your Bible with confidence. Base your life upon it with assurance. It is the preserved and inspired Word of God! God has superintended His word through thousands of translations and copies. He has never re-inspired the Bible, some think He did in 1611. He never re-inspired it, but He has preserved His Word and He has preserved it in its inspired, infallible and inerrant form! Blessed be His great name!

## 08.03 THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

---

### The Bible: God's Perfect Word - Sermon #3 2 Timothy 3:14-17 THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Intro: In our text, Timothy is challenged to maintain a close relationship with the Word of God. Paul tells him of the benefits that come from such a relationship. He is reminded that it is the Scriptures which have taught him what he knows about God. It is the Word of God that has fed him and led him to this point in his life. The Scripture has been foundational in making him the man of God he is, 2 Timothy 3:14-15. He is to continue in them so that he might continue to progress as a believer and as a man of God.

Friends you and I need the Scriptures in our lives as well! If we are going to be all we can be for the glory of the Lord we need a close relationship with the Bible. If we are going to grow in the Lord as He wants us to, then we need the Word of God. The verses we have read today have something to say to us about the purpose of the holy Scriptures. They answer, at least partially, the question of why God gave us His Word.

Why did God feel the need to give His revelation to the original authors of the Bible? Why did God feel the need to exert supernatural power to inspire His Word? Why has He demonstrated the same supernatural power in preserving that same Word? While I would never presume to speak for God, I believe you and I can look into His Word and see for ourselves just why God gave us His Word. Let's take a few minutes today to examine The Purpose Of The Holy Scriptures.

#### I. THEY SERVE THE PURPOSE OF REVELATION

(III. Revelation is the process of God telling the original author exactly what He wanted to say. Of course, just as God revealed His mind to the original author, His inspired Word continues to reveal Him and His mind to all those who open the book and read, this is illumination and it is what Timothy had already experienced, according to Paul, 2 Timothy 3:14-15. Notice what the Bible reveals about God.)

A. They Reveal God's Person - The only way God can be known by us, at least now, is through His Word. The Scriptures reveal God to be holy, loving, just, eternal, glorious, exalted, loving, gracious, merciful and infinitely good. They teach us that He is Lord, He is Sovereign, He is a consuming fire, He is terrible and a God of wrath. In the Bible we learn truth that man could never have come to by himself. In the pages of the Bible, we meet God Himself! We could never know Him as well any other way.

B. They Reveal God's Power - In the pages of Scripture we can read of the awesome power of God. We can read of His power to create, Genesis 1-2; \*\*\*III. Isaiah 40:12\*\*\*; of His power in impossible situations, John 11; John 6 (Feeding 5,000 and walking on the storm); of His power to heal; of His power to do anything that He desires to do, Luke 1:38; Job 42:4; Ephesians 3:20.

C. They Reveal God's Promises - Thousands of promises fill the pages of the Word of God, and every single one will be kept, Romans 4:21! The saints of God need never fear that any of the promises of God will fail! (Note: Everything God does is for the glory of His name! God does nothing that does not exalt Him! However, we are told that He has exalted His Word above His very Name, Psalms 138:2.)

D. They Reveal God's Plan - It is in the pages of God's inspired, infallible, inerrant book, the Bible that we can read of God's plan to Save the Sinner - Romans 5:8; Romans 10:13; Satisfy the Saint - Psalms 103:5; Secure the Saved - John 10:28; John 6:37-40; Supply His Sons - Php 4:19; Psalms 37:25.

## II. THEY SERVE THE PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION

(III. The Bible is the unfolding of the story of redemption. Verse 15 reminds us that the Scriptures are "able to make thee wise unto salvation." From the moment man sinned in the garden of Eden, there is a continuous red thread that can be traced through the pages of the Bible. This story of redemption culminates with the death of Christ on the cross for the salvation of the lost.)

A. They Demonstrate The Wickedness Of The Sinner - The Bible is what teaches us that we are sinners in need of a Savior, Romans 3:10; Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22.

B. They Demonstrate The Wrath Of The Sovereign - Romans 6:23; John 3:18; John 3:36; Psalms 9:17.

C. They Demonstrate The Worth Of The Soul - 2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16.

D. They Demonstrate The Way Of Salvation - John 3:16; Matthew 11:28; \*\*\*Ephesians 2:8-9\*\*\*; Acts 16:31; Acts 4:12.

## III. THEY SERVE THE PURPOSE OF REINFORCEMENT

(III. 2 Peter 3:16-17 speak of the benefits that can be derived from a careful and close study of the Bible. After we have received God's revelation and are part of His redemptive plan, the Bible serves as a reinforcement tool, helping us to grow and to develop into all that God wants His children to be. I want to point out two ways in which the Scriptures can help us to develop as believers.)

A. They Build Us Up Through Their Standards - One of the criticisms of the Bible is that it is a rule book. People do not like the idea that the Word of God tells them how to live their lives. But, it is the guidelines for living that are found in the Bible that enable us to live lives that bring honor and glory to the name of God. Jesus said that keeping the commandments was the tangible evidence that we really love Him, John 14:15. John tells us that obeying the Word of God is proof of our salvation, 1 John 2:3-6; 1 John 4:6. John also says that the commandments of the Lord will not be harsh to the believer, but they will delight the soul, 1 John 5:3. Those who determine to live out the commands and teachings of the Bible will grow! (Note: By the way, don't get hung up on all the do's and the don't's. If you will spend your time doing the do's, you won't have the time or the energy to do the don't's!)

B. They Build Us Up Through The Symbols - The Bible identifies itself through several clear metaphors and similes. These symbols serve the purpose of helping us understand what the Bible is and what it can do in our lives. Let's examine a few of those symbols today.

1. A Mirror - James 1:23-25 - As a mirror the Word of God perfectly reflects the mind of God and the condition of man.

2. A Seed - 1 Peter 1:23 - When the Word is properly planted in human heart, it will bring forth life, growth and fruit.

3. Water - Ephesians 5:25-27 - As water, the Word has the power to cleanse, quench and refresh.

4. A Lamp - Psalms 119:105; Proverbs 6:23 - The Word is a lamp because it shows us where we are, it guides us into the future and it keeps us from falling.

5. A Sword - Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17 - Called a sword because it has the ability to pierce the heart. It is equally effective on sinners, saints and Satan.

6. Precious Metals - Gold - Psalms 19:10; Psalms 119:27; Silver - Psalms 119:127; Psalms 12:6 - The Bible is referred to as gold and silver because of its desirability, its preciousness and its value.

7. Food - Job 23:12 - The Word of God is called food because it strengthens those who partake of it. (Note: The verb "furnish" in verse 17, means to be "finished, complete". It is in the passive voice. In other words, this completing ministry of the Word is something that is "done to" the one who gets into the word. If you will feed on the Bible, you will grow!) A. Milk - 1 Peter 2:2 - As milk is nourishes the young.

B. Meat - Hebrews 5:12-14 - As meat it nourishes the mature.

C. Bread - John 6:51 - As bread it can nourish everyone.

D. Honey - Psalms 19:10 - As honey it is sweet and provides strength for the journey.

8. Hammer - Jeremiah 23:29 - It is referred to as a hammer because it possesses the ability to tear down and to build up.

9. Fire - Jeremiah 20:9; Luke 24:32 - It is called fire because it has the power to judge, purify and consume!

Conc: Thank God for the Bible! God has blessed us beyond our ability to comprehend! He has given us an inspired, infallible, inerrant record of Himself, His will and His ways. May we take this blessed old book, may we love it, read it and carry it in our hearts, assuring ourselves in the fact that it is the truth! And that it will develop us, feed us, lead us and teach us all the way home to Heaven!

## 08.04 THE PROFIT IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

---

The Bible: God's Perfect Word- Sermon #4 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:14-17 THE PROFIT IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Intro: We have been investigating the Word of God for the past four weeks. We have encountered the truth that the Word of God is a divine revelation of God's Person and Character. We have been reminded that the Word of God was divinely inspired in the beginning and that it has been supernaturally preserved down to this very day. We have discovered the purpose for which the Bible was given to man. It was given so that lost sinners might come to know God in a personal relationship.

I hope that you have a deeper understanding of how your Bible came to be and that you love for this book is greater than it has ever been. As we finish our time in this series, I would like to examine the benefits that come from a close relationship with the Word of God. We are told in 2 Timothy 3:16 that the infallible, inerrant and inspired words of God are "profitable". This word means "beneficial, useful, and full of profit". I would like to zero in on that aspect of the Word of God today and preach for a few minutes on The Profit In The Holy Scriptures.

I. 2 Timothy 3:17 THEY PERFORM AN EQUIPPING MINISTRY (III. The word "furnished" means "to be complete and equipped.") A. They Equip Us For The Faith - In the pages of the Bible we learn all we need to know to give us:

1. Saving Faith - 2 Timothy 3:15 - The Bible shows us our condition, our condemnation and how to obtain our conversion. The Bible shows us a crucified and risen Savior Who gave His all that anyone who believes in Him might be saved. The Word of God is a book about redemption!

One of the most dramatic examples of the Bible's divine ability to transform men and women involved the famous mutiny on the "Bounty." Following their rebellion against the notorious Captain Bligh, nine mutineers, along with the Tahitian men and women who accompanied them, found their way to Pitcairn Island, a tiny dot in the South Pacific only two miles long and a mile wide. Ten years later, drink and fighting had left only one man alive--John Adams. Eleven women and 23 children made up the rest of the Island's population. So far this is the familiar story made famous in the book and motion picture. But the rest of the story is even more remarkable. About this time, Adams came across the "Bounty's" Bible in the bottom of an old chest. He began to read it, and the divine power of God's Word reached into the heart of that hardened murderer on a tiny volcanic speck in the vast Pacific Ocean--and changed his life forever. The peace and love that Adams found in the Bible entirely replaced the old life of quarreling, brawling, and liquor. He began to teach the children from the Bible until every person on the island had experienced the same amazing change that he had found. Today, with a population of slightly less than 100, nearly every person on Pitcairn Island is a Christian.[1])

(III. Many years ago in a Moscow theater, matinee idol Alexander Rostovzev was converted while playing the role of Jesus in a sacrilegious play entitled Christ in a Tuxedo. He was supposed to

read two verses from the Sermon on the Mount, remove his gown, and cry out, "Give me my tuxedo and top hat!" But as he read the words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," he began to tremble.

Instead of following the script, he kept reading from Matthew 5, ignoring the coughs, calls, and foot-stamping of his fellow actors. Finally, recalling a verse he had learned in his childhood in a Russian Orthodox church, he cried, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!" (Luke 23:42). Before the curtain could be lowered, Rostovzev had trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.[2]

2. Serving Faith - 2 Timothy 2:15 - Here, we are commanded to "study" the Bible. This word means "to be diligent, to labor." If we will spend the time we need in the Word of God, we will be able to "rightly divide" that Word. This is a surgical term that means "to make a straight cut". In other words, we will obtain a correct understanding of the Word of God and this prepares us to be a "workman", that is, a "servant" who will not be put to shame in the face of the enemy! As we study the Bible, we will learn about the Wonder of God, the Work of God, the Will of God, and the Ways of God! We will receive a theological education that will enable us to serve the Lord without shame! The Bible teaches us about the Person, Promises, Prophecies, Plan and Proof of God.

B. They Equip Us For The Fight - Ephesians 6:18 - When Paul described the armor of the believer, he only mentioned one offensive weapon: The sword of the Spirit, or the Word of God. The word sword comes from the Greek word "rhema". It refers to what was called the "Roman short sword". It was much like a dagger. This short sword was on the belt of every Roman Legionnaire. They carried wherever they went and used it in many tasks from preparing their food to hand to hand combat.

It is interesting that Paul should use this word for the Bible. In some other places, the word "logos" is used. The word "logos" refers to "the whole Word of God". It is the same word used in John 1:1, where Jesus is called the Word of God. The word "rhema" refers to a "specific word". Think of it like this, the "logos" or the whole Bible brings to mind the idea of a complete armory. In that armory, there are weapons of every description. When a battle arises, we should be able to walk into that armory and select the perfect "rhema" or specific sword we need to fight that particular battle. This is just what Jesus did on the Mount of Temptation, Matthew 4:1-11. Three times Jesus was tempted and three times Jesus walked into the great armory of the Word of God, entered the Deuteronomy room and walked out with the perfect sword with which He could stick the devil! (Ill. "It is written", Matthew 4:4; Matthew 4:7; Matthew 4:10.) Of course, before you can do this, you must be familiar with where the right swords are located within the armory! This means that you need to study the armory and familiarize yourself with placement of all the swords. Then when temptations and trials come, you can walk into the armory and find the perfect weapon for the day of your battle! By the way, when you try to fight the battles of life and the enemy of life in your own strength, you will fail, 1 Corinthians 10:12. But, when you fight the battles of life with the Sword of the Spirit, you are assured of victory, Matthew 4:11! Learn the layout of the armory; it will enable you to fight far more efficiently!

(Note: Notice this: Christian is never really commanded to fight, but he is told to "stand", Ephesians 6:11; Ephesians 6:13-15. After all, "the battle is the Lord's", 1 Samuel 17:47.

III. There is a bird called the gray heron that has a very odd mode of defense. When attacked by the eagle or falcon it simply stands quiet and firm, using its bill as a sword, allowing the enemy to pierce himself through by his own force. The Christian's method of defense is very similar. We have the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. When attacked by the enemy, without or within, stand firm and display the Word, hold it forth. The more fiercely the foe attacks the more surely shall they pierce themselves with it. God's Word is a burning fire and all it will consume all that cross it.) II. 2 Timothy 3:15, 2 Timothy 3:17 THEY PERFORM AN ENABLING MINISTRY

A. They Enable Us To Grow Spiritually - 2 Timothy 3:15 - We are told here that the Scriptures have the power to make us "wise". The word means "to teach or to have understanding." I would submit to you that there are people in this room today who have not had the benefit of obtaining an extensive formal education, but who know the ways of God better than many theologians because they know their Bibles. Experts say that 30 minutes per day for ten years yields the equivalent of a Doctor of Philosophy degree, III. Psalms 19:7.)

If you will get the "seed" of the Word within your heart, God will water it and it will bear fruit! You will grow! (III. As you abide in Him, through prayer and through studying and meditating in the Word of God, you will find that "fruit" will be produced in your life. You won't have to struggle to grow in the Lord, you just will! III. "Furnished" in 2 Timothy 3:17 is in the passive voice! How much time and effort are you putting into your study of the Word? – III. Psalms 1:2; Psalms 119:148.)

(III. Listening to some people, it is very easy to see that they do not know very much about the Bible. The following story bears this out: A pastor entered a class as the lesson was in progress and asked, "Who broke down the walls of Jericho?" A lad answered, "Not me, sir." The pastor turned to the teacher and asked, "Is this the usual behavior in this class?" The teacher replied, "I believe this boy is an honest boy, and I really don't think he did it." Leaving the room, the pastor sought out a deacon and explained what had happened. The deacon said, "I have known both the boy and the teacher for several years, and neither of them would do such a thing." By this time the pastor was heartsick and reported the incident to the Christian Education Committee. They said, "We see no point in making an issue out of this thing. Let's pay the bill for the damage to the walls and charge it to upkeep. Anyway, our insurance may even cover it.")

(III. A man in Kansas City was severely injured in an explosion. Evangelist Robert L. Sumner tells about him in his book The Wonders of the Word of God. The victim's face was badly disfigured, and he lost his eyesight as well as both hands. He was just a new Christian, and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible. Then he heard about a lady in England who read Braille with her lips. Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in Braille. Much to his dismay, however, he discovered that the nerve endings in his lips had been destroyed by the explosion. One day, as he brought one of the Braille pages to his lips, his tongue happened to touch a few of the raised characters and he could feel them. Like a flash he thought, I can read the Bible using my tongue. At the time Robert Sumner wrote his book, the man had "read" through the entire Bible four times.[3])

(III. Martin Luther's Bible study method: "I study my Bible like I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree that the ripest may fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf. I search the Bible as a whole like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb--study book after book. Then I shake every

branch, giving attention to the chapters. Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and their meanings.”[4])

B. They Enable Us To Go Spiritually - 2 Timothy 3:17 - The Word of God gives us all the tools we need to go to work for the Master. The Bible teaches us about:

· God’s Works (What He is doing around us) · God’s Will (What He wants from us) · God’s Ways (How He accomplishes His Will). As we read the Word of God we discover that there are some things that we are to avoid and there are some things that we are to do. As we obey the Word of God, as we do the do’s and don’t the don’ts, we will find ourselves “thoroughly” or “completely and perfectly” “furnished” or “equipped” to do the Lord’s work in this world! God saved you to work for Him, Ephesians 2:10; James 2:18; James 2:20. The Lord saved us to work and the Bible tells us how!

### III. THEY PERFORM AN ENLIGHTENING MINISTRY

A. We Are Enlightened Through Their Coaching Ministry - The Scriptures teach us “doctrine”! This word simply means “teaching or instruction”. It refers to the body of truth that we believe and practice as part of the Christian faith. Everything we know about God and believe as Christians has been taught to us by the Word of God! In fact, God could never have been known unless He had first reached out to us! Like a good coach, the Scriptures teach all the fundamentals of the faith and they instruct in the deep things of God. By the way, we should never base our doctrine on feelings or experiences or on what someone we admire believed. Everything we believe and do should be based squarely on a clear Word from God, not on our own opinions, preferences or prejudices! (III. The folly of the Charismatic movement – “I don’t care what the Bible says; I know what I have experienced!”)

B. We Are Enlightened Through Their Chastising Ministry - The word “reproof” means “to be convicted”. It has the idea of putting something to the test. The Word of God will put your life to the test. It is like a set of scales, or balances. It will show you where you fall short. It is like a plumb line, it will show you where you do not line up! Scripture will put you to the test! It is like a mirror, it will reveal the true you, James 1:23-25. The word “reprove” comes from the same word that is translated “evidence” in Hebrews 11:1. In both cases it refers to “convincing evidence”. In modern language, we would call it “the smoking gun”. Sometimes, the Word of God is laid alongside our lives and serves as the Lord’s Exhibit A. He shows us from the Word the He has the goods on us and how we are living. The best thing to do is to bow before Him and deal with everything that He shows us about ourselves. Never rebel against the convicting ministry of the Word of God! (Note: Don’t get mad at the preacher either!)

C. We Are Enlightened Through Their Correcting Ministry - The Word “correction” means to “restore to an upright or correct state”. The Bible doesn’t just show us what is wrong in our lives; it also teaches us how to fix what is wrong. It teaches us about the matter of repentance and confession of sin, Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9. If you will do what the Bible says to do about the wrongs it exposes, it will get you on the right path in short order!

D. We Are Enlightened Through Their Commanding Ministry - “Instruction in righteousness” refers to “Instruction that aims at increasing virtue”. The Bible will tell you what is wrong with you. It will also tell you how to fix what is wrong with you. Then, it will tell you how to live so that you can

avoid being found in the wrong the next time around. Literally, the phrase “instruction in righteous” means “that which cultivates the soul”. The Word of God, if read, believed and lived out in your life will cause you to become more like Him!

(III. There are several tools God uses in maturing us for His glory. Sometimes, He will use adversity to shape us. There are times when God will use chastisement to speak to His children. However, the Bible is the primary tool God uses to develop His children, Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15.)

Conc: A New York enthusiast had a good collection of paintings, one of them being the Leaning Tower of Pisa, which hung over his writing desk. For a long time he noticed that it persisted in hanging crooked despite the fact that he straightened it every morning. At last he asked the housekeeper if she was responsible for its lopsided position each morning that he came to his office. "Why, yes," she said, "I have to hang it crooked to make the tower hang straight." Does that sound strange? That is exactly how a lot of people read the Bible. Many people twist the Word of God in order to justify their own opinions or actions, or doctrine to make them all appear right. Let us not twist the Scriptures to suit our own fancy. Let us be sure to hang the picture right! Preachers and teachers need to be especially careful that we “cut it straight”, James 3:1. We must not allow our opinions to cloud the message God wants His people to hear!

There is great profit in the Word of God! But, only as we take it like it is written and conform our lives to it! Thank God for the Bible!

[1] Signs of the Times, August, 1988, p. 5.

[2] J.K. Johnston, Why Christians Sin, Discovery House, 1992, p. 121.

[3] Robert L. Sumner, The Wonders of the Work of God.

[4] [http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/b/bible\\_study\\_of.htm](http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/b/bible_study_of.htm)

## 09.00 The Book of Revelation

---

The Book of Revelation The Unveiling Of Revelation - Revelation 1:1-8 The Backdrop For The Revelation - Revelation 1:9-20 The Cure For The Common Cold - Revelation 2:1-7 The Poor Little Rich Church - Revelation 2:8-11 An Unholy Union - Revelation 2:12-17 The Church With The Rotten Center - Revelation 2:18-29 The Church With The Reputation - Revelation 3:1-6 The Jesus Church - Revelation 3:7-13 The Church That Thought It Had It All - Revelation 3:14-22 When Jesus Opens The Door - Revelation 4:1 The Throne Chapter - Revelation 4:2-11 There Stands The Lamb - Revelation 5:1-7 Heaven's Concert - Revelation 5:8-14 Riders On The Horizon - Revelation 6:1-8 History's Greatest Prayer Meeting - Revelation 6:9-17 The 144,000 - Revelation 7:1-8 The Tribulation Saints - Revelation 7:9-17 When The Trumpets Begin To Sound - Revelation 8:1-13 When Hell Visits Earth - Revelation 9:1-12 The Sixth Trumpet - Revelation 9:13-21 The Beginning Of The End - Revelation 10:1-11 The Two Witnesses - Revelation 11:1-14 The Edge Of Eternity - Revelation 11:15-19 Wonders In Heaven - Revelation 12:1-6 The Growing Conflict - Revelation 12:7-17 The Beast From The Sea - Revelation 13:1-10 The Beast From The Earth - Revelation 13:11-15 Hell's Gate Pass - Revelation 13:16-18 With The Lamb On Mount Zion - Revelation 14:1-5 2 Seconds After Death - Revelation 14:6-13 The Harvest Of The Endtimes - Revelation 14:14-20 The Seven Last Plagues - Revelation 15:1 to Revelation 16:21 The Fall Of Religious Babylon - Revelation 17:1-18 The Fall Of Commercial Babylon - Revelation 18:1-24 Scenes Of Glory In Heaven - Revelation 19:1-10 VE Day - Revelation 19:11-21 The 1,000 Year Party - Revelation 20:1-10 The Sinner's Day In God's Courthouse - Revelation 20:11-15 A Bright New World - Revelation 21:1-8 A Glimpse Of Our New Home - Revelation 21:9 to Revelation 22:5 The Conclusion Of The Book - Revelation 22:6-21

(To give credit where credit is due, this series draws heavily upon the work of Dr. Jerry Vines. This sermon series was prepared back in the late 1980's. I was a very young and busy bivocational preacher. As I collected materials to use in this series, someone gave me a set of sermons on tape that Dr. Vines had preached while he was Pastor at West Rome Baptist Church in Rome, GA in the early 1970's. His skill, research and work in the biblical text formed much of the basis for this series. Thank you Dr. Vines.)

## 09.01 Revelation 1:1-8 THE UNVEILING OF REVELATION

---

Revelation 1:1-8 THE UNVEILING OF REVELATION Intro: Why study this book? Several reasons! Satan hates it; It applies to our day;

God will bless the study of it, we need to hear it, we are commanded to preach the whole council of the word and Revelation is a part of it. Some people believe that we are not supposed to mess with this book. They declare that it cannot be understood.

Well, it is the Spirit's job and not man's to ensure that the Word is understood. The title of the book is found in verse 1. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

It is given to reveal unto us the purposes, the person and the plans of the Lord Jesus.

Instead of these things being hidden as some say, even the name Revelation means "an unveiling." We can understand the book and we can learn much from it. Let's take some time tonight and study the first 8 verses of Revelation. Notice:

I. Revelation 1:1-4 THE UNVEILING OF HIS PURPOSE A. Revelation 1:1 a-b The Significance of the Book - (An Unveiling - Ill. Statue) 1. Revelation 1:1 a The Person Of Christ Unveiled - Jesus is revealed in all of his glory. 2. Revelation 1:11 b The Purpose Of God Unveiled - To reveal what will shortly happen.

B. Revelation 1:1-2 The Signature of the Book

1. Revelation 1:1 c The Marvelous Way He received This Revelation - Ill. Signified; Lamps = assemblies; Stars = angels; incense = prayer, etc.) (Ill. All of the symbols are explained in this book or elsewhere in the Bible) (Ill. Words change = Symbols do not!) 2. Revelation 1:2 The Meticulous Way He Recorded this Revelation - He recorded what he was commanded, not contradicting, but building on the testimony of Jesus.

C. Revelation 1:3 The Singularity of the Book - It stands alone in Scripture.

1. Embodies A Special Promise - A three fold blessing - (Ill. Revelation 22:14; Revelation 18:1-24, Revelation 19:1-21) 2. Embraces A Special Period - Ill. These are the last days - Ill. Israel - Matthew 24:32-34. (It reveals events relates to our days!) Benediction - In Revelation 1:4-5 John begins to address the seven churches of Asia Minor. He tells them of two things:

1. Grace - That God's mercy is available to all, and that He will see His people through.
2. Peace - That even in the midst of turmoil, He is still the Prince of Peace.

He also reveals who this message is from:

1. God the Father - Exodus 3:14
2. God the Spirit - In the plenitude of His power (Ill.

First of many sevens!) (III. Stars, churches, lampstands, 7 times 7, etc.) 3. God the Son - Adonay Yeshua Meshach II. Revelation 1:5-6 THE UNVEILING OF HIS PERSON A. Revelation 1:5 The Threefold Ministry Of Jesus 1. His Prophetic Ministry - Faithful Witness He witnesses to: a. The Nature of Sin b. The Necessity of Righteousness c. The Nearness of Judgment d. The News of salvation (III. Isaiah 55:4; John 18:37) 2. His Priestly Ministry - First Begotten from the dead) a. The offerer of the perfect sacrifice - His pure Blood, and the intercessor for men's souls, Hebrews 5:6; Hebrews 7:25. b. The first to rise to die no more, the promise of more to come - 1 Corinthians 15:3-23 (III. First Begotten = Protokos - The prototype of what is to follow!!) 3. His Prospective Ministry - Ultimately, He will be ruler of Heaven and earth - 1 Timothy 6:15 B. Revelation 1:5-6 The Threefold Reason For Praise (John's Doxology)

1. Revelation 1:5 b He Loves Us - (Present tense) a. Personal love - John 3:16 b. Everlasting Love, Jeremiah 31:3 2. Revelation 1:5 b He Loosed Us - (Past tense) (III. Washed = Louo - Dual Trans)a. He Washed Us From Sins Stains - 1 John 1:7 - Total cleansing - Immersed b. He Loosed Us From Sins Chains - Romans 6:6-7 c. He Freed Us From Sins Claims - Romans 6:23 3. Revelation 1:6 He Lifted Us a. Kings - Reign with the Lord Jesus - 2 Timothy 2:12 b. Priests - Need no other stand in. We have direct access to the Holy of Holies. Hebrews 10:19. (III. He is worthy to be praised. III. Dominion will be returned to him some day very soon!) III. Revelation 1:7-8 THE UNVEILING OF HIS PLAN

A. Revelation 1:7 a An Immediate Plan - To return in glory - Zechariah 13:6 (III. Second Coming is in 2 parts -Rapture and Glory B. Revelation 1:7 b An Ultimate Plan - To Rule over all - Hebrews 10:12-13 C. Revelation 1:8 The Key To His Plan - (All revolves around who He is!) 1. The Alphabet of God - (III. Who He REALLY is!) 2. The Almighty - (III. History is...His Story!) (III. Is, Was, Is to come!)

Conclusion: These are very exciting days to be alive and especially to be a Christian. Prepare yourselves to be leaving this world soon! In the meantime, there are lost people all around who need the message, invite them to these studies and tell them of the Lord. The time is short, Satan is working and God's people need to be also!!

## 09.02 Revelation 1:9-20 THE BACKDROP FOR THE REVELATION

---

### Revelation 1:9-20 THE BACKDROP FOR THE REVELATION

Intro: To understand any book of the Bible, but especially Revelation with its complexity and depth, we must understand the setting, or backdrop against which it was written. Many books require in depth study to find out this information, but this one gives it all to us right here in these verses. Tonight, as we study this passage, let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart and I guarantee that you will be blessed. Let's look together at the BACKDROP FOR THE REVELATION.

I. Revelation 1:9-10 a THE PLACEMENT OF THE BOOK A. Who Wrote The Book? John (90-100 years old!) (III. Older folk have a place) 1. Brother - (III. No distinction between ministry and congregation!) 2. Companion - Persecution, 2 Timothy 3:12; Service; Watching

B. Where Was John? Patmos - A 10 mile by 6 mile rock in the Mediterranean Sea. This island was used by Rome as a hard labor prison. (III. The providence of God - Domitian tried to kill John, but when he couldn't do it, he had him banished to Patmos. A place where God could get him alone and speak to him.)(III. He was there physically, but He was in the Spirit also!) (III. All believers are in two locations:

1. Revelation 1:9 b - Earthly location - Patmos

2. Revelation 1:10 a - Spiritual Location - In the Spirit (III. Need for balance)(III. We need to worship in the Spirit - John 4:24) (III. John alone at church - Any service is what we make it!) C. Why Was He There?

1. His Preaching - 1 Corinthians 1:18 2. His Testimony - III. Christianity was a criminal activity. It might be that again.

II. Revelation 1:11 b & Revelation 1:19 THE PARTITIONS OF THE BOOK A. Revelation 1:11 b The Command John Received - Write it and Send it - III. Why these seven?

B. Revelation 1:19 The Conditions John Received - (God's Divine Outline) 1. Past - (Ch. 1) 2. Present - (Ch. 2-3) 3. Prospective - (Ch. 4-22) (This is the KEY verse of Revelation. You miss it and you will fall into false interpretations.) III. Revelation 1:10 b, Revelation 1:11 a, Revelation 1:12-20 THE PREOCCUPATION OF THE BOOK (III Jesus is the centerpiece of the Revelation, Revelation 1:1 a) A. Revelation 1:12 Candlesticks - (III. Lampstands) A picture of the church, Matthew 5:16 (Matthew 5:20)

B. Revelation 1:13 Jesus is in the midst of His churches! Matthew 18:20. He meets us here!(III. What is He doing when He comes to church?) C. Revelation 1:14-18 Jesus Displayed - III. When John Turned around he saw:

1. Revelation 1:11 a His Personality - III. The author and the finisher - Hebrews 12:2; John 8:58

2. Revelation 1:13 His Position - (Ill. Son of Man - John knew Him well! John 19:26; John 13:25; John 21:7. (Ill. He is Signified by His clothing) (Ill. Clothes do not make the man, they mark him) His garments mark Him as: Priest (Praying); King (Guiding); Judge (Examining) 3. Revelation 1:14-16 His Person. a. Revelation 1:14 Head and hair - Purity, Age, Wisdom (1 Peter 2:22; Daniel 7:9) b. Revelation 1:14 Eyes - Perception - Hebrews 4:13 c. Revelation 1:15 Feet - Persistence - (Ill. Will never quit, Ill. His Life) (Ill;. Judgment - Will stomp all of His enemies - Hebrews 10:12-13) d. Revelation 1:15 Voice - Power - (Ill Voice of authority; Niagara, ocean) (Cannot be argued with) (Ill. He will have the final say!) e. Revelation 1:16 Stars in hand - Protection - (Ill. Safe in the hand of Jesus - Colossians 3:3) f. Revelation 1:16 Mouth - Perfection - Hebrews 4:12, Jesus always spoke the perfect Word. g. Revelation 1:16 Countenance - Peerlessness - (Ill He has no equals!) (Ill. The Sun!) (Churches = Lampstands; Messengers = Stars; Jesus = The Sun - He outshines them all!)

4. Revelation 1:17 His Peace - Ill. John's reaction and Jesus' touch. He was always dispensing peace - Ill. John 6:20; John 14:27.

5. Revelation 1:18 His Power - This verse tells all we need to know to give us peace concerning the future! Jesus is in control of all, Matthew 28:18. a. Resurrection - His and ours. b. His Right - He holds the keys that unlock deaths door! (He is the key man!)(Ill. Jail.) He has authority over death and judgment - Ill. Ephesians 4:1-32!

## 09.03 Revelation 2:1-7 THE CURE FOR THE COMMON COLD

---

Revelation 2:1-7 THE CURE FOR THE COMMON COLD Intro: The letters to the seven churches can be interpreted 3 different ways:

Prophetically, (Church history - Pentecost to 100 A.D.); Practically, (to a literal church, and to individual churches throughout history); Personally, (To every believer.) These seven messages should speak to each individually as well as to the needs of this church here. But, do not forget, that this letter went to a real, active church. III. Ephesus, "the Vanity Fair Of Asia", "The Supreme Metropolis of Asia.". Famous 3 ways: 1. Religion: The temple of Diana; 7th wonder of world; bank; art; sin; 2. Commercially: Port city; Military city, industrial city; 3. Politically: A free city, self rule. It was here that Paul founded the church in Ephesus, Acts 18:1-28. He spent 3 years here preaching and training the people; Apollos preached here, Aquila and Priscilla ministered here; pastored by Timothy and later by John. A church greatly blessed by much spiritual light. Yet, they were a church with a problem. Jesus came to them and diagnosed them as cold and fallen. Revelation 2:1 identifies the speaker as Jesus. He is walking in His church seeing and judging.

We are reminded that He is in full control. Let's listen in as Jesus gives them the cure for the common cold.

### I. Revelation 2:1-3 THE FAITHFUL WORKS OF THE CHURCH

A. Revelation 2:1-2 a THEY WERE STANDING UP TO THE TASK - (III. A busy church!) (III. Works - what they should be!) (III. Labour - Work to the point of pain - involved personal sacrifice) (Patience - endurance. Opposition did not phase them.) (III. Announcements!) B. Revelation 2:2 b THEY WERE STANDING UP FOR THE TRUTH - (III. Fundamental) 1. They hated moral evil - Practiced separation - Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6. (III. Corinth - 1 Corinthians 5:11-13) 2. They hated ministerial evil - Put preachers to the test! (III. 12 apostles - III. authenticating miracles - tongues, healing, etc.) (III. Revelation 2:6 - Nicolaitians - 2 Views: 1. A priestly sect 2. Followers of Nicolas - who taught that to know what sin was about, you had to experience it - a Gnostic cult.

C. Revelation 2:3 THEY WERE STANDING IN THE TEST - They persevered in the face of opposition. Galatians 6:9 Obedient and active on the surface, but internally, they were a sick people. They were afflicted by THE COMMON COLD. Notice:

### II. Revelation 2:4-5 a THE FATAL WEAKNESS OF THE CHURCH

A. Revelation 2:4 THE VITALITY OF THEIR PASSION WAS GONE - They were a saved and a serving people, but their motives for service were wrong. (III. Prestige, position, reputation, duty, fear) Love is the only worthwhile motive!

1. They had lost the honeymoon love - (III. 2 Corinthians 11:2) (III. Remember salvation?) The excitement? Where is it? 2. Like Martha, they were so busy they had no time for Jesus. 3. Lack of love is plain to see. It manifests itself in several ways. Enthusiasm, attendance, Joy, witnessing, praise, study, prayer - all suffer when you have a cold toward the Lord! (III. Actually, it is a

backslidden state!)

B. Revelation 2:5 a THE VALIDITY OF THEIR PROFESSION WAS GONE - Jesus declares they they have fallen. They lack that closeness to Him they had. O utwardly, they looked impressive, but inwardly, their works were fake. They came from a wrong and warped motive! (III. Shields - 1 Kings 14:25-27) III. Revelation 2:5-7 THE FORCEFUL WARNING TO THE CHURCH A. Revelation 2:5 b LOVE MUST BE ABSOLUTELY PARAMOUNT - Jesus says they need to consider four things.

1. Remember - Consider where He brought them from and where they used to be with Him! (III. Remember the excitement? The joy? the dreams?) 2. Repent - 1 John 1:9 Get right with God! 3. Repeat - Fall back in love with the Lord and His work! Be motivated by love. 4. Removal - No love for Jesus, no light for Jesus! (III. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3) A church or a Christian without love is a false witness! They give a false sign of what Jesus is all about! Jesus will not tolerate a church without love. (III. It might function, but there will be no testimony, no power, no presence of God!) They might as well be dead and gone! (III. Ephesus today!)

B. Revelation 2:7 LOVE MUST BE ABSOLUTELY PERSONAL - Jesus appeals to the individual. We a saved one by one and we will be restored one by one! To love the Lord and the Lord's work is a personal decision.

Conc: Is your love what it ought to be? Why do you do what you do? If it isn't out of love for Jesus, then your motive, regardless of what it is, is absolutely wrong!

Jesus tells them to endure and when it is finished, they will receive blessing from the tree of life that is in heaven. What a blessing! After all He has done for us, how can we not love Him? Do you need a revival of love. Do you need to experience the cure for the all too common cold? If so, then come to Jesus right now and experience a new honeymoon with the Lord.

## 09.04 Revelation 2:8-11 THE POOR LITTLE RICH CHURCH

---

### Revelation 2:8-11 THE POOR LITTLE RICH CHURCH

Intro: Ill. Three interpretations. Smyrna was located 40 miles from Ephesus. It was called "The Crown City". It was famous for commercially, because it was a port city. Its main export was myrrh, a spice that was used in embalming, and for perfume. It was also a famous religious center. There were temples to Zeus, Cybele, Diana, Aphrodite, Apollo and Asclepius. There was a street paved with gold running through the center of town connecting the temple of Zeus with the temple of Diana. Smyrna was famous for its theater and for its music center. It was a city of great wealth and culture. It was also a city which hated Christians. They stood opposed to all the sin and idolatry of that city and they suffered as a result. This church represents the time period from 100 A.D. to 312 A.D. It is the Martyr Church. Let's join Jesus as he come to this church that is facing the fire and the lion. Notice with me the POOR LITTLE RICH CHURCH.

#### I. Revelation 2:8-9 THE CHURCH'S COMFORT A. Revelation 2:8 IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST

1. The First and the Last - Jesus has already been there! He tells them He is the one in charge! Nothing can happen to them except He allows it to! Romans 8:28! (Ill. Map and Dragon!) 2. Was Dead and am Alive - He has already conquered death for these people! He can identify with their sufferings. Jesus can help us through anything! - Hebrews 4:15 B. Revelation 2:9 IN THE PERCEPTION OF CHRIST (Ill. He knows - Hebrews 4:13)

1. Their Pressure - Ill. They worked inspite of trouble. (Ill. Crushing - Grape vat) Ill. The persecution that was there and what will come! 2. Their Poverty -(Ill. 2 Kinds of poverty!) (Ill. They had no material wealth. Their faith in Jesus had casued them to lose all they had financially. (Ill. It will happen again!) (Ill. Jesus knew about poverty; 2 Corinthians 8:9) a. A Parenthetical Statement - Were poor Materially, but were rich Spiritually. b. Rich in the things the world could not touch - Matthew 6:19-20 c. Ill. Believer who gave much and lost all. 3. Thier Provocation - a. The Synagogue of Satan - Jews who were trying to destroy the Christian church in Smyrna. (Ill. Preacher in Devil suit!) b. Ill. Satan is an imitator. He has never had an original idea! c. Ill. Jesus was also provocted - Matthew 10:24-25 d. The godly church will never be liked - 2 Timothy 3:12 II. Revelation 2:10 a THE CHURCH'S COMMOTION A. The Misrey Of It - (Ill. the sufferings of the believers - 70 million!) 1. Suffering is sure - We need to be prepared! 2. Suffered some, more on the way - Jesus knows what is ahead. If we will let Him, he will tell us.

B. The Mystery Of It - Not that Satan does it, but that God allows it! (Ill. He has a plan! Isaiah 55:8-9 C. The Ministry Of It - (To try their faith!) 1. Our faith being tried comes out more perfect! 1 Peter 1:6-7 2. Ill. 10 days = 10 persecutions under 10 emperors. (Ill. Nero and description!) (Ill. We may suffer, but Jesus has put a limit on it - Ill. Job!) III. Revelation 2:10-11 THE CHURCH'S CONQUEST A. The Secret Of It - (Faithfulness!) 1. You may not can be a lot of things, but you can be faithful - 1 Corinthians 4:2 2. Ill. Polycarp!! (Ill. Believer facing the sword!) B. The Sweetness Of It -

1. A Crown of Life - III. The world may kill us here, but it can never touch us there! (III. A Crown of Living it up) III. Many will receive this crown! 2. No Second Death, Revelation 21:8 (III. Petet Acts 4:12) We can face trials with confidence if we are assured of our salvation and the eternal nature of it! (III. Born once die twice, Hell forever, Born twice die once, Heaven forever!)

Conc: Are you suffering because of Jesus today? If so, rest assured that Jesus knows, cares and understands. But, even better than this, He will go with you through your trials and afterward take you home to glory.

## 09.05 Revelation 2:12-17 AN UNHOLY UNION

---

### Revelation 2:12-17 AN UNHOLY UNION

Intro: Ill. 3 intertreatations. Pergamos was the capital of Mysia, located northwest in Asia Minor. A blending of power, religion and intellectual life. Pergamos contained a temple dedicated to emperor worship. In fact, Ceasar Agustus traveled here every year during the Roman winter. he came here to be dried out, he was a drunk! Pergamos was famous for two things: 1. Intelligence - Ill. 200,000 volume library, stolen by Mark Anthony and given to Cleopatra. Ill. Pergamos comes from the same word as parchment. Paper was invented here! 2. Religion - Emperors, Zeus, Bacchus (Ill. god of wine, the goat-god; Ill. Satan; Ill. Alcohol and its effects.); Temple of Aesculapius - God of medicine and healing. Doctors school located in temple. Ill. Methods of healing used. Extreme method was snakes.

Jesus come to His church located in this mess and spoke to them from His heart. He comes to them as the holder of a two-edged sword. He comes with the truth and power of His Word. To encourage the faithful and to exterminate the foolish. The Word will divide, destroy foes on both hands and pierce to the heart. Let's listen in as Jesus speaks to them and to us. Represents the time period of 313 a.d. to 590 a.d.

I. Revelation 2:13 THEIR TESTIMONY A. Difficult - A dangerous place to be a Christian.

1. Satan's seat there<sup>1</sup> (Devil not in Hell - 1 Peter 5:8) (Ill. Prince of this world John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11) 2. Satan's stronghold - God intends for us to be on the offensive! 3. They lived in a place beyond their circumstances - (Ill. Dwell) (Ill. Thermostats) (Ill. The difficulties on this world!) 4. Jesus knows and He places us where He wants us!

B. Definite 1. Held His Name - They exalted Jesus. God's plan for us - John 12:32 2. Did Not Deny His Faith - They held high the fundamentals. (Ill. There is a great need for Christians to stand today. Ill. Liberalism) 3. Ill. Antipas - refused to follow heathen worship. Was slowly roasted alive in a brass bull.

II. Revelation 2:14-15 THEIR TOLERANCE A. Revelation 2:14 CORRUPTION IN THE MEMBERSHIP 1. Ill. the Story of Balaam - (Numbers 22:1-41, Numbers 23:1-30, Numbers 24:1-25) 2. These false teachers taught that they were God's people and could do as they pleased. Ill. They became worldly. they allowed the world into their church! (There is a price to pay for this type of thing - Galatians 6:7) 3. Ill. Pergamos = "Marriage". It was during this period that the church entered into an unholy union with the world. (Ill. Constantine - 313 a.d. claimed to have a vision during a battle. He claimed to see a cross in the sky with these words under it, "In hoc signo vinces", which means "In this sign conquer." (Ill. What he did as a result!) Entire regiments were baptized; unwilling people were made to be baptized; Constantine became leader of the church; pagan temples became churches; heathen festivals became Christianized; Idols were renamed after so called Christian saints; the Emperor became known as Pontifex Maximus. Here was the birth of Roman Catholicism, infant baptism, saint worship, maryolatry. Ill. There were some

successes = Ill. The Arian heresy, refuted by Athanasius, ill. the circumstances. 4. The church married the world and many real Christians were driven underground. (Ill. the Catacombs) Those who formerly had suffered, were tricked into making a compromise. Sold out their true faith in Jesus for a little peace and comfort. (Ill. We need to beware of any compromise with the state or any person or organization!) 5. Balaam Died by the sword, so will all the enemies of the Lord.

B. Revelation 2:15 CONFUSION IN THE LEADERSHIP - Taught the clergy were above the members. Ill. All have access to God - Revelation 1:6 (Ill. No power in a servants position! Ill. Reason for much church trouble and confusion.

C. Revelation 2:16 COMMAND FROM THE HEADSHIP - REPENT! Ill. Jesus owns the church, disowns compromise! You cannot live in sin and hide in the church! God will fight those who hinder the churches testimony! (Ill. Balaam!) Ill. Revelation 2:17 THEIR TRIUMPH

A. The Hidden Manna - (Ill. Exodus 16:1-36 - miracle Bread) (Ill. Elijah) God will feed His children on the good spiritual things this world cannot eat.

B. The White Stones

1. Acquittal - (Ill. Judge) Ill. Sin is black, but we are not blackballed by Jesus - Isaiah 1:18. 2. Victory - (Ill. Army) 3. Citizenship - (Ill. Citizens of Heaven) Php 3:20 4. Friendship - (Ill. Friends would each carry a white stone with the name of their friend written on it. Jesus wants to be our friend - Proverbs 18:24 5. Placemats - Ill. Dinner, names would be written on white stones. Marriage supper of the Lamb

C. New Name - Not a name for you, a name for Him that is special to you. Ill. It will represent of relationship with Him. (What will your stone say?)

Conc: Church, we owe it to Jesus to be His friend! To faithfully serve Him and avoid compromise with this wicked world. We need to avoid the traps of Pergamos and walk faithfully with our great God! Just simply be His friend!

## 09.06 Revelation 2:18-29 THE CHURCH WITH THE ROTTEN CENTER

---

### Revelation 2:18-29 THE CHURCH WITH THE ROTTEN CENTER

Intro: Ill. An apple with a worm, or food that has rotted. This church was like this, it looked pleasing on the exterior, but at it's heart it was wormy, rotten and festering with evil. The city of Thyatira is the least known of all the cities, yet it received the longest letter. However there are four things for which it was famous. 1. A military city - A buffer city, Ceasars elite guard was stationed there. 2. An industrial city - Ill. Lydia, dyes and water. 3. A trade guild city - Ill. Each guild had it's own patron god. 4. An occult city - An occult temple presided over by a female sorceress. This church represents the time period of 590 a.d. - 1517 a.d. Jesus comes to this church as the Son of God. The one with authority to deal with them, John 5:22. (Ill. The Sun God was the partron god of the elite guard.) He also comes with flaming eyes: He sees all they do and all they are, Hebrews 4:13. Feet of Brass: He has come to judge, 1 Peter 4:17. Let's join Jesus as He comes to the church with a rotten center.

I. Revelation 2:19 HE COMES WITH JOY (Ill. A Working church - Working churches are the Lord's delight.) A. They Are Active In Their Works - 1. Works - Our caling card! 2. Love - The only valid motive for works 3. Service - Ministry (Ill. Each church) 4. Faith - Works born of conviction 5. Patience - Endurance in the work. 6. Works are good, but there is a danger of trusting them and not Jesus. (Ill. Worship always come before works - Jesus says to come before we go!) B. They Are Advancing In Their Works - 1. Development and Progress - (Ill. No room for laziness - 3 bums, Zeal) 2. Our works need to be growing. A lack of growth in our works, indicates a lack of growth in our spiritual development. 2 Peter 3:18. 3. Have you plataued? (Ill. Hebrews 10:23-25) II. Revelation 2:20-23 HE COMES IN JUDGMENT

(Ill. Possibly founded by a woman - Lydia, Acts 16:14-40) (But, certainly foundering because of a woman!) (Ill. Thank God for our ladies! Ill. A blessing or a curse!) Ill. Leader are extremely important to the testimony of the church!

(Ill. Gune - A wife, possibly the pastor's wife!) Jesus comes to judge this church because:

A. Revelation 2:20 A HERESY IS CONDONED -

1. Ill. Jezebel - Introduced Baal worship to Israel. A worship filled with sexual perversion and idolatry. (Immorality and idolatry!) 2. Ill. Jezebelism - We must become like the world to win the world! Make sin not so sinful. (Attempts to adopt and incorporate worldliness into the church and it's worship.) 3. Sin must never be condoned in the church.! 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Romans 16:17 4. This church has the attitude that doctrine is not important. IT IS VITAL!! (Ill. Doctrines introduced during this period - Papy elevated, Dogma and ritual given equal weight with scripture, Mariolatry, Purgatory, Mass, Mass for dead, etc.) (Ill. Thyatira = Continual Sacrifice!)(Ill. Our modern day - People are still twisting the truth and getting by with it! (Ill. Buffer city - torn down and rebuilt - cults must constantly change their doctrine - The truth never changes!) (Ill. Ecumenical movement is dangerous! - 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.)

B. Revelation 2:21 A HERESY IS CONTINUING - 1. This woman misunderstood the goodness of God - Romans 2:4 2. People still do this. But, God will not tolerate sin among His people - Revelation 3:19 3. Sin must be repented of!

C. Revelation 2:22-23 THIS HERESY IS CONDEMNED 1. This church will enter the tribulation. (III. Church will go on!) 2. The young will suffer. They suffer the most in a worldly church! They don't have a chance. 3. Judgment will be according to each man's works - God is fair!

III. Revelation 2:24-29 HE COMES WITH JUSTICE (Just as He will punish the guilty, He will reward the faithful!) A. Revelation 2:24-25 RECOGNIZE THE FAITHFUL -

1. The rest are addressed - That faithful remnant, they are in every church. (III. Elijah 1 Kings 19:18) 2. None other burden - They are to continue in their calling. Witnesses 3. Not all will repent, but only a few are needed to bring results! (III. Kindling) 4. Hold fast - Stay true to the things of God, they will see you home. (III. Preacher and pine knot) B. Revelation 2:26-29 REWARD THE FAITHFUL 1. Will share in Christ's authority - Will rule in the millenium - 1 Corinthians 6:2 2. Will be given the Morning Star - Revelation 22:3-4; Revelation 16:1-21. a. When we have Jesus, we have it all! Romans 8:17. (III. Wicked son and Marcellus) b. Jesus will be our greatest reward! Remain faithful, hold fast, stay true to the Book and the Lord will bless us. Beyond our wildest dreams.

## 09.07 Revelation 3:1-6 THE CHURCH WITH A REPUTATION

---

### Revelation 3:1-6 THE CHURCH WITH A REPUTATION

Intro: Imagine you are crawling, scorched, near-death, across a hot burning desert. You are dying of thirst and close to perishing. But, ahead, you see a sign that reads, "Cool, clear, life-giving water - only five miles ahead". This sign gives you renewed energy, new hope and you continue your tormenting crawl across the parched sand. As you arrive at the promised place, you see a magnificent building, radiant in its beauty, the sign outside invites you in, even beckoning you with the promise of life-giving water. So you crawl through the entrance into a glorious building and there before you is the promised well, with the bucket ready to be let down and filled with water to quench your thirst and to pour life back into your body. With the last bit of your strength, you lower the bucket into the well, expecting a splash as the bucket hits the water, but it never comes. The only sound is the dull thud of the bucket hitting the bottom. You think that perhaps you are delirious so you reel in the bucket only to find it full of dust. Dust that cannot wuench, but only deepen the thirst and destroy all hope. Sound far-fetched? This is the experience of many people who go to God's house expecting to filled and fed with the water and bread of life, only to find all the trappings and rituals, but no help or hope for all those who've made their way there. Tonight, we want to look at a church with a false reputation. Our church can learn from this one.

If we must have a reputation, let it be a true one, not one of death, but of life. One that fulfills its promises. Ill. the city of Sardis, Capital of Lyda, a center of commerce, coins first minted there, carpet and woolen industry located there. Noted for immorality, a term of contempt.

Only a shell of its former self. Ill. the church had taken on the characteristics of the city. Had become a thermometer instead of a thermostat. Lessons are to be learned here. Christ came with what the church needed, the power of the Spirit and His man. Notice the church with a reputation.

I. Revelation 3:1 b THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH A. Had a reputation (Ill. what people think) B. Christ speaks of reality -(What He knows to be true) 1. Great Physician felt pulse and pronounced dead. (Hebrews 4:13) 2. Do not be deceived in outward appearance. (Ill. flowers and funeral home.) (Matthew 23:27) C. Jesus shows the reason Revelation 3:2 b 1. Works not complete - (Ill. do not reach Heaven) (Ill doin' and Dabblin') 2. Good on starting, poor on finishing (do you works reach Heaven?) 3. Signs of life (Growth, harmony, emotion) II. Revelation 3:2-3 THE CURE FOR THE CHURCH A. Spiritual Alertness - chase sleep (Ill. Dorothy and friends in the Wizard of Oz) 1. Ill. guards and Sardis 2. Ill. frog in kettle 3. Keep the good things alive (Strength) B. Spiritual Brokenness - self - judgement 1. Remember, hold fast , repent 2. Need to practice self judgment ( 1 Corinthians 11:31) 3. If we don't judge ourselves, Jesus will, Revelation 3:3 b III. Revelation 3:4-6 THE CHRISTIANS IN THE CHURCH A. The Faithful Few 1. Clean Garments (Colossians 3:5-10) Christians need to be clean (Ill. surgeon ) 2. Ill. the difficulty of the day B. The overcomer 1. Clothed in white (share the glory

2. Book of life 3. Confessed before God (Matthew 10:32)

## 09.08 Revelation 3:7-13 THE JESUS CHURCH

---

### Revelation 3:7-13 THE JESUS CHURCH

Intro: Philadelphia was the youngest of all the cities. It was founded as a missionary city for greek culture, it was known as "little Athens". It was also a military buffer city. The name Philadelphia means The city of brotherly love. It was named this by King Attalus II for his brother Eumenes, King of Pergamous. Philadelphia was built in an active volcanic area. As a result, there were numerous volcanic eruptions and earthquakes that forced the evacuation of the city. Philadelphia was filled with numerous heathen temples, (Ill. Citizens and pillars). Philadelphia was the last of the Christian cities to fall. It fell as a result of jealousy on the part of Byzantium christians. This church received no complaints from the Lord. Only praise! Ill. represents the time period 1700 a.d. to rapture. Represents the rebirth of revival and missions! If we are to be any of these churches, let's strive to be Philadelphian in our ministry and outreach. (Ill. Sent missionaries to India!) I. Revelation 3:7 THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST A. In His Attributes 1. He is Holy - Demon - Mark 1:24; Angel - Like 1:35; 1 Peter 2:22 2. He is True - (Real and genuine) (His fame lives up to His claim!)(Ill. Coke) (Ill. Only Savior - Acts 4:12) (Ill. We can count on His Word!) B. In His Authority - He has the keys. He is the key man! (ill. Isaiah 22:20-25 - type of Saviour!) 1. To God's Blessings - 2 Corinthians 1:20 2. To Salvation - Acts 4:12; John 10:9; John 14:6 3. To Service - 1 Corinthians 16:9 4. To Safety - Colossians 3:3 C. In His Activity - Opening and closing doors!

1. Ill. Open and closed doors - Paul, Acts 16 2. Jesus is busy manning the doors in our lives. 3. Ill. All doors are a blessing.

II. Revelation 3:8-11 THE CONTROL OF CHRIST A. Revelation 3:8 In Control Of The Christians - (Knows works) 1. Weakness - Small numbers, true fundamental churches are in the minority. Ill. Under God's control. 2. Willingness - Weak but strong, kept some big things. a. Kept Word - Ill. Bible is the Word of God - Is inspired, must be kept. Ill. Under attack b. Kept Name - Jesus must be the churches focus! His name is to be lifted up - John 12:32. (Ill. Liberal church) (Make much of Jesus and.....) B. Revelation 3:9 In Control Of The Critics - 1. False church hates the true church! - John 3:20 2. If we are faithful, we will be criticized - 2 Timothy 3:12 Like it or not, we can gauge our effectiveness by the flack we receive! Ill. Proper response - Matthew 5:44.

C. Revelation 3:10-11 In Control Of The Crisis 1. Great tribulation - Church will be gone - Romans 5:9. 2. The Earth Dwellers - Those who live for world - 1 John 2:15 3. Behold, I come quickly - Rapture - 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 Joy for the believer and it is a missionary motive! 4. Hold Fast - Not to salvation, but to the Word and His name. Do not lose reward and testimony. (Where would we want Jesus to find us?) Ill. Revelation 3:12-13 THE CONQUEST OF CHRIST (Romans 8:37; John 16:33) A. Revelation 3:12 a He Will Make Them - (Ill. pillars) (Ill. Pillows) 1. Strength - Ill. Pagan Temples 2. Stability - In God's Temple. It will stand forever! 3. Steadfastness - Go out no more. (Ill. Earthquakes) (Ill. Eternal city!) B. Revelation 3:12 b He Will Mark Them 1. Name of Jehovah - Marked as God's people. Called out! 2. Name of New Jerusalem - Marked as to destination. 1 Corinthians 2:9 3. Name of Jesus - Marked by the master.

III. His mark - Holiness! (III. His new name will reveal more of Him to us - III. Sheba 1 Kings 10:1-9)

Conc: Would Jesus tell us what he told these people? Would He come with praise? Or with complaint? Would He seek to encourage us? Or, would He have to rebuke us before He could bless us? Perhaps, you are not even saved! Why not deal with whatever might be wrong in your life right now?

## 09.09 Revelation 3:14-22 THE CHURCH THAT THOUGHT IT HAD IT

---

### Revelation 3:14-22 THE CHURCH THAT THOUGHT IT HAD IT ALL

Intro: Ill. Jesus saved the worse church to last. This letter is the saddest, the most disturbing and, sadly, the one we can identify the most clearly with. It is the picture of most churches today. It is certainly the picture of the church in the last days. We have moved in our study from the days of the Apostles to the days of the Apostasy.

We have lived long enough to witness the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. In that we have witnessed the full rise of the apostate church, 2 these. 2:3. Ill. A Redbook survey of American church leaders revealed that 59% rejected the Virgin Birth; 71% Life after death; 54% the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus; 98% the personal return of the Lord. Brother, we are in a mess. This church was also. Laodicea was a very important city in Asia Minor. It was known for, 1. Wealth, Banks and Pride - Ill. earthquake in 17 AD; 2. Clothing Industry - (Black Wool); 3. Medical School - Eye Salve; 4. Water Situation - They received cold water from Colosse and hot water from Hierapolis. But all water was lukewarm by the time it reached Laodicea. It is to this town and the church located there that Jesus comes with his message for them.

#### I. Revelation 3:14 THE DYNAMIC CHRIST

A. He Is All-Conquering - He is the Father's fullest Amen to man's deepest need. He is the end of the revelation. He is the final authority. He is the Amen! (Ill. Amen!)

B. He Is All-Convicting - He will not Dilute the truth; He will not Distort the truth. (Ill. All the ways we have of skirting truth!) God deals with the facts. He will tell this church the perfect truth. He will do the same for you and me.

C. He Is All-Controlling - He is the origin of God's creation - John 1:3. He is responsible for all we see.

#### II. Revelation 3:15-17 THE DELUDED CHURCH

A. Revelation 3:15-16 It's Sickening Compromise - They were a mixture of fire and ice. They were aware of Calvary, but were not moved by it! They knew about Hell, But didn't try to warn the lost! (Ill. We have a message! We need to be fired up about the things of God!) (Ill. Many cold, a few frozen!) 1. Ill. Two reasons for concern: a. Most Difficult people to move toward God. b. Misrepresents God and Jesus. (Ill. Jesus desires that we be one way or the other!) 2. Jesus says He will spue them out. They make Him physically ill and He will vomit them out! (Ill. Our tendency to compromise and get cold!)

B. Revelation 3:17 It's Sickening Complacency - Their personal viewpoint contrasted with that of the Lord! They felt they had it all, He says they have nothing! They were fooled by the trappings of religion, (Ill. Offerings, attendance, buildings, budgets, education, organization, ritual, etc.) (Ill. Church of God Grill!) Jesus declares that they have nothing at all - Ill. Tomas Aquinas and Pope

Innocent III. Jesus says they are:

1. Wretched - To be pressed under a burden. 2. Miserable - To be pitied. (III. The poorest saint had more honor than they!) 3. Poor - Spiritual beggars. 4. Blind - Spiritually unclothed 5. This is where the modern church is today. Seeking to serve God by traveling down blind alleys. Some of which are: Fundamentalism, Exclusiveism, Ritualism, Rationalism, Socialism, Occultism, Ecumenism, Materialism.

III. Revelation 3:18-19 THE DEFINITE CHOICE (Christ councils them to do several things:) They need:

A. Spiritual Values - Only those things gotten from Jesus are of value!

B. Spiritual Virtues - (III. The Emperors Clothes) The world can see through this type of church's facade. We need to cloth ourselves in the works of the Lord!

C. Spiritual Vision - (III. Eyesalve) III. there is a great need for us to see ourselves as God sees us and the world as He see them. Where is our surrendered walk and our consuming love for a perishing world?

D. Spiritual Vitality - REPENT! Nothing else will suffice! His council is for ZEAL! Jesus desires that we reach the boiling point in our love for Him. Are you on fire for the Lord? (III. Our only resort is usually our last resort! Only repentance will pour the Spirit into our churches!

IV. Revelation 3:20-22 THE DUAL CHALLENGE

A. To The Sinners In The Church - Jesus waits, patiently, in love. He waits for that one person to open the heart and let Him in!

1. Implies Friendship 2. Implies Fellowship (III. He waits for one Christian to open the door for real revival!) (III. The Excluded Christ! How many times have we locked Jesus out?) B. To The Saints In The Church - 1. They shall reign with Jesus - 2 Timothy 2:12 2. They shall rejoice with Jesus

## 09.10 Revelation 4:1 WHEN JESUS OPENS THE DOOR

---

### Revelation 4:1 WHEN JESUS OPENS THE DOOR

Intro: III. This verse must be understood, if we are to correctly interpret the divisions in the book of Revelation. There are three divisions. Chapter 1; 2-3; 4-22. This is clearly stated by Revelation 1:19. That verse is the key verse to the book. It unlocks the door of our understanding. If we miss that verse, we have missed the leadership of the Lord! If Revelation 1:19 is the key that opens the door, then 4:1 is the hinge upon which it swings! If we miss the significance of this verse, then we will be as guilty as any of the cults. We will misinterpret the rest of the book if we miss it here! (III. Hereafter and after these things!) I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VERSE

A. It Is A Transitional Verse - Revelation 1:19 (III. The things which are to take place after the rapture. (III. Meta-tauta - After these things!)(III. Revelation 3:1-22 - Last word on the church until Revelation 19:1-21, upon the earth!) B. It Is A Typical Verse - A Type of the rapture! (III. John represents the caught up believers!) (III. There must be a rapture here! If it isn't, our entire theology is washed up!) II. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE VERSE (III. Revelation 1:1 - Sign-i-fied) A. A Symbol Of Sight - (III. open doors - third time!) 1. Revelation 3:8 - Door of Opportunity 2. Revelation 3:20 - Door of Salvation 3. Revelation 4:1 - Door of Deliverance (Standing open) a. Jesus is the only Door - John 10:9; John 14:6 b. The door is open for salvation, but it will close - Matthew 25:1-13 TODAY c. Door is open to receive the saints home!

B. A Symbol Of Sound - Trumpet 1. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 - Rapture 2. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 - Rapture 3. Come up hither - The call of authority - III. Jesus calling for Lazarus - John 11:43 III. THE SWEETNESS OF THE VERSE (III. A Blessing) A. An Escape - No tribulation for the church! 1 Thessalonians 5:9

1. III. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 - III. caught up = to snatch away. (Implies haste and rescue) The church will be rescued from impending doom! 2. Judgment Is Coming - (Revelation 2:22; Revelation 3:10) (III. Chps. 6-19!!) 3. Escape Is Promised - Revelation 3:11 a. III. Types of rapture in the O.T. 1. Enoch - Genesis 5:1-32 2. Noah - Genesis 6:1-22, Genesis 7:1-24, Genesis 8:1-22, Genesis 9:1-29 3. Lot - Genesis 19:1-38 4. The church will be tested, but not in the Great Tribulation - (III. Jesus Movement!) 5. Proof Positive - Revelation 2:7; Revelation 2:11; Revelation 2:17; Revelation 2:29; Revelation 3:6; Revelation 3:13; Revelation 3:22 - Contrast - Revelation 13:9 - No Spirit no church!

B. An Entrance - Going to Heaven to be with the Lord!

1. See the Lord - Revelation 22:4 2. Experience Heaven - Revelation 21:4; 1 Corinthians 2:9 3. Live Forever - John 11:25-26

## 09.11 Revelation 4:2-11 THE THRONE CHAPTER

---

### Revelation 4:2-11 THE THRONE CHAPTER

Intro: Things look different from a Heavenly perspective. III. That is true in every area of life. Everyone wants to go to heaven, and tonight we shall. Here we see a scene that will take us into Heaven itself and will allow us to look into the things that are going on there. John was caught up into Heaven in verse 1, let's join him there and learn of our future home. Here we see a scene that defies description. The symbolism here is beyond us common mortals. When Jesus describes a vine, we can relate to that. When He talks of Bread, we can grasp that. Water, wind and other things He talked of are easily understood. But, here we are confronted with an emerald rainbow that makes a complete circle. With strange people and animals. We have entered the realm of the unfamiliar. To understand it, we will have to rely on the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Let's look tonight at the Throne Chapter.

I. Revelation 4:2-3 THE SOVERIEGN ON THE THRONE A. III. The glory of seeing God on His throne.

B. There are three facts revealed about God:

1. Revelation 4:2 The Stability Of God - His government - III. throne set. Nothing or no one can overturn God - Psalms 47:8; Psalms 45:6  
2. Revelation 4:2 The Symbolism Of God - His glory - John tries to do the impossible!  
a. Jasper - Hard, inflexible, clear, unchangeable, firm. Describes the Lord's government. (III. The Lord's fixed physical laws - Gravity, thermodynamics, etc.) His moral laws are just as stable. (III. He will rule with a rod of iron - Psalms 2:9)  
b. Sardine - Blood red, flashing and fiery - Speaks of the holiness of God. III. the fires on Israels altar was never to go out! This perpetual fire was to remind Israel of the wickedness of their sins. God is HOLY and as long as there is sin in the universe, His anger will burn against it! III. He is not some doting old man or some cosmic Santa Clause. He is holy, He is God!  
c. III. The human side - This seems pretty tough! But, it is a picture of one who will judge the world. . III. the Priests breastplate - Exodus 28:17; Exodus 28:20. The first and last stones mentioned were these two. It reminds us that yes, there will be judgment, but it will be administered by one who has walked among us, there is human side to the judgment! (He judges, but with compassion - III. Near the heart!)  
3. Revelation 4:3 The Serenity Of God - His grace - III. OT rainbow. Right now, we only see half the bow, then we shall see it all - 1 Corinthians 13:12. We will see it right then. III. Trials of faith and struggles.

II. Revelation 4:4 THE SAINTS AROUND THE THRONE III. 24 elders. they are symbolic of all the redeemed of the ages. (III. 12ot 12nt) A. A Promise Fulfilled - 2 Timothy 2:12 (III. Happy Baptists)

B. A Position Finalized - (III. Spiritually seated - Ephesians 2:10) (III. we will literally be here someday!; THIS IS US!)

1. White Raiment - Purity and righteousness. Only when we are clothed in His righteousness do we merit Heaven.  
2. Crowns Of Gold - Judgment seat is past! Crowns represents reward for

service.

III. Revelation 4:5-11 THE SONGS BEFORE THE THRONE A. Revelation 4:5 a A picture of approaching judgment. (III. Thunder, lightning, tornado)

B. Revelation 4:5 b Seven Lamps - Holy Spirit in all of His Completeness. No longer the Comforter, but an instrument of judgment!

C. v.6a Sea of Glass - Finality, God's judgment is final. No more appeals it is over. (III. Natural sea - changes and fluctuates - this sea cannot change.) (III. Laver The time for repentance and cleansing is past, God's judgment is fixed and unchangeable.

D. Revelation 4:6-8 The Four Beasts - (4 = world - seasons, compass) These beasts represent all created life. Lion = wild; Calf = domesticated; man = intelligent; Eagle = birds. (III. each represents a different side of the Lord - 4 gospels - Lion = Matthew; Calf = Mark; Man = Luke; Eagle = John.) III. To be near Him is to be like Him! (III. Wings speak of swiftness in service!) III. All creation is quick to praise Him and glorify the Lord! A Picture of unceasing praise to the Lord!

E. Revelation 4:9-11 Celebration - When the beasts glorify the Lord, the church begins to worship. Heaven will throb with the praise of Jesus. (Note: Every time the 24 elders appear in the Revelation, they are falling on their faces and praising Do!) Let's do two things:

1. Begin to praise Him now so we will be ready. 2. Earn many crowns to be able to cast them at His feet. Worship is worthship. He alone is worthy to receive our praise!

## 09.12 Revelation 5:1-7 THERE STANDS THE LAMB

---

### Revelation 5:1-7 THERE STANDS THE LAMB

Intro: Recap Revelation 1:1-20, Revelation 2:1-29, Revelation 3:1-22, Revelation 4:1-11. Revelation 5:1-14 is one of the most important chapters in the entire book! We must remember that we are dealing exclusively with prophecy now. Everything we will talk about is future. We also must remember that God is exact in what He promises. Ill. Josiah, 1 Kings 13 - 300 years; Cyrus, Isaiah 44:28-28 years. In Revelation 4:1-11, we have the praise of the Lord for creation, in Revelation 5:1-14, we have the praise of the Lord for redemption. Christ is the central figure of the chapter, the Book is also featured. Let's notice the details of these verses.

I. Revelation 5:1 A FANTASTIC SCROLL Where is the Book? On God's hand. The book is a scroll. (Ill. Scrolls) God is extending the Book. What is the Book about?

1. Related to man, Revelation 5:3. 2. Concerned with what will happen to the earth, Revelation 6:1-17. 3. Has to do with redemption, Revelation 5:1-14. In the O.T., three things could be redeemed: 1. A Servant - Jesus broke the bondage and slavery of sin. 2. A Wife - Jesus redeemed His Bride out of the World and from the world. 3. Land - Jesus will redeem the world! (Ill. Jeremiah 32:8-14 - Explain redemption) a. On the inside, why the land was lost. b. On the outside, the terms of redemption.

A. God is holding the title deed to the planet earth and to all of creation. Christ is The redeemer! (Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:21 - Il. Sin's curse) B. Adam sold his inheritance to Satan - (Ill. The results) 1. The story is inside the scroll 2. The redemption price is on the outside (A Sinless Man) C. Ill. Why hasn't God moved before now? It would have been illegal.

II. Revelation 5:2-4 A FRANTIC SEARCH Question: Who is worthy? (Not who is willing - Napoleon, Hitler, Alexander, etc.) A. No Man In Heaven - No person, no angel was able.

B. No Man Upon Earth - No politician, no religious leader.

C. No Man In Hell - No departed conqueror or demon.

D. No one could take the Book or even look upon it!

E. There is silence in Heaven, until we hear John crying. (Wept much = cried and cried) First crying in Heaven!

F. These are the tears of all humanity - Caused by sin.

G. Why cry? Because the church has been redeemed, but creation was still under The curse. If no one could take the Book and pay the price, then creation would have to remain in bondage.

III. Revelation 5:5-7 THE FABULOUS SAVIOR (Weep not, behold! (Ill. This is the message of the church, we have a redeemer.) The elders say weep not, for the Lion has prevailed!) A. The

Character Of The Savior 1. A Lion - Majesty, authority, power (Ill. The Jews were looking for a lion and got a lamb!) 2. A Lamb - John expected to see a lion and saw a lamb (Means a little lamb) (Ill. Passover Lamb, a pet Lamb.) (God took His little lamb for you and me!) a. A Slain Lamb - Still bore the marks. These will serve to remind us of the price paid for us.

(Ill. Jesus was there the whole time! Jesus promised to be in the midst! Too often, we come to church and miss Jesus while looking around at everything else.) 3. Seven Horns - All Power - Omnipotence - Matthew 28:18 Seven Eyes - All knowing - Omniscience - Hebrews 4:13 B. The Conquest Of The Savior

1. He Prevailed - Revelation 5:5 - He conquered in every instance - Temptation, Calvary, tomb, ect.) 2. He is able! 3. He took the Book and is ready to redeem all creation.

Conc: Is Jesus your Lion (Judge), or is He your Lamb (Savior)?

## 09.13 Revelation 5:8-14 HEAVEN'S CONCERT

---

### Revelation 5:8-14 HEAVEN'S CONCERT

Intro: After the Lamb takes the book, all of Heaven bursts into a song of praise. (Ill. Music's power in our everyday lives. Music has the power to move us – James 5:13; Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16) All of the emotions known to man can be experienced and expressed through the medium of music. Let's take a few moments tonight to visit this Heavenly Concert at the throne of God. The admission is free, the atmosphere is glorious and the company is beyond compare. After all, we are going to be here some say soon!

I. Revelation 5:8 THE BASICS OF HEAVEN'S MUSIC Who? The 4 beasts and the 24 elders. The Instruments –

A. Harps - (Symbolic of praise) Ill. We will be able to play in Heaven!

(Ill. Little boy with broken arm asks doctor, "Will I be able to play the piano after I get my cast off?" Doctor says, "Certainly!" Boy says, "You must be some doctor." Doctor asks, "Why?" Boy responds, "Well, I couldn't play before!") (Ill. Old Testament prophets often prophesied accompanied by the music of harps – 2 Kings 3:15) There is a 2-fold purpose for music in the church:

1. The preacher and the people are prepared for the ministry of the Word of God.
2. The heart is lifted from the mundane and the worldly in worship.

B. Bowls – (Symbolic of praise) (Ill. The symbolism of incense in the presence of God. It pictures the sweet smell of our prayers ascending up before the face of God!) (Ill. Our praying is never in vain! It ascends up before the Lord and it honors Him!) (Ill. We should sing now for His glory and we should be actively involved in a lifestyle of praise and prayer!) II. Revelation 5:9-10 THE LYRICS OF HEAVEN'S MUSIC

(A New Song) (Ill. Revelation 4:1-11 The song of praise was for creation. In Revelation 5:1-14, the song is praise for redemption!)

A. The theme of their song is Jesus! (Ill. They take their time to praise the Lamb.) Jesus ought to be the centerpiece of all that we are and do. (Ill. Colossians 1:18) Does He have the preeminence in your life?

B. Their song is a ballad – A song with a story!

1. About the Power of the Lamb – Revelation 5:9 a
2. About the Passion of the Lamb – Revelation 5:9 b (Ill. Slain – sphazo – to butcher, or slaughter) (Ill. The brutality of the death of Christ – Isaiah 52:14)

3. About the Purpose of the Lamb – Revelation 5:9 c (III. Blood – It is what redeems us, keeps us and presents us holy before the presence of God – Hebrews 9:22)

(III. Hymnals – Some would like to remove the blood from their singing, others already have! In Heaven, however, the Blood of Jesus is the theme of the praise. There will not be a single one there who is not blood bought and blood washed. Give me that old-time, blood religion!)

C. Made us Kings and Priests – Revelation 5:10 In other words, we are members of the royal family. We also have the obligation of offering up sacrifices to His glory. (III. Praise – Hebrews 13:15; Performance – Romans 12:1-2) III. Revelation 5:11-14 THE DYNAMICS OF HEAVEN'S MUSIC

A. Revelation 5:11 – (III. The number of angels) (III. The Temple had about 4,000 musicians and rotating choir members.) Just pause to imagine the sound of Heaven's great choir of the redeemed.

B. Revelation 5:12 – Their seven fold anthem of praise.

1. To receive power – Dynamic power 2. Riches – Plentitude – (All things – Colossians 1:18) 3. Wisdom – Total intelligence 4. Strength – Force 5. Honor – Reverence 6. Glory – Doxology 7. Blessing – Eulogy

(III. Notice, He alone is "Worthy." None else deserves praise and worship. Jesus alone is worthy! Are you giving Him these things? He receives them in Heaven, He ought to receive them from His people who inhabit the earth!)

C. Revelation 5:13 The entire universe, Heaven, earth, Hell, begin to praise Jesus the Lamb! (What a day that will be! However, what a tragedy it will be for fallen man. They must bow, but it will avail them nothing – Php 2:5-11!)

D. Revelation 5:14 The beasts are at a loss for words and simply say, "Amen – So let it be." The 24 elders fall before Jesus (Again!) and worship the eternal Lamb of God.

(III. All music will leave you at someone's feet. Either at the feet of Jesus, or the feet of Satan. Where does your music leave you?)

## 09.14 Revelation 6:1-8 RIDERS ON THE HORIZON

---

### Revelation 6:1-8 RIDERS ON THE HORIZON

Intro: In the last two chapters, we have been in heaven. We have enjoyed the glory of the exalted Father and Son. Listened in on the songs and witnessed the praise. Now, it is time for God to begin working out His redemptive plan for the planet Earth. As the Lamb begins to open the seals, thunder is heard in Heaven. Thunder signals impending doom, (Ill. Thunderstorm). One of the beasts says, "Come and see"! The invitation is given for all men to approach the things of God and look into coming events. It is part of God's plan and wish to save fallen man. He invites him to look that he might see what is coming and turn from his evil toward the Lord. Tonight, I want you to notice with me that there are RIDERS ON THE HORIZON. Let's look in as Jesus begins the series of events that will reclaim earth from Satan.

I. Revelation 6:2 THE SEAL OF DECEPTION (Horses imply swiftness and rapid succession) (Ill. This is not Jesus!)

A. White Horse - Gives the appearance of good. False purity, (false Christ), He will ride onto the scene in the wake of the rapture and deceive many not believing that he is Christ, (1 Thessalonians 2:11; Matthew 23:27), deception is his weapon, (Matthew 24:5; Matthew 24:24) (Ill. Simon - Acts 8:9-10) (If left, you will believe!)

B. A Bow - A military man who carries a bow, but no arrows. He conquers by deception rather than bloodshed. (Ill. The world is ready for a man to bring peace.(Ill. World thought patterns have already been programmed to accept his doctrine - Ill. Communism, Dependence on government, Secular Humanism - Evolution, Situation Ethics, Moral Freedom, Self-sufficiency, Sexual Permissiveness, Anti-religion bias, Socialism, One World Government, Death Education, Human Destiny.) He will unite the world. Man's other attempts have failed, his will too.

C. A Given Crown - The world will accept him and will crown him king of the world (Ill. He has no right to the throne!)

D. He Comes Conquering - He will take the world, He will be the last natural man to try and bring peace to the world. The world will be fooled by him, but - 1 Thessalonians 5:3. His false peace will last 3 1/2 years!

(Ill. This rider is not Jesus! Note how they compare: Both ride white horses. The first has a victors crown, the second has many diadems, he is King of Kings; The first has a useless weapon, the second an all powerful sword; The first is a man, the second is GOD!) II. Revelation 6:3-4 THE SEAL OF DESTRUCTION

A. Red - The color of fire and blood. Fire devours and destroys. Bloodshed will be the natural result of these days. the false peace will be impossible to bring about. This apparently peaceful man now becomes an instrument of war.

B. Many wars will break out as antichrist attempts to consolidate his power. III. The words of Jesus - Matthew 24:6-8. (III. Russia and her allies will invade Israel - Exodus 38:1-31, Exodus 39:1-43.) (WWIII will take place now - the world is ready! III. 60,000 H-bombs, enough to destroy the world 17 times over at a temperature of 130 million degrees.) (III. The world loves war! III. Scientific study; III. God - Romans 3:17; III. Since WWII - 12 limited wars; 38 political assassinations; 74 rebellions for independence; 162 revolutions. And WWII was the war to end all wars!

C. Imagine a world without any peace! Its coming!

### III. Revelation 6:5-6 THE SEAL OF DISPAIR

A. Black - Mourning, sorrow, famine - Lamentations 4:8-9. The aftermath of war is always famine, and with famine disease - III. 27 million died in Europe after WWI.

B. Balances - Rationing of food

C. Measure - 1 Quart; Penny - A Days Wages. A days work will one quart, the least a man can survive on, of wheat. Or, 3 quarts of Barley, horse feed. (What about the rest?)

D. Could it happen? Consider this: 1/2 the preschool children in the world are undernourished; Over 1/2 the world goes to bed hungry; 10,000 people starve to death annually. (III. Population Stats) (III. Our wastefulness!)

E. While the poor starve, the wealthy enjoy excess. All compassion will be gone! Population: 203,000 births per day; 74,000,000 increase per year! 1850 = 1b; 1930 = 2b; 1961 = 3b; 1976 = 4b; 1989 = 5b; 6.75b by 2,000! Waste: 1 days waste from average family would feed a family of 6 in India. Our dogs have a higher protein diet than many in poor countries. Our waste costs 17.5 Billion dollars annually. (God will judge!) Land: Nearly all the world's cultivatable land is being used. (III. The world eats enough grain each year to build a highway 18 yds wide, 6 ft. deep around the equator of the earth - 1.2 billion metric tons. There isn't much hope of producing more.

IV. Revelation 6:7-8 THE SEAL OF DEATH A. Pale Horse - Pestilence. Green is the color of dying tissue.

B. Death is the rider with Hell following: There will be no restrainer - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17.

C. 1/4 of the world's population will be destroyed. (III. Ezekiel 14:21) 1. There will be violence. - The sword. 2. There will be starvation - Hunger. 3. There will be disease - Death (III. Pestilence - III. the bubonic plague; AIDS, III. 20,000,000 cases; possibly 100 times greater than reported cases! chemical warfare - chemicals, insects, animals, III. 1979 explosion in USSR military lab. III. DNA research, disease strains developed for war, etc.) 4. The animals will kill - Beasts. Possibly RATS - Destroy 1 b dollars of food in USA alone. Produce 5 or more litters of 8-9 each per year, fleas carry bubonic plague which destroyed 1/3 of Europe in 14th century. Carry Typhus which was responsible for over 200 million deaths in 400 years. Rats can carry as many as 35 different diseases. If 95% of population is destroyed, can replenish in 1 year!

Conc: Already in place. Coming now. Will continue through Tribulation. But, the worse part - Matthew 24:8

## 09.15 Revelation 6:9-17 HISTORY'S GREATEST PRAYER MEETING

---

### Revelation 6:9-17 HISTORY'S GREATEST PRAYER MEETING

Intro: III. The first four seals. The events of these verses, are during the middle portion of the Great Tribulation. The time known as Jacob's Trouble, (Jeremiah 30:7) As the fifth and sixth seals are opened, terrible things take place on the earth. Many are depressed by the events of Revelation. However, we must consider what this world has done and continues to do to God and His Son Jesus Christ. God has every right to judge mankind and He will exercise that right during the Tribulation. Let's look into the Word as the Lamb opens these two seals.

#### I. Revelation 6:9-11 THE MARTYRS IN PEACE (III. Martyr - One killed for adherence to a belief!)

(This passage refutes two doctrines: 1. Soul sleep - These souls are awake! 2. Purgatory - These souls are not paying for anything, they are waiting on something!) (Altar = Safety; Security and Sacrifice) (After the rapture, the world will hear the gospel - Currently, Scripture is in 1,100 translations; 2,000 languages!) A. Revelation 6:9 THE COST OF ALLEGIANCE - (More in chp. 7)

1. Many will be saved during Tribulation. Many will pay with their own blood! (III. The inquisition of the dark ages; modern persecutions!) (2 Timothy 3:12) (III. Matthew 10:25; John 16:1-4) 2. There is a price to pay for devotion to the Lord!

#### B. Revelation 6:10 THE CRY OF VENGEANCE -

1. III. A strange cry - Not a Christian cry, we are taught to pray for our enemies - III. Stephen - Acts 7:1-60; Jesus Luke 23:1-56; III. Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:14 2. How long Oh Lord? OT terminology - III. Psalms 94:1-4 3. God will deal differently during the Trib. (III. OT = Law; NT = Grace) C. V.11 THE COMFORT OF OMNIPOTENCE (III. It is good to serve a God who knows it all!) 1. White Robes - Have a body; Purity; Closeness; Love! 2. Others must die also! (III. Why? To glorify the Lord! Rub Satan's face in it!) 3. In the midst of trouble, just rest in the Lord, we will understand it better farther on. Even now, God has a purpose - Romans 8:28.

II. Revelation 6:12-17 MEN IN PANIC (III. Most awful and frightening scene in Bible!) (III. We have just seen the prayer meeting in Heaven. Here is the largest one the world has ever seen.!) (III. 7 classes of men are portrayed - a picture of the entire human race. A race in total panic!) (III. TV and movies have left us desensitized, but the feeling will come back some day!) Here is a scene where all of mankind has gone totally berserk!

#### A. Revelation 6:12-14 WHAT THEY SEE (III. Earthquakes)

1. A universe in total and absolute bedlam - III. Predicted - Haggai 2:7; Matthew 24:29. (4,000 yrs - 13,000,000 dead from quakes!) 2. An Earthquake - III. The fear of an earthquake. Men rely on the stability of the earth. But, even that will fail then! 3. Sun Becomes Black - Happened at Calvary! (III. May 19, 1780 - The Dark Day) The sun goes into mourning! III. A universal power failure! III. No ordinary eclipse! Some believe this is atomic war - No Way!) Sun God dead! 4. Moon Becomes as

Blood - III. A reddening of the moon! (III. Power of the moon) Moon God dead! 5. Stars fall - III. The use of stars - Navigation, Prognostication - the God of Astrology is dead! 6. All of the naturally stable things that man has depended on are removed from their sight that they focus their attention on God! 7. Heaven is rolled back - All that is above is rolled away! The curtain is drawn, the veil that separates us from the face of God will be removed! 8. Mountains and Islands moved - (III. Atomic war - 17 times amount needed to destroy the world!) All stability is gone. (III. Many times the sinner has to be brought there before he will come to Jesus!) B. Revelation 6:15-16 a WHAT THEY SAY 1. Seek Refuge - III cave men in future, not past! Man is devolving not evolving! 2. All men begin to pray - Want to be buried in the rocks. Men who are too tough and too cool to pray now, will pray then! But, to the wrong place! 3. Too late to pray now! Yet they pray and in the wrong direction! They call on the rocks and not the Rock to cover them! Many who would not turn before do now, but it is too late!

C. Revelation 6:16-17 WHAT THEY SENSE 1. Will finally believe that sin, wrath and judgment are true! 2. Wrath of the Lamb - (III. Lambs - Meek, gentle, docile - Paradox) (A picture of rejected love!) (Wrath = Orge, A building of anger - God's wrath has been building for a long time! It will be released! (III. Hurrricane Camille and hurrricane party! It grew and killed them all!)) 3. None Will Be Able to Stand - All will have to experience the judgment of God. None is good enough to escape. It will be a time of Hell on earth!

Conc: Come to the Lamb, while He is still dealing with men in mercy! Revelation 22:17!

## 09.16 Revelation 7:1-8 THE 144,000

---

### Revelation 7:1-8 THE 144,000

Intro: III. The tribulation and the first 6 seals. The seventh is not opened until Revelation 8:1. This is a parenthetical portion of scripture. A lull in the storm if you will. God stops the activity for a period of time to draw back the curtain and allow us a glimpse at His heart. Men have rejected the grace of the Lamb and now, they must experience the wrath of the Lamb. However, before He pours out the final judgments upon the human race, God stops to answer a prayer prayed long ago by the prophet Habbakuk, in Habakkuk 3:2. God is going to extend His mercy to a group of individuals. This is encouraging to me! In the midst of so much hatred, pain and judgment; it is good to know that the Lord will still be in the business of saving souls during the tribulation! Revelation 7:1-17 deals with two distinct groups of people. Revelation 7:1-8 deal exclusively with the Jews; Revelation 7:9-17 with gentiles. We want to answer three questions tonight related to this first group. 1. Who are they? 2. What do they do? 3. Are they living tonight? Let's spend some time tonight looking at the 144,000.

#### I. Revelation 7:1-2 a HOW GOD PROTECTS THEM

A. BY EARTHLY RESTRAINTS - (4 is a prominent number, repeated three times: angels, corners, winds) (4 is the number of the world!) 1. Angels - Messenger - Hebrews 1:14 2. Corners - Not flat - Isaiah 40:22 Four Points of the compass. 3. Winds - Type of Judgment - Hosea 8:7 Holding = restrained; III. Horses

B. BY HEAVENLY RESOURCES - A fifth angel - 5 number of grace - Rises like the sun, Malachi 4:2 Could it be? This angel comes to dispense grace to these men. They are to be sealed by God's seal. (III. Seal = Protection - Noah, Ark; Israel, Blood; Cain, Mark) II. Revelation 7:2-3 HOW GOD PRESERVES THEM A. WHY THEY ARE SEALED - They are the servants of God! (II. Nothing else can happen until they are sealed!) 1. A mark on the forehead. A. Possession - III. Signet B. Protection - III. Tomb C. Preservation - (III. Canning) - To preserve from slaughter, from Anti-Christ. Nothing can kill them! III. The government will try! But, will not succeed!

B. WHERE THEY ARE SEALED - In the forehead, an outward, observable sign. (III. Passover - Blood on the doorposts!)

1. Believers are sealed with an inward seal - Ephesians 1:3, III. The soul. (III. Ephesians 4:30; III. Sin) By His seal, we are guaranteed delivery to the throne of God. III. An inward seal now, but an outward one then. 2. This seal will be a constant reminder to Satan that he is defeated. The church now, the 144,000 then. 3. Satan will be able to do nothing to these men, they are protected, kept and preserved by the mighty hand of God!

#### III. Revelation 7:4-8 HOW GOD PRESENTS THEM (III. 3 Questions)

A. THEY ARE PRESENTED AS A FAMILY (Who they are? #1) (III. Cults who claim to be the 144,000: Worldwide Church Of God; Jehovah's Witnesses; Seventh Day Adventists. None of

these are right!) These men are not gentiles, they are not Christians. They are not any group, they are members of a family. They are Jews! What does this tell us?

1. God is not through with the Jew - Romans 9:1-33, Romans 10:1-21, Romans 11:1-36 2. These are Jews who have received Christ - III. 2 Witnesses, Revelation 11:1-19 3. 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes. No living Jew, but Jesus, knows which tribe he is from. (III. All records were destroyed in 70 AD) But, God knows! 4. Notice that Dan is missing. Why? Probably Idolatry. They were spiritual weaklings and they are not needed here? (Genesis 49:17) B. V.3 THEY ARE PRESENTED AS TO FUNCTION (What they do? #2) 1. Servants - They are evangelists - Matthew 24:14 2. III. The zeal of a converted Jew!

C. ARE THEY ALIVE? #3 Probably! We are in the last days!

Conc: The important matter is your personal salvation. Do you know the Lord? I do not know how you feel about it, but I am encouraged that God is going to raise up an army of redeemed Jews who will preach the gospel of the Kingdom, and that a multitude will be saved from tribulation. We serve a truly awesome God!

## 09.17 Revelation 7:9-17 THE TRIBULATION SAINTS

---

### Revelation 7:9-17 THE TRIBULATION SAINTS

Intro: III. The 144,000. I praise the Lord that there will still be people saved during tribulation times! This is good news. Here is a number totaling more than one man could count! These verses give us the opportunity to look at what awaits those who come out of tribulation. It also affords us the privilege of getting a little sneak preview into the goings on of glory. I don't know about you, but I tend to get a little bit homesick every now and then. This is God's way of pulling the curtain aside and letting us look into the things that will happen when we finally get home. Let's notice some facts about this great multitude.

I. Revelation 7:9-12 THEIR DESCRIPTION (Includes the souls under the altar! Revelation 6:16)

A. They are Gentiles - God dealt with the Jew in verses 1-9, now He turns to the gentiles. Acts 1:16 - Thank God, He loves the gentile. Romans 1:16 B. Standing - Not the church - III. Revelation 4:4 (III. 1 Thessalonians 1:10) C. White Robes - Virtue, purity, (III. Revelation 3:5, sardis) (III. 1 John 1:7; Isaiah 1:18) D. Palms - Victory, (III. Israel - John 12:13) (III. Victory over trib. And devil!)

III. Satan and Antichrist's worse punishment turns out to be these saints's greatest blessing!

E. Praises - These saints lift their voices together and praise the Lord for His saving work! III. What a worthy theme! III. We ought to be about the same business - Luke 10:20! (III. The OT Feast of Tabernacles - All Nations praising God together! When we are redeemed by God and are with Him, we have reason to praise - Hebrews 13:5)

F. Angels - Say Amen, add seven additional blessings, like that so good, they say Amen again! (III. Angels are not known to sing! But, they are known to praise - III. They have seen praise - Luke 15:7, III They never praise God for salvation! This is a human privilege!) II. Revelation 7:13-14 THEIR DELIVERANCE (III. Elder and John) A. Came OUT OF tribulation! Saved as a result of the witness of the 144,000!

B. Saved by the blood - III. Slaughterhouse religion! The Blood is THE ONLY WAY TO GOD! Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5; 1 John 1:7 III. Salvation!

III. Revelation 7:15-17 THEIR DESTINY A. Revelation 7:15 Service - They will serve God continually. Service never ends, here or there.

B. Revelation 7:16 Blessings:

1. No hunger - III. Famine, Revelation 6:5-6 2. No Thirst - III. Water to blood - Revelation 8:8, Revelation 8:11 3. No Sunburn - III. Sun - Revelation 16:8-9 C. Revelation 7:17 Joy 1. Jesus Himself will feed them. 2. Will give them plenty and they shall never want! 3. God will wipe their tears away, III death of saints, II. All they saw. One day God will extend his grace in a personal way! (III. Us too - Revelation 21:4)

## 09.18 Revelation 8:1-13 WHEN THE TRUMPETS BEGIN TO SOUND

---

### Revelation 8:1-13 WHEN THE TRUMPETS BEGIN TO SOUND

Intro: III. The events thus far. We have witnessed the opening of six of the seven seals. When the seventh is opened, it produces seven trumpets. These trumpet announce what will be a series of divine judgments upon a sinful world. There is not much for man to say about these things. Therefore, we will let the Bible speak for itself in these matters.

I. Revelation 8:1 SILENCE IN HEAVEN A. The lull before the storm.

B. The judgments that follow are so terrible that all of Heaven falls silent. (III. Beasts, Elders, Angels, Choirs.) C. Sometimes, we need to get silent before the Lord - Psalms 46:10

D. III. The effect of silence - (III. Wedding, Prison, III. Man in truck!) 30 mins of total silence is never shattering!

II. Revelation 8:2 & Revelation 8:6 SOLEMN PREPARATIONS A. Seven angels are given trumpets. The trumpets will signal the judgments.

B. III. The importance of trumpets - Numbers 10:1-12 - (Assembly, Journey, Alarm, War, Worship, ect.) C. These angels position themselves and get ready to sound their trumpets - Revelation 8:6

III. Revelation 8:3-5 SAINT'S PRAYERS A. The prayers of the saints are kept - Psalms 56:8-9; Revelation 5:8 B. Will be offered before the Lord - (III. Delayed answers!)

C. III. The Lord's prayer! When we pray, "Thy Kingdom Come", we are asking for God to judge this world! It also answers the prayer in Revelation 6:9-10.

D. Pray! God hears, Jeremiah 33:3; and He will answer!

E. Revelation 8:5 After the prayers went up, the judgment came down!

F. III. The world has rejected Jesus' sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, now they will be judged from the altar of God!

### IV. Revelation 8:7-13 SERIOUS PUNISHMENT

A. Revelation 8:7 First Trumpet - Hail, fire and blood cast upon the earth. (III. Ezekiel 38:22) 1/3 of all trees and all the green grass gone! Imagine that! (III. Oxygen levels!)

B. Revelation 8:8-9 Second Trumpet - "A mountain cast into the sea!" 1/3 of sea turns to blood; 1/3 of all sea life dies; 1/3 of all ships go down! (III. Man's dependence upon the sea!) C. Revelation 8:10-11 Third Trumpet - A falling star 1. Poisons 1/3 of all fresh water! (III. Wormwood - a poison herb - III. Absinthe!) 2. Jesus is the water of life - John 14:13-14 - He was rejected and now He will judge them in a manner that will remind mankind of who He is!

D. Revelation 8:12 Fourth Trumpet - (God's dimmer switch) 1. Dims the light by 1/3 2. Ill. Darkness increases by 8 hours per day. (Ill. Cold, heat and power; Ill. Crops.) 3. Jesus is the light of the world - John 8:12 - Men chose darkness and get their desire. (Ill. All of these things are an Ecologist's nightmare!) E. Revelation 8:13 The Eagle - he proclaims 3 woes upon the world. Things are going to get worse from this point!

Conc: No person present need worry about these things. If, that is, you are saved by the grace of God! Soon all of these things will come to pass. Where will you be when it all comes down?

## 09.19 Revelation 9:1-12 WHEN HELL VISITS THE EARTH

---

### Revelation 9:1-12 WHEN HELL VISITS THE EARTH

Intro: Ill. The phrase, "Hell on earth!". We tend to exaggerate our circumstances sometimes and feel that we really have it bad. We are famous for our pity parties! We have never seen a time like the one that is coming upon this old world someday. Il. The tribulation period. A time that is so bad, even Heaven becomes silent over the coming horror, Revelation 8:1; and pronounces a threefold woe upon the earth dwellers, Revelation 8:13. Many people avoid this book, because it scares them. Well, it was given to lost men as a warning of what was coming so they might prepare themselves and miss the awful period of time that is coming upon the earth. These things are not to be avoided, they are to be heeded. These things are given to change us. Tonight, we will literally see a period of time when there will be hell on earth! If you have heard of sin, Hell and the end of man and are still unmoved, then listen to these verses tonight as we consider the thought, When Hell Visits The Earth!

I. Revelation 9:1 THE ANGEL(Let's see if we can determine his identity!)

A. A Famous Figure - (A star = Ill. Athlete, movie, music, etc.) (Ill. Lucifer = Day Star - Isaiah 14:12) Ill. Known in Heaven, Earth and Hell B. A Fallen Figure - Ill. Past tense; Ill. Luke 10:18 1. Fallen from Heaven - Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:14) (Ill. Anointed Cherub) 2. Satan hates both you and God - don't let him use you!

C. A Fearful Figure - (Bottomless Pit = Shaft of the Abyss; Luke 8:31)

1. Jesus holds the keys to hell - Revelation 1:18; (Ill. Satan's power is limited! Ill. Job) 2. The key is delivered to Satan that he might unlock the door that separates this world from the next. The hidden supernatural world will come into view! (Ill. What a tragedy!) Il. Revelation 9:2 THE ABYSS

A. A Deep Place - Bottomless

B. A Dark Place - (Ill. Smoke, a description of Hell - Luke 16:19-31) (Ill people joke about hell, but those who reject Jesus will go there!)(Ill. Mt. ST. Helens - people had sense enough to flee!) C. A Demonic Place - Matthew 25:41 1. Demons dread the Abyss - Luke 8:31 2. The Beast comes from the Abyss - Revelation 11:7 3. Satan will be chained in the Abyss - Revelation 20:1 4. Fallen angels are bound there - 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6 5. Abyss is he home of demons so vile and so vicious that they are chained now, but they will be released some day! 6. The world is getting ready for this invasion! (Ill. Increased interest in the supernatural, especially angels. This will prepare the world for the demonic attack that will come! (Ill. Music, movies, cults, crime, etc. All point to an increase in demonic activity!) Ill. Revelation 9:3-12 THE ATTACKERS (Ill. Locusts and the terror they inspire. Ill. Their devastation of crop land!) 1. Have power as do scorpions - Ill. Scorpions 2. Are they literal or Figurative? Figurative! 2 reasons:

1. V.4 They do not hurt plants, they target people, lost people! 2. They have a king - Proverbs 30:25 3. What we see here is a demonic invasion!

A. Revelation 9:5-6 A Description Of Their Purpose 1. To Torment Men for five months! 2. Death will be a goal, but no one will die for 5 months! (Ill. No funerals; no obituaries!) 3. Even suicide will be impossible! (Ill. The horror here!) B. Revelation 9:7-12 A Description Of Their Personalities 1. Horses - An invading army 2. Crowns - Authority; No one will be able to do away with them! (Ill. Congress or Medicine!) 3. Faces - Intelligence 4. Hair - Attractive - Men may be drawn to them 5. Teeth - Infective - Ill. Lion's bite is the most infective bite known! 6. Breastplates - Force and Insensitivity - They will delight in inflicting pain! (For five months, they will feast on blood!) 7. Chariots - Oppressive - Unstoppable (Ill. Armies of men will prove useless!) 8. Tails - Tormentive; They will sting men. 9. Destructive - Revelation 9:11 They are organized and the name of their king is Destruction! They have a job and they will perform it well! 10. What will it be like to awaken one morning and find one of these fearful creatures staring at you and waiting for you? Many will find out!

Conc: One day soon, Hell will be let loose upon this world! Will you be here? You don't have to be! Will folk you know be here? They don't have to be either! Jesus died to save all men. And, to make a way for them to avoid the terrible times that are coming upon this world!

## 09.20 Revelation 9:13-21 THE SIXTH TRUMPET

---

### Revelation 9:13-21 THE SIXTH TRUMPET

Intro: Revelation 9:13 The place of mercy becomes the place of greatest judgement. When men reject the love and mercy of God, all they have left is His judgment and wrath. Ill. many people will not believe that God is a God of wrath But, this will never change the facts! Deuteronomy 4:24; John 3:18; John 3:36. The saints prayer in Revelation 6:10 is finally being answered.

#### I. Revelation 9:14-15 THE FALLEN ANGELS

A. Revelation 9:14 They Come From A Distinct Place - Euphrates River. Very prominent in the Bible. It is the place where man, sin, murder, apostacy and religion were all born.

B. Revelation 9:15 They Come For A Distinct Period Of Time - The were prepared for THE hour. God is running on a precise timetable. He is in control!

C. Revelation 9:15 They Come For A Distinct Purpose - to slay 1/3 of the human race! (Ill. Demons are over world powers - Ephesians 6:18; Daniel 10. These demon powers will control the world and cause the deaths of billions!

#### II. Revelation 9:16-19 THE FEARFUL ARMY

A. The Number Of The Army - 200,000,000! This was the total population of the world in John's day! China had an army of 200,000,000 in 1964. It is around that number today! This is a column of men 1 mile deep and 87 miles long!

B. The Nature Of This Army - (Revelation 9:17) Human or Demonic? Human described in symbolic fashion, demonically energized!

1. Breastplates of Fire - fire = red; Jacinth = blue; Brimstone = yellow 2. Heads as Lions - Fierce looking and acting. Perhaps a symbolic way of describing a demonically inspire army. 3. Weapons - Weapons of Hell. (Possibly a description of modern emplacements of war.) (Ill. The reality of Hell. God allows all the horrors of hell to visit the earth. Still, men will not repent. 1/3 of all people living die!

#### III. Revelation 9:20-21 THE FATAL ATTITUDE A. Revelation 9:20 The Spiritual Life

1. Demon Worship - Ill. College courses offered in witchcraft; Voodoo; the Occult. (Ill. Three E's - Entertainment, Enlightenment, Enslavement!) 2. Idolatry - Men will worship the works of the hands. Man is a religious animal. He will worship something. Left to himself, he will focus his worship in the wrong direction. If man doesn't fill the void in his life with Jesus, he will fill it with idols!

B. Revelation 9:21 The Moral Life - (Ill. 4 biggest problems today!)

1. Murders - (III. Oklahoma, O.J., Ted Bundy, Jim Jones, Charlotte, etc.) We live in murderous times! 1. There is no regard for human life. 2. Apart for the grace of God, we are all capable of murder! (III. Jeremiah 17:9) a. Abortion - In one year, more babies die from abortion than the total number of Jews murdered during Hitler's reign in Germany! Appro. 9,000,000! 1.6 million a year here! 4,300 per day; 180 per hour; 3 per minute. (III. This is why we need to be involved, and vote our convictions!) (III. Jeremiah and John the Baptist!) 2. Sorceries - (III. Pharmakon = Pharmacy) The use of drugs will increase. It is possible that government will resort to mind-altering drugs to control the populace. Drugs are preparing the world for Anti-christ! 3. Fornication - (III. Pornia = Pornography) Illicit sexual activity will mark that day. (III. Adultery; Pre-marital sex, same sex relationships, pornography, etc.)The tribulation will be a sexually free time. We are headed there now! This displays a disregard for: 1. God's gift of sex; 2. One's own body; 3. The institution of marriage. We are already seeing an increase in sexuality based programming, advertisement and literature. Sex is everywhere! (III. Porn is a 10 billion dollar industry. 85% goes into the pockets of organized crime. 18,000 outlets exist for the sale of porn. 20% of all new videos are pornographic. There are 350 known child pornography magazines! And, it will get much worse! There's more I could say! (III. Computer sex, phone sex, cable sex!) 4. Thefts - Stealing. Property will mean nothing. People will have no personal rights. Whatever shreds of decency and innocence the world has left will be taken away during the Tribulation!

What is the world's attitude concerning these things? They will not repent, Revelation 9:20! It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance, Romans 2:4, not His judgment! If men will not get right under the cross, they will not get right under the whip!

## 09.21 Revelation 10:1-11 THE BEGINNING OF THE END

---

### Revelation 10:1-11 THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Intro: This is another of those parenthetical passages. They appear from time to time in Revelation to turn our eyes from the awfulness of the judgment. They serve to focus our attention on the blessed Lamb of God. In the midst of His wrath, we desperately need to be reminded of His great power. There is one fundamental problem with the world today, they leave Jesus out of their calculations and plans. Ill. Ancient astronomy, (Aristotle and Ptolemy believed the earth to be the center of the universe. It wasn't until Nicholas Copernicus and Johannes Kepler discovered that the sun was the center of the solar system and all other things revolved around it, that everything fell into place and began to make sense.) This world has cut Jesus from the picture and replaced Him with the United Nations and other faulty institutions of man and the result has been total chaos. When Jesus is restored as the focal point of mankind's attention, then all things will make sense and fall into place. That is what God is up to here. This passage introduces the middle of the tribulation period. Let's notice what is taking place upon the earth as we see the beginning of the end.

I. Revelation 10:1-4 THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL A. Revelation 10:1 Who Is It? Probably Jesus! Why?

1. From Heaven - Abode 2. Cloud - Glory - (Ill. Cloudy pillar!) 3. Rainbow - Mercy - (Ill. Rainbow after flood) 4. Sun - Diety, glory - (Ill. Mt. of Transfiguration, Ill. They wanted a sign - Matthew 12:38. He gave them signs - When He was born, He placed a star in the sky. When He died, He put the sun out! Now He stands in His glory outshining the sun! 5. Legs of fire - Judgment! (Ill. There will be no winking at sin!) Ill. He walked here, lived here and died here. He has watched this world persecute His saints, devastate His world, and turn a deaf ear to His calls. But, He is coming back! No meek, mister nice guy this time. He comes in wrath!

B. Revelation 10:2 What Is He Doing?

1. Holding - A book of prophecy. Possibly OT prophets - Daniel 12:4 (Ill. Revelation 10:7-11) 2. Standing - Claiming the sum total of earth for Himself. (Ill. Practice of victors) (Ill. Buying land!) C. Revelation 10:3 What Is He Saying?

1. Crying as a lion - (Ill. Nothing compares to the roar of a lion who stands in his own domain.) This roar is God's final warning to His enemies that He is coming. 2. Seven Thunders - (Voice of God) Psalms 29:3-9 Ill. John was told not to write! (Ill. Daniel and Paul.) What did the voice say? Good Question!

II. Revelation 10:5-7 THE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE ANGEL A. Jesus pledges by His Father that there will be no more delays!

B. All the eternal plans and visions of God are about to be brought to pass!

C. We need to remember that the days of delay are in reality the days of opportunity.

D. III. When the waiting is over, all the sinners will be punished! (III. How long Oh Lord? Now, My child!) III. Revelation 10:8-11 THE APPROPRIATION OF THE BOOK

A. John could see the book, even know its contents. But, until he took it personally, he was no bettered!

B. Eat it! - (III. The Word is food - Matthew 4:4; Psalms 119:103; Jeremiah 15:16; 1 Peter 2:22) The Word does us no good until we eat it and digest it. Until you learn to feed off the Book, you will be an undernourished Christian.

C. Revelation 10:9-10 The Two-fold Effect - Both sweet and bitter. (III. Hebrews 4:12)

1. The is a blessing and a burden to the Word, a sweetness and a sadness, a happiness and a heartache, etc. 2. The future, the little book is prophetic, is wonderful for the saint, but awful for the sinner!

D. Revelation 10:11 With the Word comes responsibility 1. If we are going to speak for God, we must know His Word! 2. If we know His Word, then we must share it!

E. John was to speak concerning all of these things - III. Chps. 11-22 F. John did his job well. Can we say the same?

Conc: We are presently living in the days of delay. Let us pray, study and witness so that we may live and work for Jesus until He comes. Are you ready to meet God, my friend?

## 09.22 Revelation 11:1-14 THE TWO WITNESSES

---

### Revelation 11:1-14 THE TWO WITNESSES

Intro: God always has His witnesses! Even in this time of great wickedness and absolute rebellion against God, He has His witnesses in this sin cursed world. III. The goal of this chapter and the entire book of Revelation, is to give glory to and to exalt the blessed Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is possibly the most difficult chapter in this book. It is simply so deep that we could literally spend hours explaining all the twist and turns that are available here. However, we will try to get the gist of the passage and glean some truth from it. Please notice that the events described here probably take place within the first 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation. Anti-Christ has established world-wide peace, a world religion, world economy and a seven year contract with the nation of Israel. Let's notice the events of this awful period.

I. Revelation 11:1-2 THE TEMPLE WORSHIP (III. The wonder! Men will build a temple to worship and sacrifice to a God who has already accomplished all things) (III. 3 Temples in the Word of God - 1. Solomon's Temple - Destroyed 583 BC by Nebuchadnezzar; 2. Zerubbabel's Temple - Destroyed 168 BC by Antiochus Epiphanes; Herod's Temple - Destroyed 70 AD by Titus the Roman.) (Now, the Temple is the church of believers - Ephesians 2:21; 1 Corinthians 6:19) There are two temples in the future - The Millennial Temple - Ezekiel 40-44; and the Tribulation Temple. The Jews will rebuild their temple! They are already beginning the processes that will make this possible. As we study this passage, keep 2 things in mind, 1. We are on Jewish ground; 2. This discusses a future temple.

A. Revelation 11:2 b The City Mentioned - Holy City - Jerusalem, (III. Moslem, Christian, Jew) 1. The Jews Must Return To Their Homeland - (III. Ridiculed) Fulfilled in 948! 2. The Temple Must Be Rebuilt - (III. Ridiculed) III. The difficulties involved.

B. Revelation 11:2 c The Chronology Mentioned - 3 1/2 years. Revelation 11:2-3, Revelation 12:6, Revelation 12:14 (III. Daniel's prophecy concerning Antichrist, Daniel 8:10. He will allow the temple to be rebuilt, but after 3 1/2 years, he will set himself up as God to be worshipped - 2 Thessalonians 2:4)

C. Revelation 11:1-2 a The Chastisement Mentioned - III. Rod is a type of judgment! This temple is under judgment from God! Why? It rejects the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross and substitutes the sacrifices of men!

1. A part is given to the gentiles. They will be the instruments of judgment - Luke 21:24.

II. Revelation 11:3-12 THE TWO WITNESSES (III. The church is gone, but God still has His men!)

A. Revelation 11:3-6 The Inauguration of Their Ministry - 1. Revelation 11:3 They are real people 2. Revelation 11:3 Sackcloth - Mourning - Preaching Misery - No message of hope and comfort! 3. Revelation 11:3 Preach - Probably preach Jesus as the fulfillment of Holy Scripture. 4. Revelation 11:4 Olive trees, Candlesticks - Spirit and Light. They will minister in the power of God's Spirit

preaching His Light. (III. Zechariah 4:3; Zechariah 4:14)5. Revelation 11:5 They are Unstoppable - Power to devour enemies with fire, stop the rain, and send plagues., turn the water to blood. 6. Who are they? Several guesses! a. Elijah - Malachi 4:5, III. Elijah never died. III. Elijahs power. (III. A lone voice in his generation) b. Moses - Moses mentioned in Malachi 4:5 with Elijah. Moses seen with Elijah in Matthew 17:1-27 on Mt of Transfiguration. The miracles and plagues were preformed by Moses. (A lone voice!) c. Enoch - He too was alone voice for God. He never died, and all must die - Hebrews 9:27 7. It doesn't really matter! What matters is that God has always got His man. III Noah.

#### B. Revelation 11:7-10 The Completion Of their Ministry

1. Revelation 11:7 Killed by the beast - Revelation 13:1. If you are in God's will, nothing can harm you. 2. Revelation 11:8 Their bodies lie unburied in the street for 3 1/2 days in the city of Vice, Vanity and Violence. Jerusalem! 3. Revelation 11:9 III. Ridiculed until the advent of TV. III. this will feed the drug induced, godless, wickedness of the day. 4. Revelation 11:10 The earth Dwellers will throw a party. The Devils Christmas. Why? Their preaching troubled the sinners! III. The preaching of the Word brings torment and conviction. It bugs people! People do not like to be faced with their sin! People hate it now, they will definately hate it then!

C. Revelation 11:11-12 The Vindication Of Their Ministry 1. They are raised from the dead. 2. God then reenacts the rapture. He shows a godless world what they missed! (III. God will vindicate His people - III. Death and Resurrection!0 III. Revelation 11:13-14 A TERRIBLE WOE A. Earthquake - tenth part of Jerusalem falls B. 7,000 notable men die - III. Seven number of perfection, God shows who is still in control.

C. The remanant must admit that this is the work of God. (III. This will stick in Antichrists craw!) (III. Jail house and death bed salvation!) The kind that will save you and take you to Heaven is the kind that comes from conviction and conversion.

D. The second woe is past, but a worse on is coming!

## 09.23 Revelation 11:15-19 THE EDGE OF ETERNITY

---

### Revelation 11:15-19 THE EDGE OF ETERNITY

Intro: In Revelation 6:1-17, Revelation 7:1-17, Revelation 8:1-13, Revelation 9:1-21, Revelation 10:1-11, Revelation 11:1-19, we have studied the events of the great tribulation. In Revelation 12:1-17, Revelation 13:1-18, Revelation 14:1-20, Revelation 15:1-8, Revelation 16:1-21, Revelation 17:1-18, Revelation 18:1-124, Revelation 19:1-21, we will be covering the same ground again. Except, this time, we will see a different slant on things. Same scenes different angle. Revelation 11:6-19 are a summary statement. A syllabus, if you will, of the events that will lead up to the dawn of eternity. Folk, one day, time will cease to exist! We will step from this time oriented world into an era that is not affected by time. Let's look into the events that will lead to the edge.

I. Revelation 11:15 THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REIGN OF CHRIST A. Jesus will not actually take the throne until Revelation 19:11

B. Kingdoms - Now belong to Satan, he controls every government in the world! (Matthew 4:8-10). But, one day soon, they will belong to Jesus! Imagine a world controlled by the Holy Son of God!

1. In Power - (Revelation 19:11-16) (III. The Queen of England!) C. Eternal - This King will never abdicate, die or be dethroned! (Psalms 145:13) D. Is Jesus King in your life? There are two kinds, which is HE?

1. Totalitarian Monarch 2. Constitutional Monarch - (III. England) II. Revelation 11:16-18 THE ADORATION OF THE REDEEMED OF CHRIST

A. Revelation 11:16-17 The 24 elders, representing the redeemed of Christ, burst into song. They praise Him because He has retaken what is rightfully His! (III. He has also answered the prayer of the ages - Matthew 6:10) B. Nations Were Angry - The rebellion in man vents it's hatred toward God! (III. Trying to kill the Jews!)

C. They Wrath Is Come - Romans 1:18 ff During the last 3 1/2 years, God's wrath will pour itself in torrents upon the earth. (III. This isn't a milquetoast God! Hebrews 12:29) D. The Time Of The Dead - 1. Resurrections - Revelation 20:4, Revelation 20:12 2. Judgments - Revelation 20:11-15 (III. Judgment will come to all men who reject Jesus!)

E. Rewards - O.T. Saints and Tribulation Saints. All of God's People will be rewarded! All the Pauls and Peters, and even the rest of us too! Revelation 22:12

F. Destroy the Destroyers - Satan, every demon and every person who followed him will be cast into the lake of fire - Revelation 20:10 G. Temple - Jewish ground, the church has no temple!

Opened - Access (III. The old days!) Ark - 2nd. Most important article of worship in the Jewish religion. There are 5 names for the Ark in Scripture and they all speak to what the Lord is doing! 1. Ark of Covenant (Numbers 10:33) Contained the Law - God's Law has been transgressed and He is angry. 2. Ark of Testimony (Exodus 25:22) Testified to God's holiness and man's sin. God is still

holy and man is still a sinner! 3. The Ark of God (1 Samuel 3:3) It was the only visible throne of God God is still on His throne! 4. The Ark of Strength (Psalms 132:8) Because of miracles and works associated with it. God is still in power! 5. The Holy Ark (2 Chronicles 35:3) Because it is where God dwelt! God is still alive and well!

H. All of these things are to encourage the Jewish people in the midst of their trials. I'll tell you, this also encourages me!

I. Lightenings, etc - Speak of the horrors that are ahead!

Conc: Time is running out! We must be motivated to reach our generation for Jesus!

## 09.24 Revelation 12:1-6 WONDERS IN HEAVEN

---

### Revelation 12:1-6 WONDERS IN HEAVEN

Intro: This is a chapter of great controversy. Many stumble here and fall into the trap of false doctrine. A person's interpretation of the whole book hinges on what they believe about this particular passage of scripture. As always, we will interpret the scriptures in a way that allows them to speak for themselves. Notice the word "wonder", it means a sign, an unusual event worthy of special notice. Something very strange is going on here. The vision that John is seeing is partly past and partly future. Let's spend a few minutes looking into these verses and notice some wonders in Heaven.

#### I. Revelation 12:1-2 A WOMAN

A. She has been variously interpreted as: The Virgin Mary, The Church, and many female cult leaders and even some women preachers have tried to set themselves as this woman.

B. Her true identity?

1. Seen in her attire: Ill. Genesis 37:9-11 a. Sun - Glory, Isaiah 46:13 b. Moon - Dominion - Genesis 13:15 c. Crown - Rule - The Jew will dominate the post-millennial world. 2. Seen in her crown - (12 Stars - Ill. 12 tribes - Genesis 37:9; Genesis 35:22) C. Her Pain - This also displays her identity.

1. Her Cry - Israel has ever cried for her deliver, the Messiah to come - Exodus 3:7, God has heard their pleas. 2. Her Travail - Israel has been in travail since the beginning. (Ill. All the persecutions.) (Ill. Isaiah 66:7-8) (Ill. Israel is not finished with pain and suffering, she will go through the tribulation.) 3. Her Pain - Israel desired and desires to see Messiah come - Isaiah 9:6 D. The woman without doubt pictures Israel. (Ill. God's Wife - Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:8)

The church is a virgin bride, 2 Corinthians 11:2. The woman pictured here is obviously no virgin!

II. Revelation 12:3-4 A DRAGON A. The identity of the Dragon is clear from verse 9.

B. Let's notice several features of his character.

1. Great - Power and control in the world - Matthew 4:8-9. 2. Red - His murders - John 8:44. 3. Dragon - His vicious nature - 1 Peter 5:8. 4. 7 heads - His wisdom - Ezekiel 28:12. 5. 10 Horns - His power over the final kingdom of man. 6. 7 Crowns - His perfect authority in the world system - 2 Corinthians 4:4.

C. His Activity 1. 1/3 of the stars - The angels who followed him in his rebellion - Isaiah 14:13-14. 2. Destroy the child - Satan hates the child of the woman. This is a reference to the events surrounding the birth of Jesus - Matthew 2:13-18. Ill. Genesis 3:15. Throughout the history of Israel, Satan has tried to corrupt or kill off the bloodline that would produce Jesus. (Ill. Cain, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, David, Etc Ill. Revelation 12:5 A MAN CHILD A. His Identity is plain 1. He will rule

the world - Psalms 2:9 2. He will be caught up to God. A plain reference to the ascension of Jesus!  
(III. His life and His work! - Mark 16:19) (III. Stephen - Acts 7:55-56) (III. Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews  
1:13; Hebrews 8:1; Hebrews 10:12; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22) B. The child can only be the Lord  
Jesus! He alone is worthy!

#### IV. Revelation 12:6 A JOURNEY

A. Speaks of a time of great persecution. (III. The events of the Tribulation - covenant, betrayal,  
murder, etc - Matthew 24:15-22; Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4) B. God will miraculously  
preserve His chosen people - (III. Petra!?)

C. This will be a sad time for anyone left behind! God help us in the time left for us to work to get  
past little old petty things and win some people to Jesus!

## 09.25 Revelation 12:7-17 THE GROWING CONFLICT

---

### Revelation 12:7-17 THE GROWING CONFLICT

Intro: III. Revelation 12:1-17 is a chapter of conflict. In Revelation 12:1-6, we have seen the attacks by the dragon against Israel and against Christ. When we come down to Revelation 12:7, we are confronted by more conflict. In Revelation 12:7 a, we see there is a war in Heaven. Here is where we need to separate fact from fiction. 1.) Satan has never been in hell, but he is headed there. 2.) Satan has direct access to Heaven tonight, but it will be cut off, III. Job 1:6-12; Job 2:1-7. Let's observe the conflict that invades the Lord's heavens.

I. Revelation 12:8-11 THE DEVIL'S DEFEAT IN HEAVEN (III. Michael - "Who is like God." An Archangel, the leader of Heaven's armies.) A. The Devil Exposed 1. Serpent - "Shining one" - III. Appearance 2 Corinthians 11:14 2. Devil - "Slanderer, accuser" - Thank God for 1 John 2:1 - We have an Advocate. (III Accusations - Sadly, the devil doesn't have to lie!) 3. Satan - "Adversary" - Satan is our enemy. His ways lead to death! (III. Quicksand!) 4. Deceiver - Has deceived us all! (III. Doesn't have to be that way - 1 Corinthians 10:13) B. The Devil Expelled (How? With What?)

1. Their Covering - (III. Power in the Blood!) (III. Slaughterhouse religion - Hebrews 9:22) The Blood is our protection! It has all the power we need to defeat the devil! III. Napoleon and red spot at Waterloo! 2. Their Confession - Stood true to the Word - Were not ashamed! 3. Their Courage - Were willing to die for the Word! (III. Jerome!) (III. Joy in Heaven - Revelation 12:10 & Revelation 12:12 a - Contrasted with woe in the earth - Revelation 12:12 b) II. Revelation 12:12-17 THE DEVIL'S DESPERATION IN THE EARTH (He knows he is defeated!)

A. Desperate Anger - Like a trapped animal, (III. Tazmanian Devil) Satan unleashes all of his anger and hatred for God and man Violence will increase and continue!

B. Desperate Attack - Revelation 12:13 Israel attacked by Satan. God intervenes for Israel's sake. III. Sheep nations - Matthew 25:1-46) (Revelation 12:15-16, Tries to destroy them by water! But, even the earth gets involved.) (Revelation 12:17 - Satan attacks the 144,000 who are professing and preaching Jesus around the world! Yet, he is helpless against them!)

Conc: The only sure way to defeat the Devil is through the Blood of Jesus! It will do the trick in the Tribulation and Satan runs in fear from the Blood in our day! Praise God, the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus is sufficient to defeat the devil forever and eventually it will put him in his rightful place. HELL!

## 09.26 Revelation 13:1-10 THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

---

### Revelation 13:1-10 THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

Intro: Revelation 6:1-17, Revelation 7:1-17, Revelation 8:1-13, Revelation 9:1-21, Revelation 10:1-11, Revelation 11:1-19 reveal the events of the tribulation, Revelation 12:1-17, Revelation 13:1-18, Revelation 14:1-20, Revelation 15:1-8, Revelation 16:1-21, Revelation 17:1-18, Revelation 18:1-124, Revelation 19:1-21 unveil the personalities involved in the tribulation period. We are going to meet two beasts in this chapter. One is the Beast from the Sea. He is a world dictator. The son of perdition, the Antichrist. The second, the Beast from the Earth, we will meet next week. He is a world acclaimed and accepted religious leader. He is the false prophet. Tonight, I want to spend some time looking at Revelation 13:1-10. They paint for us a portrait of the Antichrist and his activity in the tribulation period. Let's learn more about the Beast from the Sea.

I. Revelation 13:1-2 THE DESCRIPTION OF THE BEAST (III. The attractiveness of and the readiness for the Antichrist.) A. Revelation 13:1 His Appearing 1. Sand - The people's of the earth. (III. Sea = Restlessness) Psalms 2:1 2. Heads - Intelligence. (III. Man uses only 10% of brain!) 3. Horns - Authority and power. (III. Power Given to him - III. Revelation 13:5, Revelation 13:7) 4. Crowns - Confederated ruling power. (III. The kingdoms of the earth - Daniel 2:31-45) (III. Revival of Roman Empire - It really never failed! III. All the attempts to revive it - Charlemagne, Napoleon, Mussilini, Hitler. III. Humpty Dumpty.) (III. Daniel 7:1 ff) 5. Blasphemy - Expend all power and intelligence blaspheming God.

B. Revelation 13:2 His Appearance 1. Leopard - Swift and unchanging (Jeremiah 13:23) 2. Bear - III. The walk and ferocity of the bear. 3. Lion - Fearless and fierce

C. Revelation 13:2 His Authority - He receives his position and his power from Satan. (III. Like father like son! - John 8:44) (III. 12:3 - The resemblance is striking!) II. Revelation 13:3-4 THE DECEPTION OF THE BEAST

A. Revelation 13:3 An Object Of Wonder - (III. Wound healed) The world rejected the resurrection of Jesus. It will believe the resurrection of Satan! (III. Revelation 17:8)

B. Revelation 13:4 An Object Of Worship - They refused to worship the real Christ, but they will devote all to the false one. (III. Heaven is still rejoicing over Satan's defeat, Revelation 12:10, but the earth dwellers are worshipping Him.) III. Revelation 13:5-10 THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BEAST (III. His purposes are on display for all to see.)

A. Revelation 13:5-6 To Defy The God Of Heaven - Satan can not touch God, His Sanctuary, or the Redeemed in Glory! He is reduced to screaming and name calling! Pitiful!

B. Revelation 13:7 a To Destroy The Saints Of God - Satan cannot harm the glorified saints, but he can destroy those who are not specially sealed on the earth. He will use all the tortures of the ages to attempt his extermination of God's people!

C. Revelation 13:7 b To Dominate All The Nations Of The Earth - He will not be satisfied until every nation is under his thumb. (Ill. Alexander the Great! He cried when there were no more kingdoms to conquer. Antichrist will not cry, he will carry out!)

D. Revelation 13:8-10 To Delude The Masses - The peoples of the world who are not saved, will bow the knee before the Antichrist and worship him. (Ill. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12) 1. They will worship 2. The saved will never bow to him. 3. His day will come - Galatians 6:7; Revelation 20:10 4. This is the patience of the saints! We are on the side of the victorious! God has won, Satan is defeated. Let there be rejoicing in the hearts of the Lord's people!

Conc: Sad days are coming! Arn't you glad that we have the Lord's promise? We are leaving and going to be in Heaven with Him when all this comes down. Our duty now is be ready and be telling. Bring someone's name to Jesus tonight and stand in the gap for the salvation of their soul.

## 09.27 Revelation 13:11-15 THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

---

### Revelation 13:11-15 THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

Intro: Ill. The Satanic Trinity. Many things that Satan does, are a direct attempt by the devil to copy God. Last week, we looked at the Anti-Christ, this week, we are confronted with the Anti-Holy Spirit. The last one was the governmental, economic, military leader; this one is the leader of false religion. There will be a one world religion! It's coming and is even now on it's way. The world is getting ready for the advent of a new global community that will embrace all religions, (Ill. The Pope ,Ill. A leader in the Ecumenical movement - A person with worldwide connections has even been in this church!) Let's spend some time tonight looking at this beast from the earth. The evil man known as the False Prophet.

I. Revelation 13:11 THE APPEARANCE OF THE BEAST A. Out Of The Earth - Lit. from the land. Probably from Israel, possibly a Jew.

B. Two Horns - Power and authority. (Ill. No crowns)

C. Like A Lamb - Gentleness and association with Christ. This is the Anti-Lamb! He claims authority as the chosen of God. (Ill. people will flock to hear anyone who claims to speak for God!)

D. Speaks As A Dragon - With deceptiveness - Ill. 1 Timothy 4:1) He is intent on devouring people's lives and souls - 1 Peter 5:7. Ill. Satan and every demon are liars! - John 8:44 II. Revelation 13:12 THE AUTHORITY OF THE BEAST A. He is empowered by the devil and acts with the authority of the Anti-Christ.

B. He causes the world to worship the Antichrist and the Devil - (Ill. Ecumenical Movement and one world church!) Ill. 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Ill. The repulsiveness of devil worship! One day, the entire world will do it and think they are worshipping God come down to man!

### III. Revelation 13:13-15 THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BEAST

A. Miracles - Revelation 13:13 - Fire from Heaven - (Ill. Elijah - 1 Kings 18:1-46; Malachi 4:5-6; A duplicate of Elijah's miracle!) Not all miracles are of God - Ill. So called Charismatic movement! Not all men of God do miracles! (Ill. John Baptist - Matthew 11:11; John 10:41!) B. Miracles - Revelation 13:14 - Uses the miracles to convince people to go away into idolatry!

C. Miracles - Revelation 13:15 - The image they make moves, speaks and demands worship. All who refuse to worship the image are destroyed. (Ill. Robotics? Reality?)

Conc: As we conclude these thoughts on this second beast, let me ask you some questions. 1.) How open are you to new forms of worship? 2.) Do you believe that all religions can operate under the same umbrella? 3.) How important is pure doctrine to you personally? 4.) Do you think it is acceptable to worship with people of a different faith? In these last days, we will begin to see more and more of these things coming to pass. We will begin to see an erosion of the truth and a disappearance of the distinctives that mark us from others. You will worship someone! Either God

or the Devil! Yes, you will bow before one or the other!

## 09.28 Revelation 13:16-18 HELL'S GATE PASS

---

### Revelation 13:16-18 HELL'S GATE PASS

Intro: This passage of scripture has, without doubt, caused more speculation and fear than any other piece of Biblical prophecy. It seems that everyone is afraid of the Mark of the Beast. There have been many foolish attempts to make it mean some individual, (Ill. Reagan, Kissinger, Pope, Nero, etc.), or some system. (Ill. Computer in Belgium, Social Security). The truth of the matter is that no Christian in this room need worry about having to receive the Mark of the Beast. However, those who are lost and survive until the middle of the Tribulation period will have to make a choice. (Ill. Grocery store clerk and \$6.66.) Let's try to dispel some of the mystery surrounding the Mark of the Beast. I don't have ever yanswer, but the Scriptures and society do provide some of the answers we seek. Let's look into the Mark of the Beast.

#### I. Revelation 13:16 AN ECUMENICAL MARK

A. All will be required to receive the mark. It will accompany the worship of the beast and his image. Revelation 13:15, Revelation 13:4 (Ill. Exodus 34:14) B. Ill. Ceasar worship of the time Revelation was written.

C. The world is being programmed today - (Ill. Credit Cards, Debit Cards, SS#'s)

D. The word mark is the Gr. word "Charagma" = A physical mark, an etching. Used 8 times in NT, 7 refer to the Mark of the Beast, all refer to idolatry!

1. It may or may not be visible to the naked eye. 2. Some possibilities: a. Laser Tattoos - Visible under ultra-violet light b. A literal number - Too easily forged. c. Scannable computer chip - Already used in animals, (Ill. Spain, Indiana) d. Fingerprint scan, retina scan, heat scan (Very possible!) e. Genetic code - Too costly and complicated f. Voice patterns - easily faked II. Revelation 13:17 AN ECONOMIC MARK A. It will be required for buying and selling.

B. It has happened before - (Ill. WWII and rationing) (Ill. Sam's Club!) C. Probably implies a totally cashless system.

1. Headed there right now - ATM cards, Credit Cards; Debit Cards (Ill. Debit cards for welfare and food stamps.) 2. Proliferation of computers makes it possible. (Ill. Wal Mart) 3. A cashless economic system implies: (No tax fraud, No illegal cash transactions, Saving of billions by banks and businesses and governments, convenience, No robberies, No cash drug transactions, total governmental control of the population.)

D. The message is simple, "No mark, no food!". People will either bow to Antichrist or they will starve! Given the choice, what would you do?

#### III. Revelation 13:18 AN ENUMERATED MARK

A. III. 666 - 6 is the number of man (III. Neb's idol - Daniel 3:1; III. Goliath - 6 cubits tall, spear weighed 600 shekels) (created on the sixth day, works 6 days, 666 represents the utmost of man's intelligence and achievement, yet it is still short of God!) God is represented by the number "7" it denotes completion, and perfection. 777 denotes complete Godhead; 666 denotes complete evil - complete or not, it is still short of God!

B. 666 is a man's number. Why would anyone choose that number? 2 reasons:

1.) To stand in total defiance to God; 2.) To show the world that he doesn't care about God - 2 Thessalonians 2:4) (III. The spirit of Antichrist is already at work, God is already being kicked out of life - public and private!) C. 666 Might be incorporated into the system for everyone - as a prefix or suffix D. Headed there now, we cannot make it without numbers - (III. Some!) IV. AN ETERNAL MARK A. Many will refuse the mark - Revelation 15:3; Revelation 20:4 (III Those who refused Ceasar worship.) B. Anyone who accepts the Mark, has received a one way ticket to Hell. They cannot be saved! Revelation 14:9-12 C. They will suffer eternally and physically in this life - Revelation 16:2 D. They who receive the mark are doomed. III. It won't be easy to say no!

Conc: People need to be educated about what this mark is real all about. They need to know that they don't even have to be here for that time that is coming. We must live out and speak out the truth. This system will not even come until the church is gone. It is also an absolute deception for everyone involved in it - Revelation 19:20

## 09.29 Revelation 14:1-5 WITH THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION

---

### Revelation 14:1-5 WITH THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION

Intro: After the turmoil and death of chapter thirteen, we need something like this to encourage and refresh our hearts. Only God can follow a black storm with a beautiful rainbow! Only God can take something so black and dark and make it turn out all right. He does this in our lives daily, and He will do it in the tribulation also. III. The blessedness of the Lamb! He is THE theme of the Book! III. Here we see again the 144,000 of Revelation 7:1-17. What can be said about these men can be applied to every true believer in Jesus. Let's glean from the Book.

I. Revelation 14:1 A HEAVENLY COMPANY (III. Mt. Zion in Jerusalem, the king's residence. It also stands as a type of Heaven.)

A. Divinely Protected - (III. The protection of the 144,000 - Revelation 13:15; III The killing of Antichrist's enemies, but not the 144,000 - Revelation 7:3. They are God's Untouchables! (III. the Christian is immortal until God is through with him, III. No weapons - Isaiah 54:17)

B. Divinely Preserved - III. 144,000 sealed and 144,000 taken home, not 143,999! (III. Eternal Security!) (III. Business and Loss) (III. Not the perseverance of the saints, it is the Preservation of the Savior! - John 17:12; 1 Peter 1:5!) (III. All who get saved go home!) (III. Roll Call In Glory!)

II. Revelation 14:2-3 A HAPPY COMPANY (III. Revelation 14:2 - Heaven's Orchestra is playing the overture.) (III. Happiness and singing in Heaven!) (We need to be happy and sing to the Lord down here! - Psalms 100:1-5!) (III. People who will not sing!) (III. Crows and Nightingales!)

A. A New Song - A fresh song - A song no one else can sing. (III. Everyone has a song, a testimony a praise that is unique to them! It is up to use to make use of very opportunity to use them for the glory of God!) III. Revelation 14:4-5 A HOLY COMPANY (All these should be true of us!) A. Revelation 14:4 a They Are Detached - (III. Sins of trib.) (III. Separation - 2 Corinthians 6:17)

B. Revelation 14:4 b They Are Dedicated - They followed Jesus and did all He wanted! (III. John 14:15; John 21:1-25) (III. Some areas where we need to be dedicated to the Lord!) C. Revelation 14:4 c They Are Devoted - The Firstfruits are the guarantee of a full harvest!

D. Revelation 14:5 a They Are Dependable - Jesus can trust the holy - Luke 16:10

E. Revelation 14:5 b They Are Displayed - No Fault at all! (III. Fault now, but no charges in Heaven - Colossians 2:13-14) (III. Believers are faultless - Jude 1:24) (III. God's inability to remember forgiven sin - GLORY!!)

## 09.30 Revelation 14:6-20 SECONDS AFTER DEATH

---

### Revelation 14:6-20 SECONDS AFTER DEATH

Intro: In ancient Greece, the theater was very important to the people. However, things were different for them than for us. In our day, the action never stops. Then, they had to change the scenes and the props. When the curtain fell, it was customary for people to come onto the stage and preview the upcoming scene. That is exactly what we see here! The scenes are changing and the angelic messengers are here to tell of the upcoming scenes. In these verses, we are allowed to look around the curtain of time and take a little peek at eternity. What we see is that there is a vast difference between the eternity the sinner can expect and that which awaits the saints of the Lord, Matthew 25:46. This passage, in its context, is mainly for those who bear the mark of the Beast. However, there is application for our day and for everyone seated here tonight. I want us to think on the thought tonight, "2 SECONDS AFTER DEATH!"

#### I. Revelation 14:6-11 THE FUTURE OF MISTER SINNER

A. Revelation 14:6-7 Their Rejection Confirmed - (III. Angels preaching - Not in our day!) In the Trib., there will be no one else to do it, the angels will have to! III. The obedience of the angels! (III. The everlasting Gospel - Galatians 1:8) (III. The Hour of His judgment - III. How He has spoken to men and people have rejected, they will then also!)(III. these are the "Earth Dwellers".)

1. III. There is no response to the Gospel from the dead! III. There are no second chances! III. Luke 16:31! They will not repent anyway! III. Churches of our day!

B. Revelation 14:8-9 Their Fornication Is Concluded - (III. Babylon is a type of the world! This is a picture of a harlot enticing victims!) Babylon will fall! III. After death, the entire world will be taken away from the sinner! No more bottles, needles, or brothels! (III. People who live for the world will have nothing after this life!)

C. Revelation 14:10-11 Their Condemnation Is Continued - (III. This is the most frightening!) (III. Condemnation of sinners - John 3:18; John 3:36) (If you drink of the cup of this world, you will drink of the cup of God's wrath! - III. Wrath = Thumos, (Thermonuclear, Thermos, etc.); III. Orge = To become red-faced, III. A Dam and water! (III. There is a choice between two cups, if the cup of grace is refused, then the cup of wrath must be drunk!) (III. Brimstone - Theion - The fire from God - III. Sodom and Gomorrah!) (III. Is Hell literal? Do you believe it? (III. Matthew 13:42) (III. The difference between reality and symbolism; reality is always worse than the symbol! You better hope Hell is real! III. Hell forever - Chains, demons, fire, pain, no rest - forever!) (III. There is no such thing as Hell on earth!

II. Revelation 14:12-13 THE FUTURE OF MISTER SAINT Revelation 14:12 - The hope of the saved!

A. A Blessed Release - There are only two ways to die! (III. Jesus took the sting of death - 1 Corinthians 15:55-57!) Death is only victory for the saint - Php 1:21!

B. A Blessed Refreshment - (Rest = A pause to reflect, implies activity without labor!) (III. Finally get to serve God and not grow weary in the work!) III. We will be more alive in Heaven than we are here!

C. A Blessed Reward - Everything done for the Lord will be rewarded!

(III. Works will also follow the lost!) Revelation 22:12

Conc: III. It won't even take two seconds for any person to realize where they have ended up. When the saints get to Heaven, there will be glory and praise and the face of the Lord Jesus Christ! For the sinner, there will only be misery and screams and eternal separation from the only One who ever loved him enough to give Himself for him. Where will you be 2 seconds after death?

## 09.31 Revelation 14:14-20 THE HARVEST OF THE ENDTIMES

---

### Revelation 14:14-20 THE HARVEST OF THE ENDTIMES

Intro: III. The two previous visions. In this vision, John uses two agricultural metaphors. One of grain and one of grapes. These events picture the Feast of tabernacles. A time when the Jewish people came together to celebrate the Lord's goodness and blessing. Before that Feast, there came the harvest of the grain and the grape. Remember, that we are seeing a preview of things that will be considered more deeply later. We are preparing for the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus. But, before He can come, there must be a harvest. Before the celebration, there must be judgment and the cutting off of the wicked. Let's look at these two scenes of judgment.

#### I. Revelation 14:14-16 THE GOLDEN HARVEST

A. Revelation 14:14 The Reaper Of The Harvest - This is Jesus! (III. The cloud - Revelation 1:7) The Son of Man (III. He was presented as the Son of Man in Matthew 8:20, and this is the last time He is identified as the Son of Man. The first had to do with His event, the second with His return in victory.) (III. A reference to the Lord's parable in Matthew 13:1-58. In Matthew 13:1-58, He is the Sower, here He is the Reaper!)

B. Revelation 14:15 The Ripeness Of The Harvest - The time is now for the harvest to take place. (III. The parable of the Tares - Matthew 13:24-30) This is the time for the ultimate harvest and for the final separation. (III. This is a picture of Christianity. There are 2 kinds in the church! We cannot tell the difference. God can! (III. Differences in the tares and the wheat!) 1. Wheat and tares are identical at the beginning 2. At the end, tares stand tall, turn black and get ugly! 3. Wheat turns it's heads downward. (A picture of humility) 4. As wheat grows upwards, it dies downwards. 5. Wheat grows through the seasons and is harvested annually. (III. We have our harvest, John 4:35) 6. The tares are poisonous, a natural emetic. When harvested along with the wheat,. they must be harvested grain by grain or they will cause sickness.

C. Revelation 14:16 The Reaping Of The Harvest - For 2,000 years, the saints have watched Satanically inspired cults and religions spring up and flourish. They will do even better after the rapture! However, the Lord knows them that are His and He will reap His people and gather them into His barn, the others He will bind and prepare for the fire! (III. Matthew 13:41-42) (III. The tares are burned to keep them from reproducing! III. Why there is a Hell!) III. This harvest has to do with those saved during the Tribulation. The harvest has primarily to do with the saints. The vintage of grapes, on the other hand, have to do mainly with the world.

#### II. Revelation 14:17-20 THE GORY VINTAGE

(Here, we are presented with a picture of the Lord finally and ultimately dealing with those who have opposed Him and His truth. He steps into the arena of the battle of Armageddon to judge His foes. The time of the Lord's vengeance and judgment has finally come upon the earth!) Notice:

A. Revelation 14:17-19 It Is Timely - Men have rejected the true vine of John 15:1-27. They would not have Jesus, instead they reached out to the world, and now it is time to face the Lord. (III. Grapes gathered and placed in the winepress. A place of pain and destruction) (III. Isaiah 63:1-3 is fulfilled here!) This will be a terrible time to face God.

B. Revelation 14:20 It Is Terrible - This is a picture of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16; Revelation 19:17-19), not a single battle, but a great military campaign, III. Ezekiel 39:8-16. All the nations of the earth come against the nation of Israel to do battle! It will happen! )III. The blood will run to the horses' bridles, 4ft. deep. It is 1,600 furlongs (200 miles) from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. (III. A river of blood 4 ft. deep and 200 miles long!) Men have rejected the saving blood of the Lord Jesus, now they will wallow in their own blood! It's Jesus or destruction!

Conc: Evil days are coming! We must be sure that we are ready to meet the coming of the Lord. We must do all we can to help others prepare for that day as well! Are you ready for the harvest?

## 09.32 Revelation 15:1-16:21 THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

---

### Revelation 15:1-8, Revelation 16:1-21 THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

Intro: Ill. Have you ever heard the expression, "It couldn't get much worse."? Well, for those who are still alive on the earth at the beginning of the last part of the tribulation things can and do get a whole lot worse! The great God of grace, love and immense patience has finally reached the limits endurance. It is time for His wrath to fall upon the world and the events described here are awful in their descriptions, but surely worse in their fulfillment. Thank God, if you know for sure that you will miss this awful time. Let's look in on the time of the Seven Last Plagues.

I. Revelation 15:1-8 THE PRELIMINARIES BEFORE THE LAST PLAGUES A. Revelation 15:1-4 A Period Of Waiting - There is much to see here:

1. Seven angels carrying seven bowls full of judgment. 2. A gracious God whose wrath is about to be poured out. 3. The tribulation saints, and the song they sing. (Ill. The Song of Moses - Ex. Exodus 15:1-27 - A Song of Physical Redemption; The Song of The Lamb - A Song of Spiritual Redemption.) They sing of God's Greatness, His Goodness and His Glory! They sing of His Virtue, His Victory and His Vengeance. (Ill. The songs of Heaven!) (Ill. Will be a blessing to be there and hear that!) B. Revelation 15:5-8 A Place Of Worship - There is much here also

1. The Messengers Of Wrath - These come from the very presence of God himself. They step from the place of absolute holiness to execute judgment upon the place of absolute wickedness. a. They Possess Divine Righteousness - (Ill. Linen) What they are doing is right and just! b. They Possess Divine Restraint - (Ill. Golden girdles) They have involved no passion of their own. (Ill. A Surgeon) What they are about to do is painful, but absolutely necessary! 2. The Mediators Of Wrath - One of the Four Beasts, (Revelation 4:6-8); The cherubim who ever guard the holiness of God. (Ill. They represent the totality of God's creation, it is fitting that one should be involved in the redemption of the planet, Ill. Romans 8:19-21. 3. The Manifestation Of Wrath - The way into God is barred by a time as His wrath blazes out against a world that has rejected Him and His Son Jesus. Ill. The priest in the OT; Ill. The Blood of Jesus opened a way into the very presence and heart of God. That way is now briefly closed so that those who have rejected that way and have served the Devil and his son, the Antichrist can be judged.) God's own glory and holiness bars the way, (Ill. Egypt - Exodus 14:1-31) II. Revelation 16:1-21 THE PROCEDURES OF THE LAST PLAGUES

A. Revelation 16:1 Judgment Commanded - Here, the very voice of God Himself can be heard He gives the command for judgment to begin! (Ill. What follows is literal!)

B. Revelation 16:2-9 Judgment Commenced - (Ill. Picture divebombers in orderly formation delivering their ordinance on target and on schedule!) 1. Revelation 16:2 The Unexpected Cancer Of The Sea - Ill. A boil. Ugliness and pain. 2. Revelation 16:3 The Unexplained Contamination Of The Sea - Ill. The clotted, rotting blood of a dead man. (Ill. A place of life becomes a place of great death!) (Ill. A Plague in Egypt) 3. Revelation 16:4-7 The Unexaggerated Corruption Of The Streams - Ill. Very literal! a. Revelation 16:4 The Reality Of This Judgment - (Ill. A Plague!) Jesus'

first miracle was water to wine, something good to draw men to Him; now he turns water to blood, to remind men of Him!) b. Revelation 16:5-6 The Rightness Of This Judgment - (Ill. Poetic justice!) God always rewards men according to their deeds! c. Revelation 16:7 The Response To This Judgment - The voice of the altar, where the Blood of the Lamb was poured out, speaks and joins in agreement with the deeds of holy God! (Ill. Many saints have shed their blood on the altar of sacrifice before the Lord. That altar now cries out in gladness at the vengeance of their blood!) 4. Revelation 16:8-9 The Unequaled Catastrophe Of The Sun - God allows the heat to be turned up and the man on earth are scorched by the heat of the sun. (Ill. The power of our sun.) Man's response to this plague is to blaspheme God and to continue on in their sins. A true and revealing portrait of mankind's wicked heart!

C. Revelation 16:10-21 Judgment Completed - God's rescue of the world proceeds in three stages.

1. Revelation 16:10-11 The Domains Of The Beast Are Ravished - Ill. Men chose darkness over the Light of Life, the Lord Jesus and now God gives them what they wanted! (Ill. This darkness is only a weak foretaste of what they face in Hell - Matthew 8:12. (Ill. Gnawing tongues and intense pain!)(Ill. Blasphemy) 2. Revelation 16:12-16 The Directives For The Battle Are Released - a. Revelation 16:12 The Euphrates is dried up. The Kings of the east will come against Israel. (Ill. China - 200,000,000 and Japan!) b. Revelation 16:13-14 - Demonic spirits are unleashed to deceive the world into a war against the beast. This is Armageddon! c. Revelation 16:15 - Man is again told that Jesus is on the way. Man is warned to be ready! d. Revelation 16:16 - All the armies of the world converge on Jerusalem to stamp out the last of the believers. 3. Revelation 16:17-21 The Destruction Of Babylon Is Realized - The world system is brought down. a. Revelation 16:17-18 Premonitions of disaster and a great earthquake b. Revelation 16:19 (Ill. Babylon) The city falls and the world is stricken by the touch of God. c. Revelation 16:20 The calamity is so great that the mountains collapse and the islands are moved out of their present places. (Ill. Some see nuclear power here!) Whatever it is, it is the touch of almighty God! d. Revelation 16:21 Hail stones weighing over 100 pounds will fall on men. Again, men blaspheme God. Man is totally depraved!

Conc: Are you prepared to leave before the hammer falls? You better be!

## 09.33 Revelation 17:1-18 THE FALL OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON

---

### Revelation 17:1-18 THE FALL OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON

Intro: Ill. This chapter and the one to follow explain all the things talked about in Revelation 16:1-21. This is where we see the fulfillment of those prophecies. In this chapter, we will witness the fall of the great worldwide church that will flourish after the rapture of the church. This system is already at work even today. All around the world, there is a great move underway to bring all religious groups under one central umbrella. We are witnessing the great falling away which the Bible says will come about in the last days. (2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:3-4). It has already reached the place where Bible believing Christians, people who take the Bible literally and who try to live a holy life for the Lord, are under increasing attack. The only way to succeed, in the eyes of the world, is to conform and be tolerant of other's beliefs and opinions. I believe that all Christians can worship together. But, when people go off on a tangent and begin to worship and dabble in areas that are forbidden, then that is where we must draw the line! Let's look at this awesome chapter and see if we can identify what is happening here.

#### I. Revelation 17:1-6 THE BABYLONIAN MOTHER

A. Revelation 17:1, Revelation 17:15 Her Popularity - World-wide influence. This religious system will have the ear of the world! (Ill. Power and wealth.) When you reject the truth, you will be sucked into by a lie. (Ill. Seeker churches.)

B. Revelation 17:2 Her Perversion - (Ill. Whore - No woman wants to be called that term.) (Ill. She will use her charms to deceive the world into thinking she is the right way.)

C. Revelation 17:3, Revelation 17:9 Her Prediction - This church is upheld by the power of the beast. It will be headquartered in Rome, Revelation 17:9. She will be defended by the ten nation confederacy of the revived Roman Empire. (Ill. The church will once again wed the state - Ill. Constantine 325 AD. (Ill. Christianity began to change - Christmas, Lent, Baptism, Relic Worship, Saint Worship, Popery, etc.) (Ill. Is it the Catholic Church? NO!! Catholicism will surely be involved, but so will Methodism, Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, the Islamic faith, Buddhism and even the Baptists.) (That said, the connection between the history and practice of Roman Catholicism and the description of this religious system cannot be lightly passed by!)

D. Revelation 17:4 Her Prosperity - (Ill. Garments, Wealth and Ritual! The trappings of religion!) (Ill. The wealth of religion - Catholic - 100 Billion, Mormons, Baptists!)

E. Revelation 17:5 Her Personality - (Ill. Roman practice of identifying prostitutes) (Ill. Mother - Origin) (Ill. The origin of the Babylonian Mother - Genesis 10:8-11; Genesis 11:1-4) (Ill. Cush, Semiramis, Nimrod, Zoroaster. (Ill. Sunbeam, Ishtar Eggs, Unicorns, Circle of Life, Yin Yang, etc.) This system is as old as time, and as new as it has to be. (Ill. Revelation 17:18 - She is a city, and a system!)

F. Revelation 17:6 Her Persecutions - III. his system is responsible for the deaths of the saints of the Lord. From Cain and Abel to the Tribulation saints, this religious system has been responsible for the martyrdom of 10's of millions on Christians. (III. It is not tonight, nor has it ever been the denomination that determines a person's, it is the Blood of Jesus that makes the difference!

## II. Revelation 17:7-13 THE BABYLONIAN MONSTER

A. Revelation 17:8, Revelation 17:10-11 The Identity Of The Beast - (III. It is the Anti-Christ) III. His rise to power, his death and his resurrection, Revelation 13:3. His entire ministry is a mockery of that of the Lord Jesus Christ. (III. The Empereors of Revelation 17:10, and the Antichrist is both the seventh and the eighth.

B. Revelation 17:12-13 The Identification Of The Horns - The 10 nation confederancy of the revived Roman Empire. (III. The EEC!) III. Revelation 17:14-18 THE BABYLONIAN MASSACRE

A. Revelation 17:14 They Battle The Lamb - III. These nations will come against the Lamb Himself. (III. Refers to Revelation 19:1-21). When they attack Jesus, they are sure to lose! (III. King of Kings!) (III. Those with Him - Called, chosen and faithful - That my friends is you and me!)

B. Revelation 17:16 They Burn The Whore - III. Organized religion will be utterly destroyed! When their religion has served it's purpose and offers them nothing else, then they will turn on the church will utterly destroy her! (III. Sounds like a lot of people in our day - God is a great big sparetire!)They will strip her of her wealth, destroy and disfigure her places of worship and organized religion shall cease to exist on the earth! (III. Organized religion is a disgrace anyway!)

C. Revelation 17:17 They Bend Before God - As they carry out their deeds, they are unaware that God Himself is using them for His glory and to carry out His plans and purposes! In the midst of chaos, it is good to know that God is still in control!

Conc: Have you got Jesus tonight? Are you a member of the church or a part of the body? That is one question you had better get right. If you miss that one, you have missed everything! If you need the Lord this evening, please come to Him and allow Him to do a work in your heart and life.

## 09.34 Revelation 18:1-24 THE FALL OF COMMERCIAL BABYLON

---

### Revelation 18:1-24 THE FALL OF COMMERCIAL BABYLON

Intro: In Revelation 17:1-18, we witnessed the fall of the great worldwide religion that will place the world in idolatry and cultism. In this chapter, we will witness the fall of commercial Babylon. In the days of the tribulation period, men will build an economic empire never equaled in this world. There will be astounding wealth and affluence. However, it will all come to a violent end. In Revelation 17:1-18, we saw the Babylonian system fall, now we will see the city itself fall. God Himself will judge their wickedness. We will see God put forth a demonstration of His great power and we will see four groups react to what the Lord has done.

I. Revelation 18:1-8 THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FALL OF BABYLON A. Revelation 18:1 The Heavenly Communicator - Filled with light and Glory. (III. The contrast!)

B. Revelation 18:2-3 Her Corruption - III. Religious corruption. (III Ancient Babylon was the home of soothsayers, magicians and seerers - Daniel 2:2

1. Demonism - This city will be filled with evil and demon infestation. (III. A glimpse at the way modern government is empowered, perhaps?)

2. Drunkenness - The entire world is smitten by her charms. They are made drunk by her allurements. The world is held captive under her intoxicating spell. She offers them immorality and sin without fear of religious oppression. III. Speaks of a time of unbridled wickedness and lustful abandon. (III. God will deal with them!) C. Revelation 18:4-8 Her Condition 1. Revelation 18:4 There is a call to God's people to separate. (III. Abraham and Lot - 2 Corinthians 6:17)

2. Revelation 18:5 Babel's tower did not reach Heaven, but her sins have! (III. God is patient and longsuffering, but He has a limit. (Judgment must come!)

3. Revelation 18:6 Double payment is required for her sins. III. Ancient Babylonian atrocities and Jewish calls for punishment - Psalms 137:8-9; Exodus 21:22-25! God will require double payment!

4. Revelation 18:7 Pride has filled her and she defiantly believes that she shall see no punishment!

5. Revelation 18:8 Judgment WILL fall and will fall swiftly! Her desolation will come in a single day! God is powerful and He will dispense justice!

II. Revelation 18:9-200 THE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FALL OF BABYLON (III. Alas, Alas - A cry of mourning rises for fallen Babylon - There are four reactions to the fall of the city.) A. Revelation 18:9-10 The Monarchs - The kings who have prospered because of Babylon.

B. Revelation 18:11-16 The Merchants - They weep for all the money and business they have lost. (III. All the items - Gold is first and souls are last!) (III. Depends on where your treasure is! Matthew 6:20-21)(III. People will be trapped by materialism - Body and soul - III. Modern politics; if a man promises prosperity and plenty he is elected. Where is the moral vote?) III. Revelation 18:14 A

picture of Hell - ungratified desires!

C. Revelation 18:17-19 The Mariners - Men will learn too late that materialism will lead to nothing - Mark 8:36-37.

D. Revelation 18:20 The Heavenly Multitude - There will be rejoicing in Heaven over the fall of a God hating world! God has avenged the blood and the honor of His servants.

III. Revelation 18:21-24 ACCOMPLISHING THE FALL OF BABYLON (III. Millstone throne into the sea - A complete and catastrophic judgment. - Jeremiah 51:42) III. No mores!

A. Revelation 18:21 Babylon and all she stood for is no more.

B. Revelation 18:22 a Music without God - No more!

C. Revelation 18:22 b All industry and craftsmen - No more!

D. Revelation 18:23 a All appearance of Habitation - No more!

E. Revelation 18:23 b All weddings - No more! (III. No joy and happiness!)

F. Revelation 18:23-24 Babylon represents all the sin and murder of all time. Judgment falls from the Lord to ultimately destroy all those who have opposed God.

## 09.35 Revelation 19:1-10 SCENES OF GLORY IN HEAVEN

---

### Revelation 19:1-10 SCENES OF GLORY IN HEAVEN

Intro: Here is a change from the somber to the song. Two scenes are in view in this chapter. 1.) Joy in Heaven. 2.) Judgment on the earth. Two suppers are in view also. 1.) The marriage supper of the Lamb, v.9; 2.) The great supper of the great God Revelation 19:17. This chapter opens with the hallelujahs of Heaven ringing and closes with Hell opened. Let's look into these verses tonight and witness scenes of glory in Heaven.

I. Revelation 19:1-6 THE ANTHEMS OF THE SAVED (2 Words sounding out!) III. Amen and Hallelujah - Words given to us to help us worship God. These are heavenly words.

1. These words are pronounced and translated the same in every language. (III. 2 Travelers) 2. These words should be used to praise God. 3. Amen - A word of ascent and agreement to the Word of God. a. When Amen occurs at the beginning of a sentence it means "Truly". b. When it comes at the end, it means "so be it", or "I agree". c. Amen is the most known word in the world. 4. Hallelujah - Used in one place in NT. It gives glory to the Lamb! a. Hallelujah - "Praise the Lord" (III. We need to be about the business of praising God! Some people think they are dignified, but they are really petrified! It is in perfect order to respond in the services! Amen! (III. Hallelujah Chorus - Alright to sing it, but it would scare everyone to death if someone said it, or even worse if they shouted it!) There are four Hallelujahs that ring out in Heaven

A. The Hallelujah Of Redemption - Revelation 19:1 & Revelation 19:5 Praise to God for all that He has done for them. (III. Cross, Grave, Blood!) Hallelujah! (III. Billy Bray and Cornish people - "My right foot says Hallelujah and my left says Amen!") Praise God that we are all different. (III. Old saint shouting in cold, formal church. When told to quiet down she replied, "I can't help it, I got religion." and the reply was "you didn't get it here!") (III. Old lady shouting in cold church was carried out by 4 ushers. She began to shout again and said, "Praise God, Jesus rode into town on 1 donkey, I'm getting carried out by four!")

B. The Hallelujah Of Retribution - Revelation 19:2-3 Praise the Lord for His unerring judgment. Hallelujah! (III. God makes no mistake in judgment!)

C. The Hallelujah Of Realization - Revelation 19:4, 24 prostrate, again, before God. (III. Redeemed of God!) When we finally get the Heaven, we'll be all God saved us to be! Hallelujah!

D. The Hallelujah Of The Reign Of Christ - Revelation 19:6 Praise God for the day when Jesus will reign! (Hallelujah!) II. Revelation 19:7-10 THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SUPPER

(III. 2 Things will follow the rapture for the saints of God. 1.) The Judgment Seat of Christ. 2.) The festival of the marriage supper.) 1. Rapture - Catch us up! 2. Judgment Seat - Clean us up! 3. Marriage Supper - Cheer us up! (III. The oriental background for the marriage supper.) 1. Betrothal - engagement. (III. Differences) (III. Spouse usually chosen by parents! There is a danger here!) (We are married now!) (Our day!) 2. Presentation - The bridegroom and His friends would go and

get the bride and take her to the home that he had prepared for them. There, gifts would be exchanged. 3. The Festival - The length and lavishness of the marriage celebration would depend on the wealth of the bridegroom. The Marriage Supper

1. The Centrality Of The Bridegroom - Revelation 19:7 - (Ill. Bride is usually foremost!) (Ill. Society page, parties, showers, "Here Comes The Bride"; The groom is totally unimportant!) In Heaven, Jesus is the center of attention!

2. The Coming Of The Bride - Revelation 19:7 - (Ill. The Bride's preparations!) (Ill. The need to keep ourselves clean! We make our own wedding garments!) (Ill. Inner and outer garments - the tunic and the toga!) 3. Righteousness Explained - Revelation 19:8 a. Personal - Isaiah 64:6 b. Provided - 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:21-22 c. Practical - (Ill. Hope chests - The Bride made her own dresses!) The outer garment will be of our own making, the inner garment will be made by God!

Conc: Comment on Revelation 19:9-10. Those who go are indeed blessed! Are you going to be there? Only if you know Jesus! (Ill. The fate of those lacking a wedding garment! Matthew 22:1-13)

## 09.35a Revelation 19:11-21 VE DAY

---

### Revelation 19:11-21 VE DAY

III. VJ day and other great days when wars were ended and peace reigned. There is coming a great day when the entire world will be at peace. A time when men shall "beat their swords into plowshares", Micah 4:3, and a time when the entire world will be at peace. III. Mankind's vocabulary will change as the terms related to war are dropped from the everyday speech of men. No more will wives and mothers watch their sons go off to war and receive them back dead in bags. War will be obliterated as Jesus Christ rules the entire world in peace and prosperity. Won't that be a blessing? Let's notice together how these things will come to pass.

I. Revelation 19:11-14 THE ARRIVAL OF THE SON OF GOD (III. This is the second time a door has been opened in Heaven, Revelation 4:1) A. Revelation 19:11-13 The Appearance Of Jesus

1. His Nature a. Full of glory - (III. Revelation 19:12) (III. First advent - Isaiah 53:2; Matthew 8:20. b. Faithful and true - (III Modern politics, Jesus will always tell the truth and will do what He says He will.) c. Fights in righteousness - (III. His cause is just! III. Other wars have been fought over foolish things!) (III. The Lord is a man of war - Exodus 15:3)

2. His Name a. Name Of Mystery - Revelation 19:12 - III. Men would not know Jesus, except as a by-word. Now they cannot know Him even if they desires to. b. Name Of Ministry - Revelation 19:13 - (III. His first and final ministries!) (III. His garments are splashed with the blood of the enemies of the Lord. What a day it will be when the sky rips asunder and the glorious King rides forth in great and awesome victory.) (III. The armies of the world!) c. Name Of Majesty - Revelation 19:16 - (III. Name on thigh. The thigh symbolizes power. III. Jacob and the angel. The angel touched Jacob's thigh and his power to resist was broken - Genesis 32:1-32.) Jesus is no more the lowly Nazarene, the butt of cruel joking and mockery! He has assumed the title He has always possessed - King of Kings and Lord of Lords! (III. His garment is a symbol of His position. (III. Joseph's coat of many colors!)) Jesus is the ultimate ruler!

B. Revelation 19:14 The Armies Of Jesus - All the saints of God! III. Jude 1:14-15

C. Revelation 19:15 The Armaments Of Jesus - No carnal weapons, just His spoken Word! III. His Word is living, Hebrews 4:12. It has the power to heal and give life, and it has the power to destroy and kill - Isaiah 11:4 (III. John 18:6) (III. His brand of headship - Ruling with a rod of iron!) II. Revelation 19:17-18 THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SUPPER OF GOD

A. Revelation 19:17 The Fowls Called - God is about to prepare a feast for the fowls of the air - the flesh of His enemies!

B. Revelation 19:18 The Flesh Consumed - In life they lived by rank and were separated by rank, but in death they are all made equal! What a lesson! Death is the great leveler!

III. Revelation 19:19-21 THE ANNIHILATION OF THE SATANIC TRINITY

A. Revelation 19:19 The Armies Are Drawn To Armageddon - All the armies of the world, many of whom are enemies today, will join forces to try and defeat the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Their mission will be to put an end to God, the saints of God and even the mention of the Name of God. Their plans will all fail!

B. Revelation 19:20-21 The Armies Are Destroyed At Armageddon

1. The Dastardly Duo Is Destroyed - III. The Anti-Christ and the False Prophet are thrown alive into the Lake of Fire! III. Hell is waiting with an open mouth to receive these two pretenders! (III. Before the eyes of all, their leader is taken and cast into Hell! III. What a shock!)

2. The Deceived Multitudes Are Destroyed - The assembled armies of the world are defeated in just a moment by the Word of God. III. Blood to the horses bridles - Revelation 14:20. Then their flesh is consumed by the fowls of the air! The same word that will save the repenting sinner today, will be the means of slaughter in that awful day.

Conc: Today is the day of salvation!

## 09.35b Revelation 20:1-10 THE 1,000 YEAR PARTY

---

### Revelation 20:1-10 THE 1,000 YEAR PARTY

Intro: III. A chapter of controversy. The controversy is found in Revelation 20:2-7. It has to do with the 1,000 year period known as the Millennium. The period when Jesus will rule upon the earth in peace and righteousness. (III. Isaiah 11:1-11) (III. Swords and plowshares). There are three views concerning the Millennium, 1.) Postmillennialism - This view says that men will get better and better and will establish the Kingdom of God and then Jesus will return. (false!) 2.) Amillennialism - This view says that the Kingdom is here right now, Satan is already bound. This view spiritualizes these Scriptures. (false!) 3.) Premillennialism - This view says that man will continue to degenerate and when man hits the bottom, Christ will return to the earth and establish His Kingdom. This view treats these Scriptures literally. (True View!) There have been some who asked why even have a millennium? These are several answers:

1. To fulfill Old Testament promises to Israel.
2. To give a public display of the glory of Jesus.
3. To answer the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come."
4. To fulfill the promise that the saints will reign.
5. To bring about a complete redemption of nature. (Romans 8:19-22) 6. To give man one final test under the sovereign rule of Christ.

Let's look together at this great time.

I. Revelation 20:1-3 SATAN REMOVED - III. Man says that man's problem is his environment. Give him a good environment and you will produce a good man. Jesus is going to improve man's living conditions drastically.

II. Revelation 20:4-6 THE SAINTS RESURRECTED - III. The tribulation saints are raised and made to rule with the Lord Jesus! III. What a blessing resurrection is. Death is never the end for God's children! (III. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57)

III. Revelation 20:7-8 a SATAN RELEASED - III. Why? Dr Schaffer, "If you can tell me why he was released the first time, I will tell you why he was released the second."

1. III. Satan's anger - chained for 1,000 years - III. 1 Peter 5:8 2. Same old devil, same old tricks - Proves people will not repent under perdition, Satan is the same. 3. 2 Reasons he is released: a. To prove the incorrigibility of Satan. b. To prove the utter depravity of men. (III. the dispensations!)

IV. Revelation 20:8-9 SINNERS REBEL - III. Population explosion. Man will still be seeking a better way than God's way after 1,000 years of the best days man has ever known. Man is wicked to the core apart from Jesus! Man declares war on God! What foolishness!

V. Revelation 20:10 SATAN RUINED - III. Satan cast forever into the Lake of Fire! II. No annihilation! Praise God, what glory awaits us!

## 09.36 Revelation 20:11-15 THE SINNER'S DAY IN GOD'S COURT

---

### Revelation 20:11-15 THE SINNER'S DAY IN GOD'S COURT

Intro: III. Everyone wants their day in court. They say, "If I could just tell my side of the story, then everything would be alright." Well, every sinner will have their day in court. This is the last event that will take place before time is done away with. This is a passage and message that is intended for the ears of the lost and the dying. Yet, the truths that are contained here ought to give Christians a greater zeal for the souls for the lost.

#### I. Revelation 20:11-12 THE SETTING A. The Background

1. A Terrible Fact - (III. The Great White Throne) Men will stand stripped of all their pretenses and will appear as they really are. 2. A Terrible Figure - (III. Jesus Himself!) The marks of the cross still visible in His body. The one men have denied, cursed and ridiculed will be the One before whom they will stand! (John 5:22; Revelation 5:6) 3. A Terrible Fear - (III. The Glory that awaits the child of God, just to get to see Jesus!) But, for the sinner, it will pure agony to look upon Him! (III. Even the heavens and the earth must flee away as they too are defiled and must be made over.) There is nowhere for anyone to hide! They will stand before the One they hated and they will stand before Him in paralyzing fear. 4. A Terrible Fellowship - The petty, paltry sinner and the grand and glorious sinner will stand side by side here at the throne of the Judge. No one will be exempt. From the common drunk to the wicked world leader, every sinner who has ever lived will stand before Jesus! (III. Cain, Hitler, Presidents, Popes, Preachers, Theifs, Murderers, Harlots, Drunkards, Druggies, you name it!)

B. The Books - (III. The Mind. It stores everything that the person has ever experienced. It awaits the proper trigger to bring it once again to conscious memory.) III. God doesn't forget either. He keeps some books on fallen men:

1. The Book Of Life Of The Lamb - This book contains the names of every person who has ever trusted Jesus by faith. From the young to the old, from the first to the last. Their names are written here! What a glorious thought! Is your name here? 2. The Book Of The Lives Of The Lost - This book contains the record of the lives of the lost. Every deed, whether done or left undone is written. Man can either come to Christ for salvation, or he can stand on his own record. To come to Christ is to gain life, to stand on our own record is to die lost forever! You see, man will be judged for sins of commission and sins of omission, Matthew 25:41-46, for flagrant and open sin, as well as, "the secrets of men", Romans 2:16. Man will be judged not only for what he has or has not done, he will be judged for what he is - A sinner! Men will be weighed against the Lord Jesus and His righteousness and will be found wanting and be judged lost and doomed to Hell!

#### II. Revelation 20:13 THE SUMMONS

A. There will be no hiding place! (III. The cry of God in Eden - "Where art thou?" This cry will come again!)

B. Every grave will give up her dead. The dust will come together again. The sea will give her dead. Hell will be empty for the first time in thousands of years. (III. The Lady and her “eternal tomb”)

C. Imagine the scene before the throne of Jesus! The damned in all their hideousness and with the effects of their sins apparent in the dead bodies. (III. The saints will be raised and given a glorified body, but what will the dead look like?) III. Revelation 20:14-15 THE SENTENCE A. The books are read and the sentence is given!

B. The Fearfulness - To hear the words of Matthew 25:41 spoken to you!

C. The Finality - No appeals, no leniency, no pardons. All who appear before the righteous Judge are sentenced to an eternity in the Lake of Fire.

Conc: This very moment is the reason God sent man the Bible. This moment is the reason the Holy Spirit has striven with the souls of men for thousands of years. God's desire is that men repent and turn to Jesus. Oh, it is not too late today! Now is the time to be sure and to make your calling and election sure. When you stand before Jesus, and you will! Will you stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ? Or will you face Him in final judgment at the Great White Throne? If He is calling you, then you need to come to Him!

## 09.37 Revelation 21:1-8 A BRIGHT NEW WORLD

---

### Revelation 21:1-8 A BRIGHT NEW WORLD

Intro: The thought of Heaven has sustained the saint of God for centuries. Just the knowledge that there is a place of endless glory and blessing ahead is enough to give the child of God “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” In these verses, John gives us a small glimpse of that eternal state. But, what he does give just whets my appetite for more. Let’s look at the Bright New World that John describes in these verses.

#### I. Revelation 21:1 A NEW CREATION

A. Some New Things - New = recently made, fresh, unused, worn (III. New can also mean, of a new kind, unprecedented, uncommon, unheard of!) III. 1 Corinthians 2:9; III. we Are used to a spoiled creation.

B. Some No More Things 1. The old creation - 2 Peter 3:10 2. The Obstacle of the sea - (III. Oceans are probably a product of the flood!) (III. Seas were an obstacle in John’s day) (Speaks of there being no boundries between men.) II. Revelation 21:2 A NEW CITY A. A Pure City - (III. Holy!) Contrast old and new.

B. A Presented City - (From God) 1 Corinthians 2:9; Ephesians 3:20 C. A Prepared City - III. John 14:1-3. III. A bride preparing to give herself totally to her husband.

#### III. Revelation 21:3-4 A NEW COMMUNION

A. v.3 Blessed By The Presence Of God - (III. Tabernacle!) God will be present with His people! III. This makes me homesick. Makes me lose interest in this world!

B. Revelation 21:4 Blessed By The Absence Of Grief 1. No sadness - Wipe = obliterate, erase, blot out, wipe out! No cause for tears! 2. No Separation - No more untimely separations by death! 3. No Sorrow - III. Mourning - No more broken hearts! 4. No Suffering - No more hurts, no more labors, no more longings!

IV. Revelation 21:5-8 A NEW CONSTITUTION A. Revelation 21:5-6 a A Splendid Place - (III. “I Make”, and “It is done!”) B. Revelation 21:6-7 A Satisfying Place 1. Satisfying Resources - Every need supplied, every desire fulfilled! 2. Satisfying Rewards - III. Joint heirs with Jesus - Romans 8:17. 3. Satisfying Relationship - He gave us His Son - John 3:16; He gave us His Spirit - Luke 11:13. Now in a very literal way, He gives us himself!

C. Revelation 21:8 A Safe Place - All those who are outside are banished from Heaven! It is this type of people who have ruined our world, but they will not ruin that world, for they will not be allowed in! III. The sadness of “Unbeliever”! (III. These will be among the tears He wipes away!)

## 09.38 Revelation 21:9 - 22:5 `A GLIMPSE OF OUR NEW HOME

---

### Revelation 21:9-27, Revelation 22:1-5 A GLIMPSE OF OUR NEW HOME

Intro: These verses bring into view the place that Jesus referred to in John 14:2. This is the place that He has gone to prepare. The Bible gives us a description that boggles the mind and goes far beyond anything that we as humans can imagine. In the last message, we saw the spiritual and psychological aspects of the city, now we will have an opportunity to consider the physical characteristics of our heavenly home. Let's look at these verses tonight and see if we can catch a glimpse of our new home.

#### I. Revelation 21:9-10 THE SCENE

A. Revelation 21:9 The City Identified - The city is called the Bride. It is identified with its inhabitants. (Ill. Heaven will be heavenly because of the occupants!)

B. Revelation 21:10 The City Inspected - This city descends from Heaven from the Lord and stays above the earth. John is about to get the grand tour so he can share it with us.

#### II. Revelation 21:11-21 THE SPLENDOR

A. v.11 It's Shine - Ill. It shines with the very glory of God. Ill. God's glory and man's presence will dwell together there. (Ill. The Jasper stone - Diamond -

Ill. The awesome Glory of the Lord shining throughout the city.) (Ill. New Jerusalem is a diamond set in gold for the glory of the Lord.)

B. Revelation 21:12-14 It's Standing - Ill. Walls - Separation. Walls are constructed to keep things in or to keep things out. Gates - Access. (Ill. 1 gate for each tribe in Israel!)

C. Revelation 21:15-17 It's Size - Ill. The city - 1,500 miles square. Possibly a cube, or a pyramid! Perhaps a sphere! Would have a diameter larger than the moon. If it were set along the east coast, it would stretch from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, and from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico. Ill. The Wall stands approximately 216 feet tall. Beauty rather than protection is the basis for the design. Ill. Jasper everywhere! The glory of God will radiate and be reflected from every surface.

D. Revelation 21:18-21 It's Substance 1. Revelation 21:18 a The Wall - Clear Jasper. 2. Revelation 21:18 b The City - Pure Gold. (Ill. Pure gold is transparent!) 3. Revelation 21:19-20 The Foundations. a. Jasper - Clear - (Ill. Icicles) b. Sapphire - Clear Blue c. Chalcedony - Yellowish Green d. Emerald - Deep Green e. Sardonyx - White with layers of red. f. Sardius - Fiery Red g. Chrysolite - Golden Yellow h. Beryl - Sea Green i. Topaz - Greenish Yellow j. Chrysolite - Golden Green k. Jacinth - Violet l. Amethyst - Purple. Ill. The brilliance of the glory as the light from Jesus Christ Light and Power blazes through the 12 foundations and is reflected and prisms by the Jasper of the city. (Ill. The Rainbow - The City will be a brilliant testimony to the great glory of God. 4. Revelation 21:21 a The Gates - Gigantic pearls. 5. Revelation 21:21 b The Street -

Transparent gold. III. Only one street!

III. Revelation 21:22-27, Revelation 22:1-5 THE SUPERIORITY A. Revelation 21:22 It's Access To God - (III. No temple) (III. The worship of that place!)

B. Revelation 21:23 It's Accents - (III. No sun or moon!) The light will not come from without, but from within!

C. Revelation 21:24-26 It's Approachableness - The gates are ever open and the peoples of the earth will bring their glory into the City. The people will come to worship, and they will come to honor God with their offerings to Him.

D. Revelation 21:27 It's Appeal - No danger or dangerous people! III. What an attractive place Heaven will be!

E. Revelation 22:1-5 It's Appointments 1. Revelation 22:1 The Crystal River - (III. No pollutants; No fishing either!) 2. Revelation 22:2 12 Healing Trees - (III. No disease in eternity!) III. Probably for the earth dwellers. They may have to be renewed from time to time. 3. Revelation 22:3 a No more Curse - (III. All that this involves!) (Especially no more sin!) 4. Revelation 22:3 b The Service - Probably people from off the earth, possibly the saints. 5. Revelation 22:4 The Wonder - Men will finally see the face of God! (III. Moses!) 6. Revelation 22:5 a The Lighting - God will light the place. 7. Revelation 22:5 b The Glory - The Bride will reign with her husband the Lord Jesus. (III. What this might imply!)

Conc: heaven's sounding sweeter all the time. Have you made you preparations to go there? If not, there is no better time than right now to prepare to meet God. Christians, we need to get heavenly minded! Praise God, one day we will stand in His presence yonder in glory!

## 09.39 Revelation 22:6-21 THE CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK

---

### Revelation 22:6-21 THE CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK

Intro: We have covered a lot of territory in the book of Revelation. We have traveled through history from the early churches all the way into eternity. But, finally, we have arrived at the back door of the book and of the Bible. It is here that we receive a trio of final things. As we look into these verses tonight, let's notice together, the conclusion of the book.

#### I. Revelation 22:6-10 THE FAITHFUL WORD OF GOD

A. Revelation 22:6 The Accuracy Of The Word - (Ill. 2 Timothy 3:16 - Lit. God breathed!) The Bible is an accurate book!

B. Revelation 22:7-9 The Authority Of The Word -

1. Revelation 22:7 - The Lord declares His coming and gives a command. (Ill. We are to keep the Word! - John 14:15; James 1:22-23) 2. Revelation 22:8-9 - John worships the angel, and is rebuked! We are to give our worship to God and Him alone - Matthew 4:8-10; Deuteronomy 20:10)

C. Revelation 22:10 The Accessibility Of The Word - This is not a closed Book! It is open to all who are led by the Spirit. It is the final authority for all faith and practice in the House of God and the lives of God's children! (ILL. Just because it is open, does not mean it is open to alteration!) (Ill. 1 Corinthians 2:13-14) II. Revelation 22:11-16 THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST

A. Revelation 22:11 It Settles What We Are - Jesus is the great divider, (Ill. The thieves). Where a man stands in regard to Jesus determines his condition here, and hereafter! (There is time now, there may not be later! - 2 Corinthians 6:2) B. Revelation 22:12-15 It Settles Where We Are - (Ill. Each judged by his works - Revelation 22:13!) 1. Revelation 22:14 Some will be in Jesus - These will be in glory with Him! 2. Revelation 22:15 Some will be outside Jesus - Those who are lost will be lost forever. Ill the greatest agony of Hell will be the knowledge that it didn't have to end this way! (Ill. The rich man's agony was made worse because of the bliss of Lazarus!)

C. Revelation 22:16 It Settles Whose We Are - We are His, the great lover of the church! Ill. it ought to be a joy to your heart to know that you belong to Jesus!

III. Revelation 22:17-21 THE FINAL WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT A. Revelation 22:17 The Last Welcome -

1. The last invitation - "Come" - Ill. What a great word! (Ill. Noah and the ark!) 2. The last inviters - The Spirit and the Bride. Those who have drank well of the blessings of the Lord invite those who have not, to come and to partake of all that He is and all that He has to offer. 3. The last invited - The hearer, the thirsty, whosoever! (All are invited to partake of the Water of Life. Many are drinking from the stagnated ponds of the world. They are sipping all the filth, and the scum that this world has to offer. Jesus offers each one a chance to be eternally satisfied. A chance to have within them , a river. A chance to never thirst again! (John 4:13-14) (John 7:37-38)

B. Revelation 22:18-19 The Last Warning - Man is not to tamper with the Word of God! This book opens with a blessing to all who will read it, hear it, and keep it, Revelation 1:3! It closes with a condemnation of all those who take it upon themselves to change God's Word! Men can do as they please, but they cannot change the Word of God - Psalms 119:89! Those who try will pay a heavy price!

C. Revelation 22:20-21 The Last Word -

1. A Word From The Savior - His last word is to remind us that He is coming. This gives us great hope! It also gives us reason to purify our lives before Him - 1 John 3:1-3!) 2. A Word From The Saints - "Come!" There is a desire to depart in the heart of every born again believer! (Php 1:23!) There is a desire to homeward bound! (III. Revelation 22:21 - It is interesting to notice that there is a word of grace! While we wait, we need that grace to sustain us day by day!)

## **10.00. The Prison Experiences Of The Bible (Sermon Series)**

---

The Prison Experiences Of The Bible (Sermon Series) The Prison Of His Promotions - Genesis 39:20-22; Genesis 41:14 The Prison Of His Purifications - Judges 16:16-30 The Prison Of His Persuasions - Matthew 11:1-11 The Prison Of His Perseverance - Jonah 1:1-17 The Prison Of His Power - Acts 12:1-19 The Prison Of His Purposes - Jeremiah 32:1-15 The Prison Of His Praises - Acts 16:16-26

## 10.01. The Prison Of His Promotions - Genesis 39:20-22; 41:14

---

### The Prison Experiences Of The Bible

#### Sermon #1

Series Introduction: One of the striking things about the Law of the Lord is the fact that God authorized no prisons among His people. When a person committed a crime in Israel, their punishment was to be swift and sure, and it was to be a punishment that fit their crime. Yet, throughout history, kings and other rulers have built prisons to contain political enemies and lawbreakers. This is still true in our day.

Even though God did not order His people to build any prisons, He did allow some of His most choice servants to spend time in the dungeons of their day. In fact, a few of God's men met their deaths in prison cells. When God allowed one of His servants to go into prison, it wasn't because they were criminals. God sent each of those special prisoners to their prison because He wanted to teach them some lessons they could learn nowhere else.

I believe that it is worth our time to consider these prison experiences, because they have much to teach us about our God. With that in mind, let's look at Joseph and his prison experience.

#### Genesis 39:20-22; Genesis 41:14 THE PRISON OF HIS PROMOTIONS

Sermon Introduction: Our text tells us that one of the greatest characters in the Old Testament had his own prison experience. Joseph, who pictures the Lord Jesus in at least 100 ways, pulled a long, hard stretch in Pharaoh's prison.

III. The Context and why Joseph was in prison. (III. Why wasn't he executed?) Joseph was there because Potiphar wanted to punish him. But, in reality, Joseph was there because God wanted to promote him. God used a time of confinement as a time of refinement in the life of Joseph. God prepared Joseph for leadership by sending him to the lockup.

Now, I am interested in Joseph's prison experience, because I find that God will often do the same thing in your life and mine. He will have a plan to promote us to a greater level of service, but that path will often lead through some prison experience or the other. God's path for us will lead us through a time when we are shut off; shut down; shut away and shut up.

It is in these prison experiences of life that God prepares us for greater service and responsibility. Let's take a few minutes to join Joseph in The Prison Of His Promotions. There are a few truths in this passage that we need to understand today.

#### I. THE PROBLEMS OF THIS PRISON

(III. I have never been in prison, but I understand that prison is not a pleasant place to spend your time. It is a place of problems. Joseph's prison is no different. In Joseph's prison we see mirrored the problems we can expect when God sends us into a prison experience in our own lives.)

A. This Is A Painful Prison – In Genesis 39:20, we are told that Joseph was “put” into prison. There is no mention of torture or abusive treatment. However, Genesis 40:3 tells us that Joseph was “bound” in this prison. Psalms 105:18 adds even more detail. When all this is considered, it becomes clear that this was a painful time in Joseph’s life.

(Note: It is never easy when the Lord sends you into a prison experience in your life. Of course, God never promised His children that serving Him would be a painless affair. Some of God’s most choice servants have been shaped on the harsh anvil of pain, Ill. Job – Job 1:1-22, Job 2:1-13; Paul – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; David – He was hated and hounded by Saul without reason; Elijah – 1 Kings 17:1-24, 1 Kings 18:1-46, 1 Kings 19:1-21.

It has been said that “those God would use greatly, He firsts hurts deeply.” So, we should not be surprised when we find ourselves locked away in one of the prisons of life. We are not the first ones to inhabit the cell of affliction and we will not be the last.)

B. This Is A Perplexing Prison – Nowhere are we ever told that Joseph questioned anything that happened to him during his young life. But, surely there had to be questions in his mind. He must have wondered why his brothers hated him so. He must have wondered why he should end up as a slave in Egypt. He must have wondered why he was being punished for doing the right thing. Surely those questions and others must have perplexed his mind.

(Note: One of the problems of this prison is that it can be so perplexing in nature. I mean, you try to do your best and live your life for the Lord and still trouble comes your way. That is a troubling truth for many people. And, some are blown off course by the trials they are forced to endure. They throw up their hands and say, “What’s the use?” That is the wrong attitude to take with the trials of life! We may not understand all that is happening, but we can be sure that our Lord is in control of the situation.

(Ill. There were some parents who lost their little boy in a tragic automobile accident. They both were very bitter at God. When the pastor came by to see them, the mother said, “Where was God when my son died?” The pastor said, “The same place he was when His Son died.”) When we take that attitude, we are mistaken. You see, even though the prisons of life are disturbing and distracting, they are part of a plan that we know nothing about. God is using the hard, harsh events of our lives to shape us and move us to where He wants us. We must trust the Lord, even when we can’t figure out what He is doing. We need to remember that He has a plan. It is a good plan; it is the best plan, Romans 8:28. Our duty is to serve the Lord even when we don’t understand Him. Who would want a God they could figure out anyway? (Ill. Isaiah 55:8-9)

Regardless of what life bring our way, we must submit to His will and trust Him to do right. That is what Joseph did. That is what Paul did, 2 Corinthians 4:7-11. And this is what we are to do too. (Ill. A trip to the paint store.)

C. This Is A Prolonged Prison – We do not know how long Joseph spent in his prison. It was at least two years, Genesis 41:1, but it may have been as long as 13 years, Genesis 41:46! We do know for sure that from the time Joseph was thrown into that pit by his brothers until the day he became the second ruler in Egypt, some 13 years passed by. For an extended period of this man’s life, his motto could have been “Nice guys finish last.”

(Note: Sometimes our trials are over in a short time; at other times they may last for years. God may spend many years shaping your life for a relatively short period of service. He may send you into a prison experience in your life to prepare you for greater service.)

III. It took at least 15 years from the time David was anointed king over Israel until he ruled over the land, 1 Samuel 16:1-23; 2 Samuel 5:4. Those 15 years were hard years; but they were years of development. David was forced to walk through some hard places, but God used that time in his life to develop David to sit on the throne of the land.

Regardless of how long or how short our prison experiences may be, our duty is to submit to God and to His will for our lives.)

(III. Peter Marshall once said, "It is a fact of Christian experience that life is a series of troughs and peaks. In his efforts to get permanent possession of the soul, God relies on the troughs more than the peaks, and some of his special favorites have gone through longer and deeper troughs than anyone else.") II. THE PROVISIONS OF THIS PRISON

(III. This prison is a place of problems, but it also a place filled with God's provisions. He may send us into a prison experience, but He never sends us there alone, or without the resources we will need to survive and thrive in that prison.)

A. The Provision Of God's Presence – We are told in Genesis 39:21 that "the Lord was with Joseph." That young man went into a prison experience, but he did not go into it or through it alone! The God Who sent him there went with him into that awful place.

(Note: Regardless of the nature of the prison experiences you may face in life, remember that God will go with you through them all, Hebrews 13:5; Isaiah 43:2, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." When it came time for Noah to enter the ark, God did not say "Go into the ark"; He said "Come into the ark", Genesis 7:1. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace, they found the Lord was already there, Daniel 3:24-25.)

B. The Provision Of God's Peace – We are told that God "showed him mercy", Genesis 39:20. This word is translated "lovingkindness" in other places in the Old Testament. It carries the same idea as the New Testament word "Grace". In other words, God gave Joseph the power and strength he needed to endure the prison he was forced to face.

(Note: He will do the same for you! III. Our Lord's promise to Paul – 2 Corinthians 12:9. III. Paul's "thorn" is not named! There will be grace, peace and power sufficient for the trials you are called upon to face in life. III. Isaiah 40:29-31; Isaiah 41:13; Deuteronomy 33:25-27)

C. The Provision Of God's Promotion – Genesis 39:21-23, Genesis 40:1-23, Genesis 41:1-14 tell us that even in prison, God was busy using Joseph for His glory. In that horrible dungeon; locked away with the vilest criminals in Egypt; Joseph shone like the star that he was. III. The Context. Because Joseph submitted to God's will in the prison experience of his life; God elevated him and used him for His glory.

(Note: God does not send us into the prison to bury us there. He sends us to prepare us for even greater things in His work. When He allows you to suffer a time of being shut up; shut off and shut it; He does it to grow you so that His image can be more clearly seen in your life.

III. How gold is refined – This is what God is doing in your life through your prison experiences – 1 Peter 1:6-8. III. “How Firm A Foundation.” – “When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie, My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply; The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.” God sends you into His furnace so that He might use you more greatly for His glory.) III. THE PRIVILEGES OF THIS PRISON

(III. The problem makes the prison difficult. The provisions make them bearable. But, it is the privileges we find in the prisons of life that cause them to become places of growth and blessing

A. The Privilege Of God’s Plan – What kept Joseph going through the dark days of betrayal; deceit and suffering? It was the sure knowledge that God was working out a wonderful plan on Joseph’s behalf. III. Genesis 37:5-11 – Many years before God had told Joseph that he was going to come out on top. During the broken hearted days when he was betrayed and sold in to slavery by his brothers; Joseph was looking for that plan to be fulfilled. During the hard days when he labored for Potiphar and fought off the advances of Potiphar’s wife; Joseph was waiting for God to do what he said he would do. Then, during the years he languished in that dark, dreary prison; Joseph kept on believing and kept on waiting. He knew his God had made him a promise and that God would keep that promise. Then the day came! They called him out of prison and brought him before Pharaoh, Genesis 41:14. Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dream, Genesis 41:15-36, and was made the second ruler in the kingdom, Genesis 41:37-43. Joseph had suffered greatly while God worked out His plan; but he remained faithful and he saw God’s plan fulfilled in his life.

(Note: We may not understand this, but when God puts us through a prison experience in our lives, He has honored us. It is an honor to be counted part of God’s plan. To know that I, as insignificant and as meaningless as I am, am a part of God’s plans is an amazing truth. To think that He would take the time to develop me so that He might use me for His glory is a truth too wonderful for words. But, that is one of the things that makes His grace so amazing. He does not just save us to keep us out of Hell. He saves us to make us because we are a part of His eternal plan. He saves us because He intends to use us for His glory, Ephesians 2:10. The fact that I am saved today tells me that I am important to God. He loves me and He has a plan for my life. So, when my path becomes difficult, it is because He is working out that plan in me and through me. My sole duty is to submit to Him.)

B. The Privilege Of God’s Praise – Joseph is careful to give all the glory to the Lord, Genesis 40:8, Genesis 41:16, Genesis 41:25. Joseph knows that God has been working in his life so that God could get glory to His name. God did the things He did in Joseph’s life so that He might develop Joseph and so that He might use Joseph to show others the greatness and glory of the God of Heaven. (III. Pharaoh and his nation were introduced to the God of Israel, all because Joseph was submissive to the Lord.)

(Note: That is what the Lord is doing in our lives when He sends us into a prison experience. He is growing us, but He is also using us to bring more glory to His name. Since that is true, and since our heart’s desire ought to be for His glory, 1 Corinthians 10:31, there is no greater thing that we

can do in life than to submit to His will for our lives, even when we don't understand what the Lord is doing.)

C. The Privilege Of God's Providence – In the end, Joseph saw every promise of the Lord fulfilled and he came to understand that all the pain he was forced to endure served to glorify God; grow Joseph and that it all worked for good in his life, Genesis 50:20, and in the lives of others. Because of Joseph's obedience and submission, God was able to save the nation of Egypt and the family of Joseph. Joseph's brothers had sold him into slavery to get rid of him; God had orchestrated everything to save the bloodline of the Messiah, Genesis 45:5; Psalms 105:17.

(Note: in our lives, God is going to send us into some places when faith is going to have to swim where reason cannot even wade. During those times, we are going to have to trust God. You see, when all Joseph could see was the pit, Potiphar's house and the prison; God could see the palace!

He knows what He is doing in my life. He knows where He is taking me. He knows all about the plans He has for me. He knows what He is preparing me for in this life. I do not! Sometimes all I can see is the prison; during those times, I must trust that He sees the palace. Let me give you two great "Prison Promises". These two verses will sustain you when all you can see is the prison.

1. Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
2. Psalms 138:8, "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.")

Conc: Many years ago, Martin Luther made this statement, "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my little apple tree and pay my debts." That simple statement says a lot about Luther. He was saying, "No matter what comes my way, I am going to do the right things and keep on serving the Lord."

You see, those who won't serve God in the prisons of life are not fit to serve Him the palaces of life either. Does this message find you looking at some kind of a prison experience in your life? What are you doing in that prison? Are you rebelling against it, or submitting to it? God has you there for one reason: He is using that prison as a tool of preparation for a future promotion. Has He spoken to your heart through this message? If so, then come and get before Him and deal with the word He sent to your heart today.

## 10.02. The Prison Of His Purifications - Judges 16:16-30

---

### The Prison Experiences Of The Bible - Sermon #2 Judges 16:16-30 THE PRISON OF HIS PURIFICATIONS

Intro: One of the realities of the Christian life is the matter of chastisement. We don't like to think about it, but chastisement is a fact nonetheless, Hebrews 12:5-13. When chastisement comes our way, we will try to rebel against it, but the right attitude is one of humble submission and repentance, Job 5:17; Proverbs 15:32. Chastisement is painful to endure, but it is absolute proof of His love for us, Proverbs 3:11-12. When a child of God walks away from the Lord and from God's will for his life, he can expect that God will reach out to draw him home, Revelation 3:19. This truth is seen in these verses in the life of Samson.

Samson was a man with great potential, but he never quite reached that level of life he was capable of living. His name means "Distinguished and strong", but he was anything but! The Spirit of the Lord came upon him from time to time, but he failed to walk in the power of the Spirit day by day.

Because of his rebellion and his sin, Samson found himself in a prison house of chastisement. I want to take us there today so that we can see what happens to believers who stray away from the path God saved them to walk. I want to preach for a few minutes on the thought, The Prison Of His Purifications.

#### I. THE ROAD TO THIS PRISON

(III. The road to Samson's prison was a road that never had to be traveled. God had given him power and position in Israel, and Samson had squandered it all just to gratify the lusts of his flesh. He wanted to live his life on his own terms and he paid a high price for his rebellion.)

A. It Was A Road Of Disobedience – When Samson's birth was announced, his parents were told that he was to be a Nazarite, Judges 13:1-23. The "Law of the Nazarite" is found in Numbers 6:1-21. Basically, a Nazarite was to be a person set apart for the Lord. 1.) Nazarites were not to cut their hair. 2.) They were to refrain from drinking wine or strong drink, or from eating anything that grew upon a vine. 3.) They were to avoid all contact with dead bodies.

We have no record of Samson cutting his own hair; Delilah took care of that for him. We have no record that Samson ever partook of "the fruit of the vine". But, there is plenty of evidence that Samson violated his Nazarite vow by contact with dead bodies, Judges 14:6, Judges 14:8-9. Samson refused to keep the letter of Law and it cost him his life and his ministry.

B. It Was A Road Of Disappointments – Just reading through the life of Samson, it becomes quickly apparent that he was a spoiled brat. He wanted what he wanted and he wanted it right then, Judges 14:1-3. He failed to tell his parents when he gave them honey he had taken out of the carcass of a dead lion, Judges 14:9. Samson enjoyed riddles, Judges 14:12-14; Judges 16:1-17. He was not above carrying out some destructive mischief either, Judges 15:3-5.

Samson had much potential as a judge, but he failed to live up to that potential because he was so selfish and self-centered. He was a disappointment because he never became all that he could have.

C. It Was A Road Of Depravity – One of Samson’s main problems was a bad case of “female trouble”. He liked the ladies and that is what did him in. III. Samson married outside of the nation of Israel, Judges 14:1-3; He even sought out a harlot, Judges 16:1. In the end, it was his trouble with women that caused Samson to be destroyed. His passions overcame his reason and he fell. Samson was an incredibly strong man. He killed 1,000 men at one time. He carried away the gates of a city. He overcame his captors. He broke bonds and did many amazing thing. But, in spite of his physical prowess, Samson was powerless against his flesh. He was not deceived, he sinned with his eyes open!

D. It Was A Road Of Death – Samson left the landscape of his life littered with the dead bodies of his enemies. True, he was killing the Philistines, but most of the time, he killed not free Israel, but to promote Samson. One time, he killed 30 men just to settle a debt, Judges 14:19. He left a pile of dead bodies in his wake.

E. It Was A Road Of Disasters – Samson’s life was one disaster after another. His parents were broken hearted. His family was humiliated. His wife was given to another man. The name of God and the testimony of Israel were damaged in the eyes of the heathen. Samson suffered what he did in the end because of how he lived his life.

(Note: I hope no one in this room is living a life like that of Samson. If you are, and you are saved, you need to understand the danger you are in. I think we need to be reminded that low living carries a high price tag. When we fail to live up to what God saves us to be, He will take the necessary steps to get our attention and call us back to Him.

Some of you may see the signs of a Samson style life in your own walk. Friend, I would recommend that you make things right with the Lord before He sends you into the prison of His purifications.) II. THE REALITIES OF THIS PRISON

A. Judges 16:4-20 It Was A Place Of Losing – III. The Context – Samson threw everything away to please a woman and to please himself.

1. He Forfeited His Fellowship – Judges 16:20-21 - With God and His people. He fell from his position, his power and his purpose. (Note: Sin will take away everything you cherish! It will take your innocence, your family, your future, your testimony, your power, your tender heart, etc. Sin will rob you and leave you broken, battered and beaten, III. Just ask David, 2 Samuel 11:1-27, 2 Samuel 12:1-31, Psalms 51:1-19.)

2. He Forfeited His Faculties – Judges 16:21 - He lost his vision. Not just his physical sight, but his spiritual sight too. How long had Samson been blinded by his sinful condition before his eyes were destroyed, III. Judges 16:20? How long did Samson grind before his mind turned back to God? (Note: Sin will destroy your spiritual vision. You will lose your vision for the Lord, His house, His Word, His work, His people, lost souls, etc.)

3. He Forfeited His Freedom – Judges 16:21 - He was bound in his new condition. He became the object of ridicule and humiliation. The people identified Samson’s God with Samson! Thus, they

mocked Samson and they mocked the Lord because of Samson. His testimony was forfeit and he was bound in the aftermath of his sins. (Note: The believer has wonderful liberty in the Lord Jesus. This is not liberty to sin, but it is liberty to follow the Lord and His will for our lives. When sin dominates our lives, it will bind us and take away the liberty He gave us. Sin will dominate your life and hold you bondage in its iron grip. III. Just ask David!)

B. It Was A Place Of Laboring - (III. The prison is a place of blinding, binding and grinding!) Grinding was considered to be woman's work, this added to Samson's humiliation. Here is the point; Samson was born to be a liberator. He was raised up by God to lead the people of God out of bondage. He was given power so that he might use his energy for the glory of the Lord. But, here is the mighty judge of Israel, blinded, bound and grinding corn for the enemies of God. (Note: Such is the power of sin! It will rob you of your vitality and leave you with nothing with which to serve God. There will be no time, no energy and no interest in the things of God. Your life will be dominated by the grinding power of sin.)

C. It Was A Place Of Lingerin – Judges 16:22 – Samson served in the prison house of the Philistines long enough for his hair to grow back out. Hair grows at a rate of about 1/8” per week. How many months did Samson spend in his darkness, bondage and humiliation? (Note: Again, we can see the comparison to sin and its power in our lives. When we fall into its grip, it has the power to hold far longer than we could ever have imagined. No one walks off into sin expecting to stay. They turn aside for a moment of pleasure, and wind up wasting months and even years of their lives. What a tragedy!) III. THE RESTORATION IN THIS PRISON

A. The Path To His Restoration - Samson called on the Lord. This reveals that his heart had at last turned back to God after being away so long. He called God “LORD” - This is His covenant name. He called Him "Lord God"; this is the name “Adonai Jehovah”. He called Him “God”; this is the name “Elohim”. Samson called on the God of the covenant, the God of grace; the God of power and the God Who saves. He did exactly what he needed to do to find restoration for his soul. (Note: The only door that leads out of the prison of His purifications is the door of repentance. When we come to Him confessing our sins and casting ourselves on His mercy, He will forgive us and He will restore us, 1 John 1:9; III. David - Psalms 32:1-5; Psalms 51:1-12.)

B. The Proof Of His Restoration – The fact that God answered proved that Samson had made things right with the Lord! The fact that the last act of his life was the only selfless act of his life proved that his heart had changed. III. What Samson did for Israel – Leaders, Lords and large crowds. (Note: The saint proves he has been restored by the way he lives his life. There will be a devotion to the things of the Lord that was lacking before. (III. Matthew 3:8; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 5:9; Php 1:11.)

C. The Pain Of His Restoration - His restoration was only partial. He got his vengeance on the Philistines for how they had treated him, but he still died, blinded, bound and broken. No amount of repentance could make things like they were; nor could it bring back the things that were lost forever. (Note: Some have gone out into the world and they have been brought back by the Lord. But, they have left their loved ones out there in sin. They have left a testimony that can never be recovered. They have left more than they expected when they stepped out into sin. Don't let that happen to you!)

Conc: Samson will always be remembered as the “weak strong man”. He was strong in his muscles, but weak in his morals and it cost him plenty. Where does this message find you today? Do you need to come home? Do you need to pray about some danger signs in your life? The Fundamental Top 500

## 10.03. The Prison Of His Persuasions - Matthew 11:1-11

---

### Sermon #3

#### Matthew 11:1-22 THE PRISON OF HIS PERSUASIONS

Intro: As we continue to think about the prison experiences found in the Bible, I want to draw our attention to the experience of John the Baptist as he languished in his prison. By way of introduction, let's find out why he was here and what he was facing.

John was cast into this prison because of his preaching. It seems that Herod, who was king of a fourth part of the Roman province of Palestine, had taken his brother's wife, a woman by the name of Herodias, and had married her. John had preached publicly against this vile and unlawful relationship and he had been arrested and thrown into prison by the king, Luke 3:19-20; Matthew 14:3-4. In fact, Herod would have executed John, Matthew 14:5, but he feared the public backlash, because all the people accepted John the Baptist as a prophet sent from the Lord.

While in this prison, John began to have some doubts and concerns about Who Jesus was and what He was doing. John's doubts worked against his faith and caused him to question the person and work of Jesus. I want to join John in this prison, because I believe that many of God's children pass through it as well.

There are times when we all experience doubts and fears. There are times when we wonder about our salvation and about our faith. During those times of doubt and fear, we ask ourselves some pretty deep questions. "Am I really saved? Am I really secure? What if I made a mistake? What if Jesus isn't really the way to Heaven? What if the Muslims, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, the whoever's are right and I am wrong? What if the Bible is not really the Word of God? What if God can't really take care of meet and meet my needs?"

Now, most of us wouldn't admit it out loud, but we have found ourselves assaulted by questions like these. We have wondered about our faith, haven't we? When we have allowed the questions to rise in our hearts, we probably found ourselves locked in the same prison in which John found himself. Let's join him there today and consider what he did and what he experienced in The Prison Of His Persuasions.

That's where John was, and Jesus sent John just what he needed to persuade him of the truth. That may be where you are today. If so, or if you happen to find yourself in this prison in the future, the truths taught in these verses should serve to help you find your way out. Let's notice those truths today as I try to preach about The Prison Of His Persuasions.

#### I. Matthew 11:2-3 THE DECEPTIONS OF THIS PRISON

A. What John Doubted In This Prison – "are thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" – In his prison, John had come to doubt the very person of Jesus. This is the same John who was so bold in his preaching concerning Jesus. Notice these verses: Matthew 3:11-15; John 1:27-36;

John 3:25-36. There was a time when there was no doubt in John's mind, but when he was thrown into the prison, he began to doubt.

B. What John Discovered In This Prison – He discovered that absence does not make the heart grow fonder. Matthew 11:2 says, "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ..." John is locked up and he can no longer see the Lord Jesus as He heals and ministers. He can no longer hear the Lord's voice as He preaches and teaches. John is removed from the sights and sounds of the ministry of Jesus and his heart has become clouded with doubts and questions.

C. What John Did In This Prison – When doubts arose in John's heart, he did the right thing, he turned to Jesus for the answers he needed. Instead of wondering and worrying there in that prison, John turned his efforts toward getting an answer from the Lord. That is where help will be found in a time of doubt!

(Note: Why did John find himself locked in this prison of doubt? I think there are many reasons, but there are three that I want to share with you today.

1. Discouragement – John was a man used to the wide open spaces of the desert; now he finds himself locked away in a dungeon. John was used to his liberty, now he finds himself bound in chains and fetters. This confinement in a situation he could not change caused him to entertain doubts that normally would not have received a welcome in his mind.

(Note: How many times have we found ourselves here? We find ourselves in a situation we cannot change. We find ourselves with a problem we cannot solve. We find ourselves in a prison from which we cannot escape. When that happens, we sometimes begin to doubt too. Beware of discouragement; it can devastate your life. Discouragement can cause you to doubt everything you know and believe!)

2. Disappointment – Surely John imagined that Jesus would come and set him at liberty. After all, Jesus was the Messiah! He possessed scepter of David. Jesus could do anything; surely He could have set John free. When Jesus didn't rescue John, perhaps he became discouraged and began to doubt. After all, wasn't that one of the ministries of the Messiah? - Ill. Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18

(Note: Again, we probably wouldn't admit it, but when the Lord does not do what we think He will do, or what we ask Him to do, there is a tendency for us to become disappointed with Him. Have you ever entertained this thought: "The Lord did this for so and so; I don't understand why He won't do it for me!"? This disappointment can lead us to doubt Him, if we are not careful.)

3. Disillusionment – John "heard...the works of Christ". As the reports filtered into the prison of the miracles and the preaching of Jesus, John was waiting for the big news. He was waiting for the day when one would come and say, "John, Jesus is the Messiah! He not only heals the sick, raises the dead and causes the blind to see, but now He is about to attack Rome and set us free!" That is the news John and all Israel were waiting for. (Ill. Matthew 3:12; Malachi 3:2; Malachi 4:1)

Hear me well today, John found himself locked in this prison of doubt because he listened to his own doubts and fears. When you listen to what you think; what you feel; what you see; or to what your heart tells you, you are in trouble! You cannot trust your eyes; they don't see everything. You cannot trust what you feel; because we are called to walk by faith not by feelings. You certainly cannot trust your heart; it is a liar, Jeremiah 17:9. We must come to the place where we simply

trust the Lord, even when we cannot trace what He is doing. Often, during the trials of our lives, we will not see the Lord do the things we think He should be doing. Our problem is similar to John's; we fail to see the big picture. John did not understand that Jesus had to die and rise again and that at least 2,000 years would elapse before He would establish His kingdom.

Often, we do not see everything that God is doing. He knows more than we ever will about the situation, we must trust Him, or disillusionment will occur.)

(Note: I praise the Lord that God does not sugar coat the lives of His saints. I am thankful that He lets us see them, warts and all. In fact, there are many instances of doubt in the lives of the people of God.

Ø Think of Abram who had left everything he had known and loved to follow God to live as a pilgrim in a strange land, going down to Egypt and fearing that the Egyptians would take his life, Genesis 12:11-13.

Ø Think of Elijah who had stood alone on Mt. Carmel, faced down a king, a false god and a nation and, who had prayed down fire from Heaven; crawling under that Juniper and asking God to let him die, 1 Kings 19:4.

Ø Think of Thomas who had been prepared to die with Jesus, John 11:16, but who would not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, John 20:24-25.

No, when doubts arise, you are not alone my friend! In fact, you are in good company. However, that is not an excuse to allow the doubts to continue. They must be addressed and they must be eliminated, or you will find yourself in a horrible prison of doubt.)

(Note: Have you ever found yourself in the prison of doubt? Are you there now? Is Satan or the flesh attempting to turn your heart away from what the Lord had told you or promised to you? If that is your situation, then let me encourage you to do what John did. Don't close the door to Jesus, but run to Him and take your doubts with you. He is not afraid of your doubts, but He is more than willing to hear them, answer them and deliver you from them. Here is the Lord's challenge for you: Php 4:6-7.) II. Matthew 11:4-6 THE DEMONSTRATIONS OF THIS PRISON

A. Matthew 11:4 How Jesus Answered John – When Jesus hears the disciples of John and their questions; He does not send back a stinging word of rebuke. Jesus could have said, "Who does John think He is to question me? He saw the Spirit descending on Me. He knows that I am the Savior. He knows and he has preached it! He has no right or room to doubt me! Go back and tell John to get his heart right with God!" That is not what Jesus does! When he hears the doubts that have gripped John's heart, Jesus responds with patience, grace and love. Look at His response: "Go and show John again..." Jesus is willing to help John as he works through his problem. Many would have reacted in anger; Jesus reacted in love.

(Note: I wish we never doubted, but sometimes we do! Have you ever found yourself in a place of discouragement and depression like Elijah? Have you ever come to the place where you are depressed, defeated, discouraged and disillusioned? We all have! Notice how tenderly and with what grace the Lord ministered to Elijah, 1 Kings 19:1-16.

Ø The Lord did not rebuke Elijah; He ministered to him, 1 Kings 19:5-8!

Ø God did not write him off; He reaffirmed his call, 1 Kings 19:9, 1 Kings 19:13.

Ø God did not yell at him; He spoke tenderly to him, 1 Kings 19:5, 1 Kings 19:7, 1 Kings 19:7, 1 Kings 19:9, 1 Kings 19:12.

Ø God did not give his ministry to another; He gave him a fresh assignment, 1 Kings 19:15-17.

Ø God did not allow his doubts to continue; He set the record straight with a pointed word of encouragement, 1 Kings 19:18.

What is the point? He will demonstrate that same tenderness to us when we find ourselves locked in the prison of perplexity.

Ø He will come to us and minister to us there, Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 20:28.

Ø He will dispense grace in sufficient measure for our need, 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Ø He will stand by us and enable us to go on for His glory, Romans 8:27; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 15:57.

Ø He will speak peace to our troubles hearts, John 14:27; Php 4:7.

Ø He will deal with our doubts in His time and in His way. Thank God that we serve a patient God of love, mercy and grace!

B. Matthew 11:4-5 How Jesus Assured John – Jesus merely pointed John back to the Word of God! Jesus reported all the things He was doing and seemed to be saying, “Just go back and tell John to read his Bible and he will understand.” Here are some of the verses Jesus may have had in mind: Isaiah 35:3-6; Isaiah 61:1-2. Jesus seems to be saying, “Tell John that I am the Messiah. I am doing everything the prophets said I would do. I am fulfilling the Word of my Father in part now; I will fulfill the rest when the appointed time comes. Tell John to study the Book and he will see.”

(Note: The Bible is the absolute cure for our doubts! If we can but read the Word and take on faith that God will do everything He has promised, and that He will stand by His Word no matter what, we can see our doubts fall apart before our eyes.

Folks, you can count on the Word of God! He will stand by it, Psalms 138:2; Matthew 5:18; Matthew 24:35; 2 Corinthians 1:20. Everything He has promised, He will do! Let the Bible put your doubts to death! Bring your questions, lay them against the Word of God, and watch Him give you the answers you seek.)

C. v. 6 How Jesus Admonished John – This is the same admonition Jesus gave to Thomas when he questioned the resurrection, John 20:27. The Lord wants John to know that he does not have to have all the answers. He wants John to believe in spite of the mysteries of life. He wants John's faith to be in Jesus in spite of what the eyes see, the heart feels, or the mind thinks. He wants John to believe in Him and to simply trust Him by faith.

(Note: That is what Jesus wants from us as well! I realize this world is filled with many mysteries.

Ø Why do good people suffer?

Ø Why do babies get sick, suffer and die?

Ø Why do good people seem to have more than their share of problems and trials?

Ø Why does it seem like serving God doesn't always pay off in this world.

Ø Why is this world filled with sickness, suffering, sorrow and death?

We will never have the answers to all those questions. If we allow our hearts and minds to dwell on them, we can find out faith shipwrecked on the jagged rocks of doubt. We may become like Asaph did in Psalms 73:1-28. We must come to the place where we simply cast our doubts aside and trust God for the things we cannot see, feel or understand. We must come to the place of obedient faith in Him, His power and His purposes for our lives. Let me remind you of two important truths:

Ø Our God is a God of Power – Isaiah 40:12; Exodus 3:14; Luke 1:37; Job 42:2.

Ø Our God is a God of Purpose – Romans 8:28; Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11.

We can trust Him, and that is the truth He wants us to understand when we enter the prison of His persuasions!

### III. Matthew 11:7-11 THE DECLARATIONS OF THIS PRISON

A. Matthew 11:7 Some Things Helped John In His Prison – When the disciples of John left Jesus, they returned to John and told him what they had seen and heard. Evidently, these things helped John overcome his doubts and fears. We never hear of him expressing doubt again. Also, consider the fact that John went to his death, a willing martyr for the glory of the Lord, Matthew 14:6-12.

(Note: We can be sure that when we are allowed to enter the prison of doubt, the Lord will have a word of hope, encouragement and blessing. He will have exactly what we need, when we need it, to get us through that prison. Again, let me appeal to you to look into His Word for the help you need. Instead of walking in worry, fear and doubt, you can walk in peace, confidence and joy if you can but learn to take the Lord at His Word.)

B. Some Things Were Hidden From John In This Prison – After John's disciples leave Jesus begins to talk about the greatness of John. Notice how Jesus describes John the Baptist.

Ø Matthew 11:7 - He was not a "reed shaken by the wind" – John was not blown about by the changing winds of political and religious favor. He was not like a flimsy reed; he was as steady as a rock.

Ø Matthew 11:8 - He was not "a man clothed in soft raiment" – John was looking for an easy time. He did not come to rule, but he came as a servant. He came as one who prepares the way for the coming King, Matthew 3:3-4.

Ø Matthew 11:9-10 – He was "a prophet" and he was even more than that; he was the literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, Malachi 3:1.

Ø Matthew 11:11 – He was the "greatest" of those "born of women". This refers to the greatness of his character and of his privileges. He was a true man of God; the last of the Old Testament prophets; and the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was somebody real special.

(Note: The statement “notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” This does not refer to character. Many Christians have a character that is nowhere near that which possessed by John. But, our privileges far exceed his! He was merely among “the friends of the Bridegroom”, John 3:29. We are the “Bride” of Christ, 2 Corinthians 11:2. Those who are part of the church are in a greater state of privilege.)

(Note: Why did Jesus wait until the disciples of John were gone before He talked about the greatness of John? Perhaps Jesus did not want to add the temptation of pride to the burdens already born by John.)

(Note: Here is what I want you to get from this last thought: Heaven has some secrets it doesn't feel the need to share with us. Like John, we often find ourselves in a place of doubt and fear. During those times, we have no idea what Heaven is doing. God has a plan and a purpose that you and I can never fathom, Isaiah 55:8-9.

Sometimes God conceals His plans from us, but He still desires that we trust Him anyway. You see, like John, you never know what Heaven has planned for your life. God may be about to use you in a powerful, wonderful way. But, before He can use you for that purpose, He may just have to keep a few secrets from you. Are you willing to trust Him anyway? In fact, you might live your entire life and still never know what the Lord is doing in your life. Are you willing to trust Him anyway?

While you are in that prison of doubt and perplexity, you may wonder what the Lord is doing in your life. Heaven may not tell; but if the Lord sees fit to allow you to go into that prison, He does so because He sees in your character the kind of metal that can endure the furnace of doubt and be purified. When we want to say good things about people, we say them to their faces so that they will think good of us. We save the bad things for behind their backs. Heaven is not that way! Jesus says His best things about us behind our backs.)

Conc: Heaven may seem to be hiding some things from you today. Your heart and your mind may be filled with doubts and fears. Let me encourage you to bring those doubts, fears and problems to the throne of grace. The Lord may just give you the answers you need today. On the other hand, He may dispense grace in abundant measure for you today.

If there are needs, this altar is open. If you are lost, you can be saved. If you are backslidden, you can come home. If you are filled with doubt and fear, you can find peace. Just do as He would have you to do.

## 10.04. The Prison Of His Perseverance - Jonah 1:1-17

---

The Prison Experiences Of The Bible

Sermon #4

Jonah 1:1-17 THE PRISON OF HIS PERSEVERANCE

Intro: During the awful, bloody days of World War I, there was a British soldier who became so distraught with the war, the suffering and the death that he deserted. He tried to find his way to the coast so he could catch a boat and make his way back secretly to his homeland in England. In the darkness of the night he lost his way. After a while, he stumbled upon a road sign. It was pitch black and he was terribly lost. He had no idea where he was or what the sign said. He decided to climb the pole to see if he could read the sign and figure out which way he needed to go. When he got to the crossbeam, he held on to read the sign. Taking out a match, he lit it, and looked directly in the face of Jesus Christ. He had climbed an outdoor crucifix!

Stunned by what he saw, he realized the shame of his life. He was looking into the face of the One who had endured it all and had never turned back. The next morning the soldier was back in the trenches.

God has an amazing way of getting our attention! He will call us to a task in His kingdom work and we will draw back from Him and seek to go our own way. When that happens, the Lord will come after us and pursue us until He brings us back to Him and to His plan for our lives. When the Lord has an assignment for you, He is determined that you carry it out. He will not just allow you to walk away while He does nothing. He will persistently and patiently work in your life until He brings you to the place where He can use you for the task He has in mind. He will do whatever He needs to do to get your attention and bring you to the place where you are willing to do what He tells you. This is one of the lessons taught here in the book of Jonah. God called the prophet to a task he did not want to do and he ran from the Lord. But, God persevered and sent Jonah into a prison experience to get his attention and gain his cooperation. This prison wasn't constructed of brick, mortar and metal bars. It was a prison built of flash and blood, with bars of ivory. Yet, it was in this strange prison that Jonah was convinced that God's plan was the right plan.

I want to join Jonah in his prison and deal with the truths that we find there. I want to show you that you can run from God and from His will for your life, but you can never hide. If necessary, He will send you into a prison experience to get your attention and gain your cooperation. Let's look together at The Prison Of His Perseverance.

### I. THE ROAD TO THIS PRISON

A. Jonah 1:1-3 It Is A Road Of Disobedience – God had called Jonah to a specific task. He was told to go and warn the city of Nineveh that judgment was coming to their town. God wanted to extend His grace to a lost and needy people, and Jonah wanted no part of it! God wanted to save the heathen people of Nineveh, Jonah 4:1. Jonah, on the other hand, hated them and could have

cared less if they had died and went to Hell!

Why did Jonah possess such a deep hatred for the people of Nineveh? There are several reasons, let me suggest a few.

- Nineveh was the capital city of the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians were a fierce, warlike people.
- The Ninevites were idol worshipers.
- The Ninevites were not Jewish. Jonah was probably a racist.
- The Ninevites were known for their cruelty to the people they attacked and defeated. For instance, they were known to skin their victims alive and then impale their bodies on sharpened stakes and leave them there to die. They often forced parents to watch their children being burned alive, just before the parents themselves were killed. The Ninevites were also known to bury their victims up to their necks in the sand and leave them to die of hunger, thirst or wild animal attack. Whole cities had been known to commit suicide rather than fall into the hands of the Ninevites.
- The Ninevites had focused their attention on Israel. It was common knowledge that the Assyrians were coming and that they intended to destroy the people of God.

So, when Jonah hears the call to go and evangelize the city of Nineveh, he makes a decision to go to Tarshish. Tarshish was located on the western coast of Spain, some 2,000 miles in the opposite direction. It was far as Jonah could go in his effort to get away from God.

Jonah seemed to think that he could escape from God's plans and God's gaze by running away. He didn't want to do what the Lord was telling him to do, so he fled from God. Apparently, Jonah held to too small a view of God. He seems to think that God is a local God. He seems to believe that if he can run far enough away, God will not be able to find him. Jonah holds to a faulty theology. Psalms 139:7-10 lets us know what God can see and where He operates!

While he has a small view of God, Jonah seems to have a large view of self. Jonah thinks he is smarter than God. He thinks he can run away and hide from God. Apparently, Jonah thinks he can serve God when it is convenient to Jonah; but when hard times come and an unpleasant assignment comes, he thinks that he is free to abandon God and to walk away from God's call on his life.

(Note: Let's not be too hard on Jonah. Do we not think the same way from time to time? We do not mind serving the Lord when it is convenient. But, when He tells us to do something we do not want to do, we rebel and we disobey Him.

We may not go to Tarshish, but we do go away from the Lord! We think we know more than He does. We think we are in control. We think we can call the shots and do as we please.

Let me just remind you that when the Lord saved you, He took total possession of your life. He owns you, body and soul, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. He alone has the right to tell you what to do; where to go; and how to live your life. And, when He comes along with an assignment for you to fulfill, all He wants to hear from your mouth is what He heard from Isaiah, Isaiah 6:8. Anything less is disobedience and rebellion and that attitude will not go unchallenged by the Lord, Revelation 3:19. III. Preachers who run from the Lord. It is not a badge of honor to say that you refused to do

what the Lord told you to do! Has God been speaking to your heart about something He wants you to do? Are you obeying His voice? Or, are you doing as you please, going on your way and going against God's will for your life?)

B. Jonah 1:3-12 It Is A Road Of Disappointments – When Jonah hits the road, things go well at first. He finds a ship heading to the right place. Such a ship probably didn't come along but once every six months or so. He was able to pay the fare, board the ship and lay down for a little rest. He thinks that he is going to have a soothing cruise and then start a new life in a new location. Jonah has it all planned out! The disappointments begin right away.

- Did you notice that Jonah is on a downward path, Jonah 1:4-5? If Jonah had followed God's plan for his life, he would have been used of God in a powerful way. His road would have led him upward and not downward.

- Did you notice that Jonah had to pay his own expenses, Jonah 1:3? If Jonah had stayed with the Lord, God would have paid his bills for him.

- Did you notice that the captain and the crew soon found out who he was and are amazed at the condition of Jonah's heart and life, Jonah 1:6-10? If Jonah's heart had been right with the Lord, he would not have lost his witness and damaged his testimony before these pagan sailors.

- Did you notice that Jonah ended up in a place he never imagined himself being, Jonah 1:15-17? If he had stayed with God's plan, Jonah would have been in Nineveh preaching and enjoying a great revival, instead of fighting for his life in a storm and having to go through a whale of a prison experience.

- Nothing worked out like Jonah planned it!

(Note: The same scenario will play itself out in the lives of all those who choose their own path over God's plan. They will experience trials, tribulations, disappointments and hardships that could have been avoided. The Bible reminds us in Proverbs 13:15 b, "...the way of transgressors is hard." The Bible also gives us this word, "7.) Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8.) For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9.) And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not," Galatians 6:7-9.

If the Lord has been calling you to follow a certain pathway, and choose to go in another direction, do not be surprised when troubles and disappointments come your way!

C. Jonah 1:4-17 It Is A Road Of Disasters – Jonah made his decision and set his plan in motion. He boarded his ship and set out for Tarshish. His goal was to "flee from the presence of the Lord", Jonah 1:3. Did you notice the first word of Jonah 1:5 – "But"? Jonah had his plan, but God had the final say!

God first sent a storm to get Jonah's attention. This must have been a very severe storm because the sailors were terrified. They had weathered other storms on the Mediterranean Sea; but they had never seen a storm as ferocious as this. Jonah slept right through the storm, Jonah 1:5-6. Apparently, the sailors have concluded that God is behind the storm and they cast lots to discover who the vile sinner is and Jonah is selected. He is forced to confess his rebellion to a bunch of

men who do not know the Lord. Jonah suggests that they throw him overboard, because he is the cause of the storm. Those pagan sailors have more compassion than he does, because they try to save the ship and Jonah, Jonah 1:13. When this doesn't work, they are forced to pick Jonah up and to throw him into the sea. When they do, the storm is gone in an instant, Jonah 1:15. God used this event to bring about the conversion of those pagan sailors, Jonah 1:16 (III. When you get the backsliders out of your midst, you can have revival!) Then, Jonah finds himself swallowed alive by a special fish, prepared just for him. He is imprisoned there for three days.

(Note: For years, infidels and skeptics have mocked the Bible for this account of a man being swallowed by a giant fish and living to tell the tale. They claim that it is an absolute impossibility. In 1891, off the coast of the Falkland Islands, a man on a whaling vessel named James Bartlett fell overboard. As he bobbed in the ocean, he was swallowed whole by a huge whale. A day and a half later, the crew on his boat caught a large whale and when they began the process of disemboweling the animal, they saw movement in the whale's stomach. They cut it open and found James Bartlett in there. His skin had been bleached white and his hair eaten off by the gastric juices of the whale, and he was unconscious, but he was alive.

He revived and was able to talk of his experience. What happened to that whaler proves that what the Bible says is accurate.)

(Note: One thing after another went wrong until Jonah found himself in a place of utter helplessness. He thought he could do battle with God, but he found out that his arms were too short to box with God. By the way, so are yours and mine! God knows how to bring us to our knees! He knows how to take the "but" out of you, Jonah 1:3! (III. Moses – Exodus 3:11, Exodus 3:13, Exodus 4:1, Exodus 4:10 – God answered every objection Moses offered. He will do the same for you!)

Regardless of what He wants you to do, do it! If you rebel, you will find that your pathway will be filled with disappointments and disasters. He will not let you get away, but He will pursue you and He will do whatever it takes to get you in a place of absolute submission! Is God trying to get you to do something? Is He calling you to a new ministry; to a deeper walk with Him; to a new kind of work? If He is, my advice to you is this: to not run from Him, but run to Him and yield to His will. He will not change His mind, Romans 11:29.) II. THE REHABILITATION IN THIS PRISON

(III. This prison had the desired effect in Job's life. After he was placed there, the Lord began to affect the changes that were needed to rehabilitate Jonah.)

A. Jonah 2:1, Jonah 2:4, Jonah 2:7-9 Jonah's Acknowledgement Before The Lord – Out of that whale's belly, Jonah prays and calls on God, Jonah 2:2. He turns his eyes and his heart in God's direction once again, Jonah 2:4. He comes back to God and praises the Lord for Who God is and for how he works, Jonah 2:7-9. Jonah 2:8 seems to be a confession of his sin and foolishness.

B. Jonah 2:9 b Jonah's Agreement With The Lord – He says "I will pay that I have vowed". In other words, Jonah is saying, "Lord, I am through running now! You called me to be a prophet and I will deliver your message when and where you tell me too. Wherever You lead I will go!"

C. Jonah 2:2, Jonah 2:10, Jonah 3:1-2 Jonah's Acceptance By The Lord – We know that Jonah made things right with the Lord because God heard his prayers, Jonah 2:2. God delivered him

from his prison, Jonah 2:10. God renewed His call on Jonah's life and gave him a second chance to carry out God's will, Jonah 3:1-2.

(Note: Jonah paid a high price for his rebellion. He suffered greatly and damaged his testimony because he refused to walk in the will of the Lord. But, when God got his attention, Jonah repented and made things right with God and the Lord forgave him and restored him!

I praise the Lord that God always stands ready to receive His wayward child back again. When the rebellious child of God comes to himself and comes clean with the Lord, God will forgive his failures. All He is looking for a heart willing to tell the truth, 1 John 1:9. Psalms 32:5. When He finds that heart, He will forgive that person and put them back in right standing with Himself.

I praise the Lord that we serve the God of the Second Chance! He doesn't write His people off when they mess up, but He forgives them, restores them and uses them again for His glory. Just look at Moses, he was a murderer, Exodus 2:12. Consider Mark, he abandoned Paul and Barnabas on a mission trip, Acts 15:38; but God restored him and used him in a great way, 2 Timothy 4:11. Look at David, he messed up in some mighty big ways, but God still used his and his life for His glory. Then there is Peter; he denied the Lord three times, but Jesus forgave him and used him as a mighty preacher of the Word of God.)

(Note: There are times when we can fail the Lord and lose our right to hold certain offices. There are times when our influence with men is so devastated that it can never be fully repaired. But, there will never be a time when the Lord will refuse to forgive His repenting child and to restore them to a place of fellowship! It is possible that you might not be able to do what you once did, but there is a place of service for all those who will repent and call out to the Lord once again!) III. THE RESULTS OF THIS PRISON

(III. When Jonah comes out of this prison, he is a different man. God sent Jonah into that fish to bring about some desired changes in Jonah's life. Let's look at the results of Jonah's prison experience in his life.)

A. Jonah 3:3 God's Man Is Changed – This time Jonah is not running from the Lord; he is running with the Lord! Jonah picks up his Gospel trumpet and heads off to Nineveh.

(III. How he must have looked as he entered that city and began to preach his message of judgment. His skin bleached with by the gastric juices in the whale's stomach; his hair dissolved off his body. He was a changed man physically, but more importantly, he was changed spiritually. Jonah is on the Lord's team now!)

B. Jonah 3:4 God's Message Is Communicated – Jonah enters Nineveh and preaches the message God sent him to proclaim. The people of Nineveh hear that the judgment of God is headed their way. They are evangelized.

C. Jonah 3:5-10 God's Mission Is Accomplished – When the people of Nineveh hear the message of Jonah, they repent of their sins and seek the face of the Lord. The greatest revival in history breaks out and an entire town is converted to the Lord! At least 120,000 children are saved, Jonah 4:11. It is estimated that Nineveh had a population of nearly 600,000 at this time. This event is a great demonstration of the power and grace of God in saving sinners.

All this came about because Jonah was changed in his prison experience and he began to go with God instead of against Him.

(Note: When we get in a place where the Lord can use us, He will use us! After all, that is why He saved us from our sins! He saved us to be vessels of honor for His glory, 2 Timothy 2:20-21. He saved us from our sins to use us for His glory. He saved us to go to work for Him in this world, Ephesians 2:10.

God is looking for people He can clean up and use in a powerful way. Look at our Lord's disciples; He took them and in spite of their weaknesses, their failures, their pasts, and He used them for His glory. Right here in this room, there are people who have failed the Lord and you may think your ability to serve Him has been forfeited forever. You are wrong! The Lord can restore you, bless you and use you, if you will yield to Him and go with His plan for your life!)

(Note: We know that Jonah's heart was not made totally right. He is still mad that the Ninevites got off the hook. He is angry and discouraged. He should have been praising the Lord for what God has done, but Jonah is upset. The book closes with him still in that condition. How sad!)

Conc: The prison of His perseverance can be a hard place to live. But, it can be a blessing in some ways too.

- This prison reminds us that God loves us, Hebrews 12:6-12.
- This prison helps prepare us for greater service.
- This prison can focus our affections and set our hearts on God's plan for our lives. A father had a rather strong-willed son. On the way to the store he kept telling the child, "Sit down and buckle the seat belt." But the little kid just kept standing in the seat. Again he said, "Sit down and buckle the seat belt." And after a time or two more the boy was convinced he had better sit down or disaster would strike. So he slipped down onto the seat, snapped the seat belt closed, and said, "Daddy, I'm sitting down on the outside, but I'm still standing up on the inside." Has God been calling you to do something for His glory? Have you been taking a different path than His? Wouldn't today be a great day to come to Him and tell Him that you are through running and fighting, and that you are ready to go with the Lord?

If He has spoken to your heart, or if you would just like to recommit to a life of service to Him, this altar is open.

## 10.05. The Prison Of His Power - Acts 12:1-19

---

The Prison Experiences Of The Bible

Sermon #5

Acts 12:1-19 THE PRISON OF HIS POWER

Intro: The early days of the church witnessed the power of God moving on miraculous ways. 3,000 people were saved on one occasion, Acts 2:41; and 5,000 were saved on another occasion, Acts 4:4. The early church was marked by the manifest presence and power of God. He was on them to such a degree that “fear came upon every soul”, Acts 2:43. God’s power and presence produced peace and harmony within the church, Acts 2:42-47. Souls were being saved on a daily basis, Acts 2:47. The people were excited, busy and holy. God was working and His power was felt by saint and sinner alike. The church was growing; God was glorified; Jesus was being preached and sinners were being saved. It was a great time to be a part of the local church!

But, not everyone was pleased! The Jews hated the early church because the church said that Jesus was the Messiah. The church said that Jesus had been killed by the Jews and, most amazing of all; they even claimed that He had risen from the dead. The Jews hated the message of the Gospel, and with so many Jews turning from Judaism to follow “that way”, Acts 19:9; Acts 19:23; Acts 24:22; it wasn’t long before the church came under fire from its enemies. The Jewish leaders had tried arresting the Apostles and forbidding them to preach the Gospel, Acts 4:1-23. That did not work, so they arrested Stephen, tried him and stoned him to death in an effort to stem the growth of the church, Acts 6:8-15, Acts 7:1-60. This failed to achieve the desired results as well. The Jews continued their efforts to try and stop the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They used hired guns like Saul of Tarsus; but he wound up getting saved. They persecuted the saints and many members of the church were scattered to the four winds of the earth. Still, the church continued to grow and prosper. That brings us to our passage of Scripture today. Herod, seeking to curry favor with the Jews, arrested James, the brother of John and had him executed. When he saw this pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter, and planned to kill him too. So, this passage opens with the Apostle James dead and the Apostle Peter in prison, about to be put to death. In this prison experience, God flexes His muscles in some amazing ways and gives His servants a great victory. By way of introduction, let me point out that Peter arrived in this prison through no fault of his own. He was living right; walking with God; doing the best he could do; preaching Jesus; honoring the Lord and trouble still came his way. There is a lesson here for us as well. We must never get the idea that a good, godly life is a hedge against troubles. Sometimes, the closer one lives to Jesus the more that person suffers for Jesus. Consider Job. He was clean, holy and good, by God’s Own estimation. He was doing his best to serve the Lord and to live for God and still trouble came his way, Job 1:1-22, Job 2:1-13. Trials marked the lives of David, Paul, Elijah, and even the Lord Jesus. Jesus is called “a man of sorrows”, Isaiah 53:3. If Jesus suffered trials and set backs in life; we should expect no better treatment ourselves.

I think the Bible is pretty clear on this matter. Every person who comes into this world is going to experience troubles and trials, Job 5:7; Job 14:1. Those people who live for the Lord are going to have their trials too, John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12.

Peter discovered this when he was thrown into Herod's prison. But, it was in that prison experience that Peter experienced the power of God in some wonderful ways. I want to look into Peter's prison experience today and show you the ways God manifested His power to Peter in that prison. We need this teaching because we will find ourselves shut up in this prison at some point in our lives. When we do, we need to know that our God is God in the prisons of life also. As the Lord gives grace, I want to preach on the thought The Prison Of His Power. Let's notice the ways God manifested His power in this prison experience.

#### I. Acts 12:6 GOD'S POWER IS SEEN IN HIS PEACE

A. Peter is scheduled to be tried and executed the very next morning and what is he doing? He isn't in there praying for deliverance. He isn't writing his last will and testament. He isn't crying, screaming and begging for mercy. The night before he is to die, Peter is sleeping in his prison cell like a little baby! (Ill. He slept through the angel coming in and the light shining around him. The angel has to hit him to wake his up, Acts 12:7.) He may be chained between two soldiers, but he is sound asleep, without a care in the world. God had given Peter "peace that passeth understanding". (Ill. This wasn't the first time Peter had been in jail. He had already been delivered in Acts 5:19 by the angel of the Lord. Maybe Peter believed the Lord would come through again.)

(Note: If you are saved, God has already delivered you from the worst prison of all; He has delivered you from sin, judgment and Hell. If He can deliver a sinner from that prison, any other prison will be a pushover!)

B. That is an amazing thing to see! Sadly, very few of the Lord's people have arrived at that kind of place in their life. Sometime it seems that the least little thing can come along and it sends us reeling into fear, panic and worry.

God has a better plan! He desires to give His children peace, John 14:27; Php 4:6-7. Do you have that kind of peace in your heart today?

C. That brand of peace is on display in the Word of God. The Three Hebrews had it, Daniel 3:16. Daniel had it, Daniel 6:10. Job had it, Job 13:15. You and I can have it too! Thank God for His peace!

#### II. Acts 12:7 a GOD'S POWER IS SEEN IN HIS PRESENCE

A. As Peter lay there sleeping, the angel of the Lord came into that very cell. The bars, the locks, the guards and the walls proved to be no barrier to the Lord! He came right in and did as He pleased. He meant to come to Peter and nothing was able to stop Him.

B. When we find ourselves in these prisons of despair and trials, we need never fear being there alone. Our Lord promised us that He would ever be with us and He meant every word that He said, Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20; John 14:18.

He has never forsaken His people and He never will, Psalms 37:25! When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into the furnace, they found the Lord already there, Daniel 3:25. When Daniel went into the lions den, he found the Lord was already there, Daniel 6:22. When Paul was on the ship in the stormy sea, he found the Lord was there with him, Acts 27:23.

C. No matter where the path of your life leads you, you will never go there alone. The Lord will be with you in every trial and along every mile. He will never let you down!

### III. Acts 12:7-11 GOD'S POWER IS SEEN IN HIS PROVIDENCE

A. Ill the Context – God moved in might, supernatural power to deliver His servant from that prison. Chains fell off, doors opened by themselves and Peter was delivered from his prison.

B. God will use whatever means is necessary to care for you in all the prison times of his life. When you find yourself in a prison situation, you need to know that God will move Heaven and earth if necessary in order to meet your needs.

C. This is seen throughout the pages of the Bible - Elijah and the ravens, 1 Kings 17:2-7; the widow and her meal and oil, 1 Kings 17:8-16; The Three Hebrews and the flames, Daniel 3:1-30; Daniel and the lion, Daniel 6:1-28; The children of Israel and the Red Sea, Exodus 14:1-31, the Manna, Exodus 16:1-36, the water from the rock, Exodus 17:1-16, the shoes and clothes that did not wear out for 40 years, Deuteronomy 29:5; the Disciples in the storm, Mark 6:45-51; The hungry multitudes, John 6:1-13; Mary, Martha and Lazarus, John 11:1-45.

If He will do this for these folks, He will do what He has to do to meet you need as well. That is His promise, Matthew 6:25-34. And, that is just what He will do!

### IV. Acts 12:12-17 GOD'S POWER IS SEEN IN HIS PURPOSES

A. Ill. The Context. The Lord used Peter's prison to teach Peter and the members of the church to place their trust in God and to leave the matter in His hands. Those folks could not have delivered Peter by their power. They could not have stormed that prison and secure his release. They did what they could though. They prayed and God worked. This prison experience taught them all that God is greater than our needs and that He is worthy of our faith!

B. As we pass through this life and as we move through our various troubles, trials and prison, we probably will not understand the reason and the purpose behind all we face. That is why verses like Romans 8:28; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17 are so vital to our faith.

C. Why does the Lord allow these things in our lives? I cannot answer that, but I can say this: God has a purpose for every prison He allows you to pass through. That purpose may be to grow you. It may be to help someone else. It may be simply to glorify the Lord. He has a plan and He has a purpose and He wants us to come to place where we simply trust Him for all we need and for all we face.

(Note: After these events, you will notice that Peter gave glory to the Lord for his deliverance, Acts 12:17. You will also notice that Herod received the praise of men and refused to give glory to God, Acts 12:21-23. God killed Herod and when that threat was removed, the Gospel spread faster than ever before, Acts 12:24. That may be God's sole purpose for the prison. He may be using your

prison experience as a means to glorify His name and to draw others to Jesus. Are you willing to submit to His purpose, even though you may not understand it?)

Conc: Are you in a prison of sorts today? Are you in a place where you need to see the Lord flex His muscles and demonstrate His power in your life? Let me invite you to come before Him to place your burden at His feet and get the help you need at this stage in your life. This altar is open for whatever you may need!

## 10.06. The Prison Of His Purposes - Jeremiah 32:1-15

---

The Prison Experiences Of The Bible

Sermon #6 Jeremiah 32:1-15 THE PRISON OF HIS PURPOSES

Intro: Our God is a mysterious God. He works in ways that you and I cannot understand. He declares this very thing in His Word, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts," Isaiah 55:8-9.

He is a God Who is doing some amazing eternal things in your life and mine. He is a God Who is working out a sovereign, unstoppable plan. As He does what He does in us and around us, we often find ourselves standing back, scratching our heads, wondering about what is going on.

There are times when we find ourselves caught up in the vortex of God's eternal plan, with things going on in and around us that seem to make no sense at all. Have you ever been there? Can you identify? You know God is in control, but you have no idea what He is up to and sometimes that sense of the unknown bothers us deeply. That is the place Jeremiah finds himself in these verses. He is in prison and God is doing something in him, to him and around him that he cannot fully comprehend. Since we also find ourselves in that same prison from time to time, it might be helpful for us to look at what Jeremiah experienced in The Prison Of His Purposes. I would like to take Jeremiah 32:1-44, Jeremiah 33:1-26 and show you some facts about this prison that you need to know. Let's join Jeremiah in The Prison Of His Purposes.

### I. THIS PRISON CAN BE A PLACE OF CONFUSION

A. The Circumstances Of Life Can Be Confusing – Even before Jeremiah arrived in this prison, his life had been a series of devastating circumstances. Let's take a brief look at the trials faced by this faithful prophet:

1. He had been denied the comforts of love and family – Jeremiah 16:2.
2. He had been denied the comforts of encouragement and friendship – Jeremiah 15:10. Jeremiah preached the truth and stood for God and not a single person said, "Thank you", or offered a word of encouragement and friendship.
3. He had been denied the comfort of personal liberty – Jeremiah 32:2. Jeremiah conducted much of his ministry from the confines of prison.

There can be little doubt that these circumstances of life, and others besides, caused Jeremiah much confusion and turmoil of spirit. He had been faithful to the Lord in spite of everything that had come against him, and still he suffered greatly. In fact, there is no record that Jeremiah ever gained a single convert in 50 years of ministry!

(Note: If we looked only at the circumstance of our lives, we too can find ourselves confused. Sometimes, it may seem that God isn't fair in His treatment of His servants. Life is hard at best and sometimes it seems that God's children carry a greater portion of the burden than others do. ("For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity." Ecclesiastes 2:23.) Look at Job! God's Own testimony is that Job was a godly, faithful servant, Job 1:8. Yet, look at how Job suffered! It just doesn't seem fair! Consider Jesus! No One has ever been more righteous than He, yet He suffered more than any man, Isaiah 52:14; Hebrews 12:2-3.

What we fail to see is that God is operating on a higher plane than we can see. He is doing things that we cannot fathom. He is moving in ways that we cannot comprehend.

God has used Job's tragedies to comfort millions down through the ages. Job had no idea what God was doing. Jeremiah's troubles were used to teach a nation about the judgment and faithfulness of God. Jeremiah didn't grasp it all either.

So, when your path makes no sense and it seems that God is not treating you fairly remember this:

1. God is working out a good plan in your life, and you can trust Him, even though you don't have all the details.
2. Nowhere does the Bible say that God is fair! It does say that He is just and that He will always do right. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Genesis 18:25. You will never understand Him, but you can always trust Him!

B. The Complications Of Life Can Be Confusing – Jeremiah 32:2-6 – Here is Jeremiah, he is preaching the message God has given him. He holds nothing back, but he tells the truth and he is thrown into prison for his efforts. It must have seemed to Jeremiah that he was being shelved by God. Surely his situation made no sense to him at all.

(Note: Have you ever been there? The wheels of life can spin fast at times, and there are times when they seem to spin out of control. In fact, your life can become derailed in a blink of the eye.

Another person gets that promotion and you are passed over. Your spouse comes in one day and tells you they do not want to be married to you any longer. That child in whom you have invested the best years of your life turns on you and goes off into rebellion. Your ministry comes to a grinding halt and others move forward while you stagnate. The complications of life are many and they arrive without warning. They are devastating in their impact and they leave us wondering, if not out loud, at least in our hearts, "Where is God and what is He doing to me?"

Sometimes it seems as though God has forgotten our address, doesn't it? Sometimes it seems as though God has placed us on the back shelf, out of the action, and that He has forgotten all about us. Sometimes it seems that He doesn't care about what we are facing. Sometimes it seems that He is nowhere to be found. The complications of life can be very confusing!

Remember John the Baptist; the great preacher and prophet who was locked away for preaching the Word of God? He faced such a time of doubt and confusion, Matthew 11:1-11. We are not alone in our confusion over life's complications.)

C. The Commands Of Life Can Be Confusing –Jeremiah locked up in prison. He has been preaching that Judah is about to fall into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Even as he languishes in the prison, the Babylonians are coming to execute God's judgment on the Israelites for their rebellion and their idolatry. Jeremiah has even prophesied that Judah will go away to Babylon in captivity for 70 years, Jeremiah 25:11. In the midst of this impossible situation, Jeremiah's uncle sends his son Hanameel to Jeremiah, asking Jeremiah to redeem a piece of property that belongs to Jeremiah's family. That made no sense! The Babylonians surely possessed that land already. Even if they didn't they would soon. They would possess it for the next 70 years. Jeremiah was being asked to pay money for a piece of property that he would never be able to farm or even see. Yet, God was in this matter, Jeremiah 32:7, and Jeremiah bought the property as he was commanded, Jeremiah 32:9-16, fulfilling all the legal requirements of such a transaction.

(Note: Sometimes the commands of life can be confusing also. God will come by and request something that makes no sense. He may call you into a new ministry in a place that seems to make no sense. He might uproot you from a church where you have served for years. He may require you to give up something that you love very much. He may make a request of your life that seems insane on the surface. When God shuts you up in the prison of His purposes, you can expect Him to require some strange things from your life. He doesn't ask these things from us to confuse us, but He does so to accomplish His purposes. We don't always know what He is doing, but as I have already said, we can trust Him to do right. He will never lead you down a wrong path, Psalms 37:23.) II. THIS PRISON CAN BE A PLACE OF COMMITMENT

(III. Even though Jeremiah was in a difficult place, it is interesting to watch his life. He was confused about his circumstances, but he was committed to doing the Lord's will anyway. His commitment to the Lord is easy to see.)

A. Jeremiah 32:16-25 The Prison Became A Place Of Communion – Jeremiah did not understand his circumstances and he did not understand what the Lord was doing in his life, but he used that time as a time of personal growth and communion with the Lord. He praised the Lord for His greatness, His glory and His power. He praised Him for His past works. Jeremiah was in a hard place, but he turned to the Lord in that prison and spent time with the Lord.

(Note: The hard places of life can affect us in one of two ways. They can drive us away from the Lord as they did Cain, Genesis 4:1-16. Or, they can drive us to the Lord as they did Job, Job 1:20-21. When we find ourselves in one of the prison experiences of life, there is no better thing for us to do than to pray! When we turn from our fears, our doubts and our confusion, to face the Lord, we are allowed to step out of our reality and into His presence, Hebrews 4:16. Prayer brings us into contact with the help and the resources we need to make it through our prison times, Php 4:6-7.

Prayer is never an easy business. It is made even more difficult when trials and trouble arise in our lives. But, we must pray! We must seek the help of our Father. He cares about what we face and He invites us to come to Him for the help we need, Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 7:7-11; 2 Corinthians 12:8-10.

B. Jeremiah 32:26-44 The Prison Became A Place Of Confidence – The theme of Jeremiah's prayer had been confidence in God's abilities, Jeremiah 32:17. When the Lord speaks to Jeremiah after his prayer, God confirms His power and His ability, Jeremiah 32:27. God tells Jeremiah that He is going to judge Israel for their sins and their rebellion, Jeremiah 32:28-36. But, He also tells Jeremiah that He will restore Israel one day, and keep His covenant with them, Jeremiah 32:37-44. The essence of Jeremiah's prayer is summed up in Jeremiah 32:24-25. He declares his confusion over what he has been asked to do, but he also declares his confidence in the plans, purposes and power of God.

(Note: That is the place to which God wants to bring us. He wants us to reach the place where we do not need to know all the answers. His desire for us is that we come to the place where we trust Him, even when what He is doing in us and around us makes no sense at all. III. Psalms 37:1-8; Psalms 56:3-4.

One of the greatest days in your Christian walk is the day when you reach that place of peaceful contentment, where you may not know what God is going to do, but you know that He has a plan. The Three Hebrew boys reached that place, Daniel 3:16-18. Daniel reached that place, Daniel 6:10. Paul reached that place, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Many others have arrived there and we can as well, by the grace of God.)

C. Jeremiah 32:9-15 The Prison Became A Place Of Compliance – Jeremiah's character is seen in how he responded to the Lord in a time of confusion and personal pain. He simply did what the Lord asked him to do. He redeemed the family and he made sure that he took every step that was necessary to record the transaction. I am sure that some people must have laughed at Jeremiah as he did this, but he did it anyway. I am sure that many did not understand, but that did not stop him. He remained faithful to the Lord, even when doing all that God required made no sense at all.

(Note: Anyone can serve the Lord and keep His commands when they make sense and the way is easy. However, it takes true commitment and dedication to do the Lord's will when others do not understand.

Imagine how Abraham must have felt as he led Isaac up that mountain to put him to death. Put yourself in his sandals. That was a moment when the requirements of the Lord made no sense at all. But, if you will read Genesis 22:1-24, you will find no hesitation at all in Abraham's response. He just did what the Lord asked him to do. That is the response God is after from each of us. It's not always easy to obey God. It is made especially difficult when God's commands make no sense at all. It is not easy to do what He wants when our hearts are breaking. It is not easy to remain steadfast when everyone around us seems to be moving away from God. He is looking for a people who will obey Him, without question, simply because they love Him, John 14:15. He will bless those who walk in this fashion – John 14:21-24.) III. THIS PRISON CAN BE A PLACE OF COMFORT

A. We Are Comforted By God's Providence – Jeremiah 32:26-44, Jeremiah 33:1-26 – Jeremiah is comforted by the Lord's ability to declare ahead of time that which will take place in the future. He is reminded that God works on both ends of time to accomplish His will in the world. Yes, Israel will be destroyed and taken captive; but they will be brought him and restored to their land and to fellowship with God.

(Note: When we find ourselves in the prison of His purposes, we need to take comfort in Who our God is. We may not understand everything that He is doing, but we can trust the fact that He is in control. We serve a sovereign God Who is working out an eternal plan. I take comfort from the fact that He is in control, Daniel 4:35; Ephesians 1:11; Romans 9:15-23; Acts 4:24-31. I may not know what He is doing, but He knows and He has a plan to make everything work out right in the end, Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4:17.)

B. We Are Comforted By God's Power – Jeremiah is comforted by the Lord's Power. Not only does God have the power to declare the future, He also had the power to bring it to pass.

(Note: Let me just remind you that we serve a God of limitless power and ability, Ephesians 3:20; Luke 1:37; Matthew 28:18. If you have a need in your prison, He can meet it! If you have a mountain, He can move it. If you are in a deep, dark valley; He knows the path out. He can and will take care of your situation in His time and in His way.)

C. We Are Comforted By God's Presence – Surely Jeremiah felt all alone and deserted in his prison. Yet, the Lord was still with him. God spoke to him there and God even used that prison to meet the needs in Jeremiah's life, Jeremiah 37:21. While others were starving, God used the prison to feed his man!

(Note: The prison times of life can be frightening. They can make us feel as though we have been deserted by the Lord and left there to die. Regardless of how things may appear, we still have His promise that He will never leave us, Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5. God will often use the very things we fear as His vehicle to move in our lives. III. The Disciples in the storm, Mark 6:48-51. III. The Widow of Zarephath – God used the needs and tragedies in her life to demonstrate His presence and power, 1 Kings 17:1-24.) You may feel like it, but you are never alone!

D. We Are Comforted By God's Promises – When Jeremiah heard from the Lord in his prison, he was given the good news that things would work out. The Lord came with His promise that all would be well in the end. Surely, that word from the Lord cheered the heart of the prophet in that prison. Jeremiah leaned heavily on the Word of God, Jeremiah 15:16.

(Note: As we journey through this life, we often find ourselves in what can only be described as prisons. We can find hope and comfort in our prison by leaning on the promises of God. As God told Jeremiah in Jeremiah 32:27, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" No matter what kind of situation we are facing in life, we can rest in the promise that our God can handle it. Nothing is too hard for Him! The world laughs at us today because we do not run with them in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. We separate ourselves from them to follow an ancient religion that demands holiness and obedience from its followers. The world does not understand our commitment to the Lord and they mock us as a result. But, there is a day of vindication coming for the saints of God! Our commitment to Him will pay off and we will be rewarded for our loyalty to Him.

Conc: Are you in the Prison of His Purposes today? Is God doing some things in your life that do not make sense? Is He allowing some things to happen to you that just do not add up? Is He working out some plan that you cannot seem to get a handle on? Are you confused and concerned about some of the things that are happening to you? Do you find yourself doubting Him more than you find yourself trusting Him? Do you need a word in your prison? If so, come to Him like

Jeremiah did, pour out your heart before Him and look to Him for the guidance you need.

## 10.07. The Prison Of His Praises - Acts 16:16-26

---

The Prison Experiences Of The Bible

Sermon #7

Acts 16:16-26 THE PRISON OF HIS PRAISES

Intro: Having lost in a fire virtually everything they owned, the Spafford family made new plans, including a move from Chicago to France. Horatio Spafford planned the trip for his wife and four daughters to be as trouble-free as possible. To transport them from America to France, he booked passage on a huge ship, and made sure they had Christians with whom to fellowship in route. He planned to join them a few weeks later. In spite of much careful preparation, Mr. Spafford's plans suddenly dissolved when the ship carrying his loved ones was rammed by another vessel and sank, carrying his four beloved daughters to the bottom. His wife arrived in Wales safely nine days later and telegraphed her husband the awful news that all four of their children had drowned. Spafford left Chicago to go and bring his wife home. As they cross the Atlantic, the captain came and told him when they were passing over the spot where his daughters had died. At that place, Horatio Spafford took a pen and paper and wrote these words while passing over the spot where his daughters perished: When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul.

It took great faith for Horatio Spafford to write those words. God took the worse prison experience of his life and turned it into a prison of praise and hope.

Paul and Silas found themselves in a difficult prison of oppression and suffering. In that prison they experienced the great grace of God. They received everything they needed transform a prison of pain into a prison of praise. I would like to examine their experience for a little while today. It may be that someone here is locked away in a prison of pain. I want you to see that God can take your pain and turn it into praise for His glory. Let's notice some of the facts pointed out in this passage as we think on the subject: The Prison Of His Praises.

I. Acts 16:16-24 IT IS A PLACE OF MISERY

(III. When Paul and company arrived in Philippi, they expected great things to happen. After all, the Lord had very clearly sent them to that city, Acts 16:6-12. His will was further revealed when Lydia and some others came to faith in the Lord, Acts 16:13-15. As soon as the Lord started blessing, however, the devil began his work. III. The Context of Acts 16:16-24. These men were in the Lord's will, doing the Lord's work and still trouble came into their lives. They found themselves in a place of misery. Let's examine that place together.)

A. Acts 16:19-21 The Misery Of The Accusations – III. The context. Paul and Silas are falsely accused by selfish men, who cared for nothing but money. These men did not care for the poor

demon possessed of whom they made their living. They were not above lying and scheming to exact revenge on those they felt had done them wrong. The problem with their story is the fact that nothing those men said about Paul and Silas was the truth. All they had done was preach the Gospel and set a poor tortured soul free from bondage. They were doing their best to serve the Lord and still trouble came. Have you ever been there?

B. Acts 16:22-23 The Misery Of The Arrest – III. The Context. When the rest of the people of Philippi heard the false accusations of the men, they turned on Paul and Silas like a pack of rabid dogs. They hauled them into court; there they were beaten and thrown into prison. The word “cast” means “to throw something with no concern for where it lands”. These men were beaten like common criminals and thrown into prison. All they had done was preach the Gospel and try to help someone and their troubles got worse and worse. Have you ever been there?

C. Acts 16:24 The Misery Of The Accommodations – III. The Context – Paul and Silas were handed over to the jailer and “thrust” then into the inner prison, and then their feet were locked in the stocks. This was no prison like anything we have in this country. Our modern prisons would have been like a five-star resort compared to where these men found themselves.

Most likely, they would have been thrown into a deep, dark cell that would have been the nastiest place you could ever imagine. They would have been chained amid mud, filth and human waste. It would have been a dank, dark, dreary, dirty, disgusting, dangerous dungeon. They were there for no other reason but for faithful, obedient service to the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you ever been there?

(Note: I know that I touch this note a lot in my preaching, but God never said this life would be easy. The Bible is very clear that the opposite would be true. Ecclesiastes 2:17, “Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” Ecclesiastes 2:23, “For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.” Other verses teach the same truth, Job 14:1; Job 5:7.

Jesus told His disciples that trouble was not a possibility; it was an absolute certainty, John 16:33! I guess you have noticed by now that this life is hard. It seems sometimes like God’s children bear more than their share of trials and troubles, III. Asaph and Psalms 73:1-28. There are going to be some rough times along the way. There will be some hard times, times when trials and suffering will dominate you life. There will be times when you will do your best to serve the Lord, but He will still put you in a prison situation. It will be a place of misery and suffering. Sometimes it will be worse than you can ever imagine. Spouses die, diseases come, children rebel, marriages fail, and sometimes life hurts. And all the good deeds, good prayers, good hopes, good wishes, and good thoughts will not be able to prevent you from going into a prison experience from time to time. I know that is not what anyone wants to hear, but those are the facts as the Bible declares them. There will be some places of misery along the path of life. Have you ever been there? If you have, I need to tell you that you will probably go there again. If you haven’t I can say that you will go there some. If you are there right now, I want you to know that there is hope in your place of misery.) II. Acts 16:25 IT IS A PLACE OF MINISTRY

A. A Place Of Personal Ministry – When Paul and Silas found themselves in this prison experience, they were hurting, humiliated and in need of some encouragement. After all, they had followed the Lord to Philippi and now they are sitting, chained in a cruel Roman prison. In their hour of need they had no man to whom they could turn for help. They turned to the only source of help available to them. They turned to God and lifted their hearts to Him in prayer.

These men knew something that so many saints never get a handle on. They knew the best place to find the help of a Friend in a difficult situation is to turn to the throne of grace. The saints have a Friend Who cares deeply about them, Hebrews 4:15-16. He has promised to hear their prayers, Jeremiah 33:3. He has promised to answer their prayers, 1 John 5:14-15. When you find yourself locked away in a prison experience, you can always find a friend Who cares and Who is available to help you. Learn to lean on Him in prayer and your prison will be transformed.

B. A Place Of Profound Ministry – As they prayed, their prison was transformed from a place of pain into a place of praise. Paul and Silas began to sing songs of praise unto the Lord. We do not know what they sang, but we can be sure that they did not sing “Gloom, despair and agony on me. Deep dark depression, excessive misery. If it weren’t for bad luck we’d have no luck at all. Doom, despair and agony on me.”

These men are in a terrible predicament. They have been serving the Lord faithfully. They followed Him even when His will did not make sense to them. Now they are in a prison because they did the right thing. They are in a prison because they have been lied about. They are in a prison, wounded, bleeding and chained. Yet, they are filled with the praises of the Lord. They had learned the profound truth of Job 35:10 and Psalms 42:8.

III. Charles Spurgeon said, “Any fool can sing in the day. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by.... Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of men.” When we find ourselves in one of the bitter prisons of life, and we turn to the Lord for the help we need to make it through that prison, God can turn our sighing into song. He can turn our trials into testimony. He can turn our pain into praise. He can take a time of profound heartache and transform it into a time of great help. May God help us to do as many of the great saints of God have done. May He help us to have a song in the midnight hour. May He help us to be like Job, Job 1:20-21. May He help us to be like Paul, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. May He give us grace to praise Him when the pressure is on!

C. A Place Of Powerful Ministry – “and the prisoners heard them” – This phrase means that the other prisoners were “listening intently” to Paul and Silas as they prayed and praised the Lord. They were amazed by what they were hearing! Here were two men who had been severely beaten, carelessly thrown into the inner prison and fastened down in the stocks. Yet, they are not moaning and groaning. They are praising their God and singing love songs to him. That is a powerful ministry!

I would just remind you that a lost world is watching you and me as we go through our prison experiences. They could care less about us when we are filled with joy and everything is going well; but they are all eyes and ears when trouble comes into our lives. They watch us to see how we will react when the pressure is placed on our lives. They want to see if our faith is real when we

go into the prison house of suffering.

(III. I have seen saints on both sides of this thing. I have seen some fall to pieces when trouble comes. I have seen others lean on the strong arms of a loving God and praise Him in the face of overwhelming pain and suffering. I can tell that those who can praise the Lord in their trials have a powerful testimony. Their testimony says, "My God is real when things are going well and my God is real when everything falls apart. He is God and He is sufficient!" That is a powerful testimony; and it is a testimony that we should all strive to have in our lives! III. Psalms 84:6) III. Acts 16:26-33  
IT IS A PLACE OF MAJESTY

(III. How you and I respond in the prisons of life is something we should pay close attention to. After all, God may have sent us there just so we could help someone else to see that God is an ever present, all-sufficient, all mighty God. Let's notice how God used this prison to get glory to His name and to bring others to Himself.)

A. Acts 16:26 The Majesty Of God's Power – Notice the language of this verse: Suddenly, foundations of prison shaken, immediately – This is a verse packed with action! All of a sudden, God moved in power and one moment all the prisoners were chained down and the next moment, they were all free! One moment, things looked bleak, but in the next moment, the power of the Lord changed the situation and things began to look better!

(III. Whether you recognize it or not, the prison is a place of power! God may change your situation as He did for the Disciples on the ship, John 6:17-21. Or, He may change you in your situation as He did Paul and Job. Either way, you can be sure that He will move in power when the time is right and set you free. He has a plan to set you free! He has not forgotten about you. He knows where you are. He knows the pressure. He knows about the horrors of the prison and He knows how to set you free. Did you notice that even though they were free, they were still in prison? They were made free while they were still in their prison experience. God can and will do that in your life. When He does, it is a display of awesome, Almighty power!)

B. Acts 16:27-33 The Majesty Of God's Providence – Why did God allow these men to go through this prison? All they had done was serve the Lord! After that are released, they go meet with the brethren and immediately leave town. Is it possible that God allowed Paul and Silas to be beaten, thrown into prison and locked in the stocks just so He might use them in Philippi? Is it possible that God allowed them to endure all that pain and suffering just so God could get glory in Philippi? Is it possible that He sent them to prison just to save a jailer and his family? If you look at the outcome of this event, you will see that God used these events to save the jailer and his family, Acts 16:27-34; to testify to the city officials, Acts 16:35-39; and to encourage the saints and to teach them that God was greater than any prison or problem they would face, Acts 16:40.

(III. Sometimes you never get an answer to the why questions. Sometimes God will send you into a prison experience for His Own purposes and you may never know why these things have happened to you. But, does it really matter as long as He is honored and we are used as a vessel of honor for His glory? You can rest assured that even when life makes no sense at all, God has a purpose for everything He allows in your life, Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4:15-17. Paul understood this truth, Php 1:19-22. He knew the truth of Psalms 46:1-2, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,

and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”

What we face in life is part of God’s plan for us. His plan is a good plan and He knows what He is doing. Our duty is to trust Him at all times and realize that even the things that hurt us are sent to grow us and to shape our lives for His glory, Hebrews 12:6-12; James 1:3-4; 1 Peter 1:7-8. Blessed is that saint who will allow the Lord to have His way in that saint’s life!)

Conc: When the prison door slams behind you and you find yourself locked down tight in the shackles of your pain and problems, you may feel that there is no reason to praise the Lord. If you will turn your heart toward Heaven, He will hear you and He will help you to lift your voice in praise to Him. You will also find that He will give you peace in your heart that He will use your prison for His glory and for your good.

Malcolm Muggeridge, a Christian writer, said this, “Contrary to what might be expected, I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially desolating and painful with particular satisfaction. Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in my 75 years in this world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my experience, has been through affliction and not through happiness.”

If you are in a prison experience today let me encourage you to bring your need to Him. Let me encourage you to allow Him to turn your prison of pain into a prison of praise. If there are needs, bring them to Him.

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
  - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**