

(Through the Bible) Matthew 10-11

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of prayer, empowerment, and the diverse backgrounds of the apostles in fulfilling the mission of spreading the gospel.

Duration: 1:32:20

Scripture: Matthew 9:38, Matthew 10:6, Matthew 10:8-10, Matthew 10:22, Matthew 11:4-6, John 14:5-6

Topics: "Servant Ministry", "Gods Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of giving and serving others as if we are doing it for the Lord. He references the verse about giving a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, stating that those who do so will not lose their reward. Jesus sent out his disciples to teach and preach in various cities, instructing them not to take any money or extra belongings with them, but to rely on the support of the people they minister to. The speaker encourages the audience to learn from Jesus and know the Father, as knowing the truth of God's nature will reveal His love, compassion, and deep concern for every aspect of our lives.

Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to the 10th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. In the beginning of the 10th chapter we find Christ sending his disciples out, telling them to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But in the fact that he is sending them to go in the first part of chapter 10 makes the last verse of chapter 9 quite significant.

For in the last verse of chapter 9 Jesus said to his disciples, Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. And having told them to pray that the Lord will send workers into the harvest, the next thing he says is go. So many times as we pray the Lord speaks to our own hearts.

So many times we see a need and we think, oh what a need. You know the church really should be trying to fulfill that need. And we become all concerned with the need and the Lord says, well pray about it.

And as we pray about it suddenly we realize that God has called us he has shown us the need because he wants us to plug ourselves into the filling of that particular need. Many times the very fact that God has made you conscious and aware of that particular thing is the beginning of the call of God upon your own life for that particular field of service. So the Lord says pray because the harvest is plenteous the labors are few.

Pray that the Lord of harvest will send forth laborers into the harvest and then in the very next section the Lord says now you go out into this harvest. And so praying so often prepares us for going. It is while I am praying that the Spirit of God can really get hold of my heart.

As I've said I do believe that prayer changes things mainly me. I don't think that prayer changes God. I wouldn't really want prayer to change God.

I think it would be extremely dangerous if prayer could change God. I think that God knows best in every situation and I would not want to convince God if I could I can't but if I could I would not want to convince him to see things my way. I would rather that through prayer the Spirit of God be able to get hold of my own heart and mold me and shape me into that which God has purposed and that which God has designed.

So that so often as I say oh Lord send forth workers into the harvest and then I hear the call of God who will go and I answer oh Lord here am I send me. And so Jesus said pray the Lord of harvest and then he says now you go. So when he had called unto him the 12 disciples he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

So Jesus is first of all empowering his disciples for that work before he sends them out to do the work. Empowering them against unclean spirits giving them the power to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now the names of the 12 apostles and here they are first called apostles because of the fact that he is sending them out and the word apostle means one who is sent.

So at up to this point they have been disciples. They have been learning of him. They have been following him and learning as he taught.

But now the time has come for them to go out and they are now being sent by him and thus the change from disciple a follower to an apostle one who has been sent. And so the names of them first of all was Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother. James the son of Zebedee and John his brother.

And then Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew the publican or the tax collector. James the son of Alphaeus and Levi whose surname was Thaddeus. And Simon the Canaanite and Judas Iscariot who also betrayed him.

Simon the Canaanite that word translated Canaanite is actually Canaan and we are told in Luke's gospel that he was Simon the Zealot. Now Josephus tells us that the Zealots were the extreme patriots. These were men who valued freedom above life itself.

These were men who were willing to sacrifice their own lives or even see their own families martyred in order that they might be free. They preferred freedom to life and they were willing to do whatever is necessary to obtain freedom. They were the ones who rebelled constantly against the Roman government.

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

Now had Simon and Matthew met under any other circumstances Simon would have done Matthew in. I mean here you've got a Zealot, one who hates the Roman yoke, one who is willing to fight to overthrow it. And you have another one who was almost in league with Rome.

A turncoat so to speak. It's interesting though how that Christ takes people from many different backgrounds even adverse backgrounds and brings us together in a loving fellowship. Now it is also interesting to me that as the Lord names these apostles there aren't really any great marvelous people among them as far as the world is concerned.

None of them are highly educated. None of them are prominent or wealthy. In fact they're just common ordinary people.

Four of them were fishermen. One was a tax collector. We're not really given much of a background on the others but they were just plain common people.

And that always interests me because these men that God is preparing to send out to do his work are just plain common people like you. And when God has a work to be done he doesn't really go to the universities to select those with the highest grades and IQs and all. But God chooses and calls just plain ordinary people like you.

It is wrong for any of us to excuse ourselves from serving the Lord because of the fact that we are just so ordinary. Because that's the kind of person God seeks to use for his glory. If God used the highly talented highly developed kind of an individual then we would all be saying oh but don't you know he's got his doctorate don't you know he was so brilliant don't you know he and we would be putting the emphasis upon the ability of the instrument rather upon rather than upon the one who has used the instrument.

We would have a tendency then to glory in man or man's educational processes. So the Lord has chosen the simple things to confound the wise and the foolish things to put to not the wisdom of this world. And God uses just plain common ordinary people like Raul Reis and Greg Laurie and Mike McIntosh and Chuck Smith.

Just the plain ordinary people to do his work. I love to hear Raul on the radio. I have to sacrifice listening to myself because I'm on at KYMS at that hour.

I heard Raul this week as he was describing his condition when he was in the Marine Corps. He had been such a vicious killer and had killed so many people that he was brought back and put in the hospital in Vallejo for the mentally deficient. And he said the psychiatrist said man I was far and above beyond gone.

That's a typical Raul-ism. Ordinary and yet anointed by the Spirit of God and used by God to do his work. So not many wise, not many great, not many notable of the world but just those plain ordinary people who he sent out as apostles to represent him.

These twelve Jesus sent forth. That's what made them apostles. And he commanded them saying go not into the way of the Gentiles or into any city of the Samaritans.

Do not enter but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So by telling them not to go into the way of the Gentiles, he was restricting their area of ministry. They were not to go south into Samaria.

They were not to go west over to Tyre and Sidon. They were not to go as far north as Damascus. But they were to go only around the region of the Galilee.

Not even to the cities of the Decapolis. But only to those Jewish communities around the Galilee. So in the first sending out of the disciples, it was a very restricted area that he gave them to work in.

And they were to be forerunners of his coming. For he was going to follow up and to go into each of these villages. And they were more or less the forerunners of his own coming to these villages.

So they were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Paul the apostle said I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the power of God unto salvation to those that believe.

To the Jew first. And so Jesus came to the Jew first. And as he was sending them forth now, it was very limited.

Only to the Jews. Not to be going to the Gentiles or to the Samaritans. However, he himself later was to reveal himself to that Samaritan woman.

He was to heal the daughter of this Seraphim. And finally he was to tell his disciples go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. But it was important in God's plan that the gospel come first to the Jew.

And so there was first of all that restricted ministry of the disciples when he was first sending them forth. It was not to the world at this time. It was just among the Jews.

Not even into the Samaritans. But only to the Jews at this point. Later he said when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be witnesses unto me.

Not only in Judea but also in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. But now restricted to the Galilee region only to those Jewish communities. The lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Notice it doesn't say the ten lost tribes of the house of Israel. Ten lost tribes is not a biblical term. There are not ten lost tribes.

God knows exactly where they are and who they are. He's never lost them. And when the time comes he's going to seal ten thousand from each of the tribes to be or twelve thousand from each of the tribes to be preserved during the great tribulation period.

And I discount the attempt to make a Jew out of me because of my English heritage. The business of Denmark being the tribe of Dan and Danmark. And so they are called the Danish people.

And English. The word I-S-H in Hebrew is man. So Dan's man.

Danish. British. English.

Foolish. Just because it has an ish on the end doesn't make it Jewish. Now as Jesus sent them forth he said go and preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

What is the kingdom of heaven? This glorious phrase. Jesus, well we'll be getting parables about the kingdom in our next study as we get into Matthew 13 and 14. These parables of the kingdom.

What is the kingdom of heaven? Jesus said when you pray say thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. What are we praying for when we pray for the kingdom of heaven? Now Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is among you. Rather than in you. But in reality God's kingdom has come to every man who has acknowledged Jesus Christ as his Lord and King.

And if you tonight have acknowledged the Lordship of Jesus Christ. If he is the king of your life you are already a citizen of the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven has come to you.

And as a citizen of the kingdom there are many tremendous benefits for the citizens of that kingdom. As a citizen of the United States I have many benefits. Even when I travel in a foreign country there are certain protections that I have as a citizen of the United States.

Should I get into trouble there are always those embassies to which I can turn. Who are there to help the citizens of the United States out of whatever difficulty they might find themselves in. And those within the embassies in these foreign countries will seek to help those citizens of the United States.

That's just one of the benefits of citizenship. Just because I'm a citizen they'll go to bat for me. And they'll speak up for me.

And they will pull strings for me because I'm a citizen of the United States. And the United States has an obligation to guarantee its citizens certain rights, certain privileges. So I enjoy being a citizen of the United States because of those rights and privileges that I have in as a citizen.

But I am also a citizen of a kingdom. The kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven.

And I'll tell you the rights and the privileges that I have as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven far exceed the rights that I have and the privileges as a citizen of the United States. Wherever I go I have protection. I have authority, the authority of the kingdom of heaven behind me.

And Jesus is saying, now you go out and preach, saying, the kingdom heralded, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And they were to demonstrate the aspects of the kingdom of heaven by healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead, and casting out the devils. We read in the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 35, some of the aspects of that kingdom age.

Where the lame will leap for joy, the dumb will sing praises unto God, and the blind will behold the glory of the Lord. And the gospel will be preached unto the meek, to the poor. And so Jesus is telling them to demonstrate the aspects of the kingdom by setting men free from the kingdom of darkness.

I love the commission that the Lord gave to Paul the apostle when he called him on the Damascus road. And when Paul was talking to King Agrippa and relating to Agrippa that calling of God on the Damascus road, Paul said that the Lord spoke to him to go to the Gentiles to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. So Paul's commission as he went to the Gentiles was to deliver them from the power of Satan unto God, from the power of darkness to light.

And as a kingdom, a citizen of God's kingdom, I've been delivered from the power of darkness, and I am to bring deliverance to those to whom I come. To those who will heed the message and receive Jesus Christ as King. That is the effect.

They are delivered from the power of darkness and brought into the light, from the power of Satan and made a part of the kingdom of God. There are people today who are living in the kingdom of darkness. There are two basic kingdoms in the universe.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, there was only one kingdom in the universe, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of light and life. But God in his kingdom created these beings we call angels and he endowed them with the capacity of choice. And one of the choicest of the angels, the anointed cherub that covered, perfect in beauty, perfect in wisdom, was lifted up by pride and decided to exalt himself and be as God, first Mormon.

And the inspiration behind the Mormons today to be as God. What was it? Shakespeare has the statement in one of his plays, O Cromwell, flee ambition, for by this sin the angels fell. What was the temptation that Satan offered to Eve in the garden? Eat of it because you will be as God, knowing good from evil.

That bait still works. And there are those who are attempting to be as God still. Tragic.

Now, in his rebellion against God, in his pride being lifted up to be as God, he formed a second kingdom in the universe, a kingdom that was an antithesis to the first kingdom, a kingdom that was in rebellion to the first kingdom, the kingdom of death and darkness. So now in the universe there are two opposing kingdoms, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of light and life ruled by God, but now a sub-kingdom in antagonism to the first, rebelling against the first, the kingdom of death and darkness. Now when God created man and placed him here upon the planet earth, he placed man here in the kingdom of God and Adam had fellowship with God.

God came down and he communed with Adam there in the garden and there was this beautiful fellowship with man and God in the kingdom of light and life. But Satan, the ruler of the kingdom of death and darkness, came to Eve and said, Did God say you can eat of all the trees? Yes, all but the one in the middle. He told us if we ate of that tree we would die.

Satan said, Oh, you really won't die. Really, that's the finest tree in the garden. God isn't really being fair to you, Eve.

He's trying to hold back something good. You see, that tree holds the key to knowledge and God doesn't want you to eat that tree because he knows that when you eat of it, you'll be wise as he is, knowing good from evil. And so he's trying to hold that back.

You really ought to try it. How do you know unless you've tried it? And so Eve, being deceived, ate of it and her eyes were open and she gave to her husband Adam and he did eat. But in that act of disobedience to God, which was a double act because it was an act of obedience to Satan, they left the kingdom of light and life and they were drawn into the kingdom of death and darkness.

And they drew all mankind into the kingdom of death and darkness because they could not pass on something they did not have. They had lost that place in the kingdom of God, the kingdom of light and life. And so by one man, sin entered the world and death by sin for death passed unto all men for all sinned.

So each of us born of Adam were born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Born sinners by nature and we were all by nature children of wrath even as others. Born into the kingdom of death and darkness.

But there is another tree. The tree of life is still available. It is through Jesus Christ.

And if you choose to come into the kingdom of light and life, you can come by the cross of Jesus Christ. Using that same exercise of free choice that Adam used in leaving the kingdom of God, you can use that to come back into the kingdom of God since Jesus Christ made provision. And so the duty of the apostles

was to preach the kingdom.

It's possible for a man to now again have fellowship with God. You can come out of the kingdom of darkness. You can come into the kingdom of light.

You can have deliverance from the power of Satan. And you can know fellowship with God. And that's the glorious gospel that we herald today.

That's the glorious gospel we still preach. That it's possible for that man who has been bound in the kingdom of darkness and death, that man who has been alienated by God because of his life after the flesh, it's possible for him to know the power of God's Spirit in his life. And he can come from that kingdom of darkness into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ, through the tree, the cross.

And so a lot of people blame Adam today for their problems. And they feel that it is quite unfair that they have to suffer for Adam's mistake. I was hiking a group of kids from the Haiwai camp there in Arizona coming down the backside of Mount Lemmon from an old mine.

And as I was leading them down this trail, I heard this yell back the line. And so I went back to see what this horrible scream was about. And this one little guy had brushed too close to an Ochoa cactus.

Now the Ochoa is called the jumping cactus. And if you just barely touch it, it'll break off and just glom onto you. And he had one really glommed onto him, but good.

And he was really yelling. So I got back there and I took a couple of sticks and I carefully worked the sticks in between the thorns. And then I flipped that Ochoa cactus off of him.

And as he was shaking his hand and all, he said, That darn guy, Adam. And I said, where do you go to Sunday school? He said, I go to the first Baptist church. I said, well, they're teaching you correct doctrine anyhow.

You know that the thorns and the thistles resulted from the curse. Curse would be the ground, thorn shall it bring forth. But so many times we're looking at the miseries that we're facing.

We say that darn guy, Adam, you know, got us into this mess. Made such a horrible choice. When he had the choice of the tree of life.

Or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Why couldn't he have chosen the tree of life? Why would he eat of the other tree first? That tree of life in the midst of the garden of God. Why didn't he eat of it? How foolish.

And we're prone to really come down on Adam for the foolish choice. But in reality, there are still two trees today. And you have the choice.

You can choose to eat of the tree of life today. For God has given to you that choice. By believing and receiving in Jesus Christ, you can have eternal life.

Or you can choose to disobey God, to rebel. To eat of the fruit of the world and abide in death. So you really can't blame Adam for your condition.

You can only blame yourself because you, many, are following Adam's folly. Not choosing to eat of the tree of life that God has made available to all men. Through Jesus Christ.

Now, Jesus said to his disciples, freely you have received, freely give. I wonder how that fits with these modern evangelists today. I've got on my desk a letter.

I wish I had it here right now before me. If Romaine is around, maybe you can go get it. It's classic.

We have these Jewish friends in Israel that we have been seeking to share the truths of Jesus Christ with. But it's a difficult task sharing with them because he is a guide and he guides a lot of Christian tours. And as a guide, he sees a lot of the inner workings and the background and a lot of the rip-offs.

And when I go over, he'll start telling me about these rip-offs that he sees. Where these tour guides get the people over there, the famous evangelists and all, and then they'll really rip the people off. And he'll tell me of these things.

And then somehow he's gotten on the mailing list of some of these evangelists and he gets these computerized letters. Dear brother, you know. And all of this junk.

You know, have you been bothered with an ear problem lately? Or maybe it's the eyes or the nose or a knee or hepatitis. I mean, you know, the guy goes down a long list and you're bound to hit something. Somehow I've been impressed to pray for you lately, you know.

And I think there might be something wrong. And why don't you write me and share with me? Now, please don't send me any money for my birthday. But, you know, I've been laboring for the Lord 341 nights a year.

And I'm really tired and I'm going to take a vacation. And we could use a little extra money, you know. And our organ blew up and all this kind of stuff.

And here this guy's getting these computerized letters. And he's smart enough to see through them. And to him, the ministry is a sham.

He sees the rip-offs. Jesus said to His disciples, freely you have received, freely give. They weren't to demand fees for their services.

They weren't to be taking offerings for themselves. They had received freely from God and they were to give freely. I could spend the rest of the evening on that verse, but we need to get on.

I promised you we're going to go three chapters. Now, the Lord said, don't provide gold or silver, nor brass in your purses. Don't take any coins in your purses, nor script for your journey.

Don't even take two coats, nor an extra pair of shoes, nor yet staves. For the workman is worthy of his meat. Now, you can go and it's proper that the people support you.

Don't take, you know, you don't have to take a lot of money with you. It's proper that the people support you. The workman is worthy of his hire.

However, you're not to go in and make yourself a burden or lay yourself upon people. Now, into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, inquire who is worthy and stay there until you leave. And when

you come into a house, greet it.

And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. Now, in those days, they really thought quite a bit about giving a person a blessing.

If they would greet you, they would often greet you with a blessing of the Lord. The blessings of the Lord be upon you and your seed. But then if they get down the road and think, oh, he wasn't worthy.

You know, that was a Gentile or something. You come back and he said, I take that blessing back. You know, they felt that they had to remove the blessings that they gave if the person was undeserving or unworthy.

So Jesus is pretty much saying that if the house is worthy, let your peace abide. If it's not, take your peace with you. And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words when you depart out of that house or city, just shake the dust off your feet.

Verily, I say unto you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Behold, I'm sending you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore as wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

Now, someone said, well, serpents aren't really noted to be very wise. They're not considered to be a wise kind of a creature. And I heard a professor in biology making fun of the knowledge of Christ by pointing out to the class that serpents really weren't wise.

And so for the Lord to say, be as wise as serpents was a rather stupid thing and showed that he had really very little knowledge of biology. And so, one of the students spoke up in class and said, how long do you think you would survive without any arms or legs? And you had to take care of yourself out in the desert. So, you have to give them some credit.

At least they survived. There's more than we could do. The sermon of the Lord, harmless as doves, but beware of men, for they will deliver you up to their councils.

They will scourge you in their synagogues. That is, they will beat you. You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

But when they deliver you up, do not take forethought on how or what you're going to say. For it will be given to you in the same hour what you shall speak. For it is not you that speak, but the spirit of your father which speaks in you.

So, you don't have to make up little speeches in advance. Just let the Lord anoint you by his spirit. The brother shall deliver up brother to death.

The father, the child, the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

So, here we have that basis for the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, which is oftentimes used as a contrast to those who would go to antinomianism, to the extremes of the security of the believer. And there are those who press this side of the coin, he that endures to the end and the perseverance of the saints. Truth lies somewhere in the middle.

But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come. Now, Jesus is referring to his journey that he's going to be taking among these cities.

And so, if they persecute you in one city and all, just go to the next. You'll not actually go through all of these cities before I'll be right behind you. I'll be coming behind you and I'll be ministering in these cities.

He's not really referring to his second coming at all, but just to his ministry in these cities of the Galilee. Now, Jesus said the disciple is not above his master nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master.

Oh, what a, that's enough. You betcha it is. That's great.

If we could only be as our Lord. And he said, you're not greater than the Lord. It's just enough that you be as the Lord.

God help us to be as the Lord. If they have called the master of the house, Beelzebub or the Lord of Flies, how much more shall they call them of his household? They call me names. They're going to call you names.

Now, don't fear them. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed and hid that shall not be known. And what I am telling you in darkness that speak in the light.

And what you hear sort of whispered in the ear that preach from the housetops. Now I've been teaching you. I've been training you.

I've been telling you in these little intercessions that we have. Now you go out and proclaim these truths openly. That which you've heard in these little sessions that we've had go out and proclaim it.

And don't fear them. Which kill the body. But are not able to kill the soul.

But rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. So he's not saying to fear Satan. Satan has no capacity of destroying your soul in hell.

He's saying fear God. Don't fear man. The worst thing man can do is kill you.

So why should you fear man? To be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. You should fear the one who is able to take both body and soul and cast it into hell. That's the one you really should be fearing.

Are not two sparrows sold for a half of a cent. And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your father taking note. Again your father.

And again your father oversees his creation. And one of the common things of God's creation are the little sparrows. They are so common as to be almost worthless.

You can buy four of them for a penny. In those days. Two sparrows sold for a half of farthing.

And yet not a little sparrow falls but what your father doesn't know it. Doesn't make note of it. Again how detailed is God's knowledge of you.

The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Now just look at all of us here tonight. Some make it easy on the Lord.

But isn't it interesting the trivia that God knows about us. And he knows more about us than we know about ourselves. God knows even trivia about you.

That's how concerned your father is with you. Oh if we would only be aware of the tremendous concern that our father has with us his children. For Jesus said you are worth more than many sparrows.

If God takes note of the sparrows. And he's been saying don't worry about you know they kill you. There's not even a sparrow falls to the ground but what your father knows it.

If you fall to the ground in the proclaiming of the gospel. If you be killed in your endeavor to reach others with the glorious love of Christ. How much more will your father take note be aware.

So you really have nothing to fear not man. The worst they can do is kill you. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men.

Him will I confess also before my father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men. Him will I also deny before my father which is in heaven.

Heavy heavy verse. Because we must all stand before God. One day stand before the creator of the universe.

Now if I have confessed Jesus Christ before men. When my name is called. And I have to stand before God.

Jesus will step forth and confess me before the father. Father this is Chuck. He's perfect.

Isn't that what Jude said now unto him who is able to keep you from falling. And to present you faultless. Why should you laugh when I say I'm.

He says I'm perfect. Because you know the truth. And I know the truth.

But I also know the power of my redeemer. And when he confesses me before the father. And when he presents me before the father.

I will be complete in him. Faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. But if a person has denied Jesus before men.

You're going to stand all alone before God. The books will be open. And he who knows all things.

He who knows the secrets of the heart. He who can probe. Actually the bible says everything is naked and open.

Before him with whom we have to do. And there in the embarrassment of your own. Bare being and everything exposed.

And you might turn furtively to Jesus Christ saying. Lord Lord shake his head. I never knew you.

I also will deny you before my father. Oh what a heavy thing. If you deny me before men.

I also will deny you before my father. Don't think that I'm come to send peace on the earth. I came not to send peace but a sword.

The gospel of Jesus Christ unifies men. it brings together a tax collector and a zealot. But the gospel of Jesus Christ also divides men.

It divides men into two categories. Those who are a part of the kingdom of God and those who are a part of the kingdom of darkness. But Jesus divides men as well as unifies men.

And many times Jesus divides those within a household. A child comes into the kingdom of light, but the father continues to rebel in the kingdom of darkness. And so a division comes and a difference comes.

And this contention oftentimes arises over the differences of being in the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. So I'm come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes will often be those of his own household.

Jesus was speaking out of personal experience. For at this particular time his brothers were against him. He that loves his father or mother more than he loves me is not worthy of me.

And he who loves the son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Our love for Christ has to be supreme even above those of our family members if they are not united with us in the faith. If they are not a part of that kingdom of light, our love for Christ must exceed even our love for those in our own family.

And he that does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. When we get to chapter 16, we'll take up the cross and what it means. He that finds his life shall lose it.

And he who loses life for my sake shall find it. That we will also take up in chapter 16. He that receives you.

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

And those that receive you receive me. And he that receives me receives the Father who sent me. And he who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.

And he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, even a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. So you're doing it as unto the Lord.

Giving as unto the Lord. Giving unto a servant of the Lord. You receive him as you receive the Lord.

And as you give to him, it is as giving unto the Lord. And you will receive your reward for it. Now the thought blew, so forget it.

But giving a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. Now it came to pass when Jesus had made an end of these commandments. He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

So he sent them out in front of them. And then he departed and was following up now and coming into the cities. They were sort of advance men for him to go out in advance.

Now, when John had heard in prison, the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and he said unto him, are thou he that should come? Or do we look for another? Now, John had been placed in prison by Herod and John had been preaching the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And he said, there's one who is coming after me. He's mightier than I am.

I'm not worthy to untie his shoes. But here is John still in Herod's prison. And he's saying to the Lord, hey, let's get the show on the road.

For even John did not fully understand the mission of Christ in his first coming, but was anticipating the immediate establishment of the kingdom of God, as was promised in the Old Testament scriptures. And so the fact that Jesus had not yet proclaimed his power and overthrown the Roman yoke, and John was still in prison, he was getting impatient. And he sends his disciples to Jesus say, hey, are you the one or shall we start looking for someone else? Which he was just really saying, let's get this thing going.

I'm tired of sitting here in jail. Let's get the kingdom on the road. You know, let's get this movement going.

Are you the one that we should look for? Or shall we start looking for someone else? Now, Jesus answered and said unto them, go and show John those things which you hear and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whoever is not offended in me.

Now, Jesus, rather than answering John directly, points to his ministry, the works that he was doing. You remember on the night that Jesus was betrayed as he was talking to his disciples and John records it so faithfully there in the 14th chapter, where Jesus had been saying, now look, I'm going to the Father, and if I go, I'm going to come again and receive you unto myself. That where I am, there you may be also.

And where I go, you know, and the way you know. And Thomas said, Lord, we really don't know where you're going, and how can we know the way? And Jesus said, well, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by me. And he said, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father also.

And Philip said, Lord, if you'll just show us the Father, it will suffice us. Jesus said, have I been so long in time with you, and haven't you seen me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Why do you say then, show us the Father? Don't you believe that the Father is in me, and the works that I do, I don't really do of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Believe me that I am in the Father, or else believe for the very works sake. In other words, Jesus was pointing to the works as the evidence of his commission, of his person, of his authority, pointing to the works. He also said, the works that I do, they do testify of me.

They were the evidence. He was fulfilling the promises of the kingdom in the Old Testament. As far as the lame walking, the blind seeing, the dumb speaking, the deaf hearing, he was fulfilling.

The dead were being raised, the poor had the gospel preached, and he was fulfilling those aspects of the kingdom. And so his works were a witness and a testimony. So all he did was heal a few of the sick that were around there, open the eyes of the blind, and all.

And he said, now you just go back and tell John what you see. And just tell him, blessed is the one who doesn't get offended because of my not really establishing the kingdom immediately and overthrowing the Roman yoke and establishing a physical, visible earthly kingdom. Now they departed, and Jesus began to talk to the multitudes concerning John the Baptist.

And he said, what did you go out in the wilderness to see? A reed shaken in the wind. John was preaching down at the Jordan River, a lot of reeds down at the Jordan River. Did you go down to the Jordan River just to watch the reeds being blown by the wind? How come you went out of the cities and down to the Jordan? Why did you go there to see? But what did you go out to see? Obviously, you didn't go out to see the reeds being blown in the wind.

What did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? A man who was wearing fancy clothes? Behold, those that wear the soft clothing are in the king's houses. They're not in the king's prisons. John was in the king's prison at that time, and those who wear that kind of clothes are in the king's houses, palaces.

What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say unto you, more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it was written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. He is declaring to them that John was indeed the fulfillment of the promise of a forerunner who would come before the Messiah to prepare his way.

Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist. Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. In other words, our position as children of God through Jesus Christ puts us in a greater position than those of the Old Testament.

Our position of having the Holy Spirit indwelling us puts us in a greater position. Of all of the women or men born of women, not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. Yet, the privileges that God has bestowed upon us in the church exceed those privileges.

Now, so oftentimes we think, oh, how blessed it must have been for Abraham to have had that kind of a relationship with God and Moses and David and all. But in reality, the potential of relationship that is ours through the Spirit is tremendous. That God would dwell in us by His Spirit.

That God would empower us with His Spirit. Absolutely amazing. So even the least of us, filled with the Spirit of God, walking in this glorious fellowship with Jesus Christ, have greater privileges than those of the Old Dispensation.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence. John was thrown into prison and soon he is to be beheaded. And the kingdom of heaven is going to suffer violence.

The king himself is going to be crucified. And so the kingdom of heaven is suffering the violence of man. And the violent take it by force.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you're able to receive it. This is Elijah, which was to come.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Now in a interesting way, according to Jesus, John the Baptist was Elijah. This does bring up some confusion.

And when we get to the 17th chapter, we will look at this again in a little more detail. But when Zechariah, the priest, was fulfilling his ministry in the temple, the angel Gabriel came to him and told him that his wife Elizabeth, who had been barren, was in her old age going to bear a son and he was to call his name John. And the angel told him he shall go forth in the spirit and in the power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the children under their fathers.

He quotes this prophecy that Jesus quoted concerning the forerunner of the Messiah. And basically the Lord was saying John the Baptist was going to be the forerunner of the Messiah coming in the spirit and in the power of Elijah. When in the gospel of John, John the Baptist began his ministry, they came out to him and began to challenge him concerning his authority.

And they said unto him, who are you? And they asked him, point blank, are you Elijah? And John answered, no. Then they said, who are you? And he said, I'm the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his path. Quoting another passage of scripture concerning the forerunner.

Now, the reason for the ambiguity here is the fact that before Jesus comes again. And establishes his visible physical kingdom upon the earth. John the Baptist will be coming again.

Elijah will be coming of which John the Baptist was a type for he came in the spirit and in the power. So even as there were two aspects of the coming of Jesus Christ, the first to be crucified, suffering violence, the second to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. So there are two aspects of the forerunner Elijah.

So John the Baptist came to fulfill the first coming in the spirit and the power of Elijah. But Elijah himself will actually come before Jesus returns again. And Elijah will prophesy before the Lord to the Jewish people, not to the world, but to the Jewish people to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers.

That is to bring the Jewish people back into the faith of the patriarchs in God the Father. And in Revelation chapter 11, verse two, I am convinced that one of those two witnesses in Jerusalem will indeed be John the Baptist. For he has the power to shut up heaven that it not rain during the time of his ministry.

Even as Elijah prayed in it, rain not. And he has power to call down fire on his enemies to consume them. Even as Elijah called down fire upon the captain with the fifties who came out from the king to take him in.

So the Elijah coming before the Lord. Now, because I believe that the coming of the Lord is so near, I do believe that somewhere in the earth today, Elijah probably is alive and living. Because I believe that we are that near the coming of the Lord.

Now, I don't think that anybody knows who he is or where he is. He may know himself. But I'm not looking for him.

I'm looking for the Lord to come for me. I think that it's easy for us to get our eyes off the main attraction. And start looking for little side events.

Oh, who's the Antichrist? I wonder if this one could be the Antichrist, you know. Let's look for the main event. Jesus Christ.

So, Jesus is saying, hey, this is tough to tell, you know. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. I mean, if you can take it, if you can handle it.

If you will receive it, you know, this is he. This is Elijah. If you can receive it.

Now, if you can't receive it, then, you know, take it however you want. But he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. So, in a sense, it was Elijah coming in the spirit and the power as a forerunner of the Messiah.

But not the total fulfillment of that promise in Malachi. Now, what shall I liken this generation to? It is like children who are sitting in the marketplace. That are calling to their fellows.

They're seeking entertainment. And they say, hey, we've piped to you and you didn't dance. So, we mourned and you didn't cry.

What do you want? What are you looking for? So, John the Baptist came, neither eating nor drinking. And the Pharisee said, he has a devil. And he said, the Son of Man came, both eating and drinking.

And you say, behold, a gluttonous man, a winebibber, a friend of the publicans and sinners. But he said, wisdom is justified of her children. What do the people want? They really didn't know what they want.

John came as an ascetic. And they said, he's got a devil. Jesus came mixing with people.

And they said, oh, he's a friend of the sinners. He's a friend of the publicans, a winebibber. And then he began to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done because they did not repent.

It is interesting that these cities that he upbraided around the Galilee have all of them been destroyed. And today are nothing but ruins. In fact, it wasn't until just recently that they even discovered the site of Bethsaida.

And for a long time, thought that maybe the Bible was just speaking of some fictitious place. Until more recently, the archaeologists have uncovered Bethsaida. But Jesus, in the cities that he pronounces woes upon, it is interesting that they have totally disappeared.

Whereas many of the other cities, such as Tiberias, which was the capital of the Galilee region where Herod lived, and Jesus didn't really go to Tiberias, it still remains today Tiberias. The city is still there. But Capernaum is gone, Bethsaida is gone, Chorazin is gone.

Chorazin is gone, so that these cities that he upbraided have disappeared off the map. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you have been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell. For if the mighty works which have been done in thee have been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. Capernaum was the headquarters of Jesus.

That was his city. That's where he spent the majority of his ministry. His earthly ministry was spent in and around the city of Capernaum.

The majority of the miracles that Christ wrought were wrought in Capernaum, and yet the people there did not repent. And he said, if the works have been done in the city of Sodom that were done here in Capernaum, they would have repented. And so the judgment that he pronounces upon Capernaum to be cast down to hell.

But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee. Why? Unto whom much is given, much is required. The greater understanding and light that a man receives, the greater will be the judgment of that individual.

And so when God does judge, it will be according to the understanding or the knowledge that God has given. According to the grace that has been, they've been exposed to, will be the degree of judgment by which they will be judged. At that time Jesus answered and said, now he has just rebuked these cities for their failure to repent, for their failure to receive.

And then he turns from the rebuking of these cities to the Father in a prayer in which he says, said, I thank thee, oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them unto the babes. Father, I thank you. The great people of the earth, those great people of Capernaum and Bethsaida and all, you've hid the truth from them, but here are these babes, simple, ordinary people that you've chosen to reveal your truth and your love to.

And Jesus said, even so, Father, for it seemed good in your sight. I thank you, Father, that you've chosen just to use the common, ordinary people to reveal your love and truth to. I am too.

How glorious that God has chosen to reveal himself to just the common. All things are delivered, Jesus said, unto me of my Father. And no man really knows the Son, but the Father.

And neither knows any man the Father, except the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Now, Jesus, after this prayer, thank you, Father, you've chosen to reveal yourself to the babes, not to the wise and the prudent, but just to babes. Then he said, no one really knows the Father, but the Son.

And no one really knows the Son, but the Father. And the only ones who really know the Father are those to whom the Son reveals him. There were a lot of people who thought they knew the Father, but they had wrong concepts of God.

There are a lot of people today who think they know God, but their concepts of God are all messed up. Jesus said, no one really knows the Father, unless I reveal the Father to them. And I look at the concepts that many people have of God, concepts that they have developed in their own minds.

If I were God, this is how I would live, this is what I would do, this is how I would react, this is how I would respond, and so this is my God, and I've created my own God after my own likes and wishes and all. And this has been endemic of man through history, creating his own gods. No man really knows the Father, except the Son and the ones to whom the Son reveals.

And then Jesus makes the broad invitation, come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. You see, Jesus is relating the restlessness of humanity with its godlessness. And he is saying, you'll never really know what it is to rest until you know God.

Come unto me, I will give you rest. Come unto me, I will reveal the Father to you. Now, the invitation, of course, is from Jesus to you.

The invitation is to come to him, and the promise is, if you come, he will give you rest. So that the first consciousness that a person has when they have come to Jesus Christ, the very first consciousness that they possess is a deep, beautiful peace inside. It just feels so good, I can't tell you why.

But it just feel, I feel good. You see, I'm not running from God anymore, I'm not fighting God anymore. In fact, I begin now to really understand the Father, and my restlessness was my godlessness.

But now, as I've come to Jesus Christ, suddenly, there's a beautiful peace inside, a rest. And then Jesus said, take my yoke upon you. The yoke was the thing they put on the ox so he could pull a plow.

And basically, what the Lord is saying is, let me have the reins of your life, and guide you to that work that I have for you. For the Lord has a purpose and a plan for each one of you. Paul the Apostle, writing to the Philippians, said, I have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended by Jesus Christ.

Now, Jesus Christ has apprehended every one of you. And when he apprehended you, he apprehended you for a specific purpose and plan that he has for your life. The Lord has a work for each of you to do for him.

He's got a plan for each one of your lives. The Lord does not waste anything. He's very conservative, uses everything.

And when he apprehended you, he had in mind a purpose and a plan for you to fulfill for his glory and for the kingdom's sake. Paul, recognizing that, having devoted himself to serving the Lord, after some thirty years, said, I've not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended. Neither are things yet complete, but I'm pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God.

I'm still pushing on, seeking to apprehend that for which I was apprehended. Take my yoke upon you. I've got a plan for your life.

Now, you let me take over the reins and let me begin to guide you into my purposes and into my plans for you. And then the third thing Jesus said was, learn of me. Now, you need to know the Father.

You can't know the Father unless I reveal the Father to you. Learn of me, because as you learn of me, you'll know the Father. He who has seen me has seen the Father.

So learn of me, that you might know the truth of God, that he might reveal to you the truth of the nature of God. And as you learn the truth of God, you'll learn that he is a God of love, a God of compassion, a God of great, deep concern for you, a God who cares for you more than you can ever dream, a God who is interested in every minute detail of your life. Learn of me, Jesus said, for in learning of him, you will learn of the Father and you'll have a true revelation of the Father.

And then Jesus adds, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. That's in sharp contrast to those who go around telling me about the heavy burden they've been under lately. Oh, man, I've been under such a heavy burden.

I don't know if I'm going to be able to handle it, man, the burden is so heavy on my... Wait a minute. I believe that it's possible for us to take on burdens that are not from God, burdens that we take upon ourselves. It's possible for us to get ourselves into some real messes.

I feel that I have taken on many burdens that God didn't lay on me. And I sometimes complain about the burdens. Right now I'm sort of complaining at home about the burden of going to Norway.

And I don't know if God laid it on me or not. I accepted the invitation and now I sort of wish I hadn't. I'm just tired.

I'd like to stay home. But nonetheless, I have to go. But I can't say, oh, the Lord has laid this heavy burden on me, I've got to go to Norway.

If the Lord indeed has sent me, then He's going to give me the strength and the energy and I'm going to do great. If I've taken a burden on that He hasn't, then pray for me, I'm in trouble. For the Lord said, my yoke is easy, my burden is light.

Hey, wait a minute. What was His yoke? Every man bears a burden. A man's burden is that master passion by which his life is governed.

Jesus said, my burden is light. What was His burden? What was behind the life of Jesus? What was the main thrust behind His life? He revealed it in His first recorded words when He was just 12 years old. When He said to His mother Mary, didn't you know that I must be about my father's business? Now, when a person says, I must, you better listen, because you're getting close to the heart of the issues.

So many times a person said, well, I really ought to do that. I know I should. Forget it, you're not getting close yet.

When a person says, I must, then listen. Didn't you know I must be about my father's business? And that was the burden of his life, his father's business. I do always those things that please the Father.

I came not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. And He prayed, Father, I have finished the work You have given me to do. And what does He say about His burden? He said, my burden is light.

It is light to do the will of Father, to please the Father, not a heavy burden. Who is He calling? Those who are heavy laden. Those who are carrying a heavy burden.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden. What are the heavy burdens of man? What is the burden of life that you are trying to carry? What is the master passion behind your whole life? You say, well, I am being honest and looking at myself. The master passion of my life is money.

I love good things. I love nice things. I want to live comfortably.

And so the master passion of my life is just to possess nice things and to live a comfortable life. Someone else say, well, the master passion of my life is fame. I just want people to admire me and to look up to me.

And I want to be famous. Someone else may say, well, really, the real thrust behind my life is pleasure. Man, I just like excitement and pleasure.

And the only reason why I work is to get enough money to go out and have a good time. And I hate the job. I hate working.

But I have to work in order to get the money. But I can't wait for the weekends, man, where we can just really have a great time. And my whole life is geared around the weekends and the fun that I can have.

And I would have to say that's the burden of my life. Look a little deeper, because none of these are the burdens that any of you are carrying. Who do you want the money for? Who are you seeking fame for? For whose pleasure are you looking? And when you get behind these things, you have to say, well, I'm seeking money for myself.

I want to be wealthy. I'm seeking fame for myself. I'm seeking pleasure for myself.

And now you've come to the truth. The burden that Jesus said is heavy. One that will weigh you down is living for yourself.

When a person is seeking to live for himself, that is a heavy burden that one day will become intolerable. And you will just come to the cynicism and say, life isn't worth going on. And you become totally cynical, because you'll never be able to satisfy yourself.

The yoke is too hard. The burden is too heavy. But Jesus said, take my yoke upon you.

My yoke is easy. My burden is light. Living for God has to be the most satisfying life in the world.

Nothing is more satisfying than to commit your life totally to God and to live for His glory. As Jesus said back in chapter 10, he who finds his life shall lose it, but he who loses his life for my sake shall find it. My yoke is easy.

My burden is light. Because my yoke is living to satisfy and to please God. And you'll find that it is much easier to please God than it is to please yourself.

You'll never be able to please yourself as you just live for yourself, because you're not answering to the basic purpose of your creation. When God designed you and created you, God purposed that you should be for His pleasure and for His glory. As the elders are ascribing praise unto God and the worthiness of God to receive the praise of the cherubim, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor, for thou hast created all things, and for your good pleasure they are and were created.

God did not create you to live for your own pleasure. And if you live for your own pleasure, your life is going to be empty, frustrating, and dissatisfying. But if you will live for God's pleasure, if you'll take up the light burden, then your life will be fulfilling, rich, full.

In fact, even more, as David said, my cup runneth over, and your life will be like an overflowing. Well, we got two chapters. Keep trying.

Next time. Now, next Sunday night, you'll have a special worship night. But then, the following Sunday night, we'll be back and we'll continue.

And we will get into the parables of the kingdom in chapter 13, after we take chapter 12. And I don't think we'll be able to get more than two chapters next time. So, just concentrate on 12 and 13.

I'm giving up. The burden is too heavy. And so, it must not be from Him.

May the Lord put His hand upon your life, fill you with His Spirit, and guide you with His counsel. May you be strengthened in your walk with Him. May you begin to experience greater victories over those areas of the flesh that have dominated.

And may you begin to experience more and more the power of God's Spirit within your life, giving victory. May the Lord be with you, and may the Lord keep you in His love, during the time that we are absent from each other. And may you just grow in your knowledge of Him and in your fellowship in Jesus' name.

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