

Bible Study # 36
May 23, 1989
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The Gospels and Acts Series—Matthew 19;
Mark 10; Luke 13—19:29; John 10:22—12:11

What we are covering this evening is the time between Christ's journey to Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Feast of Lights or Dedication on December, 30 A.D., up until six days before the Passover of 31 A.D. We are looking at approximately three and one-half months.

He went to Jerusalem for the period of Hanukkah and went from there to an area near the Jordan River where John was first baptizing. From there Christ was summoned by Mary and Martha to Bethany (a small town near Jerusalem) at the death of Lazarus. Immediately there were some results of that tremendous miracle. It intensified persecution. It stirred up a hornet's nest. The religious leaders decided this Man was a threat, and they must get rid of Him. He went out to the Judean Desert prior to His journey back to Jerusalem for Passover.

When the miracles and works are poured out and intensified in that way, it is setting the stage for great persecution. This is one of the reasons why Jesus spent little time in Jerusalem except for the festival seasons. Christ knew what was going to happen, had to happen. Because of that, He handled things in such a way that it was only when the time came that He then made Himself available in that way and performed that miracle. It set the stage for things to happen.

The Feast of Dedication is not one of God's holy days. The only mention of it is in John 10:22. There is a reason for that, and I will point it out. It is one of the ways we can derive certain principles. It had its origin one hundred sixty-four years prior to the time of Christ (164 B.C.)—two hundred fifty years after the conclusion of the Old Testament Canon.

Remember, we went through the story of how the Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes had done everything he could to wipe out any vestige of God's truth. He prevented circumcision; he offered a pig on the altar; and he set up the abomination of desolation. He did everything he could to show his contempt for the religion of God. Mattathias, an aged priest, drew his sword and slew the apostate Jew; the Maccabean revolt began. Then in 168 B.C., just over three years later, the cleansing took place. Judas

Maccabaeus, the son of this priest, overthrew the Syrian generals and restored Temple worship. The Jews thereafter celebrated this occasion.

In John 10:22-23, Christ was going there for the celebration, their national holiday. It is akin to July 4th or Thanksgiving Day. It was a celebration of independence from the Greeks and a time to memorialize their thanks and appreciation to God for their deliverance—for rescuing them. One of the things we derive from that statement in John 10 is the fact that it is not wrong to take note of national holidays, as long as those days do not commemorate in their origin something that is negative or of pagan origin. That is part of the way we study the Bible. We seek to derive principles from the Bible and how God views some things. Does He mention something in a positive or negative way? In the way He mentions it, we are able to derive what God thinks of it. That is a good rule of thumb. It helps us deal with questions that come up in our own lives today.

Luke 13:10-13, "And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and she was hunched over, and completely unable to lift herself up. Then Jesus, seeing her, called to her, and said, 'Woman, you have been set free from your infirmity.' Then He laid His hands upon her: and instantly she was made straight, and she glorified and thanked God." The woman was crippled and Christ healed her.

Verse 14, "But the rulers of the synagogue answered indignantly, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, and told the people, 'There are six days in which it is necessary and proper for men to work: in these days therefore come and be healed, but not on the Sabbath day.'" The Pharisees were indignant. They wanted to find fault with everything He did. If somebody was of that frame of mind, even if you were perfect, you couldn't please him. What about you and me? We are not going to please everyone. Even when you are perfect you can't please everybody.

He "pulled no punches." As things came to this point in time, it was time to speak very plainly. There was a time when He taught in parables. There was a time to lay a foundation and a time to be prepared to speak with boldness and "lay it all out"—"let the chips fall where they may."

The time is coming in this age when Christ's message is going to be proclaimed in greater power and boldness, and the power of God will be made manifest. That will result in persecution

on a level that will lead into the Great Tribulation. There are serious events that are going to occur that are not occurring right now.

Verses 15-16, “Therefore the Lord answered him, saying ‘You sanctimonious pretender, hypocrite! On the Sabbath doesn’t each one of you loose his ox or donkey from the manger, and lead it away to drink? And shouldn’t this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound these eighteen long years, be loosed from this shackle of the devil on the Sabbath day?’” Christ said, ‘You extend mercy to your animals. Of all your hypocrisy! You turn an ox loose to get a drink, and you want Me to wait until sundown to heal this woman.’

Verse 22, “And He went through, city by city, and village by village, teaching, and making progress towards Jerusalem.” Towards Jerusalem, on His way, step by step.

Verses 23-25, “And someone asked Him, ‘Lord, are there only a few who will be saved?’ But He answered them, ‘Labor and fight with zeal and diligence to enter in through the narrow gate: because many, I say to you, will desire to enter in, but will not be able. From the time that the master of the house shall get up and shut the door, and you shall stand outside and begin to knock at the door, saying, “Lord, Lord, open the door for us!” and answering He will tell you, “I do not know you, nor where you are from.”’” He went on to describe those who were going to be standing on the outside looking in.

Verses 26-27, “Then you will begin saying, “We ate and drank in Your presence, and in our streets You taught us.” But He will answer, “I tell you, I do not even know you, nor where you originated. Depart from Me, all you workers and teachers of unrighteousness and iniquity.”’”

Some of you are going to be told, ‘Depart from Me.’ He was speaking to some of the religious leaders of His day. They had a disregard and disrespect for the law of God. He said, ‘You teach lawlessness.’

Verses 28-30, “There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, but you yourselves are cast out. And they shall come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God. And listen, there are those who are last, who shall become the first; and there are those who are first, who shall become the last.” The Jews had a first opportunity. They had access to the Scriptures, and it was first preached to them. You

are going to see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom and every ethnic group, people that you look down on. You are going to find yourself on the outside. Some of those that are last will be first—those with the last opportunity or at a much later time. Those who have had a chance to be in have “blown it.”

This is an important principle for those who grew up in the Church. If you have grown up in the Church, you have had an opportunity to be in on the ground floor. If you have not valued that access you have through your parents and practice iniquity, you are going to find you are on the outside looking in. People God has called will be in the first resurrection; you will be “bringing up the rear” in the second resurrection or later. There is a principle here. We better take advantage of opportunities. We have an opportunity, a first opportunity, but if we don’t utilize it, it will slip from our grasp. It is important that we grasp that. The religious leaders did not grasp that.

Verse 34, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to you; how often would I have gathered your children, in the same way a mother hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you rebelled.” He describes a mother hen and how she gathers her chicks in danger; they get up under her wings. Christ said, ‘I have that kind of protective feeling toward Jerusalem, but you don’t.’ That is a sad state of affairs.

In time sequence it was the Feast of Dedication. John 10:22, “And the Feast of Dedication was taking place at Jerusalem, and it was winter.” Verse 40, “And He departed again across the Jordan River to the place where John was first baptizing; and remained there.”

Luke 14:8-10, “When you are invited to a wedding feast by anyone, do not sit down in the first and most important place; since someone more honorable and distinguished than you may have been invited by him, and the one who invited both of you may come and tell you, “you will have to give your place to this one;” and then with embarrassment you may begin to take the very lowest place. But when you are invited, go sit down in the lowest place; so that when he who has invited you comes, he may say to you, “Friend, come up higher!” Then you will have honor instead of embarrassment in the presence of those who are sitting at the table with you.”

At a wedding, you don’t grab the most important spot or you might find yourself embarrassed. Someone else may come that the important spot

belongs to. Go sit at a lower place, and then maybe someone will come and ask you to take a better place.

Verse 11, “Because anyone who exalts himself shall be abased; and anyone who humbles himself shall be exalted!” Be willing to step back and not exalt yourself.

Verses 12-14, “And He also said to the chief Pharisee who had invited him, ‘When you make a dinner or supper, do not call your friends, nor your brethren, nor your relatives, nor your rich neighbors; since they will also invite you in return, and you will be paid back. But when you make a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind: and you shall be blessed; because they do not have the means to pay you back. Then you shall be rewarded in the resurrection of the righteous.’” It shouldn’t be simply a matter of inviting those who can return the favor, but those who can’t return the favor.

Verses 16-21, “But Jesus answered him, saying; ‘A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And at the dinner hour he sent out his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; because everything is ready now.’ And every one of them in the same attitude began excusing himself. The first one told him, ‘I have just purchased a field, and it is imperative that I go out and see it: I beg you to have me excused.’” And another said, “I have just bought five teams of oxen, and I am going to inspect and test them out: I request, have me excused.” And another said, “I have just married my wife, and because of this I am unable to come.” And after returning, that servant reported these excuses to his master. Then the master of the house became angry, and told his servant, “Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring back the poor, and the crippled, and the lame, and the blind.””

Those that were invited didn’t come. They didn’t appreciate and value that invitation. The result was that the servant was finally instructed to bring in the lame and the blind.

Verses 22-23, “And the servant said, ‘Sir, it has been done as you have commanded, and still there is room left.’” Then the master told the servant, “Go out into the highways and through the hedgerows, and urge them to come in, that my house may be filled with guests.”” The point was that many of those who had first opportunity did not value that opportunity.

Revelation 3:11, “...let no man take your crown.” The point is that if we don’t respond to the opportunity that God provides us, God is not

going to be left empty handed. He will fill the place, but it may not be with us. This is a principle for all of us as well as our children. We are to deeply value the opportunities God gives; if we treat them cheaply and don’t value and appreciate it, God will ultimately fill it with someone else.

Luke 14:25-26, “Later, great multitudes were going with Him: and turning to them He said, ‘If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate [that is, love God more than] his own father and mother, and his wife and children, and his own brothers and sisters, and besides all of these, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.’” Love much less than God, by comparison—even his own life. Obviously, God was not saying you should hate. We are to honor our father and mother and love all men, but by comparison to the love we have for God, what we have for others would be almost the comparison to hatred. Love much less by comparison. God will not take second place. He insists that He comes first. There is a commitment involved.

Verse 27, “And whoever does not carry his own cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.” This discipleship requires that we stand ready to forsake anything and everything in order to follow Him.

The parable of the lost sheep is given in v. 28, “Because which of you, desiring to build a tower, doesn’t first sit down and estimate the cost, to see if he has the means for its completion?”” It emphasizes counting the cost. If we are going to be Christians, if we are to be disciples, we are to give our all. Many of God’s people have had to pay with their lives. The Bible is the obituary of many of the people of God who suffered martyrdom. God expects a commitment.

Luke 15:1-7, “All the publicans and sinners were gathering around to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were complaining and grumbling, saying, ‘This man welcomes and receives sinners, and eats with them.’” Then He spoke this parable to them, saying, ‘What man of you, if he has a hundred sheep, and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and search for the one which is lost, until he finds it? And after finding it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And then he returns to the house, and calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep which was lost!’” I say to you, that in exactly the same way, there shall be more joy in heaven over one sinner who is repenting, than

over the ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance.”

Verses 8-10, “Or what woman having ten coins, if she loses one, doesn’t light a lamp, sweep out the house, and meticulously search for it until she finds it? And after finding it, she calls her neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me; because I have found the coin which I lost!’” In exactly the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who is repenting.”

Joy over one sinner who is repentant. When someone is baptized, that is an occasion of note. God is taking note and is watching; there is joy in the presence of the angels of God. That is what Jesus said and He should know. When you were baptized, it was a celebration of occasion in heaven. We don’t want to treat it cheaply and casually. It is of tremendous value.

Luke 15:11-15 is the parable of the prodigal son. “And He said, ‘A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the property.’” So he divided the property between them. And a short time after that, the younger gathered together all that he had, and went away into a distant country; and there he squandered his property, and dissipated himself by unrestrained and debauched living. And after wasting everything he had, a raging famine swept throughout that country; and he began to be hungry and destitute. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.”

He drank it up and threw it away. Hard times came. Finally he got a job feeding pigs. For a Jew, there could probably be no more humiliating job. Christ picked the job for him that would be horrible.

Verse 16, “And he was longing to fill his belly with even the husks which the swine were eating: and yet no one gave him anything.” Soon he began sharing their food.

Verses 17-19, “Then he came to himself, and said, ‘How many hired servants of my own father have an abundance of food, but I am dying with famine?’” Then getting up, he said, “I will go to my father, and I will tell him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you. And I am no longer even worthy of being called your son. Make me the same as one of your hired servants.’”” After a while he came to the realization, ‘You know the hired help on my dad’s farm have it much better than this. I am going to swallow my pride and tell him, ‘I have

sinned against heaven and you. I am not asking to be back as a son, but would you please give me a job.’”

Verses 20-24, “So he got up, and returned to his father. But while he was still at a distance, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion and mercy: and running out to meet him, he embraced him; then with emotion and excitement, he kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you, and I am no longer of fit character even to be called you own son.’” But the father told his servants, “Quickly bring the best robe, and clothe him; and give him a ring for his hand, and sandals for his feet. And go, bring the fattened calf, and kill it; let us have a feast, and celebrate: Because this, my son, was dead, but is alive again; and was lost, but is found!” And they began to celebrate.” The father saw him a long way off and made a great preparation.

Verses 25-27, “But the older son had been out in a field. And as he was coming closer to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of his servants over to him, and inquired what was the meaning of these things. And he told him, ‘Your brother has returned, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has returned to him safe and sound.’” The older son heard all the great festivities.

Verse 28, “But he became angry, and was not willing to go in. Therefore the father came out, and begged him to join the celebration.” He was in a pretty foul attitude about the whole thing.

Verses 29-30, “But answering he said to his father, ‘Look, for so many years I have served you, and not once have I transgressed your commandment: but never did you give me even a kid goat that I might celebrate with my friends! But when this son of yours returns, who has squandered your property with harlots, then you kill the fattened calf for him!’”

‘I have done everything you wanted me to. You never even gave me a kid goat to celebrate with my friends. He has used his inheritance on harlots, etc.; now he is coming back. It’s not fair.’

I want to point out some things. The father loved the son enough to turn him loose and let him learn his lesson. The natural tendency of the parent is to bail out the child when he is in trouble, protecting him from the consequences of his actions. The father realized that until the son was brought down to a point of humility and surrender; he couldn’t be worked with. He had to leave it in God’s hands. He hit bottom. He

realized that anything was better than this. He returned with an attitude of humility. How did the father receive him? With open arms! He was happy, thrilled and glad to see him. It wasn't a lack of love. God loves us enough that He allows us to learn lessons.

The other aspect I would call your attention to—notice what he told his older son.

Verses 31-32, “But the father answered him, “Son, you are always with me, and everything that I own is yours. But on this occasion, it is right to celebrate and rejoice: because this your own brother was dead, but is alive again; and was lost, but is found!”” You notice they were not going to re-divide the inheritance. ‘Listen, everything I have is yours. It is all yours, but this is something special. We should celebrate.’

Even when you learn a lesson, it will never be simply as though you had never gone. There are penalties of life, some more serious than others. It wouldn't have been fair to take the property and divide it again. A person can learn lessons and repent, and God forgives; but sometimes you accumulate battle scars. They will always leave a scar.

We know our children are going to get nicks along the way, but we hate to see them get the battle scars. Forgiveness doesn't turn back the clock. You can repent deeply, and God will forgive you. But you can't go back and start over twenty years ago or five minutes ago. Again, this is an important principle. You can't go and sow your wild oats and come back and everything is okay. Yes, God will forgive, but there can be wounds and scars that can take their toll from which God would like to spare us.

Luke 16:1-2, “And he said also to His disciples, ‘There was a certain rich man, who had a hired administrator; and he was accused to the rich man of squandering his goods. Then he called his administrator and asked him, “What is this I am hearing about you? Give an accounting of your administration; because you cannot be my administrator any longer.”” He called him and said, ‘We are going to audit the books.’

Verse 3, “And the administrator said within himself, “What shall I do, because my master is taking the office away from me? I am unable to dig; I am ashamed to beg.”” He said, ‘What am I going to do?’

Verse 4, “I know what I will do, so that when I have been removed from the office, my master's debtors may welcome me into their house.””

‘I have a few days before the auditors come, and I am going to make provision for myself while I still have authority.’

Verses 5-7, “Then calling each one of the master's debtors, he asked the first one, “How much do you owe to my master?” And he said, “A hundred measures of oil.” And he told him, “Take your bill, sit down quickly, and write fifty.” Then another he asked, “And you, how much do you owe?” And he replied, “A hundred measures of wheat.” And he told him, “Take your bill, and write eighty.”” He slashed large amounts off their debts.

Verse 8, “And the master praised the unrighteous administrator, because he had acted shrewdly. For the sons of this world and society are in their own time more shrewd and wise than the sons of the light.” He praised him, not for the dishonesty, but for being shrewd. He was looking ahead. There is an expression, “give the devil his due”—he outsmarted me. They look ahead and make provisions. That is what this is saying. He did it in a dishonest way, but the basis of his actions was that he was looking down the road. The lesson is Christ said we also need to be thinking about what the future holds and making provisions for it.

Verse 9, “And I say to you, “Make friends to yourselves by the wise use of your physical wealth; so that when it fails, they may welcome you into the eternal dwelling.””

What is your best investment? The point is that anything in this world that may look like a good deal, don't kid yourself. There is no sure thing; it shall fail. What about money? Money is mammon, physical wealth. Utilize the physical resources in this world in a wise way, looking toward the future because there is coming a time when this economic system is going to collapse. But putting our hearts into this work, there is going to be dividends there.

There are those who will welcome us because of the tithes and offerings that allowed them to come into the knowledge of the truth. We came into contact with the work because others have given. The principle there is to learn a lesson from the unrighteous steward. He only thought in a temporary way, not in a long-term view. We also need to use the physical resources we have access to and get our priorities straight. We set the stage for something that goes way on beyond the here and now.

Verse 10, “Anyone who is faithful in the very least is also faithful in much: but anyone who in unrighteous and dishonest in the very least is also

unrighteous and dishonest in much.” If we are unrighteous in a little, we are unrighteous in a lot. Verse 11, “Therefore, if you have not been faithful with the unrighteous physical wealth, who is going to trust you with the true riches of God’s glory.” The point is to think ahead for a long-term view.

Verse 13, “No servant is capable of serving two masters: because either he will hate the one, and he will love the other; or he will follow one, and he will despise and reject the other. You are not capable of serving God and materialism.” We can’t choose two masters—around what does our life revolve?

Luke 16:19-21, “Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and satiated himself daily in splendor and luxury. And a certain poor man Lazarus, who was laid at his porch, was covered with open sores. Now he was longing to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. But instead the dogs were coming and licking his sores.”

The rich man was living with every luxury, and Lazarus was a poor man. He was hungry, covered with sores and desired to have the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table. The dogs came and licked his sores. Get the contrast? A dog showed him more compassion than a human being—a pretty poor contrast when a human being has less concern for his neighbor than a dog has.

Verses 22-23, “And it happened that the poor man died, and he was carried away [at the resurrection of the just] by the angels into the bosom of Abraham. And the rich man also died and was buried. Then in the grave [at the resurrection of the wicked] he opened his eyes, and he became filled with fear and torment, when he saw Abraham in the distance, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

Many get very confused over this story. The idea they get was that Lazarus went to heaven and the rich man went to hell. Christ was not going into a detailed explanation. He summarized it. The poor man (Lazarus) died, and at some point after he died (we are not told how long), he “was taken by the angels to Abraham’s bosom.” That is an expression that refers to an intimate relationship with Abraham, where a mother carries a little child.

When was Lazarus taken by the angels to meet Abraham?

Matthew 24:30-31, “...And they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His

angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, one end of heaven to the other.” He is going to send the angels, and they are going to gather together the elect. We live on a round earth, and everyone would be resurrected going in a different direction. But the angels go out to gather everyone together to meet over Jerusalem.

I Thessalonians 4:16-17, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

I Corinthians 15:52, “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

John 5:28-29, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

Lazarus died, but the time is coming when he will come forth out of his grave when the just are resurrected. Lazarus is gathered into Abraham’s bosom. That is a figurative statement. Not that everybody is going to spend their time in heaven on Abraham’s lap.

Galatians 3:7, 29, “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham... And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” When you are a Christian, you enter into a special relationship as a little child to the Father. God made the promise to Abraham. He is the heir of the whole world; he is going to inherit the whole world. We inherit through Abraham. He is the father of the faithful. This is a relationship likened to a child to the father. He was like a little child sitting there, holding him on his lap. Lazarus enters into this relationship at the resurrection.

Matthew 24:31, “And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

The rich man died, and we’re told that he is resurrected. As he opens his eyes (that means they were closed), all of a sudden he is restored to life. When he wakes up and opens his eyes, it

scares him. He sees the Kingdom of God in the distance. This is a picture of the third resurrection. There is no consciousness of the passage of time. Death in the scriptures is likened to sleep (I Corinthians 15:6). When you go to sleep, you are not aware of how much time has passed.

Luke 16:24, ““And crying out, he said, “Father Abraham, have compassion and mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip just the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.””” The first thing he wants is a touch of water to his tongue. That is what happens when you really get scared. Your mouth becomes like cotton. If he were resurrected in the kind of hell people talk about, he would have wanted a fire truck. He saw the fire in the distance.

Verses 27-28, ““And he said, “I beg you, father, that you would send him to my father’s house: Because I have five brothers; that he may exhort and warn them, that they also may not come into this place of torment.””” He wanted someone to go and warn his family. He was not aware of the passage of time.

Luke 17:1-2, ““And He said to the disciples, ‘It is impossible but that offenses will not come: but woe and misery to him by whom the offenses come! It would be more profitable for him if a millstone turned by a donkey were hung around his neck, and he were plunged down into the depths of the ocean, than if he were to cause one of these little ones to be offended and stumble.’”” He warns of offenses.

Verses 3-4, ““Pay attention to what you are doing: and if your brother sins against you, admonish him; and if he repents, forgive him. But if he sins against you seven times in a single day, and turns to you seven times in a single day, saying, “I repent, I am sorry;” you shall forgive.”” The importance of forgiveness!

Verse 10, ““And you also, in the same way, when you have done all things commanded you, say, “We are unprofitable servants: because we have done only that which was our duty to do.”””

An unprofitable servant is one who has to have everything pointed out to him. He will only do his duty. The profitable servant is one who sees the big picture, understands and is going to carry it out. To the unprofitable servant, you have to point out everything. It takes two men to do one man’s work. You can turn a profitable servant loose and he will do it right. He thinks the way you think. He has the big picture. That is what God wants. God wants us to learn to think like Him. We are to have the mind of Jesus Christ

(Philippians 2:5). We become a profitable servant, one that God can count on. It is the measure of conversion. It goes beyond simply complying with the rules. The unprofitable servants didn’t understand. Nothing was ever internalized. When someone wasn’t there telling them what to do, they reverted back to the world. God wants more than that of us. Those who don’t have the big picture slip back into other things.

Verses 12-19, ““Now as He was entering into a certain village, there were ten leprous men who met Him, and they were standing off at a distance. And they raised their voices and shouted, ‘Jesus, Master, have compassion and mercy on us!’ And looking at them, he told them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And it happened that as they were going, they were cleansed and healed. But one of them, seeing that he was healed, turned back, and crying out with a loud voice was glorifying God; and he came, prostrating himself at His feet, giving thanks to Him, and he was a Samaritan. And answering, Jesus said, ‘Were not ten cleansed? But where are the other nine? Were not any found returning to give glory to God, except this stranger?’ And He told him, ‘Stand up and go your way. Your faith has healed you!’”” Ten lepers—only one was thankful.

Verses 20-21, ““And He had been asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come. He answered them, saying, ‘The Kingdom of God does not come with observation and speculation. Neither shall they say, “Look here!”’ Because look, the Kingdom of God is standing among you.”” (KJV, “the Kingdom of God is within you.”) Some think that is some feeling in your heart. Note who He was talking to; He was talking to the Pharisees. You don’t have to be looking and wondering about these things. Christ said, ‘I am your King, and I am in your midst.’ They needed to look to Him. He was the representative of it.

Verses 26-27, ““And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating, and they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the very day Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed all.”” He begins to talk about the end times.

Verses 28-34, ““Conditions will be similar to what was happening in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, and they were building. But on the very day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained down fire and

brimstone from heaven, and destroyed all. This is exactly how conditions will be in the day the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, anyone who shall be on the housetop and his possessions are in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and anyone who is in the field, let him likewise not return to the things behind. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks and strives to save his life shall lose it, but whoever is willing to lose it shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." One taken and one left.

Verses 35-37, "Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two men shall be working in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.' And answering they said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' And he told them, 'Where the body is, that is where the eagles will be gathered together.'"

What is He talking about? Christ drew two analogies—the days of Noah and the days of Lot. Everybody was pursuing his normal everyday activities oblivious to God's judgment. Noah and Lot were taken to a place of protection, and then it all broke loose. The time is going to come when there is again going to be a division, and there will be those taken, as Noah and Lot were taken to a place of safety. Everyone else is going to be oblivious to what is going on around them, and when they do see what's happening, it will be too late. It is not referring to the return of Christ. They will be oblivious right up to that time period, until the time that God makes a distinction and takes His people to a place of protection. Just as He did Noah and Lot, and then everything breaks loose. It is not referring to the return of Christ.

Read Revelation 8:7-13, "...the sun scorching, great earthquakes, etc." No one will be eating and drinking during that time.

Luke 17:37, "And answering they said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' And He told them, 'Where the body is, that is where the eagles will be gathered together.'"

Revelation 12:14, "...on the wings of a great eagle..." This is symbolic of the gathering of God's people. They wanted the physical details. But Christ said that is not important. If Christ gave all the physical details, they would get their minds on that. The body, the Church, everybody will wind up at the right place. We need to get our minds on the spiritual, and then God will take care of the rest.

Luke 18:1-8, "And He also spoke a parable to them, for the purpose of showing how it is

absolutely necessary for them always to pray, and not give up, or falter and get weak; saying, 'There was a judge in a certain city, who didn't fear God, and wasn't a respecter of persons. And there was in that city a widow; and she kept coming to him, saying, "Avenge me of my adversary!" And for a time he would not: but afterwards he said to himself, "Even if I don't fear God, and I am not a respecter of persons, Yet because this widow keeps causing me trouble, I will avenge her, otherwise her perpetual coming will wear me out." But the Lord said, "Listen to what the unrighteous judge says, And shall not God execute the avenging of His very own elect, who call out to Him day and night, though He is being patient with them and their problems? I tell you that He will speedily execute the avenging of them. In spite of this, when the Son of Man comes, will He truly find faith on the earth?"' Persistence!

Verses 9-14, "Then He also spoke this parable to some who were confident and boasted within themselves that they were really righteous, and held all others in contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee was standing and praying with himself this way, "God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers, or even as that publican over there. I fast twice in every week, I tithe all things that I gain." But the publican, standing off at a distance, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his chest, saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee: because everyone who exalts himself shall be abased; but anyone who humbles himself shall be exalted.'"

The self-righteous Pharisee and the publican! One didn't lift his eyes to heaven; the other said, 'I am glad I am not like everyone else.' Who do you think God heard?

John 11:14-16, "Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus has died! Moreover I rejoice for your sakes, in order that you may believe, since I was not there. But let us go to him.' Then Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us go also, that we may die with him.'" Notice Thomas said, 'that we may die with him.' Christ said, 'we are going to go to him.'

Verse 43, "Then after saying these things, He called with a loud voice, 'Lazarus come out here!'" Christ resurrected Lazarus. Notice the reaction of the Pharisees.

Verse 53, “Therefore from that day they plotted and schemed together, that they might kill him.” That clinched it in their mind. ‘This is something of a scale that we cannot deny. We have to get rid of Him.’

Verse 54, “So Jesus could no longer appear publicly among the Jews, but left there, and went into the countryside near the desert, to a city called Ephraim; and He stayed there with His disciples.” He no longer appeared publicly before them.

Pharisees question Jesus about divorce: Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 10:2-12.

Matthew 19:3, “But the Pharisees came to Him, tempting Him, and saying to Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?’” The Pharisees were trying to trip up Christ.

Verses 4-7, “But He answered them, ‘Haven’t you read, that He who created them in the beginning made them male and female.’ And said, ‘Because of this a man shall leave father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife: and the two shall become one flesh. So then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has united and joined together, man is not allowed to separate.’ They retorted, ‘Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to divorce her?’” (Deuteronomy 24:1) They wanted to trick Christ into a technical argument.

Verses 8-9, “He answered them, ‘Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because of your hardheartedness: but from the beginning it was not this way. But I am telling you, whoever shall divorce his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery: and anyone who marries her that is divorced commits adultery.’”

There is a lot to learn from Christ’s answer. He never answered their question, ‘Is it okay to divorce your wife for any cause?’ He said, ‘If you are really interested in how many wives God wants you to have, see how many He made for Adam.’ He referred back to the beginning. ‘Moses allowed you because of the hardness of your heart. But from the beginning it was not so.’ Things he allowed carnal unconverted people to do should not be found among God’s people.

Verses 10-11, “His disciples said to him, ‘If this is the case of a man with his wife, it is not profitable to marry.’ But He said to them, ‘Everyone cannot receive this word, but those to whom it has been given.’”

‘Well, maybe we should not get married. That sounds pretty harsh.’

Jesus blesses little children: Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-17.

Christ takes up the little children and points out that a child-like attitude is important.

Leave everything and follow Christ: Matthew 19:27-30, Mark 10:28-31 and Luke 18:28-30.

Matthew 19:27-29, “Then Peter answered and said to Him, ‘Look, we have given up everything, and have followed You. What then shall be for us?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, those of you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And anyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for the sake of My name, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.’” Whatever is given up, you will be rewarded.

Matthew 20:1-15, remember the story of some who were hired just before quitting time. What is the point there? Some will have been called earlier in their life—twenty, thirty, forty years or more. Some are called only with six months or a year left in their life. Different ones come in at all stages—some at the beginning of their life and others in the twilight of their life and have only a short time. The outstanding example of that is the thief on the cross whose Christian life consisted of a few hours. But everyone will get eternal life. There is a reward that is given. Rewards in terms of responsibility are where the distinction is made, but not in terms of that basic distinction of eternal life.

Matthew 20:16, “‘In exactly the same way, the last shall be first, and the first shall be last: because many are called, but few are chosen.’”

James and John ask to sit at right and left hand of Jesus in the Kingdom: Matthew 20:20-24 and Mark 10:35-41.

Matthew 20:20-23, “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him, with her sons, worshipping Him, and was asking something from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you desire?’ She said to Him, ‘Give the word that these two sons of mine may sit, one on your right hand, and one on your left hand, in Your Kingdom.’ But answering, Jesus said, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink of the cup which I am about to drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism which I am baptized with?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’ And He said to them, ‘Yes, truly you shall drink of My cup, and you shall be baptized with the baptism which I am baptized with: but to sit on

My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but to those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.” “To sit on My right hand and at My left is not Mine to give, but the Father’s.”

Luke 19:11-12, “But as they were listening to these things, He spoke an additional parable, because He was nearing Jerusalem, and they thought that the Kingdom of God was about to appear immediately. Therefore He said, ‘A certain nobleman traveled into a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then to return.’” Some thought the Kingdom would immediately appear. The nobleman traveled to a far country. There were things that had to happen yet. It was not going to immediately appear. He was setting the stage for the fact that there is something in between.

John 12:1-8, “Then six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, who had died, and whom He had raised from the dead. Now they had prepared a supper for Him there; and Martha was serving, and Lazarus was one of those who sat with Him, Then Mary took a pound of very expensive ointment of pure spikenard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the aroma of the ointment. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who was about to betray Him, said, ‘Why wasn’t this ointment sold for three hundred coins, and the money given to the poor?’ But he said this, not because he actually had concern for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the moneybag, and carried what was put into it. But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone! Toward the day of My burial has she kept it. Because you will always have the poor with you; but you will not always have Me with you.’”

Mary anointed Christ with precious ointment. Judas said this was waste and extravagance; this could have been sold and given to the poor. Notice what John said. John said Judas was a thief. Judas was the treasurer; that is why he said what he said. It sounded impressive to others. Yes, that is kind of wasteful. Judas had a problem and Jesus knew it. God allows a problem to exist for a while before He does anything about it.

Verse 9, “Then a great multitude of the Jews knew that He was there: and they came, not on account of Jesus only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead.” Here Lazarus came forth when Christ appeared. That was kind of hard to deny. When he was walking down the street, he was pointed

out as the one who was resurrected. He was quite a celebrity there.

Verse 10, “But the chief priests proposed that they might also kill Lazarus.” They were really indignant; ‘let us get rid of him, too.’ We can see this kind of mentality that they had.

The next Bible study we will focus in on the three to four days before the Passover when things really came to a head. That’s when “no punches are pulled,” and things won’t last very long. Remember when He told the Pharisees they were snakes in the grass? It didn’t last very long.