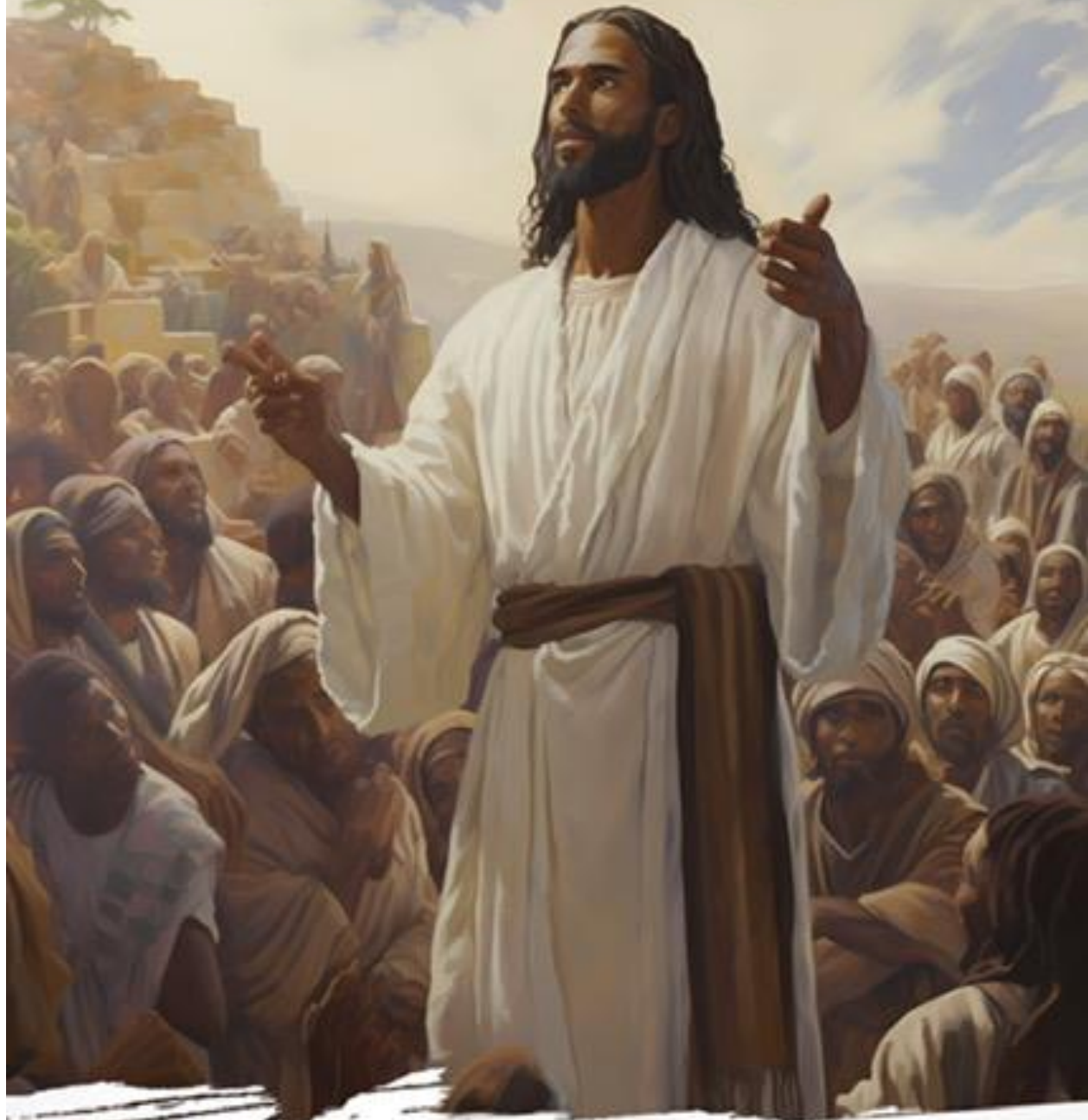


# **MOUNT CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH**

A Church grounded in the cross, growing in Christ and giving to the community.



## **The Messages of Christ**

Christian Education Student Workbook

**Series 46: April \* May \* June 2024**

Rev. Greg L. Oliver, Sr., Pastor

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*From the Pastor:*



Greetings in the Name of the Lord!

As we enter the second quarter of the year, let's reflect on the blessings of the first. We shared in joyful celebrations, learned from Black History commemorations, and celebrated the risen Christ during Easter services. I am especially grateful for your continued support and prayers, which have truly blessed my family and me. May God's abundant blessings be upon you all.

This quarter, our Sunday School study delves into the profound messages of Jesus Christ. His teachings were revolutionary, transforming hearts and minds. Love, acceptance, and forgiveness were central themes in His preaching. Jesus emphasized the importance of loving God with all our hearts and extending that same love to our neighbors. He shattered barriers, teaching that God's kingdom welcomes all, regardless of background or social standing.

I pray for your active and engaged participation in this study of God's word. Consider establishing a dedicated time for quiet reflection and personal prayer – a space to connect with the Father on a deeper level.

Remember the powerful words of Romans 8:30: ". . . nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Let's move forward with confidence, sustained by Jesus' love and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Together, in the second quarter, let's actively build God's kingdom on earth, reflecting its beauty and grace.

With love and blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Greg Oliver, Sr." The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Greg Oliver, Sr.

# The Message of Jesus the Christ

## Mount Canaan Sunday School Series 46

Second Quarter

April, May, June 2024

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## The Messages of Jesus the Christ

### *Jesus' Urgent Call to Repentance*

*And as Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him. <sup>10</sup> And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. <sup>11</sup> And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? <sup>12</sup> But when Jesus heard that, He said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. <sup>13</sup> But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (Matthew 9: 9-13; KJV)*

**Introduction:** The four gospels show us that Jesus preached on numerous topics, but first and foremost, Jesus preached a message of repentance. From that time, Jesus began to preach saying, “Repent for the kingdom is at hand”(Matthew 4:17; KJV). The apostles also preached repentance. Jesus said in Luke 24:46-47, *Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.* The Greek word translated “repentance” is *metanoia*, and the simple meaning is “a change of mind.” In common usage, however, we often speak of repentance as godly sorrow that leads to a turning from sin. However, the full biblical understanding of repentance goes beyond changing one’s mind. **In relationship to salvation, repentance is a change of mind and heart from an embrace of sin to rejection of sin, and from rejection of Jesus Christ to faith in Jesus Christ.** Therefore, true biblical repentance will always result in a change of mind, and a change of heart. Maybe not instantly, but it will happen inevitably for truly repentant persons.

#### **Jesus Doesn’t Just Call the Qualified, He Qualifies the Called:**

- ✓ Prior to Jesus’ call, Matthew’s profession was a tax collector, or a publican. A publican is someone who was contracted by the Roman government to collect taxes. As a Jew, stepping into this job was essentially an act of betrayal to his people. Tax collectors had very little accountability. They’d be told to collect a specified amount of money, but they could tell people they owed a higher amount, and citizens had no power to dispute it. Tax collectors earned a reputation for telling people they owed more than they did and they pocketed the difference. To the Jews, tax collectors were the embodiment of sin.
- ✓ The calling of Matthew proves Jesus is no respecter of a person’s profession nor their past positions when He has need of them to serve in His army. Also, Jesus calls souls knowing who they are right then, moreover, He also sees clearly who they will become in the future for the kingdom of God. When called by Jesus, Matthew arose and followed Jesus without any hesitation. He didn’t ask Jesus any questions, nor did he make any excuses, and he didn’t try to grab more money. Matthew didn’t even try to negotiate a transitional 401K retirement plan with the Roman government.
- ✓ Some theologians say Matthew may have heard Jesus speak or heard about Him in and around Capernaum. Regardless, there is no biblical record that Matthew had ever had an encounter with Jesus before his call. Matthew with a repentant heart, left ever thing concerning tax collecting to never return. He also quickly offered to make restitutions to those he had wronged by over collecting the amount of taxes they owed.

## **Jesus Was Comfortable Eating with Publicans and Sinners:**

- ✓ The word *publican* is an English translation of the Greek word *telónés*, which means “tax-collector.” A publican had the job of collecting taxes. In the Bible, publicans were Jews who worked for the Roman government to collect taxes from Jewish citizens, they often collected additional fees to pad their already-extravagant salaries and lifestyles.
- ✓ The Greek term translated “sinner” in the Bible carries the idea of a person who is “missing the mark.” Thus, a sinner is missing God’s mark and is in fact missing the whole point of his or her life. Sin is rebellion and disobedience against God, and the violation of God’s law that demands punishment and death.
- ✓ Matthew esteemed Jesus and His priceless grace towards him so highly until he went out and invited all his friends and acquaintances to dinner with Jesus. Matthew was a spiritually deficient beggar who had found the bread of heaven and he wanted other lost sinners to meet the only One who can save them from sin and themselves.

## **The Pharisees Despised and Questioned Jesus for Eating with Publicans and Sinners**

- ✓ The Pharisees were an influential religious sect within Judaism in the time of Christ and the early church. They were haughty and known for their emphasis on personal piety. The word *Pharisee* comes from a Hebrew word meaning “the separated ones.”
- ✓ The Pharisees considered themselves Hebrews-of-Hebrews who were above all other people, and they considered themselves perfect keepers of the law. They believed the letter of Moses’ moral laws, ceremonial laws and civil laws but not the spirit of them. The Pharisees believed the law was superior to the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ. Further, they taught that Jews should observe the 613 laws of the Torah.
- ✓ The Pharisees personally confronted Jesus’ disciples because Jesus sat down to eat with publicans and sinners at Matthew’s home. The Pharisees believed to eat and drink with publicans and sinners declared any person that do so as unrighteous and a sinner. They were arch enemies of Jesus during His entire ministry. The Apostle Paul, before his Damascus Road conversion, was one of the most well-trained and well-known Pharisees.

## **Jesus Came to Call Sinners to Repentance, Not the Self-Righteous:**

- ✓ Jesus’ plan was to build caring relationships with people, to show them grace and mercy, and for them to show grace and mercy to one another. Also, according to Luke 19:10, Jesus’s key mission was *to seek and to save those that were lost*, which includes all of us.
- ✓ Scripture places a premium price on repentance. Jesus says: *No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.* (Luke 13:3). Additionally, the Bible says angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner who comes to the Lord by repentance.
- ✓ Matthew 9:13 says *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*”. *Jesus was merciful and acceptant in His thoughts, attitude, words and actions towards sinners.* John 3:17 says *for God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world may be saved through Him. Jesus says for I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*

## **Conclusion**

Repentance is a command of Jesus and a core requirement to see and get into heaven. Jesus doesn’t just call the qualified, He qualifies the called. We must be comfortable like Jesus eating with sinners. We must operate in the world but not like the world. In our Christian journey, we must never question the deity and the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Remember He came to call sinners to repentance and not the righteous, the self-righteous, self-elevated and the self-centered religious people who think they have it all together.

In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## **The Messages of Jesus the Christ**

### ***Jesus Must Suffer Many Things, Be Killed, and Be Raised Up on the Third Day***

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*Now when Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets. He said to them, But who do you yourselves say that I am? Simon Peter answered, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. From that time Jesus began to point out to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem and to suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised up on the third day. Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. (Matthew 16: 13-17, 21 and 24; NASB).*

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**Introduction:** Matthew 16: 13-24 describes a conversation between Jesus and His 12 disciples about His identity, His mission, His Church and their transcendent ministry. Jesus and His disciples entered the region of Caesarea Philippi where the population was primarily Gentile. This region gave Jesus more intimate time to teach His disciples about His mission. In addition, Jesus wanted to reinforce that He was the Christ (the Anointed One) and that He would have to suffer many things in Jerusalem, be killed, and be raised from the dead on the third day. Jesus goes on to tell them that anyone who will be His disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him daily.

#### **Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of the Living God:**

- ✓ After Jesus disciples answered His first question, Jesus got more personal by asking them *who do you yourselves say that I am*. Peter, being the outspoken leader of the 12 disciples, made one of the most profound declaration of faith in all the Bible, ***You are the Christ, the Son of the living God***. Jesus responded by saying , *"Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*
- ✓ When Jesus initially called His disciples to follow Him, they were attracted to Him as a remarkable Rabbi. They committed themselves to Him as His students, as was customary in that day. Yet over time, Peter and the other disciples understood that Jesus was much more than a mortal man, but was the Messiah revealed in Scripture.
- ✓ Also, Peter and the disciples learned firsthand that Jesus was much more than John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. The disciples also learned that Jesus was more than a national reformer, more than a miracle worker, a faith healer and more than a prophet. Jesus was and is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God!

#### **Jesus Had to Go to Jerusalem and Suffer Many Things:**

- ✓ One of man's pressing question is: Why do we have to suffer even when we obey God? Suffering of any kind was not part of God's original creation. Everything He created was good. Sin corrupted the world at Adam and Eve's disobedience. Jesus came to take away the sin of the world by suffering at the hands of the Jewish and Roman authorities.
- ✓ *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).* In John 19:30, as He was dying, Jesus said, "It is finished." You see, Jesus succeeded in His mission to do God's will. A Christian's success is accomplished by doing God's will.

- ✓ Jesus candid words to His disciples were quite a shocking, especially after understanding that Jesus was the Messiah, the last thing they expected was the Messiah would have to suffer many things. Furthermore, all followers of Jesus Christ, like His disciples, must understand we have to bear our cross before we can receive our crown - no cross, no crown.

### **Jesus Had to Be Crucified in Jerusalem**

- ✓ The crucifixion and death of Jesus was a must because of two great facts: man's horrible sin and God's unconditional love. While Jesus' death was the ultimate example of man's sin against God, it was also the supreme expression of God's love towards man and the world.
- ✓ Jesus came to earth to die for our sins because we owed a great debt we could not pay and Jesus paid an incredible price He did not owe. *There is no remission of sin without the shedding of Jesus' blood* on a blood soaked cross on a skull like hill in Jerusalem.
- ✓ *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed* (Isaiah 53:5). In John 19:30, as he was dying, Jesus said, "It is finished." The cross teaches us a course about love. In John 15:13 Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down their life for their friends." Jesus freely died for our sins because God so loved the world.
- ✓ Matthew 27 says *they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, where they crucified Jesus. The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. Also, the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. Now as the centurion and his men were guarding Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the other things that were happening, they became extremely frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"*

### **Jesus Was Raised from the Dead by God on the Third Day Morning:**

- ✓ Isaiah 53 foretold the work of the Messiah is: He must die, and after His death He must be raised up to life on the third day. *And that He (Jesus) was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (I Corinthians 15:4; KJV)*
- ✓ *Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:46-47)*
- ✓ *As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth ([Matthew 12:40](#)). Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb ([Matthew 28:1](#); NKJV).*
- ✓ The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact for Christians that proves His sinless character and divine nature. The Scriptures said God's "Holy One" would never see corruption ([Psalm 16:10](#); KJV). The resurrection of Jesus Christ validates His deity as well as the Old Testament prophecies about Him. Christ's resurrection also proved His own claims that He would be raised on the third day ([Mark 8:31](#); [10:34](#)).

**Conclusion** The core beliefs of Christians must have a foundation in knowing **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God**. To fulfil prophesy, Jesus had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the ranks of the religious leaders. After excruciating suffering and being hung up for our hang ups on a bloody cross, Jesus willingly gave His life a ransom for many. All glory goes to God for raising Jesus up on the third day morning according to Scripture. Now Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God His Father interceding and mediating for us, and super ruling His entire universe.



In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## **The Messages of Jesus the Christ**

### ***Jesus Declares, Demonstrates, Deploys and Directs the Kingdom of God***

*At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (God)? And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (God). (Matthew 18: 1-4; KJV)*

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**Introduction:** The kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven are synonymous; Bible scholars believe Matthew used kingdom of heaven out of respect for the Jews. Jesus used the kingdom of God 126 times; therefore, Jesus is both the faithful ruler and the righteous King over His kingdom. Without a doubt, the kingdom of God was, is, and will always be extremely important in Jesus' past, present and future reign. We must never overlook this prominent theme in Jesus' ministry; and we must be assured the kingdom of God is significant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century church. This lesson will examine four ways Jesus declares, demonstrates, deploys and directs the kingdom of God.

#### **1. Jesus Declares the Kingdom of God**

- ✓ With the coming of Jesus Christ to earth, the kingdom of God begins not in the coronation of a mighty earthly king, but in the birth of a baby in a manger in Bethlehem. Jesus revealed that His purpose is to proclaim the kingdom of God.
- ✓ Jesus described his mission by saying that he “must preach the good news of the kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43). Yet as Jesus' ministry begins in Mark, he announces, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” ( Mark 1:15; KJV). Where the king is, there is the kingdom. This is precisely why Jesus says to the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (Luke 17:21; KJV).
- ✓ Through His own words, Jesus explains the kingdom and invites people to enter into it. Luke summarizes Jesus' ministry as “proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:1) The declaration of the kingdom often came through the parables of Jesus that illustrated what it was and how it worked.

#### **2. Jesus Demonstrates the Kingdom of God**

- ✓ Through his works, Jesus shows the power of the kingdom and his authority over Satan the prince of darkness. As Jesus explains, “If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Luke 11:20; KJV). Jesus not only declares the kingdom in His words but also demonstrates the kingdom in his works.
- ✓ Now when Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them by saying, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, “See here!” or “See there!” For indeed, the Kingdom of God is within you’ (Luke 17:20-21). We know from Scriptures the Pharisees were religious teachers of that day who opposed Jesus. So, we can conclude that Jesus Christ was definitely not saying that the Kingdom of God was in them! The Greek phrase *entos humon*, translated “within you,” would be more accurately translated “in your midst.”

- ✓ The Kingdom of God was plainly not in the hearts of the Pharisees who withstood Christ, many even wanting to kill Him! What Jesus was telling them was that as the King of the Kingdom of God, He was right there in their midst demonstrating His message and doing the work of the Kingdom. Unfortunately, the Pharisees outright rejected Jesus and despised His gospel of the Kingdom. Therefore, we must strive daily to live a kingdom life that pleases the Lord.

### 3. Jesus Deploys the Kingdom of God

- ✓ Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. When Jesus came up out from the water, a dove landed upon Him and God spoke from heaven and said: *This is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased.* After Jesus' baptism, He was driven in the wilderness by the Holy Spirit for 40 days where He soundly defeated the devil's temptations with the Word of God.
- ✓ While walking near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus called, trained, and deployed His twelve disciples. These twelve followed Jesus Christ and learned of the kingdom from Him for three years. The twelve disciples were ordinary men whom God used in an extraordinary manner to change the world for the Kingdom of God. The Gospels record the constant failings, struggles, and doubts of these twelve men, however they all were faithful until death except Judas Iscariot.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit transformed the disciples into powerful men of God who turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). The twelve disciples' transformation happened because they had spent quality time with Jesus. Moreover, may we be found faithful until death, and have the same testimony of impacting the nations for God.
- ✓ Jesus sends His followers out as ambassadors of the kingdom of God to herald its arrival. This deployment happens in Luke 10 as Jesus sends out the 70, instructing them to say, "The kingdom of God has come near to you" (Luke 10:9).

### 4. Jesus Directs the Kingdom of God

- ✓ In the great commission, King Jesus issues his discipleship battle plan to the church because he possesses "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt 28:18). Jesus sends his soldiers to the front lines to engage and defeat the kingdom of darkness.
- ✓ Hebrews 8: 1-2 says Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being. At times it may seem the kingdom of this world reigns, but the ultimate ruler, it is our true and better King Jesus who declares, *Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.* (Acts 7:49)
- ✓ *He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.* (Hebrews 7:25)
- ✓ Jesus is our advocate and defender in heaven before God representing us and making *intercession* for His followers.
- ✓ *Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.* (John 14:1-3)

- ✓ *Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11; KJV)*
- ✓ In Jesus' second coming, He will return as a triumphant warrior king. the name scribed on his body is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev 19:16). At last, He places all His enemies under his feet as He directs His kingdom that fully reflects His righteous rulership.

**Concluding Comments:**

Jesus ushered in the kingdom of God at His incarnation, virgin birth. He clearly declared and demonstrated the kingdom during His life on earth as He went around doing good and always doing the absolute will of His Father. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. Now, He wants us to love Him and to have a passion for lost souls, as we deploy from the steeple to the people. Jesus is forever directing His going church for our dying world. He taught His disciples that the way to eternal life is narrow, and those who enter into the kingdom are those who obey and do the will of His Father.



In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## The Messages of Jesus the Christ

### *The Seven I AM Statements of Jesus Christ*

Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see My day. He saw it and was glad. Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and You have seen Abraham? Truly, truly, I tell you, Jesus declared, before Abraham was born, I AM. John 8:56-58 NASB

**Introduction:** In the Old Testament, Exodus 3:14, God first mentioned His name to Moses at the burning bush, God said “*I AM WHO I AM*”. *This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you’*. Therefore, in Judaism, “**I AM**” is unquestionably understood as a name for God by the Jewish people. Also, in the New Testament, Jesus responds to a complaint by the Pharisees where Jesus says *before Abraham was I AM*. There is no doubt that the Jews understood Jesus’ claim to be the eternal God incarnate, because they took up stones to kill Him. All four gospels individually proclaim a distinctive revelation of who Jesus is. Matthew proclaimed Jesus as King; Mark proclaimed Jesus as a Servant; Luke proclaimed Jesus as a Man. and John proclaimed Jesus as God. Jesus makes these seven I AM statements only in the Gospel of John. Below are the seven “I AM” statements found in John’s gospel.

**1. Jesus’ first I AM statement is “I AM the Bread of Life”** (John 6:35, 41, 48 and 51, KJV). John’s Gospel is unique from the other three synoptic (see similar) Gospels. John’s Gospel reveals the same Christ but he highlights His deity. Jesus establishes a pattern that continues through John’s gospel—Jesus makes a statement about who He is, and He backs it up with something He does. In this case, Jesus states that He is the bread of life just after He had fed the 5,000 in the wilderness. The Apostle John used the word “believe” throughout his gospel because he wanted his readers to know Jesus is One the prophets had foretold. Jesus was born in Bethlehem which means the house of bread. Just as the physical body needs bread and water to grow and survive, the spirit and soul of man need Jesus, the Bread of Life, for survival, strength, and salvation.

**2. Jesus’ second I AM statement is I AM the light of the world** (John 8:12; 9:5, KJV). This second “**I AM**” statement in John’s gospel comes right before Jesus heals a man born blind. Jesus not only says He is the light; He proves it. The emphasis here is we must maintain a credible and obvious witness in the world, a witness that shows us to be faithful, God-honoring, trustworthy, sincere, earnest, and honest in all that we do. Also, we should always be ready to give an account of the hope that we have ( I Peter 3:15), for the gospel Light we have is not to be covered, but made obvious for all to see and benefit from, that they, too, may leave the darkness and come into the Light. We know that light illuminates dark places. In the same manner, Jesus brings light into a sin darkened world by Satan (II Corinthians. 4:4). Only Jesus can cure and light up our dark world because there is no darkness in Him at all. Whoever abides in Jesus shall not walk in darkness but will walk in the light as He is in the light.

**3. Jesus’ third I AM statement is I AM the door”** (John 10:7 and 9, ESV). The main purpose of a door is to control access to a building, church, home, vehicle, etc. Biblically speaking, Jesus is the door that controls our access into heaven (John 10:9). There is no other person whereby a man or woman can be saved and gain access to God’s presence but Jesus Christ. This I AM statement stresses that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven by any other means than Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus’ words in this passage are couched in the imagery of a sheepfold. He is the one and only way to enter the fold. *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber”* (John 10:1, ESV).

**4. Jesus' fourth I AM statement is *I AM the good shepherd*** (John 10:11, 14, KJV). When we think of the model earthly shepherd, we think of King David. He came on the scene by putting his life on the line for his father's and his family's sheep. Later we see David leaving the sheep fold and putting his life on the line for all of the nation of Israel against the Philistine giant Goliath. We know Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd who watches over His flock day and night. The distinction of Jesus the Good Shepherd from the hireling is Jesus gave His life for His sheep to protect and redeem them. Every time the hireling encounters a wolf, bear or lion, they will flee and leave the sheep alone and defenseless. With this **I AM** statement, Jesus portrays His great love and care for the world, especially His people. Jesus is the One who willingly protects His flock even to the point of submitting to death. (verses 11 and 15). When Jesus says He is the good shepherd, He deliberately took for Himself one of God's titles in the Old Testament (Psalm 23:1): **The Lord is my shepherd** I shall not want.

**5. Jesus' fifth I AM statement is *I AM the resurrection and the life*** (John 11:25, KJV). Jesus made this I AM statement immediately before raising Lazarus from the dead. Again, we see that Jesus' teaching was not just empty talk; when He made a claim, He substantiated it with action. He alone holds "the keys of death and the grave" (Revelation 1:18 NLT). In raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus showed how He can fulfill God's promise to ancient Israel: *The dead shall live; their bodies shall rise* (Isaiah 26:19, ESV). Jesus came to give his life a ransom for many and be resurrected to life on the third day morning. Since Jesus is the first fruit of all the brethren, we can now be resurrected to life eternal because of Him. Jesus came to give His life a ransom, willingly laid it down, for many and be resurrected to life on the third day morning. Since Jesus is the first fruit of all the brethren, we can now be resurrected to life eternal because of Him. Apart from Jesus, there is no resurrection nor eternal life.

**6. Jesus' sixth I AM statement is *I AM the way and the truth and the life*** (John 14:6, KJV). This powerful "**I AM**" statement of Christ's is packed with meaning. Jesus is not merely one way among many ways to God; He is the only way. False teachers and religions tell us every day there are many ways to heaven, others truth and paths to life everlasting. However, Jesus verifies He is the only way to God, the Word of God is the only truth of God and eternal life can only be obtained through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Scripture says "The very essence of God's words is truth" (Psalm 119:160, NLT), Jesus who is the Word, is introduced in (John 1: 1-3, and 14) *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him <sup>1</sup>not even one thing came into being that has come into being. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* Jesus alone is the source of life; He is the creator and sustainer of all life and the giver of eternal life.

**7. Jesus seventh I AM statement is *I AM the true vine*** (John 15: 1, 5, KJV). The final **I AM** statement in the Gospel of John emphasizes the sustaining power of Jesus Christ. We are the branches, and Jesus is the true vine, the only source of life for all believers. We are totally dependent branches connected to Him who is our life giver. We draw our life from Jesus as branches draw the necessary nutrients to survive and flourish. At first glance, we may assume that branches bear fruit on their own, but in reality, it's always the vine that gives life to all the branches and leaves. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it is joined in vital union with the vine, only those who are joined to Jesus Christ will receive their power from Him to grow to maturity and produce much fruit in the Christian life.

**Conclusion:** These seven **I AM** statements clearly confirms Jesus' deity and connects Him to the Old Testament and eternity past. Matter of a fact, there are appearances of Jesus from creation in Genesis to the end of the age in Revelation. We must believe with all our heart, and go tell everyone that Jesus is Lord and the author and finisher of our faith. Also, Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and the prophet. Without question, Jesus is the promised Messiah who is the Savior of the world.

In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:



## The Messages of Jesus the Christ

### *Fruit Bearing*

*Then Jesus told this story: “A man planted a fig tree in his garden and came again and again to see if there was any fruit on it, but he was always disappointed. Finally, he said to his gardener, ‘I’ve waited three years, and there hasn’t been a single fig! Cut it down. It’s just taking up space in the garden.’ “The gardener answered, ‘Sir, give it one more chance. Leave it another year, and I’ll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer. If we get figs next year, fine. If not, then you can cut it down.’” Luke 13:6-9 (NLT2)*

When we read this parable it may bring the question; why would someone plant a fig tree in the midst of a vineyard where grapes grow? To better understand what was going on let’s look from a natural standpoint. According to King Solomon, the fig tree and the grapes become ripe around the same time. Song of Solomon 2:13 13 - *The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.*

This is important to know to get to the why: Birds feed on fruits and vegetables. The sweet smell of the grapes would attract the birds, but the size of the figs and the fact that they would have a perch to sit on would draw them away from the tender skin of the grapes. The fig tree was a detractor. It was not planted for the fruit it bore to feed the people, but to feed the birds and allow for the growth of the grapes.

Now we know why it was there, so let’s look at why it did not grow and/or produce fruit. The dresser of the vineyard had not been doing what was necessary for the growth of the fig tree, he just let it be. It had enough nutrients and water from the ground to keep it alive, but it didn’t have an essential ingredient, the dung! The owner wanted to destroy it (because it didn’t bear fruit, so was seemingly worthless) but the keeper of the vineyard interceded and offered to do what he believed it would take for the fig tree to become fruitful and acceptable to the owner. With the offer to help the fig tree, he also said if he did all he could do and the tree still would not produce fruit, then he would not stand in the way of its destruction.

How can we relate that to a spiritual understanding for us? To start with, the fig tree seemed to be out of place among the sweet grapes in a ripe vineyard, but we now know that it served a purpose. It was not out of place. THE LORD had use for it just like HE had use for the grapes.

JESUS told this parable to get the people (the Israelites) to understand that all souls are HIS!  
*“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, ... Hath walked in My statutes, and hath kept My judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.” (Ezekiel 18:4-9)*

JESUS wanted them to understand, the people that were not of Abraham had the same opportunity to have eternal life as they did. Even though the Jews thought them “out of place” they had a purpose, GOD could use them, and salvation could be theirs. They just needed to be nurtured and given the “essential” ingredient to cause them to grow...belief in JESUS. They also had the same opportunity to die if they rejected JESUS.

Some of the Jews thought they had automatic salvation and did not need a Savior. Some rejected CHRIST due to their arrogance and pride in who they perceived themselves to be. The people assumed the bad

stuff that happened to every other nationality was due to their sin. JESUS let them know that although different, they all had the same choice to make, live or die. If they chose life, they would produce fruit and would not be destroyed. If they were given what was needed to produce fruit and failed to do so, they would be destroyed. The choice was the same for all! Be they Jew or Gentile.

**Fruit Bearing:** Men must bear fruit or else they shall perish. Jesus wanted to drive home the need for repentance by sharing the parable of a man seeking fruit. The man represents God; the vineyard dresser represents Christ; the vineyard represents either the world or Israel. Note these facts about the fig tree.

1. The fig tree was greatly privileged. It was *in the vineyard*, which meant several things.
  - a. It was planted (born) by the vineyard keeper (God or Christ) Himself. God causes every man to be born into the world. He stands behind every person as that person's Creator and Lord.
  - b. It was planted in the vineyard itself, right where there were other trees bearing fruit. It had the same soil, nourishment, rain, and sun from heaven. This is true of all persons who are born in nations where the gospel is freely preached.
  
2. The fig tree's purpose was to bear fruit. It had been *planted* to bear fruit and it *existed* to bear fruit. It was by nature a *fruit* tree; therefore, it was supposed to bear fruit. It had no other purpose for existing. So it is with man ([Luke 10:27](#); [Galatians 5:22-23](#)).
  
3. The day for reaping came. Jesus said five things about the day of reaping.
  - a. The vineyard owner, God Himself, was the One who came looking for fruit. The reaper was not someone else; it was God Himself.
    - ⇒ He planted the tree to get fruit (God put man on earth to bear fruit).
    - ⇒ He expected fruit, for He was the One who had planted the tree.
  - b. The vineyard owner found no fruit. The tree was bare.
    - ⇒ It failed in its purpose. (So many have all the privileges, yet so few ever honor God or bear fruit as they should.)
    - ⇒ The investment in the life of the tree was wasted.
  - c. The vineyard owner had waited a long time. He had come time after time looking for fruit.
    - ⇒ The tree had plenty of time to bear fruit, if it was going to ever bear fruit.
    - ⇒ The Owner's patience was extremely long-suffering.
  - d. The tree was wasting and misusing space. The purpose of the vineyard, the very reason for its existence was to produce fruit for the Owner.
    - ⇒ All space was needed for fruit.
    - ⇒ No space could be allowed to be wasted, not forever.
    - ⇒ The tree was hurting the production of the vineyard. The example of false believers affects the whole vineyard. They cheapen the vineyard (world, church) and cause others not to want its fruit.
  - e. The tree was to be cut down. The Owner pronounced judgment.
  
4. The mercy of God. The vineyard dresser interceded for the unfruitful tree. He asked for another year, one last chance for the tree.
  - ⇒ God granted one last chance, one last opportunity.
  - ⇒ Next year, however, was to be the last chance, the last opportunity for the tree.
  
5. The judgment was based upon fruit.

In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## **The Messages of Jesus the Christ** *Thy Faith Hath Made Thee Whole*

*As Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem, He reached the border between Galilee and Samaria. As He entered a village there, ten lepers stood at a distance, crying out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" He looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, "Praise God!" He fell to the ground at Jesus' feet, thanking him for what He had done. This man was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Didn't I heal ten men? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And Jesus said to the man, "Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you." Luke 17:11-19 NLT2*

Many come to THE FATHER and JESUS seeking help, but not all want more than that. Immediately after 911, the Churches were packed! People that had never been to Church were there, some that only showed up on Easter and Christmas were there, some that never wanted to hear about JESUS were there and all of them wanted GOD to save them from what might come. Their hearts were not turned toward GOD, only the direction they drove was turned.

In our lesson today, a few facts about a dreaded disease during the time Jesus was here on earth in the flesh—leprosy. Leprosy was the most terrible disease in the day of Jesus; it was greatly feared. It was disfiguring and sometimes fatal. In the Bible leprosy is a type of sin.

1. The leper himself was considered utterly unclean—physically and spiritually. He could not approach within six feet of any person including family members. "His clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, 'Unclean, unclean' " (Leviticus 13:45).
2. He was judged to be dead—the living dead. He had to wear a black garment so he could be recognized as from among the dead.
3. He was banished as an outcast, totally ostracized from society—earthly and heavenly. "All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be" (Leviticus 13:46). He could not live within the walls of any city; his dwelling had to be outside the city gates.
4. He was thought to be polluted, incurable by any human means whatsoever. Leprosy could be cured by God and His power alone. (Note how Jesus proved His Messiahship and deity by healing the leper.)

Imagine the anguish and heart-break of the leper, being completely cut off from family and friends and society. Imagine the emotional and mental pain. There are other recorded instances of lepers being healed (cp. Luke 7:22; Matthew 8:1; Matthew 10:8; Matthew 11:5; Mark 1:40).

The lepers all cried out, all called HIM JESUS, Master, all asked for mercy. It does not tell us if they were all Jew or Gentile, but we do know at least one was a Samaritan. JESUS did not ask who they were related to, what they did for a living before the disease hit them, or even if they believed in GOD. HE told them to go show themselves to the priest, even though He had not changed their situation. As they went, chances are some murmured and complained. We do not know how long they walked, but as they headed for the priest, their situation did change. Their bodies started to mend and to heal and feel better! They all experienced the same thing; they all became clean. Each one knew what was happening to them was not by chance. They knew they had just asked JESUS to have mercy on them, they knew they were not

allowed to go near the city or the priest except they were clean, yet JESUS told them to go. *This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest.* **Leviticus 14:2**

Even though they all were cleansed, they didn't all see it the same way. *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.* Matthew 15:9.

People who are interviewed after surviving a disaster will either speak about how lucky they were, how they survived due to their planning or give GOD the honor. We give credit according to the thoughts of our heart. We do not know what the nine lepers said but we do know the one honored GOD out of the thoughts of his heart. "...**thy faith hath made thee whole.**"

He knew JESUS healed him and the others and that he had to give thanks before anything else and he was not even a Jew. The ten were healed, not half or a little bit, but completely healed in their body. The one, when he came back and gave thanks and worshipped GOD, was given so much more! His heart believed in JESUS and loved THE LORD and he was given salvation. When JESUS said he was made whole it did not refer to him being healed, it referred to his soul being saved. Now his body and soul were healed, he was whole.

JESUS is not a respecter of person, He healed all that asked. Each one that ever received from JESUS had the same opportunity to be made whole. Each one could have acknowledged THE MESSIAH and honored THE FATHER, but just like today, we get blessed and act like we deserved it or were owed it. It rains on the just as well as the unjust, but that doesn't mean they will all grow. Choose life, honor and worship GOD, FOR HE IS WORTHY and we are not owed anything!

**Gratitude:** there are five points to note on the lesson of gratitude.

1. All the lepers were blessed and should have been thankful. This was true of the ten lepers, and it should be true of every man. Every one of the ten should have turned back and given thanks. They had all been blessed by Christ. Note they had all...

- recognized their need.
- shown humility.
- cried for mercy.
- persevered.
- believed and obeyed.

Their need had been met: they had all been healed. They now needed to turn back and give thanks and show appreciation.

2. One did give thanks. Note what he did.

- a. He glorified God immediately. He shouted at the top of his lungs with the loudest voice possible. He *witnessed* for God. God had cleansed him and he wanted all to know the great mercy and love of God.
- b. He worshipped Jesus. Note that he fell down on his face at the feet of Jesus. This was both humility and recognition of the power of God in Christ, two essentials for true spiritual cleansing (salvation, [Luke 17:19](#)).
- c. He was a Samaritan, the most despised and rejected of the men. (See [Deeper Study #2, Samaritan—Luke 10:33](#).)

3. Most did not give thanks. They kept going about their business at hand. They did not stop what they were doing nor return to the Lord to give thanks. But note something: they did return to their former world, the lives they used to live.

**For the Believer:** There is a lesson in the behavior of the lepers. Christ expects us to return to Him continually, to return, glorify, and worship Him as the Source of our power and strength for life.

4. The most rejected was the most thankful. Note the word "stranger" (*allogenēs*). It means that he was a "stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" ([Ephesians 2:12](#)). He had felt his need more keenly and deeply. He knew he needed to be saved, genuinely saved—spiritually as well as physically. Despite the fact that he had never known the real promises of God and that he had been without God in this world, he now knew God. His heart just broke forth to give glory to God. Jesus had saved him from so much.

5. The thankful man shall be the one truly saved—spiritually. The verb "made whole" (*sesōken*) is literally "has saved you." The man was clearly whole in body. This could be easily seen, but one could not see the spiritual and inward cleansing. Jesus was telling the man that his sins were forgiven; He was giving the man the assurance of salvation.

Now note an important question. Had the nine been spiritually cleansed as well as physically cleansed? Or was it lack of being spiritually cleansed that kept them from returning to give thanks? Or was Jesus just giving this man a strong assurance of salvation?

We are not told, but one crucial factor is known. This man, the grateful and thankful leper, was the man who received *assurance of being cleansed and of having his sins forgiven*. The others did not. They failed in being grateful and thankful.

Another important fact to note is this: gratitude and praise bring assurance to the heart. It stirs Christ to speak to the human heart, giving assurance of acceptance and cleansing.



In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## The Messages of Jesus the Christ

### *Watching and Readiness*

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*"You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected." Peter asked, "Lord, is that illustration just for us or for everyone?" Luke 12:40-41 (NLT2)*

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#### **Read the Message of Jesus in Luke 12:35-48.**

Jesus was still dealing with the subject of men who want things—wealth and riches and plenty. He was still dealing with covetousness ([Luke 12:13-21](#); [Luke 12:22-34](#)). The believer's mind is to be upon purity of life and service, not upon possessions and cares of this world. Jesus strongly warned: be prepared.

**Jesus Christ, Return**: the charge—be watching, be ready for the Lord's return. Jesus shared a striking illustration. The picture was that of a Lord who had gone off to attend a great marriage celebration. His servants had been left behind to look after the household and to wait for his return. The servants should be full of joy and rejoicing for their master's privilege in celebrating the marriage. They may not be, but they should be, and they should be looking after everything with all diligence until he returns. Jesus took the picture and applied it to Himself and His disciples.

The believer is to be in a state of readiness. He is always to be prepared, always watching and waiting for his Lord's return.

- ⇒ He is to be fully dressed, even to having his belt tight around his waist. This refers to personal preparation: purity of heart and life and keeping one's body ready to move and meet the Lord. In the East men wore robes that had to be tied with a belt at the waist or else the loose robes hampered movement and work. It was impossible to move quickly and freely without the belt being tight.
- ⇒ The Lord's servant is to have the lights burning, never allowing them to go out. Keeping the lights burning refers to serving and laboring for the Lord. He is to keep the lights of labor burning by faithfully serving and working for the Lord.

The idea with both the belt and the light is, of course, *readiness*: being prepared in body and labor, being pure and faithful. The believer must never lie down or slumber, never be caught off guard or unprepared. Jesus gave six reasons for living in a state of readiness, of purity and faithfulness.

1. The believer is to stay ready because the Lord is returning. He is the Head of the house; He owns the property. He did not desert the house and the property. He left to attend a great marriage feast. He will be returning to *His home and His property* (world). Note: the words "your" ([Luke 12:35](#)) and "you yourselves" are emphatic. No matter what others may do, "your loins...your lights" must be prepared. You must be like men who wait and stay awake and look and are prepared for their Lord. You must be *ready* to open the door *immediately* when He knocks, for He is going to return and knock. His return is an absolute certainty.

**For the Believer**: There is a message on salvation here as well. A person must be ready to open the door of his heart immediately when Jesus knocks. *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me"* ([Rev. 3:20](#)).



2. The believer is to stay ready because he will be served by Christ Himself. This is a most precious and wonderful promise, a most unusual promise. Imagine the Lord of the universe *servicing* us at a banquet, yet it is the promise made by Jesus! Why would such a promise be made to the believer?

God has only one Son, and God loves His only Son *so much* that He promises to take any man who honors His Son and to elevate that man to the highest of positions. Any man who honors God's Son will be highly honored by God. *"If any man serve me, let him follow Me: and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve me, him will My Father honour"* ([John 12:26](#)).

The person who honors God's Son is adopted as a child of God's, and that person becomes a brother to Christ and an heir of God. Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV): *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.*

The believer is to stay ready because the very thing for which he has been working is Christ's return. When Christ gathers us all together, His heart will be so overflowing with love and joy (as will ours) that He will begin serving us immediately: conforming us to His image, explaining and discussing everything with us, assigning us our eternal duties. Philippians 3:20-21 (ESV): *"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."*

3. The believer is to stay ready because he will be blessed. The word "blessed" (*makarioi* [PWS: 403](#)) means to pronounce a person happy or blessed. The idea is that Christ is going to make the believer happy and blessed. Happiness and blessedness will become a state of being, the constant experience of the believer. But note two points.

- a. It is conditional. The believer must be watching and ready for the Lord's coming (pure and faithful) if he is to be blessed.
- b. The Lord is not returning in the first watch. His return is going to be in the second or third watch. The night was divided into four watches by the Romans and into three watches by the Jews. The point is the importance of being ready: the hour of His return is unknown, but He is returning. It may be immediately; it may be later. The idea is that no one knows the time, but be ready—be prepared—if you wish to be blessed.

4. The believer is to stay ready because Christ will come unexpectedly. The parable is clear: the hour of the Lord's return is not known; His return is going to be unexpected. The believer...

- must not be careless: get tired of waiting up, get sleepy, be caught off guard, begin to disbelieve. (All of this can happen to a homeowner waiting on a burglar.)
- must watch: secure, sit up, stay awake, listen, look, take notice of all noises and sights (signs). (The burglar always comes in an unexpected hour.)

The believer must watch and be prepared as much as a homeowner would watch and prepare if he knew a burglar was coming. Matthew 24:27 (ESV): *For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*

5. The believer is to stay ready because Christ will come when *least* expected. Jesus could not have stated it any clearer; He could not have spoken any plainer. "When ye think not," He will come. He will be coming when we least expect Him to come. "Be ye therefore ready."

**Steward— Dedication— Faithfulness vs. Unfaithfulness— Rewards— Punishment, Degrees:** the parable of the steward.

1. Peter wanted to know if the message on *watching and readiness* was for the disciples only or did it apply to the world as well. Jesus answered by giving a parable known as the parable of the steward.

2. There was a faithful and wise steward. Jesus said four things about this steward.

a. He was a steward. A steward was just what Jesus said he was: a man who was made ruler over his Lord's household. He was the manager of the Lord's estate, responsible for all of it.

b. He was a slave (*doulos*), a bond-slave, a man under the Lord's will entirely. He was possessed by the Lord and his very life depended upon doing everything the Lord said (see note, [Slave—Romans 1:1](#)).

c. He was found "doing," that is, serving faithfully when the Lord returned. The Lord found him *doing exactly* what he should have been doing ([1 Cor. 4:2](#)).

⇒ He was overseeing the Master's household.

⇒ He was feeding the Master's family faithfully.

d. He was to be rewarded, made *ruler* and *promoted over all* that the Lord had. The idea is that the faithful and wise believer will be placed as highly as he can be placed. He will be given all that the Master and Lord has, that is, a complete estate to manage.

3. There was an unfaithful, an unwise steward (manager). Jesus said three things about this steward.

a. The unfaithful steward said there is *plenty of time*. Why? Because the Lord had delayed His coming; therefore, the steward thought the Lord's return was a long way off. Note: he did not doubt the Lord's return. He knew the Lord was returning, but he did not think it would be soon.

b. He did his own will, his own thing. He mistreated and abused others, both male and female, using and misusing, deceiving and taking advantage as he willed. And he lived a worldly life, indulging in the fleshly pleasures of partying and carousing, eating and drinking.

c. He was to be judged with the unbelievers. The Lord was very clear about this.

⇒ The unfaithful steward shall be caught by the Lord, caught *unaware*, "in a day when he looks not for the Lord."

⇒ The Lord will "cut the unfaithful steward in sunder." This means he will be condemned to death, cut off from among the living, exiled from eternal life. Most tragic, he shall be *cut asunder*, *cut off* from God's presence.

⇒ The Lord will appoint the unfaithful steward his portion with the unbelievers. Why? Because he was not genuine. He was a hypocrite.

4. There was the unfaithful steward identified. Note that Jesus answered Peter's question in these two verses. He was speaking to both believers and unbelievers. Who is to be watching and living in a state of readiness? Who is to be served by Christ and greatly blessed? The answer is clear: the faithful steward, not the unfaithful steward. Who then is the unfaithful steward? There are two classes named:

a. Class 1: the *servant* who knew the Lord's will and did not prepare himself ([Luke 12:35](#)), nor did he do the Lord's will (cp. [1 John 3:23](#)). This servant's judgment is tragic, for he knew God's will, but deliberately rejected it. Therefore, he will be beaten with many stripes, that is, due much more judgment and punishment.

b. Class 2: the men who did not know the Lord's will; therefore, they were not able to prepare themselves as they should have, nor were they able to faithfully serve the Lord.

However, note a critical point. Even the stewards committed things worthy of punishment. Therefore, they will be judged and condemned as well, but not as severely (cp. [Romans 1:20f](#); [Romans 2:11-16](#)).

The principle of judgment is perfect justice: having many gifts and possessing much wealth means a person is to serve and give much. A person is to use and give all he is and has—holding nothing back. Note that degrees of rewards and punishment are being taught.

In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## The Messages of Jesus the Christ

### *The Power of Prayer as Taught by Jesus*

*Then, teaching them more about prayer, He used this story: "Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.' And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can't help you.' But I tell you this—though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence. Luke 11:5-8 (NLT)*

#### **Introduction**

**Jesus prayed.** It was foretold in Psalms 109:4 that He would give Himself to prayer, and He was always praying.

Jesus often prayed, and He emphasized prayer as one of the greatest needs of human life. He always insisted that it was the source of His strength in living and serving God. Jesus prayed as a Son to His Father, and such intimacy stirred Jesus' disciples to want the same kind of relationship with God.

Prayer always begins with relationship. If there is not an established relationship, there is no basis for prayer. The Father's ear is always open to the children's cry. And if you have that relationship with God where you can say, "Father," then you've established that relationship that opens prayer for you, effective prayer for you. But if you do not have that relationship, then prayer is meaningless. There is only one prayer that God wants to hear from you if you are not His child, and that's the prayer, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." And that establishes then relationship, and opens this glorious opportunity of prayer for each one of you. But prayer begins with relationship.

#### **The Parable of the Friend at Midnight:**

Read Luke 11:1-13 and answer the questions below.

1. What request did the disciples make of Jesus that prompted this parable?
2. Why did the man go to his friend's house? What, do you suppose, made his need so urgent that he would go to his friend's house at such a late hour?
3. Why did the friend not answer the door at first?
4. Why was his friend at first reluctant to give him what he wanted? What finally moved him to give him what he requested?
5. What is the main lesson of this parable?

## The Lesson

Jesus will teach anyone to pray—anyone who is really sincere and wants to begin praying. Note what Jesus did. He said, “When you pray, say . . .” or “Pray like this.” He was giving a model prayer upon which we are to base our praying. It is a guide, the points of which are to be prayed through.

1. Thank God for two things.
  - a. Thank God for being “our Father.”
  - b. Thank God for heaven.
2. Praise God. God is holy, righteous, pure loving, kind, merciful, gracious; therefore praise Him for who He is.
3. Request four things in particular.
  - a. Pray for God’s kingdom to come.
  - b. Pray for daily bread, that is, for the necessities of life.
  - c. Pray for forgiveness.
  - d. Pray for deliverance. What this means is, “Pray for God to deliver us from temptation and from the evil one, Satan.”

And so the model that He established for prayer: relationship; that purpose of prayer, the accomplishing of God's kingdom and His will upon the earth; and then our own personal needs.

What is our (man’s) part in prayer? Let’s see what Jesus taught through the parable of the friend at night. *Jesus said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, loan me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine is on his journey and he has come to my house, and I don't have anything to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Don't trouble me: the door is shut, and my children are with me in bed; I can not rise and give to you (Luke 11:5-7).*

1. Jesus *illustrated* very simply what man's part is. The story explains itself.
2. Jesus drove *the point* home: perseverance and endurance receives what it asks. The believer shall get what he asks if he...
  - will not leave the throne of God.
  - will not go away.
  - will not let God alone.

The whole point is that the person who prays must be sincere, fervent, constant, persistent, persevering, and enduring in seeking the face of God for whatever he wants.

3. Jesus gave an exhortation, a mini-sermon to persevere and endure in prayer, and he stated it perfectly in two ways.
  - a. The person who prays is to continue asking for what he needs.
    - ⇒ Ask, and it shall be given you. But if asking does not receive it, then...
    - ⇒ seek, and ye shall find. But if seeking does not receive it, then...
    - ⇒ knock, and it shall be opened unto you.The point is: we must mean what we pray, and the way we show God our sincerity is by continuing to ask for what we need.
  - b. The verbs ask, seek, and knock are all *continuous action*. We are to keep on asking and seeking and knocking, ever beseeching God to hear us.

4. The answer is assured. God will hear and answer the person who perseveres and endures in prayer. The believer always receives the need desired. In the parable shared by Jesus, the friend was occupied with a very needed and worthy matter—he was rejuvenating his body with sleep. The point is this: most have experienced being disturbed while sleeping (whether by a crying child or some other noise) and being slow to arise. Few arise unless the beckoning call persists. But one always arises if the child coughs or cries enough, or the noise repeats itself enough. Persistence proves one's sincerity.

God is most willing to give. The child of God can rest assured that when the circumstances of life become hard, God will give the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to see His child through.

Now note another fact: God is not only willing to answer, He is *most willing* to answer. He loves and cares for man in all his needs. This must always be remembered

Why does God not always answer our prayers immediately? Why is it necessary to ask and seek and knock and to keep on asking and seeking and knocking? Why do we need to ask at all when God knows our needs even before we ask?

There are at least four reasons.

1. Prayer teaches us to communicate and fellowship with God and to trust and seek after God more and more. When God holds the giving back, we keep coming to talk and share with Him more and more. Just as a human father longs for such fellowship and trust, our heavenly Father longs for such fellowship and trust.

2. Prayer teaches us both patience and hope in God and His promises. When God does not give immediately, we patiently (enduringly) keep coming into His presence, waiting and hoping in what He has promised us ([Matthew 21:22](#); [John 14:26](#); [1 John 5:14-15](#)).

3. Prayer teaches us to love God as our Father more and more. Knowing that what we ask is coming and having to wait on it causes us to draw closer and closer to God and His gifts. And then when the gift is given, our hearts are endeared ever so much more to Him.

4. Prayer demonstrates how deeply we trust God and how much we love and depend upon Him. A person who really trusts God—who really knows that what he asks is going to be received—will bring more and more to God. He will come to God in prayer more and more. But the person who is not quite sure about receiving will only occasionally come, usually only in emergencies. God easily sees how much we really love and trust Him by our prayer life.

Note something else: God always answers our prayers, but sometimes the answer has to be "no." Why? Because what we asked is not always for our good, and God is always going to do what is best for us.

In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## The Messages of Jesus the Christ

### *Are We Keeping the Children Away From Him?*

*One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so He could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering Him. When Jesus saw what was happening, He was angry with His disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then He took the children in His arms and placed His hands on their heads and blessed them. Mark 10:13-16 (NLT)*

Note that this event with children followed right after the matter of divorce. The family as a whole was being discussed: the husband, wife, and children. Children are a joy, but many are also looked upon as problems. And tragically, children are sometimes neglected, ignored, oppressed, and even abused. In this passage, Jesus pulled no punches. It was one of the times He became violently angry, filled and moved with indignation. Jesus is the great defender of children, and every man and woman must heed His words.

*The problem with the children.* The scene was both touching and tragic. Some parents, tenderly and with hope, were bringing their children to Jesus. Why? That He might simply *touch them*. The parents were hoping that Jesus would simply touch their children, and in touching, their children would be blessed. But this was not the only scene. The disciples were rebuking the parents for bringing the children. The word rebuke (*epitimaō*) is a strong word: it means actively hindering and reproving. The disciples were actually holding the parents and pushing them back, trying to stop them from bringing their children to Jesus. Why? Very simply, the disciples saw a problem with children. They looked upon children just as many others look upon them: they felt the children could contribute nothing to the adult world. In adult affairs, children were useless, unimportant; therefore, they should not disturb the adults when they were busy at work. They felt Jesus was too busy and His work was too important to be disturbed.

*The truth about children.* Jesus saw the children being mistreated, and the Scripture literally says, "He was displeased [moved with indignation]." Children are not a problem—not to Jesus, not ever. He wanted His disciples to learn this, so He began to teach them five truths about children. (1) Children are invited to Jesus. (2) Children are citizens of the kingdom. (3) Children illustrate how one receives the kingdom. (4) Children are received and blessed by Jesus. (5) Children respond to Jesus.

Children are to be invited to Jesus. Jesus said let the children come and forbid them not. The word "forbid" (*kōluō*) means to hinder, to prevent. The tense is a *present imperative*, a continuous command: stop hindering, stop preventing the children from coming to Me. In this case His own disciples were hindering the children, continuously preventing their coming to Jesus. No wonder He was moved with indignation. Note four points.

1. Jesus called for and received children. They were welcome, even when they were so little they had to be brought. They may have been too little to understand, but He was big enough to bless them and see to it that the blessing remained all through eternity. He is, after all, God; and as God He is omnipotent, all-powerful, and able to exercise His power as He wills. Children will in no way be rejected.

2. Jesus rebuked those who stopped and disregarded the children. He said that such action was wrong. We are not to stop little children from coming to Christ. Contrariwise, we are to bring them to Him. He is God; and as God He is providential, doing as He wills; therefore, He is the One who determines whom He will bless. No man determines it for Him. Despite the tender age and lack of reason, children are not to be kept from coming to Him. No obstacle is to be put in their way.



3. The benefits of bringing children to Christ are innumerable. Just a few major ones are as follows:
  - a. A child learns love: that he is loved by God and by all who trust God, no matter how evil some in the world may act. He is even taught to love those who do wrong.
  - b. A child grows, learning power and triumph: that God will help His followers through all trials and temptations. He learns there is a supernatural power available to help, a power to help when mother and dad and loved ones have done all they can.
  - c. A child grows, learning hope and faith: that no matter what happens, no matter how great a trial, we can still trust God and hope in Him. God has provided a very special strength to carry us through the trials of life (no matter how painful); and He has provided a very special place called heaven where He will carry us and our loved ones when we face death.
  - d. A child grows, learning the truth of life and endurance (service): that God has given us the privilege of life and of living in a beautiful earth and universe. The evil and bad that exist in the world are caused by evil and bad people. But despite such evil, we are to appreciate and to serve life and the beautiful earth. We are to work and work making the greatest contribution we can to both life and the earth.
  - e. A child grows, learning trust and endurance: that life is full of temptations and pitfalls which can easily rob us of joy, destroying our lives and the fulfillment of our purposes. The way to escape the temptations and pitfalls is to follow Christ and stick to Him, enduring in our work and purpose.
  - f. A child grows, learning peace: that there is an inner peace despite the turbulent waters of this world, and that peace is knowing and trusting Christ.
4. There are several reasons why parents *do not* bring their children to Christ.
  - a. Some parents (in civilized as well as uncivilized parts of the world) are not aware of the only living and true God. Therefore, they are blind; they just do not know. Christians have failed to take the gospel to the whole world.
  - b. Some parents have heard the truth, but they have rejected Christ. They are agnostics or atheists, or else they love the world and the things of the world more than they love the news of the living God who gives eternal life. They do not care about anything beyond the comfort of self and the benefits of this world.
  - c. Some parents do believe, at least mentally, but they are complacent and lethargic. They are not concerned enough to come to Christ nor to bring their child to Christ.
  - d. Some parents are believers, but unfortunately they are immature and inconsistent in their Christian life. Their own Christian life and worship are weak and neglected, so their children are taught that Christ is not really all that important.
  - e. Some parents are liberal-minded. They are not willing to influence and mold their child's thinking spiritually. They want their child to make his own choices. They are willing to teach him what foods to eat and books to read and anything else that will teach him how to care for himself physically and materially. But they leave the care of the spiritual up to him after he becomes an adult.

There are two great errors with all five of Point 4 (above) reasons.

- a. The philosophy underlying every one of the reasons is false. Any parent who does not bring his child to Christ is following a false philosophy of life and is not facing reality.
- b. A child's mind is molded by those he is with, whether the loose and immoral or the disciplined and moral. If the child's mind is not molded by *godly parents*, it will be molded by the worldliness of the parents and the carnality of those who walk in selfish and corrupt ways.

In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## **The Messages of Jesus the Christ** *Jesus Kingdom of God Message in Eight Words*

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*“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you”.*

*Matthew 6:33*

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### ***“God’s Reign through God’s People over God’s Place”***

The Kingdom of God was the central message Jesus used throughout the Gospels to represent God's vision of the world reordered around the love of God in Christ.

Jesus message make it clear: the Kingdom of God is what life and eternity is all about.

The Kingdom is first and foremost a revelation about God who as Jesus is coming to earth as King to set right what our sin made wrong. The phrase “Kingdom of God” could just as easily be translated “reign of God” or “kingship of God.

The Kingdom of God began in the Garden of Eden and it will culminate one day the “New Heaven and New Earth” when God Himself dwell with us in eternity. (Revelation 21:2-3)

### **KINGDOM OF GOD COME**

Jesus declared that *“The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the Good News”*.(Mark 1:14-15).

The Gospels reflect Jesus’ coming down to earth to teach about the Kingdom of God. In Matthew and Luke, He came to PREACH the Kingdom is come. In Mark, He came to TEACH the Kingdom is near. In John, He came to REVEAL the Kingdom can’t come be unless you enter it.

Jesus Kingdom message is best understood in English equivalent expression of “kingship rule”, or better, the Sovereignty of God.

### **THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE**

According to the Gospels, most of Jesus’ miraculous actions are to be understood as prophetic symbols of the coming of the Kingdom, and his teaching was concerned with the right response to the crisis of its coming.

Jesus Kingdom message does not primarily refer to a geographical area or to a realm inhabited by people, but, rather to “the activity of the King in the exercise of His SOVEREIGN POWER.

The kingdom is first and foremost a statement about God. God is king, and he is coming as king to set right what our sin made wrong.

## GOD'S REIGN

God is King, and He reigns over His creation. But in a world marred by sin, God's kingship is resisted, and the peace of His kingdom has been shattered. After Adam and Eve's rebellion, God's reign in His kingdom is not the culmination of human potential and effort, but the intervention of His royal grace into a sinful and broken world.

God's reign is a saving reign. Saved into God's Kingdom is to accept the comprehensive rule of God over every aspect of life. It is not merely "asking Jesus into my heart." It means a new life and a new identity in a new kingdom.

The kingdom of God provides a holistic understanding of salvation, including not only what we are saved *from*, but also what we are saved *for*:

- saved *from* death and *for* **life**
- saved *from* shame and *for* **glory**
- saved *from* slavery and *for* **freedom**.
- saved *from* sin and *for* **following our Savior**.
- saved *from* the kingdom of darkness and *for* **the kingdom of light**.

## GOD'S PEOPLE

God the Creator-King reigns *over* all his creatures and also reigns *over his* people. This was his design from the beginning. Adam and Eve were commissioned as royal representatives of the king. Instead, they chose to seek their own path to power and glory, apart from God. Their rebellion fractured humanity's relationship with God and shattered the goodness of his creation. Ever since sin entered the world, God's kingdom project has been a rescue mission for rebellious sinners, drawing them into his renewing work through Jesus.

## GOD'S PLACE

The place of the Kingdom of God was widely expected to be supernaturally endowed to a supernatural intermediary (the Messiah or Son of Man) who would decide the worthy to "inherit the Kingdom." The Kingdom is a divine gift, not a human achievement.

The place of the Garden of Eden was meant to become a global kingdom where people would rejoice and the world would flourish under God's loving reign.

## CONCLUSION

The core message of Jesus is that the kingdom of God is near. He invites people to participate in this kingdom by repenting and aligning their lives with God's will.

Invitation to Believe: To enter the Kingdom, Jesus calls people to believe the Good News of God's salvation and to place their faith in Him.

In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## **The Messages of Jesus the Christ** *Christ Message that Focuses on Forgiveness*

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*"If you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you".  
Matthew 6:14*

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The Jesus forgiveness message is anyone who desire friendship with God is obliged to forgive the actions of his neighbors.

### Grace & Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a process that starts with grace. When we understand it is grace that implants the love of God deep within our hearts, it becomes easier to forgive others which allows us to live in freedom.

The Apostle Paul embraces grace and forgiveness by the profound statement, "If you forgive someone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven, if I had anything to forgive, I forgave it for you, as if Christ were with me". 2 Corinthians 2:10 (TPT)

### Why Forgive, and Who Says So?

The answer to the questions of WHY and WHO SAYS we should forgive is found in the message of Jesus in gospel accounts:

"Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."

### Love Or Forgive Coin

Forgiveness is easier said than done. It might be easier to forgive if the offense is minor, but what about a victim of abuse?

In Jesus messages, to forgive is of paramount importance. It is the flip side of the love coin. Love ranks first, on the top side, "heads". Jesus wants us to love one another as he has loved us, and he explained that the way that people will know that we are his disciples is by the love that we have for one another (Jn 15:12;13:35).

We damage our relationship with God and neighbors when we don't forgive. For many of us, to love or to forgive is a coin flip. The coin flips to tails and leads to sin. To remain in sin and alienation is to be in a tailspin. Forgiveness is the way to turn the coin back to heads and return to love.

The Message Of Jesus makes it clear that if we lack compassion and harbor any vengeance in our heart, rather than being ready to forgive again and again, we will forfeit any forgiveness that has been given to us.

When we offer grace-filled forgiveness to others, we receive more peace and forgiveness into our own lives.

### World View To Forgive

The world view of forgiveness is contrary to the MESSAGE of Jesus Christ. People have standards on FORGIVENESS that make sense to them but fall short of God's standard.

Even in studying Psychology, it is said “you do not have to forgive”. Additionally there are many media articles about “not forgiving those who have hurt us”. Even going so far as to proclaim that it’s cruel to tell people to forgive because it invalidates the abuse they experienced and the trauma they may be slowly working through.

### Parable on Forgiving

Look to parables to answer the question of why we should forgive people, the message in the Lord's Prayer where Jesus instructs His disciples to pray, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

In this parable, Jesus’ point is clear that the why for forgiving others is rooted in the fact we are recipients of extraordinary mercy and compassion. That we are all debtors who cannot pay our debts to God. That he has been gracious enough to grant us forgiveness in Christ.

Other parables were used in Gospels to illustrate aspects of the messages of Jesus on forgiveness. In Matthew, Jesus told the parable of unforgiving servant (Mt 18:23-35). Luke’s gospel has a series of five forgiveness parables: barren fig tree (Lk 13:6-9); the bent over woman (Lk 13:10-13); the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-7); the lost coin (Lk 15:8-10); and the greatest forgiveness parable of all, the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32).

### To Forgive Is By Grace

Jesus’ most striking and humanly incomprehensible message of forgiveness by grace was on the cross where He said of his killers, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

The mandate of messages on forgiveness is that those who are united in Christ by grace are to show they are united to God by extending the grace to other that was extended to us.

### Application

It is a transgression against God when we refuse to forgive those who have repented for their offenses to us. This is the message in the teaching of Jesus. It is also the mandate of Jesus.

In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:



## **The Messages of Jesus the Christ** *The Golden Rule was an Important Message of Jesus*

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*“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12 (NLT)”*

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Scripture you just read contains two of the most well-known things Jesus ever said. They deal with two of the basic issues of life. (1) There is the issue of righteousness. How can a person live righteously, that is, have a right relationship with his neighbor? (2) There is the issue of life. How can a person be sure he has life, real life?

Our Scriptural text today is commonly known as the **Golden Rule**. In many religions it is stated negatively: *“Don't do to others what you don't want done to you.”* By stating it positively, Jesus made it more significant. It is not very hard to refrain from harming others; it is much more difficult to take the initiative in doing something good for them. The Golden Rule, as Jesus formulated it, is the foundation of active goodness and mercy—the kind of love God shows to us every day. Think of a good and merciful action you can do today.

The Golden Rule has love as its driving force and challenge us to show God's kind of love to others. The kind of Love that treats others the way you are treated by God's love.

### **Golden Rule is Service**

Jesus says whoever wants to be great amongst you, will be your servant! So the deep and simple Golden Rule message for Christian life is to serve others by putting the interests of others ahead of your own.

The Golden Rule is a maxim of ethical conduct advocating a reciprocal relationship. Jesus taught the Golden Rule during His Sermon on the Mount, stating, *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them”* (Matthew 7:12).

The reason Jesus message to “Treat others the way you are treated by God” is called the Golden Rule is because a Roman emperor, Alexander Severus, had this saying of Jesus engraved on the walls of his palace in gold.

The summary of the Jesus's Golden Rule Message outlines the Christian's “expected duty of conduct towards his neighbor” and establishes that reciprocal conduct is a “fundamental ethical principle of Christians.”

### **Keep God in the Golden Rule**

In the Golden Rule, God is the final word (“for this is the Law and the Prophets”) which makes it a “God-centered rule” for “grace-filled people”.

The bottom line of Jesus's Golden Rule message is it will improve relationship between each other and with God.

Jesus uses the Golden Rule to summarize the Law and the Prophets, when he says, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:37–40).

### **Greatness of the Golden Rule**

Many world religions have taught a negative version of the Golden Rule, saying essentially, “Don’t do to others what you don’t want them to do to you.”

The real message of the Golden Rule is much deeper and stretches much higher than world messages.

Jesus’s Golden Rule message requires much greater effort, provides deeper motivation, and is intended specifically for Jesus’s followers (Matthew 5:1–2)

The Golden Rules of the world advocates reciprocity but it does not necessarily imply an “exhortation to love” as Jesus Christ’s Golden Rule does.

### **Messages Jesus Did not Say**

To see the demand and delight of Jesus’s teaching, consider three things he does not say.

1. Jesus did not say, “Whatever others have done for you, do also for them.” He doesn’t limit our good deeds that way.
2. Jesus did not say, “If there are a few things you wish others would do to you, do these also to them.” He doesn’t limit our good deeds that way. Instead, he says, “*Whatever* you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.” The word “whatever” (literally, “everything whatsoever”) is very broad.
3. Jesus did not say, “Whatever you wish your best friends, and fellow Christians, and people who like you would do to you, do also to them.” He doesn’t limit our good deeds that way.

### **Conclusion**

The Golden Rule is a radical way of living that can be followed only by those who daily experience the infinitely great generosity of God in their own lives.



In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

## The Messages of Jesus the Christ

### *Jesus' Personal Message to You*

Afterward Jesus went up on a mountain and called out the ones He wanted to go with Him. And they came to Him. Mark 3:13 (NLT)

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Deep in our hearts we remember the words to an old hymnal that reminds us of our promise to Jesus when we heard His call. Yes, the words ring forever in our hearts. Just where were you when He called?

*I can hear my Savior calling,  
I can hear my Savior calling,  
I can hear my Savior calling,  
"Take thy cross and follow, follow Me."*

*Where He leads me I will follow,  
Where He leads me I will follow,  
Where He leads me I will follow;  
I'll go with Him, with Him, all the way.*

Jesus calls choice men—men with hearts that are ripe to be melted and molded. He calls and appoints men, and He changes them. This is what this passage is all about: Jesus' impact upon choice men.

The disciples were *men called by Jesus*. Note three facts about what happened.

1. Jesus called, picked out, and chose some choice men. Many followed Him, but there were a few who showed more interest and commitment. He noticed the ones...

- who listened with more attention.
- who were more awake and alert.
- who responded with a stirred heart.
- who showed more attachment to Him after the crowds had gone.
- who wanted to serve God with meaning and purpose.

Jesus did not look at the stature and physics of the people, not at their appearance and looks, not even at their ability and education. Jesus looked at the heart of the people. When He saw a person listening, stirred, attached, and wanting to serve, He called that person.

2. Jesus "called...whom He would." His will was *the active power*. They did not choose Him, but He chose them. He did not call those whom the world thought more fit and educated. He called those whose hearts were right and responsive. He knew the heart, and His call was based on the principle of *heart response* (cp. [John 15:16](#)).

3. The disciples "came unto Him." The Greek means "they went away unto Him." There is the idea that they left, forsook, went away from their former work and undertook the new work assigned by Jesus.

The disciples were men appointed by Jesus for four specific purposes

**Ordained** (*epoiesen*): to be made or appointed. The word is taken from the Greek word *poieō* which means to do, to make, to appoint with credentials. The word is often used to refer to a person being appointed to some high position or office. The picture is that of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the future King of the universe, taking twelve men and appointing them to be His. He appoints (ordains) them to the *office* of being His ministers and representatives on earth.

1. The disciples were appointed *to be with Jesus*. This was the first lesson Jesus wanted to teach men: that God wants man's personal fellowship and devotion before all else. God willed men to "know Him, believe Him and understand Him" above all else ([Isaiah 43:10](#)). The disciples were to live in Jesus' presence, ever learning of Him and drawing their spiritual nourishment and strength from Him.

2. The disciples were appointed to be *sent forth*. They were to be His ambassadors, His representatives who moved out into the world. They were appointed for that very purpose, to represent Him among the people of the world.

3. The disciples were appointed *to preach*. They were to be the heralds, the messengers of Jesus Christ. He had a message for the world, and they were to proclaim His message to the world.

Preach (*kērussō* [PWS: 3002](#)): to be a herald; to proclaim; to publish; to preach. The word carries with it the idea of intense feeling, gravity, and authority—so much so that it *must* be listened to and heeded. The person who preaches is the herald of Jesus Christ; that is, his message is the message of Christ, not of someone else. The herald does not share his own opinions and views; He *proclaims* the truth of Jesus Christ.

4. The disciples were appointed to *receive power*—the power to minister and to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils.

Note that Mark makes a distinction between sickness and demon possession. This distinction is commonly made throughout the Gospels. Note these facts.

- The word for power is not *dunamis*, the supernatural power of God. It is *exousia*, a delegated power or authority. The servant of God is not given the power of God to use as the servant wills, but the servant is given the authority to specifically minister by healing and casting out demons. The servant prays and speaks the word, and then God does the actual healing and casting out of the demon.
- The emphasis of this delegated authority is casting out demons. The servant of Christ is given authority to cast out the evil spirits that rule men's lives. Note that the spiritual world or dimension of being is here acknowledged.

Transformation: the disciples were *men changed by Jesus*. But it is critical to keep in mind that each man had to be *willing* to be changed. One was not willing, Judas Iscariot. Jesus called them all, but only the ones willing to be changed were changed.

*You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using My Name. John 15:16 (NLT)*

In your own words, summarize the important points from this lesson.

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Respond to anything you have heard (or introduced) during the class discussion:

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Life Application: (How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?)

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What lesson from this Bible Study can you model and teach to others?

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Additional Notes from this Lesson:

*Commentary references and excerpts were derived from the following resources:*

*The Holy Bible*

*The Preacher's Sermon Outline Bible*

*Life Application Bible Notes*

*Word Search Bible Study Software*

*Logos Bible Software*

*Internet Resources*