

## LESSON NUMBER ONE FOR JANUARY 4

# THE BEATITUDES

**Scriptures:** Matthew 5:1-12.

**Matthew 5:1** And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

**2** And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

**3** Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**4** Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

**5** Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

**6** Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

**7** Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

**8** Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

**9** Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

**10** Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**11** Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

**12** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

**Memory Verse:** Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.—Matthew 5:6.

**Aim:** To gain a greater insight into the teachings of Jesus Christ.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday** Luke 6:20-49

**Tuesday** Psalm 103

**Wednesday** Psalm 119:1-30

**Thursday**

**Friday**

**Saturday**

**Psalm 119:89-112**

**I Corinthians 4**

**Hebrews 2**

## INTRODUCTION

Some time after Jesus entered His earthly ministry, He returned to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and there in the synagogue He read from the scroll of Isaiah what we know as the first part of Chapter 61. After reading a portion of scripture, He began to speak, but His words angered the people and they took Him up on the brow of the hill with the intent of pushing Him over and killing Him.

It appears He was not welcome to teach in their synagogues, so we see Him teaching out in the open. One time He sat in Peter's boat while the people stood on the shore to listen.

We are told the poor people heard Him gladly, but various religious leaders did not appreciate His teachings, for He taught with authority.

Not everyone today appreciates the truth of the gospel. In fact, it seems there are few. Nevertheless, it is the truth taught and obeyed that sets the soul free. I trust as we look into *The Sermon on the Mount* and explore its truths therein, it will be appealing to each soul.

## MEDITATIONS

**HE WENT UP INTO A MOUNTAIN—Matthew 5:1, 2—He opened His mouth and taught them—Jesus was in Galilee. Near**

the sea on the east side are the Golan Mountains; to the north and northwest are other mountains. It is thought it was in this area that the Master went. Multitudes were around Him, so He went up into the mountain, sat down, and when the disciples came near, He began to teach them. How many realized how blessed they were to be taught by one such as He?

**BLESSED ARE—Matthew 5:3—The poor in spirit**—There are many ideas in the world today as to what it means to be blessed. Some seem to think material riches is what it takes, but many times this proves to be a curse. The greatest of all blessings is to enjoy the favor and approval of God, which brings true happiness to the soul. **The poor in spirit**—Blessed is the one who is void of a proud and haughty spirit, who has a humble spirit. This is what it takes to be saved and it is what it takes to continue living the Christian life. The kingdom of heaven is made up of such people.

**THEY THAT MOURN—Matthew 5:4—Shall be comforted**—To mourn, or lament, over one's sin is to have godly sorrow. This produces repentance to salvation, which will indeed bring comfort to the soul. There is also a mourning where you help to bear the burdens of others—you “weep with those that weep.” When the victory comes, this also brings comfort and happiness to the soul. There are times when Satan would try to press us down, rob us of our joy of salvation, and even make us feel like we are not saved. We need to resist such efforts of the devil. We need to *mourn* over the things God would have us to, but we should not allow Satan to saddle on us feelings and burdens God would not have us carry.

**THE MEEK—Matthew 5:5—Shall inherit the earth**—In a world where there are so many that are proud and haughty, you do not find near so many that are gentle, mild and meek. One who is truly meek will show that meekness toward God. He will accept God's will for his life without disputing or resisting. **Inherit the earth**—The sect known as Jehovah Witnesses would have us believe this means the earth will be our eternal home, but the word *earth* as used here, means all good things, and Jesus is pointing out the abundance of spiritual blessings, which are provided in the gospel to those who are meek.

**THE HUNGRY SHALL BE FED—Matthew 5:6—They shall be filled**—There are many things in this world that the devil can, and does use, to try to get us to set our affections on, but we are told to set them on things above. Righteousness is here used to represent all that is true, godly and holy, and this is what we are to hunger and thirst after. The Psalmist said, “As the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Psalm 42:1). We understand the hart—of the deer family—will run and run until it finds water; so we are to seek after God, to thirst after God. And Jesus says if we will we shall be filled.

**MERCIFUL—Matthew 5:7—Shall obtain mercy**—The word *mercy* not only means pity for someone, but actively compassionate. “The Good Samaritan” was actively compassionate on the poor man who was beaten and robbed, in that he bound up his wounds and took him to an inn and paid the innkeeper to nurse him back to health. The lawyer told Jesus the Samaritan had shown “mercy,” and Jesus told him to “Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37). Thank God for His mercy shown to us. Show mercy and obtain mercy.

**HAPPY ARE THE PURE IN HEART—Matthew 5:8—They shall see God**—Jesus died on the cross, shedding His life’s blood to make it possible for us through full salvation to have a pure heart. One who lives a holy life will see God in peace. **Verse 9—Peacemakers**—James said, “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17). The pure in heart are those who have peace with God, and those who have peace with God seek to live in peace with others. Also, they will endeavor to win the sinner to the Lord and thus make peace between them. This is the fruit of a child of God.

**OPPOSITION WILL COME—Matthew 5:10-12—Persecuted**—God’s way is a happy way. His way brings many blessings, but there is a devil in the world and he hates everything that is right, pure and holy. He hates everyone who is living a holy life. It may be difficult at times to see persecution as a blessing, nevertheless, Jesus said, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” Let us make sure it is for righteousness and not something we needlessly bring on ourselves, that the evil they say about us is false. Then by His grace we can rejoice knowing that great is our reward in heaven.

## CONCLUSION

Though we were not on the mountain that day, and we did not hear the Master speak these words in person, yet they are recorded in His precious Word. And He is speaking to us today, for He said, as recorded in Matthew 4:4, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” The Word of God is food for the soul, it is a light for our feet. Let us take these words seriously, apply them to our hearts, live them out in our daily lives, and we will be blessed indeed.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why was Jesus teaching on a mountainside and not in a synagogue?
2. Did Jesus teach this earth will be our eternal home?
3. Is it possible to have a pure heart in this time world?
4. What does it mean to hunger and thirst after righteousness?
5. Why are the righteous persecuted?
6. Are you able to rejoice when evil is spoken of you?

## LESSON NUMBER TWO FOR JANUARY 11

# YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

**Scriptures:** Matthew 5:13-20; Philippians 2:15.

**Matthew 5:13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

**14** Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

**15** Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

**16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

**17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

**18** For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall

in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

**19** Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

**20** For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

**Philippians 2:15** That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

**Memory Verse:** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

—Matthew 5:16.

**Aim:** To feel more keenly the responsibility of representing Jesus Christ in the world.

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Genesis 1:1-19</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Luke 11:29-36</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Psalms 119:129-144</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>John 1:1-18</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Proverbs 4</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>I John 1</b>

### INTRODUCTION

The Bible has much to say about light, natural and spiritual. Verse 3 of Genesis 1 tells us God said, "Let there be light: and there was light." In I John 1:5, John tells us, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

Jesus tells us in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Light is used to represent truth; darkness, of course, represents error, false doctrine, sin, evil. Jesus said, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his

deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21).

Peter informs us that God's people are they who have been "called out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). John declares, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

We must have the light in us before it can shine out! "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8).

## MEDITATIONS

**PRESERVE—Matthew 5:13—The salt of the earth**—Jesus had just told His disciples they would be persecuted, be reviled, and falsely accused; now He tells them they are the salt of the earth! Was this to encourage them, to support them, during their periods of persecution? It does not take a lot of salt to preserve things, so, though the disciples be few, they were to keep the earth from complete putrefication. Let us also notice that Jesus said it was possible for salt to lose its ability to preserve. In such a case it was thenceforth good for nothing and would be "cast out." Does this not clearly show that a Christian can backslide?

**THE CHURCH IS LIGHT—Matthew 5:14—A city ... set on an hill cannot be hid**—God is light, Christ is light, the Word of God is light, and the city of God, the Church of God, is light. John, in describing the Church said, "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:11). Paul tells us Christians are to "shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15). What a great responsibility we have.

**WITNESS FOR CHRIST—Matthew 5:15, 16—It giveth light**—There is no way you can be a true disciple of Christ and keep it a secret! You do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, neither does Christ save us to hide our light. I do not speak of trying to force the truth on people, but rather living the gospel in your daily life, being a doer of the Word, speaking when the Spirit would have you to, showing love, speaking kindly, being honest in all your dealings. These are the "good works" that will glorify the Father in heaven. Good works will not save anyone, but good works are the fruit of one who has been saved. Let your light shine before all you come in contact with. This is the responsibility of every Christian.

**MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE—Matthew 5:17, 18—Think not**—Jesus was born under the Old Covenant, He lived and ministered under the Old Covenant, and He obeyed all its teachings. We do not find Him teaching anyone to disobey any of its precepts, but we do see that the Jews, many of them at least, had wrong conceptions of what the law and prophets taught. And we do find the

Pharisees accusing Him of breaking the law, but He knew its true meaning. We also know that the Old Covenant expired when Jesus died on the cross, and that He is the mediator of the New Covenant. The New Covenant is a better way, and holds a higher, not a lower standard! “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Hebrews 8:6). “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 3:19).

**ALL SCRIPTURE GIVEN BY GOD—Matthew 5:19—Whosoever therefore—**We need to understand there is much more in what we call the Old Testament—the first 39 books of our Bible—than just the law God gave Moses on the mount. God’s righteous laws are eternal, and we are to live by all His teachings. The types and shadows of the Old Covenant were fulfilled in Christ, and today we have the *reality* of those types. I do not see how anyone could *knowingly* teach people to disobey God and still have His favor. It seems to me we must understand the words of the Master as meaning a person is honestly mistaken about what the Word teaches.

**A FORM WILL NOT DO—Matthew 5:20—Exceed—**The Pharisees were very strict, but they had only a form of godliness and not the reality of it. If we are going to be a light in this sinful world we must have a true experience of salvation. Christ must live His life in and through us. A form can’t make us a member in God’s kingdom.

## CONCLUSION

Light illuminates, light dispels darkness. Light has been associated with the presence, truth and redemptive activity of God since creation. When Christ was in the world He said He was the light of the world. Before returning to the Father, He told the disciples, “Ye are the light of the world.” One can only be a light by accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and then living His truth out in their life. Let us remember truth is light and light is truth! For the Church to be the Church, and for the Church to be the light of the world, we must have the truth, love the truth and live the truth. The Lord is counting on His church to shine brightly in this sin-darkened world in which we live.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. In what sense are Christians salt?
2. What does light symbolize?
3. Why will some not come to the light?
4. How are Christians the light of the world?
5. Are we still under the Old Covenant?
6. Is a form of godliness acceptable with God?

## LESSON NUMBER THREE FOR JANUARY 18

# RECONCILIATION AMONG BRETHREN

**Scriptures:** Matthew 5:21-26; 18:15-17; Mark 11:25; I John 3:15.

**Matthew 5:21** Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

**22** But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

**23** Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

**24** Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

**25** Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

**26** Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by

no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

**Matthew 18:15** Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

**16** But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

**17** And if he shall neglect to hear thee, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

**Mark 11:25** And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

**I John 3:15** Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

**Memory Verse:** And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.—II Corinthians 5:18.

**Aim:** To show that the disciples of Christ are to work for reconciliation when problems arise.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday**      **Genesis 13**  
**Tuesday**    **Genesis 27:32-41**  
**Wednesday** **Genesis 33**

**Thursday**    **Matthew 18:1-20**  
**Friday**       **Ephesians 4:17-32**  
**Saturday**    **Colossians 1:12-29**

## INTRODUCTION

When sin entered into the heart of man strife entered! We see this in the actions of Cain when he slew his brother Abel.

The Bible records strife among families, tribes, and nations.

Civil history records war after war, strifes that have taken millions of lives, enslaved nations, and revealed the deep depravity of mankind. One is made to wonder just how it is that human beings could be so cruel to their fellowman.

Hatred is one of the most destructive forces in the family of man, and is so contrary to the divine nature of almighty God who we know to be a God of love. However, we have recorded in the Scriptures exam-



ples of reconciliation where enemies became friends. One outstanding example is Jacob and Esau. Jacob had done his brother wrong, and though Esau was not justified in saying he would kill his brother, he had determined to do so. Jacob prevailed with God! God heard his prayer, and when the two brothers met face to face, they fell on one another's neck and wept. Esau kissed Jacob rather than killing him.

Another example of settling problems is the manner Abraham dealt with his nephew Lot when their herdsmen quarreled (Genesis 13:8).

All problems can be solved peaceably if each one involved will take a humble attitude and seek to do what is right. It is not always easy to admit you are wrong, but if you are, it is to your good to admit it and correct the matter.

## MEDITATIONS

**MURDER HAS ALWAYS BEEN WRONG—Matthew 5:21, 22—Ye have heard**—It was wrong for Cain to kill Abel, and it seems clear that Cain was aware he had done wrong. In Genesis 9:6 we read, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.” When God gave the law to Moses we find the sixth commandment forbidding murder (Exodus 20:13). Life is a precious gift given by God and it is His will that each one be able to live out their natural days. It is true sin has changed many things, but sin did not change God’s will in this matter. **Verse 22—But I say unto you**—Jesus gives a fuller explanation of God’s attitude in this matter by informing us to be *vainly incensed* against another brings one in danger of the judgment. Those who understand the Greek language tell us “angry without a cause” is not in the meaning of these words, but rather “vainly incensed.” “What our Lord seems here to prohibit is not merely that miserable facility which some have of *being angry at every trifle*, continually taking offense against their best friends, but that anger which leads a man to commit *outrage* against another, thereby subjecting himself to that punishment which was to be inflicted on those who break the peace.”—Clarke. The word *Raca* was used in contempt, signifying “empty, intellectually rather than morally, empty-headed.” The word *fool* as used in this verse, means, “a godless, moral reprobate.”

**RECONCILIATION IS GOD’S WILL—Matthew 5:23, 24—Be reconciled to thy brother**—Christians are to love everyone and are to carefully preserve that love and peace with all brethren. If at any time a breach occurs we are to work for a reconciliation. If it be on our part we need to confess our faults and ask the offended one’s pardon. **Verse 24—Leave there thy gift**—When such a breach has occurred, it will hinder our prayer life, it will hinder our worship, it will hinder our service to God. Do not try to go on as though nothing has happened! “Go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come offer thy gift.” God will not accept a “gift” from a heart that is revengeful and not willing to make wrongs right.



**ADMITTING WRONG—Matthew 5:25, 26—Agree with—**Here the Master points out how much better it is to admit wrong [and He is not saying admit you are wrong if you are not] than it is to let the matter go on and get worse. If one speaks of a civil case, you would have the expense of a lawyer, possibly court costs, plus a fine, and still be required to pay the debt you owed, while if you settled “out of court,” the cost would be much less. A problem between saints needs to be settled quickly before the problem grows bigger and involves more people, thus causing more harm to the cause of Christ, and never taken to court. These verses lend NO support to the false doctrine of purgatory, as taught by the Roman church, for there is no such place.

**PROBLEMS WILL ARISE—Matthew 18:15-17—Go and tell him—**As we look at the early morning church we see they had problems, so it should not be surprising if problems arise in our day. In these verses Jesus first speaks of one on one, “If thy brother,” go to him and him alone! Too many times the offended one goes to others rather than the offender. It is only if the brother will not make his wrong right that others are to be brought in, and then only “one or two more.” If he will not hear them, then the matter is to be brought before the church. There is something wrong with an individual who will not listen to a spiritual body of saints.

**MUST FORGIVE—Mark 11:25—Forgive—**The Word clearly teaches that we must forgive to be forgiven, and surely there can be no reconciliation between brethren if there is an unforgiving spirit manifested on the part of one or the other. In fact, they cannot keep saved.

**GREAT DANGER—I John 3:15—Whosoever hateth—**Someone who is not willing to forgive may well see that ill will grow into hatred. Sin is something that grows and leads to all kinds of evil and robs you of eternal life. God’s will is that we be reconciled to Him and to one another, thus live in peace with all men.

## CONCLUSION

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a reconciling gospel! The ministers of God’s church have been given the ministry of reconciliation. To show that the gospel works, members of God’s church must follow the instructions the Master has given as brought out in this lesson. It will do little, or no good, for us to study these verses if we do not apply them to our hearts and lives.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is there so much strife in the world?
2. What does the word *reconciliation* mean?
3. Can you relate an experience where a problem was properly settled? (Do not give names!)
4. Do problems arise among saints?
5. How did Jesus say we should go about resolving problems?

## LESSON NUMBER FOUR FOR JANUARY 25

# THE SIN OF ADULTERY

**Scriptures:** Matthew 5:27-32; 19:3-9.

**Matthew 5:27** Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

**28** But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

**29** And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

**30** And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

**31** It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

**32** But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

**Matthew 19:3** The Pharisees also came

unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

**4** And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

**5** And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

**6** Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

**7** They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

**8** He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

**9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

**Memory Verse:** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.—Galatians 5:17.

**Aim:** To show the awfulness of sinning against God and against one another.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Genesis 2</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Galatians 5</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 24</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Revelation 17</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Proverbs 6:20-35</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Jeremiah 23</b>

## INTRODUCTION

God, the fountain head of all knowledge and wisdom, gave us the beautiful plan of marriage. After forming Adam, He said it was not good for man to be alone and He made Adam a “help meet.” This help meet was a woman, not another male as Adam was. God has never approved, and never will approve, of the homosexual lifestyle that some are clamoring for.

God ordained one man for one woman, and He ordained that they leave their parents’ home and build a new family. Further, God

intended for this relationship to last as long as both lived. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). We never read where God took two males, or two females, and made them one flesh. Neither do we read of where God took one man and two women and made them one flesh. Adam and Eve loved one another. They were happy in their beautiful garden home. God came down and fellowshiped with them. What a beautiful and happy life this must have been! But sin entered their hearts and lives, and what a terrible change this brought.

We know that adultery has brought much heartache to the family of man down through the ages. One case in point is David’s affair with Bathsheba. This led to murder and brought shame and reproach not only on David but the entire nation of Israel.

## MEDITATIONS

**JESUS ENLARGES ON ADULTERY—Matthew 5:27, 28—Ye have heard**—These are the same words Jesus used back in verse 21 when He enlarged on murder. Exodus 20:14 states, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” The Scriptures do not go into detail as to just what the people’s current thinking was in regard to this command, but it would be reasonable to conclude that they did not understand, or accept, its full meaning. **Verse 28—I say unto you**—The One who had given the law to Moses was now going to reveal to them the full scope of its meaning. Not only is the actual physical act of adultery wrong, but he who looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery in his heart with her. Let me also point out, even though the word *adultery* is used here, no man, married or single, can lust after a woman, married or single, without committing sin. Jesus did not limit the word *adultery* to as narrow a meaning as, evidently, some in His day did, neither does the Scriptures limit the word *fornication* to as narrow a meaning as some do today. This statement by Jesus is a strong rebuke against immodesty! For someone to expose his body to tempt the opposite sex will bring condemnation on that person, as well as the one who lusts after them.

**HELPING OURSELVES—Matthew 5:29, 30—Offend thee—**Every Christian will be tempted as they live the Christian life. We cannot completely avoid it, but there are things we can do to help ourselves. We can stay away from places, we can avoid reading some things, and we can avoid some evil influences to keep ourselves pure. This is what we understand Jesus to be teaching in these verses. He was not saying for us to literally put out our eye, or cut off our hand. Note these instructions follow the statement about adultery through lustful looks. **Verses 31, 32**—Jesus continues the subject of adultery, pointing out that many in His day had not understood God’s plan for marriage, for men were putting away their wives and marrying another at will, seemingly not realizing they were committing adultery. Jesus uses the word *fornication* in giving the exception, but the word in this verse means more than immorality among unmarried

people. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary*, says, "In Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 it stands for, or includes adultery." *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* says, "The New Testament often uses the term in a general sense for any unchastity."

**JESUS SETS FORTH THE TRUTH—Matthew 19:3-6**—We understand there were two schools of thought being taught by two Rabbi's at this time, and it seems the Pharisees tried to find out which one Jesus was agreeing with. This is what we understand the words "tempting him" to mean. One taught you could divorce for any cause; the other taught you could divorce "only for some action which was really infamous, and contrary to the rules of virtue." Jesus goes back to the beginning and reminds them what God's plan was. His plan was that it be for life—"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." **Verses 7-9**—The Pharisees asked, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement?" Jesus replied, "Because of the hardness of your hearts ... from the beginning it was not so." Then Jesus sets forth the truth, not as the Rabbi's taught, not as Moses taught, but as HE taught, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication [moral uncleanness], and shall marry another, committeth adultery." True Christians will never be unfaithful to one another, and thus will never give cause for divorce.

## CONCLUSION

From *Matthew Henry's Commentary* on Matthew 5:28:

"This command forbids not only the acts of fornication and adultery, but (1) All appetites to them, all lusting after forbidden objects; this is the beginning of the sin, lust conceiving (James 1:15); it is a bad step towards the sin; and where the lust is dwelt upon and approved, and wanton desire is rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, it is the commission of the sin, as far as the heart can do it; there wants nothing but a convenient opportunity for the sin itself."

Adultery is a great curse in our land today, but there is another way people can, and do, commit "adultery" that is sinful! In various scriptures in the Old Testament God accused Israel of adultery, whoredom and fornication, not because of literal adultery, but because of their unfaithfulness to Him. Israel was married to God, and when they turned from Him to idols, they were guilty of spiritual whoredom. We find the same truth expressed in the book of Revelation. Let the bride of Christ be faithful to her husband, and never allow her affections to go out to another.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What was God's plan for marriage?
2. What is God's attitude toward the sin of homosexuality?
3. Did God ever intend for a man to have more than one wife at a time?
4. Why did Moses give the law of divorcement?
5. Will two Christians ever divorce?

## LESSON NUMBER FIVE FOR FEBRUARY 1

### WATCHING OUR WORDS

**Scriptures:** Matthew 5:33-37; 12:36, 37; Proverbs 10:18, 19; Ecclesiastes 5:2; Colossians 3:8, 9; James 1:26.

**Matthew 5:33** Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

**34** But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

**35** Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

**36** Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

**37** But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

**Matthew 12:36** But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

**37** For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be con-

demned.

**Proverbs 10:18** He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.

**19** In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

**Ecclesiastes 5:2** Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

**Colossians 3:8** But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

**9** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.

**James 1:26** If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

**Memory Verse:** Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.—Ecclesiastes 5:2.

**Aim:** To impress the student to be careful and considerate with our words.

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Matthew 23</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Proverbs 6</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Ephesians 5:1-20</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>James 1</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Colossians 3</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>James 3</b>

### INTRODUCTION

To be able to talk is a marvelous thing. Those of the family of man are the only ones in God's creation on earth that have the ability to communicate in such a manner. Through our words we can express love, thankfulness, helpful information, encouragement, inspiration, instructions, kindness and praise to almighty God, for the Scriptures instruct us, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord" (Psalm 150:6). On the other hand the voice can be used to curse, swear, lie, express hate, etc. To be a child of God, and to live a life pleasing in His sight, we must seek to use our tongue in a proper, godly manner.

May the Lord bless each one as you study today's lesson.

## MEDITATIONS

**JESUS REFERS AGAIN TO THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES—Matthew 5:33—It hath been said—**In Leviticus 19:12 we read, “And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.” In Exodus 20:7 we read, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” **Verse 34—Swear not at all—**We read in Numbers 30:2, “If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.” God’s Word not only forbids false swearing, but all rash, unnecessary swearing. However, we do not understand taking a vow or saying you promise to tell the truth, such as a witness in court, is sinful and wrong. Where possible it would be better to say “I affirm” rather than “I swear.” Lest someone think I am misrepresenting Christ’s teachings on this point, I would ask you to consider Hebrews 6:13-17, where we are told, “When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself. ... For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.” A Christian does not have to take an oath to tell the truth; they are always honest to the best of their knowledge. **Verses 34-36—Neither by heaven—**Jesus gives us reason why we should not swear by heaven, because it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; neither by Jerusalem, because it was the city of the “great King.” He goes on to say, “Neither by your own head.” Why? Because we really do not have anything of our own. All we have we have received through His goodness.

**PROPER COMMUNICATION—Matthew 5:37—Yea, yea—**In the previous verses, Jesus has pointed out wrong uses of the tongue as pertaining to swearing. Now in this verse He gives instructions as to the proper use of the tongue. If a thing be true we can say “yea,” or yes. If it is not true we can say “nay,” or no. Matthew Henry said, “They who can *swallow* a profane oath, will not *strain* at a lie.”

**FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS—Matthew 12:36, 37—Every idle word—**“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” A pure heart will speak forth good things, an evil heart, evil things—see verses 34 and 35. *Idle* means “ineffective, worthless, vain, wicked, and injurious.” These kinds of words should not find expression in the life of a Christian, for we shall give an account of our words, as well as our deeds, in the day of judgment. In fact, Jesus said we would either be justified or condemned by our words.

**STRONG WORDS—Proverbs 10:18—Is a fool—**We have already had a lesson that dealt, in part, with hatred, and how it produces much evil, including murder. Here we are told the one who tries to

cover such feelings with lying lips, and he that uttereth slander “is a fool.” Such a one needs to get right with God. **Verse 19—Multitude of words**—This informs us if we are continually talking we will sin. Adam Clarke says, “It is impossible to speak much, and yet speak nothing but truth; and injure no man’s character in the meanwhile.”

**CAREFULNESS TAUGHT—Ecclesiastes 5:2—Be not rash**—The word *rash* means, “too hasty or incautious in acting or speaking; reckless.” A saying goes, “Haste makes waste.” When it comes to our words, as well as in other areas of our life, we need to give due consideration to what we say. We are told to let our words be seasoned with salt—that which will preserve, not destroy. The wise man would have us to understand that God is aware of our words, therefore we should let our words be few—not needless, empty jabbering.

**PURE HEARTS PRODUCE PURE SPEECH—Colossians 3:8, 9—Put off all these**—Reading from verse five we see things that Paul tells us to “mortify,” get rid of: fornication, uncleanness, etc., and then he adds “also put off all these,” and he mentions wrath, malice, anger, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying. All these things proceed from an evil heart, but we are to put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man. God cleans up our speech as well as the rest of our life.

**VAIN RELIGION—James 1:26—Bridleth not**—There are those who put so much stress on talking in some “unknown tongue,” but James stresses the need of bridling our tongue. A religious person who does not control his tongue has vain religion. No man of himself can “tame” his tongue, so James tells us, but with Christ in your heart your tongue is brought under control.

## CONCLUSION

“Pure words belong to a holy life. You should use the very choicest words, language that is free from vulgarity, slang, and the spirit of the world. Untidiness, uncleanness, carelessness, and shabbiness are not at all beautiful ornaments in a holy life. But quietness, modesty, and reticence are gems that sparkle in a holy life like diamonds set in a band of gold. Give attention to your words, your thoughts, your tone of voice, your feelings; to little acts of benevolence, the practice of self-denial, of promptness, of method and order. These are auxiliaries of holy living.”—C. E. Orr, *How To Live a Holy Life*.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Are we free to say whatever we please?
2. Is it wrong to make a vow?
3. What are seven things God hates? (Proverbs 6:16-19).
4. What did Jesus mean by, “Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay”?
5. What are idle words?



## LESSON NUMBER SIX FOR FEBRUARY 8

# LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

**Scriptures:** Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:18-21.

**Matthew 5:38** Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

**39** But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

**40** And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

**41** And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

**42** Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

**43** Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

**44** But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

**45** That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his

sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

**46** For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

**47** And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans do?

**48** Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

**Romans 12:18** If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

**19** Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

**20** Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

**21** Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Memory Verse:** Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.—Romans 13:10.

**Aim:** To show that Christians are to love everyone, not just those who love them.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday**      **Leviticus 24**

**Tuesday**    **I Corinthians 13**

**Wednesday** **I John 2**

**Thursday**

**Friday**

**Saturday**

**Romans 15:1-16**

**Romans 13**

**Ezekiel 11**

## INTRODUCTION

The Bible informs us that God is love. "He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love" (I John 4:8). Christianity is the only religion that presents the Supreme Being as a God of love. God not only loves, He IS love. "All human love, whether Godward or manward, has its source in God." Love finds its expression in service to our fellowman, and is put at the top of the list in importance when it comes to Christian discipleship. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love]" (I Corinthians 13:13).

The Christian is to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind—Matthew 22:37. He is to love his neighbor as himself, and he is to love his enemies. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his

brother abideth in the light and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (I John 2:9-11). "Love can be known only from the actions it prompts." God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it—Ephesians 5:25. Love is giving, demanding nothing in return, and love, Christian love, is the fruit of the Spirit. Without this love it will be impossible to live the Christian life.

## MEDITATIONS

**A HIGHER STANDARD—Matthew 5:38—It hath been said—**Here Jesus words His statement a little different from what we read in verse 31, "Ye have heard that it hath been said." We read in Exodus 21:24, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." This is the earliest account of a law of "like for like." We understand this law prevailed in ancient Greece and Rome. As to the Hebrews, we do not know just how often they observed it, for we do not understand it to be a law that had to be carried out in this manner, but it was justified if the one who was hurt required it. If you will notice verses 18-23 of Exodus 21, you will see that it is dealing with men "striving," or fighting. **Verse 39—But I say unto you—**In light of the above we understand better the words of the Lord, "That ye resist not evil, Do not repel one outrage by another." To do so you would make yourself a wicked person, like the one who was showing a wrong attitude toward you. Be ready to suffer wrong rather than to do wrong. Turn to him the other cheek. Christians are not to hold malice in their hearts toward anyone for anything. They must not be revengeful.

**SEEKING TO LIVE IN PEACE—Matthew 5:40—Sue thee—**There are some very unreasonable people in this world, and some will lie, cheat, and misrepresent to get earthly gain. Jesus is teaching that His disciples must not do such things. And if someone of that character sues you, takes your coat, rather than taking a vengeful attitude, rather than spending a lot of money going to court yourself, spending much more than it would cost you to replace the coat, let them have it; and if need be, to have peace, give him thy cloak also. **Verse 41—Compel—**This verse carries with it somewhat the same meaning as the previous. Christian, put forth every effort to live in peace with others. If you are compelled to go a mile, rather than being resentful or have a quarrel, go two miles. Do Christians have no privileges? Yes! but sometimes it is better to forego your privileges than to make enemies. Do not become petty just because others are.

**HELPING THE NEEDY—Matthew 5:42—Give to him—I** believe we must understand these words in light of other verses. Paul said if a man won't work neither shall he eat. The Bible nowhere approves of laziness! If a person has the ability, and he sees someone

who is poor and needy and really can't help himself, he must be charitable. "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth" (Deuteronomy 15:7, 8). "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (I John 3:17).

**LOVE TO ALL—Matthew 5:43, 44—Love thy neighbour—**We understand from the words of Jesus, in giving the parable of the good Samaritan, that our neighbor is anyone that has need. But here Jesus enlarges on it and tells us we are not to just love our neighbor, but those who would make themselves our enemies. Jesus was setting forth truth here that was contrary to what the Jews had been used to. They had felt they were justified in hating those who hated them, of being vengeful toward those who were vengeful toward them, but Jesus is saying, "No, that is not right. You are to love those that hate you, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." The people did not hear that kind of teaching in the synagogue. It takes a true experience of salvation to do as Jesus taught.

**CHILDREN OF GOD—Matthew 5:45—Children of your Father—**In the previous verse Jesus told them they must love their enemies, do good to them that hate them. In this verse He explains why, "That ye may be the children of your Father," or in other words, be like your Father in heaven. As children of God we are to be partakers of God's divine nature, and we are to show forth that goodness to others. God is love. His children must show forth His love that has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. This cannot be done through hate. To emphasize this truth Jesus said, "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "There is nothing greater than to imitate God in doing good to our enemies." The Scriptures tell us that God loved us while we were yet His enemies. If He had not, we could never have been saved. God does not love sin, but He loves the sinner.

**DO NOT BE LIKE THE TAX COLLECTOR—Matthew 5:46, 47—For if ye—**The word *publican* was used for tax collectors, and they were not very well thought of! Jesus said, "If you love only those that love you, you have no reward, and you are no better than those despised tax collectors." Adam Clarke says, "He who loves only his friends, does nothing for God's sake. He who loves for the sake of pleasure or interests, pays himself. God has no enemy which he hates but sin; we should have no other." We are not to "salute" just our brethren or friends, but to show regard and respect to all.

**BE HOLY—Matthew 5:48—Be ... perfect—**Jesus is not saying we must be perfect in the sense we will never make a mistake, but He is

teaching us that we must love everyone, as God does, and hate no one. We must live a life free from all known sin. The word *perfect*, in some verses, carries the thought of being mature; a grown up Christian.

**PAUL TEACHES THE SAME—Romans 12:18, 19—Dearly beloved**—It is true, some people are bent on being troublemakers and they will not live in peace, so Paul says, “As much as lies in your power, you live peaceable with all men.” If there be a lack of peace let it be on the part of the other party and not on yours. Paul, even as Jesus, teaches we are not to avenge ourselves. Let us remember, the Lord said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” God is just in all His ways. Many times man is not. **Verses 20, 21—Feed him**—We need to remember how good God was to us while we were His enemy, living in sin, and we need to show His love to those who make themselves our enemy. If he is hungry and needy feed him; if he is thirsty give him drink. The heaping of coals of fire on the head is not some evil; it is intended to show you are doing good, and your goodness may “melt” his hard heart. It was the goodness of God that led us to repentance.

**OUR MEMORY VERSE—Romans 13:10—Love worketh no ill**—Love is one of the strongest forces in the world. It is the opposite of hate. Its “fruit,” its effect is the opposite of hate. Love is what brought Jesus into this world; love is what made it possible for us to be forgiven; love is what causes the Christian to *want* to please God; love is what binds a husband and wife together; love is what holds a family together; love is what holds saints together; and love is what enables one to do good to those who would do ill to them. Jesus tells us who our *neighbor* is, and Paul says, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.” The law that Paul speaks of is the law of Christ.

## CONCLUSION

There is so much hatred, evil, malice, and ill-will in the world, and as a result we have broken homes, abused wives, abused children, abused parents, abused husbands, murder, wars, and strife in many lands. The teachings of Christ that we should love everyone, even those who would make themselves our enemies, is not some fanciful dream. Through the grace of God it can be, and must be, reality in the heart of the true child of God.

The Lord said through the prophet Ezekiel, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). With an experience like that we can love our enemies.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How many religions teach “God is love”?
2. Who are we to love most of all?
3. Is it possible to love everyone, even our enemies?
4. Is a Christian ever justified in being vengeful?

## LESSON NUMBER SEVEN FOR FEBRUARY 15

# HE SHALL REWARD THEE OPENLY

**Scriptures:** Matthew 6:1-18.

**Matthew 6:1** Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

**2** Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

**3** But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

**4** That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

**5** And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

**6** But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

**7** But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

**8** Be not ye therefore like unto them: for

your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

**9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

**10** Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

**11** Give us this day our daily bread.

**12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

**13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

**14** For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

**15** But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**16** Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

**17** But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

**18** That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

**Memory Verse:** Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.—I Corinthians 3:8.

**Aim:** To show that living for Christ has great rewards in *this* life.

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday**      **Leviticus 19:1-14**

**Tuesday**    **Ruth 2**

**Wednesday** **Matthew 23**

**Thursday**    **Matthew 18**

**Friday**      **Isaiah 58**

**Saturday**    **I Corinthians 9**

### INTRODUCTION

The word *reward* means, “something offered in return for some service or benefit received.” In the Bible, a reward can refer to something given for either a good or bad act.

Many scriptures speak of a future reward, whether it be a good reward or a bad reward. However, all rewards are not in the future; there are many rewards given in this present life.

I am not suggesting that the “reward” be the thing that causes you to act. Do what is right because it is right.

In the book of Ruth we have the story of a family that left Bethlehem and journeyed to Moab. There the father and two sons died, leaving three widows. Naomi decided to return home. Her daughters-in-law started with her, but one turned back. Ruth, the other, refused to turn back, saying to Naomi, “Intreat me not to leave thee: for whither thou goest, I will go: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried.”

Ruth gleaned in the fields to provide for herself and her mother-in-law, and she was greatly rewarded for such love and devotion. Boaz said to her, “The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust” (Ruth 2:12).

The greatest of all rewards in this life is to be saved from a life of sin, to be a vessel for the Holy Spirit to dwell in and use, and to be a part of the family of God. Jesus said if you gave a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, you would be rewarded for it.

## MEDITATIONS

**AVOID HYPOCRISY—Matthew 6:1, 2—Take heed**—The Scriptures teach the giving of alms; they teach we should be generous in helping the poor and needy. The nation of Israel was taught this as we see in Leviticus 19:9, 10, where they were told not to reap the corners of their fields, but to leave them so the poor could glean there. The same with their vineyards. “Eventually the nation developed that almsgiving had power to atone for the giver’s sins.” This, of course, was a mistaken idea, for “good works” cannot save anyone. Almsgiving was used by some for self-glory, and this is what the Master is teaching against here. Do not give to be seen of men. If you do, God will not reward you. Some went so far as to have someone sound a trumpet to draw other’s attention to their giving. “Giving” for self praise, or for a selfish motive, does not impress God at all, and in His sight it is not really a righteous act. They receive praise of men and that is all.

**PROPER ATTITUDE—Matthew 6:3, 4—When thou**—Jesus teaches almsgiving. He is not saying one thing against it, but what He is saying, do not go around boasting about it, do not give to receive honor of men; be just as quiet about it as possible—“That thine alms may be in secret.” If you will, thy Father will see it and He will reward you openly.

**PRAYING—Matthew 6:5—When thou prayest**—Prayer is of the utmost importance to the true disciple of Christ. Matthew Henry wrote, “You may as soon find a living man that does not breathe, as a

living Christian that does not pray.” In praying you shall not be as the hypocrites. Just as in their almsgiving, so in their praying, they sought the praise of men. They wanted to be commended by their neighbors. Not only in their synagogues, where they had their weekly service, but even on the street corners “that they may be seen of men.” No wonder Jesus called them hypocrites. **Verse 6—Enter into thy closet**—Jesus speaks of our personal prayer life. He is not teaching that it is wrong to pray in a group of saints, for we see the church praying for Peter while he was in prison. We see Peter and John going to the saints and their praying together, as recorded in Acts 4:21-33. There are some things that should not be prayed about in public. Go, alone with God, close out all other matters, and commune with Him. Tell Him you love Him, tell Him your cares, your burdens, thank Him for all He has done for you. Do it in a spirit of humility. Kneeling in prayer is, or should be, an act of humility and submission. Jesus says the Father will reward such prayers. One of the great rewards of this present life is God answering our prayers.

**PRAYER NOT JUST WORDS—Matthew 6:7, 8—Use not vain repetitions**—Please note, Jesus said, “Use not *vain* repetitions.” He is not saying it is wrong to pray for something more than once! Elijah prayed seven times for rain. What He is saying, the repeating of words over and over is not what brings the answer. We are not to be like the “heathen,” chanting words over and over.

**AN EXAMPLE—Matthew 6:9-13—After this manner**—Jesus did not intend for His disciples to repeat His words over and over. He gave them a brief outline, an example, as to how they should pray. **Verse 9**—Address your prayer to the heavenly Father. Elsewhere Jesus taught His disciples to pray to the Father in His name. **Verse 10**—Since the kingdom of God is a present reality, we understand we are to pray for the progress of the kingdom here on earth. Those who have the born again experience, and are in the kingdom of God, will pray for the Lord to have His way in their life. **Verse 11**—In some countries where food is so plentiful, they may not feel the need to pray for “daily bread,” but we should never forget, the earth is the Lord’s. It is in Him we live and move and have our being, and every good gift, spiritual and temporal, comes from Him, and He can withhold the rain if He sees fit. **Verse 12**—All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, therefore all need to seek God for forgiveness. For God to forgive us we must forgive others. Jesus is not teaching that we cannot live above sin and must seek forgiveness every time we pray. **Verse 13**—We are not to understand from this verse that God leads people into temptation to sin, for James tells us, “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (James 1:13). It is true that God tries His people, but He never tempts them to sin. So we are to pray, “Lord, do not let Satan loose upon us; chain up that *roaring lion*, for he is subtle and spiteful; Lord, do not leave us to our-



selves.”—Matthew Henry. With God’s grace, we can overcome every temptation Satan brings our way, but we must be faithful in our prayer life.

**FORGIVE TO BE FORGIVEN—Matthew 6:14, 15—If ye forgive—**You cannot be a true Christian and have an unforgiving spirit. If God is willing to forgive us our big “debt,” who are we to refuse forgiveness to our fellow servant whose debt is so small. This is the truth conveyed in the parable Jesus gave us as recorded in Matthew 18:23-35.

**FASTING IN THE WILL OF GOD—Matthew 6:16—When ye fast—**Not all fasting is in the will of God! Isaiah spoke of some fasting for “strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness” (Isaiah 58:4). Jesus speaks of those who disfigured their faces to let others know they were fasting. These, along with those who give alms and pray to be seen of men, are called hypocrites. How void people are who fast, pray, give alms, just to be seen of men. Such people are to be pitied! for they do not know the true meaning of being a child of God and living to the glory of God. The honor of men is the only reward that such people will ever receive. They will never know the joy of true fellowship with God and His people. They will never receive the reward of walking humbly with God. **Verses 17, 18—But thou—**A child of God is to fast for the good of the Lord’s work, for souls, for healing of bodies, and for needs in his own life, but go about it without telling others. Do not be sad about it! There were times when the nation was called to fast. There are times when a pastor may ask the congregation to fast. At such times it will be necessary for others to know. “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6). God will reward those who will fast as His Word teaches.

## CONCLUSION

God is the best “paymaster” anyone could have. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1). He is the one who gives to all life and breath, yea and all things. He sends the sunshine and He sends the rain. The power to get wealth comes from Him.

“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:9-11).

If there were no hereafter, the Christian life would still be a very rewarding life, but with all the rewards there are in this life there are even greater ones for the Christian in the life to come. Do not miss out on either, for you cannot obtain the eternal rewards of the righteous in the next world without living for Christ in this one.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Name some of the rewards the Christian has in this life.
  2. Are we to labor just for the rewards?
  3. What reward did Jesus say the hypocrite received?
  4. Is almsgiving a part of the Christian life?
  5. Is it still necessary to fast?
  6. Is public prayer wrong?
- 

## LESSON NUMBER EIGHT FOR FEBRUARY 22 NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS

**Scriptures:** Matthew 6:19-24; II Corinthians 6:14-18; James 4:4.

**Matthew 6:19** Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

**20** But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

**21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

**22** The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

**23** But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

**24** No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

**II Corinthians 6:14** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what

fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

**15** And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

**16** And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**17** Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

**18** And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

**James 4:4** Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

**Memory Verse:** Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?—Romans 6:16.

**Aim:** To show that it is impossible to serve God and the sinful world at the same time.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday** I Corinthians 10  
**Tuesday** Colossians 3  
**Wednesday** Ezekiel 33:1-19

**Thursday** II Corinthians 6  
**Friday** James 4:1-10  
**Saturday** Revelation 18:1-20

## INTRODUCTION

“Since sin in its various forms has become universal, surrounding us on all sides, as real as nature itself, the Bible writers often refer to it as ‘the world.’ This includes not only the most gross forms of sin, but all manner of disobedience to God of whatsoever nature or extent, God’s people must be free from all these things. ...

“That our separation from the world in this sense is to be real, is shown by the words of Christ, ‘If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you’ (John 15:19). ... ‘Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution’ (II Timothy 3:12).

“This experience was truly realized by the first disciples, for we have the testimony of Jesus Himself that they were free from the world. He said of them in prayer to the Father: ‘I have given them thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. *They are not of the world even as I am not of the world*’ (John 17:14-16).

“To us this means that everything which partakes of the spirit and nature of the world must be forsaken—worldly sentiments, worldly associations, worldly ambitions, worldly amusements, and worldly dress—everything that is not in strict harmony with the plain teachings of God’s Word.”—F. G. Smith, *What The Bible Teaches*.

## MEDITATIONS

**GUARD YOUR HEART—Matthew 6:19—Lay not up—**“Worldly-mindedness is as common and as fatal a symptom of hypocrisy as any other, for by no sin can Satan have a severe and faster hold of the soul, under the cloak of a visible and passable profession of religion, than by this; and therefore Christ, having warned us against coveting the *praise of men*, proceeds next to warn us against coveting the wealth of the world.”—Matthew Henry. We must not covet material things. The most valuable, or the best things, are not temporal things, which will rust, decay, and can be taken by thieves. **Verse 20—Treasures in heaven—**There are treasures in heaven, I am sure, but Jesus is telling *us* to lay up for ourselves “treasures in heaven.” We are to labor faithfully in His service, give of our means to support His cause, give our time and talents, put our all in His hands, serve Him and Him alone. **Verse 21—Where your treasure is—**Here it is made plain as to why we must not lay up treasures on this earth, but lay them up in heaven, where rust cannot harm, where thieves cannot steal, *because where your treasure is there is where your heart is!* If you love the world you serve the world; if you love God with all your heart you serve God, but you cannot serve both.

**A SINGLE EYE—Matthew 6:22, 23—The light of the body—**“The light of the body is the eye.” That is true literally, it is also true

spiritually. If we have a single eye we will be able to see the truth of the gospel, we will have our heart set on things above, we will put proper value on literal things and eternal things. We will not try to serve God and the world at the same time. **Verse 23—Evil eye**—The latter part of this verse leads us to believe that Jesus had religious people in mind. If they think they can have an “evil eye” and still serve God, the “light” they think they have is really darkness, yea great darkness! A sinner who knows he is a sinner is in a better state.

**ALL ARE SERVANTS—Matthew 6:24—No man**—How can anyone teach that Christians sin more or less every day when Jesus so clearly states, “No man can serve two masters”? To teach that Christians continue to sin is to teach they can serve two masters. “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:34-36). “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). We must choose, but we can only serve one master.

**A YOKE—II Corinthians 6:14—Unequally yoked**—Under the Old Covenant a man was not to yoke an ox and a donkey together. The reason is obvious! They would be unequally yoked. The apostle Paul uses this to bring out a spiritual truth. Christians are not to be yoked up with unbelievers. He speaks of religious professors, though the principle would hold true that a Christian should not marry a sinner. There is no fellowship between a true child of God and a mere religious professor, just as there is no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness. **Verse 15**—Paul continues to drive home the point that Christians are to be a separate people! Christ has no fellowship with Belial. Christians have no fellowship with an infidel. **Verse 16—The temple**—One thing the Hebrews stood firmly against was bringing idols into their temple! Now, it is not a literal temple in Jerusalem. Paul brings out the fact that Christians are God’s temple, and we are not to fellowship false religion, be yoked up with unbelievers, for that would be bringing idols into God’s temple.

**BE SEPARATE—II Corinthians 6:17, 18—Come out**—The message in these verses is the same as in Revelation 18:4, come out of false religion, separate yourself from mere formal religious worship, for worship that is not “in spirit and in truth” is vain! In presenting this truth it is not our purpose to offend anyone, rather to enlighten the student with the truth of God’s Word. Obeying the gospel is what enables us to be sons and daughters of the Almighty.

**ENEMY OR FRIEND—James 4:4—Friend of the world**—Again, no man can serve two masters. You must make a choice. To be a friend of the world—to approve, to go along with the evil of this world—is to be an enemy of God. You cannot afford to be God’s enemy, therefore love not the world, but rather love God with all your heart, mind, and soul.

## CONCLUSION

I am sure Jesus spoke to these people out of a heart of love, but He did not try to curry their favor by “watering down” the message. The same precious truths come on down to us today. We cannot serve God and mammon; we must choose between the two. We need to make the same choice Moses did. (See Hebrews 11:24-26.)

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Where must our treasure be?
  2. What does it mean to lay up treasure in heaven?
  3. How many masters can one serve?
  4. Who are the two “masters”?
  5. Which one are you serving?
- 

## LESSON NUMBER NINE FOR MARCH 1

# SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**Scriptures:** Matthew 6:25-34.

**Matthew 6:25** Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

**26** Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

**27** Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

**28** And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

**29** And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

**30** Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

**31** Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

**32** (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

**33** But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

**34** Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

**Memory Verse:** But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

—Matthew 6:33.

**Aim:** To impress the student with the need of having and keeping our priorities right.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday** Luke 8:1-15  
**Tuesday** Luke 10:38-42  
**Wednesday** Luke 12:1-31

**Thursday** Luke 12:32-59  
**Friday** Mark 1:1-22  
**Saturday** Romans 14

## INTRODUCTION

“Natural life is the greatest of earthly blessings. As to its value, we read, ‘All that a man hath will he give for his life.’ ‘Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?’

“God has placed us in this world, and surrounded us with blessings innumerable. He made the sun to shine upon us and gives us light by day, and the moon by night. He made the stars to twinkle in the sky, and the clouds to send us the refreshing showers. He sends us the sparkling dewdrops, and covers the earth with a carpet of verdant green. The beautiful hills and valleys, the sparkling streamlets which dash down the mountainside, the fields of golden grain, the beautiful flowers, the singing birds—yes, all nature abounds with tokens of God’s love, and these are blessings given to cheer our hearts and point us to Him who is the giver of every good gift. The heavens and beauties of nature declare the handiwork of God. Yet, while God has surrounded us with blessings innumerable, and gifts of great value, none compare in worth to the gift of life which we all possess; without this all other earthly blessings would profit us nothing. Our life is in God’s hands. In Him we live and move and have our being.

“There is a purpose in our having an existence here. God designs that our life shall glorify Him. This present life molds our future and eternal destiny; hence every moment is laden with weighty responsibilities.”—H. M. Riggle, *Man His Present and Future*.

The greatest responsibility of all is to “seek first the kingdom of God.”

## MEDITATIONS

**PROPER INSTRUCTIONS—Matthew 6:25—I say unto you—**The Lawgiver of the New Covenant is speaking to one and all, telling us what is proper and right, and what is not. “Take no thought for your life.” We are not to understand Jesus forbidding work, taking care of our families, providing for them food, clothing, and shelter. In Proverbs 31 we read of a very virtuous woman who looked well to the ways of her household. What Jesus is teaching here is that we are not to have “a disquieting, tormenting thought, which hurries the mind hither and thither, and hangs it in suspense; which disturbs our joy in God, and is a damp upon our hope in Him; which breaks the sleep and hinders our enjoyment of ourselves, of our friends, and of what God has given us. A distrustful, unbelieving thought.”—Matthew Henry. Cannot the One who gave us our body, provide for us what is necessary, if we will trust and obey Him?

**GOD PROVIDES—Matthew 6:26—Behold the fowls of the air—**Jesus here instructs us to consider how God provides for the fowl of the air. Even though they do not sow fields, nor reap harvests, yet God provides. This should inspire our faith and confidence in the Almighty. No proper father would provide for his livestock and let his children starve. This is what Jesus is pointing out. Jesus further informs us that we are of much greater value than the fowl of the air—see also Matthew 10:29, 30.

**WE ARE DEPENDENT ON GOD—Matthew 6:27—Which of you—**Jesus is still explaining to the people why they are not to be anxious, distracted in mind, worrying, but rather to trust, to have faith in God. Can you make the crops grow? Will your anxiousness cause the rain to fall, the sun to shine, the crops to produce? “The passage from distrust to apostasy is very short and easy; and a man is not far from murmuring against Providence, who is dissatisfied with its conduct.”—Clarke.

**JESUS AGAIN APPEALS TO NATURE—Matthew 6:28—I say unto you—**Jesus instructs us to consider the lilies of the field. Watch them grow, they toil not, neither do they spin: yet they are provided for. “Your being, its excellence and usefulness, do not depend on your anxious concern: they spring as truly from beneficence and continual superintendence of God, as the flowers of the field do; and were you brought into such a situation, as to be as utterly incapable of contributing to your own preservation and support as the lilies of the field are to theirs, your heavenly Father could augment your substance, and preserve your being, when for His glory and your own advantage.”—Clarke.

**SOLOMON, A GREAT KING—Matthew 6:29—I say unto you—**Jesus made a statement that must have surprised many: Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Jesus did not say the lilies were more valuable than Solomon; He spoke of the material splendor of Solomon’s kingdom.

“In many ways, Solomon’s 40-year reign as king of the Hebrew people is a puzzle. In his early years he was both noble and humble—undoubtedly one of the best rulers of his day. Although he was surrounded by wealth and luxury as a young man, he seemed to be a person of honor and integrity. Unfortunately, Solomon was not strong enough to withstand the temptations that go along with a long life of luxury. His contribution to the nation of Israel is figured largely in material terms. He made Jerusalem one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world, and he will always be remembered as a great builder. The tragedy is that after the building of the Temple, Solomon did very little to promote the religious life of his people.”—*Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

**GOD IS LOVE—Matthew 6:30-32—Wherefore—**For the third time Jesus instructs His audience not to be anxious, worrying, doubting, about what they were going to wear, what they were going to eat. “If God so clothed the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

If God takes care of these things, do you not think He will take care of you? Can you not believe that a loving heavenly Father will look out for His obedient children? The Gentiles, the unsaved, seek after the material things. They try to find fulfillment in earthly pleasures to the neglect of true riches. Your heavenly Father knows that you need food, clothing, and shelter. Trust Him. Again, Jesus was not saying to sit down, do nothing, and God will provide! He was teaching the need of putting first things first.



**PROPER VALUES—Matthew 6:33—But seek ye first**—Earlier, in what we call “The Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus had instructed the people not to follow the hypocrites who fasted, prayed, and gave alms to receive praise of men. In the verses that we have just considered, He told them not to worry and fret over their food and clothing. Now we come to the heart of this portion of His sermon. There is something that is real. There is something more important than the praise of men. There is something more valuable than material possessions. If you are going to be a true disciple of Mine, you must seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. God has given us richly all things to enjoy, but He has given us guidelines to go by, and we are not to set our affections on the things of this world. We are not to serve them, they are to serve us. Satan does his utmost to get people to do that, and he has been very successful with millions and millions of people. A true disciple of Christ will avoid that pitfall. The kingdom of God is a present reality. Christ is now King over His kingdom. You enter the kingdom of God by spiritual birth. There are different phases of the kingdom. Paul, in Romans 14:17, speaks of the experience of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Holiness of heart and purity of life is required of all His subjects. Then we are to work, pray and give, to see the kingdom of God prosper in the earth. If we will keep our priorities right, we will seek the kingdom of God FIRST. Jesus said if we would, the things we need “shall be added unto” us.

**LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME—Matthew 6:34—Sufficient unto the day**—We do not mean to convey the thought, and we do not believe Jesus meant that it is wrong to make plans, to look ahead, to be diligent about our work, but Jesus did teach that we are not to worry, doubt, be anxious about tomorrow. We are to trust, we are to live today with our faith firmly fixed in the promises of God. Each day has its trials, problems, and responsibilities. We should meet them with confidence in God.

## CONCLUSION

This world is not our eternal home. We must go the way of all flesh. We will not take one earthly thing with us. We should be able to understand Jesus’ burden, as He emphasized a number of times in the verses studied in this lesson, not to worry over material things, but to seek first eternal things, for the kingdom of God is an everlasting kingdom.

“Man in sin is unprepared to serve God acceptably here, to fulfil life’s purpose, to meet God’s demands, and to enter heaven. God is infinitely holy, and no unholy person can stand in His awful presence. To have boldness in the day of judgment we must be ‘pure even as he is pure,’ ‘righteous even as he is righteous,’ and ‘be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.’ Heaven is a holy place. The road that leads there is ‘the way of holiness.’ And to enter and enjoy its eternal felicities we must be holy, free from sin, for no sin can enter there. The holiness of God clothes the holy man with majestic glory, and this awful glory will drive the wicked from his presence forever (II Thessalonians. 2:7-9).”—H. M. Riggle, *Beyond the Tomb*.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Is work required of Christians?
  2. Is it wrong to have some material possessions?
  3. Is mankind only physical?
  4. What are we to seek first?
  5. What is first in your life?
- 

### LESSON NUMBER TEN FOR MARCH 8

## JUDGE NOT THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED

**Scriptures:** Matthew 7:1-6; James 4:11, 12; James 2:12, 13; Romans 14:10-13.

**Matthew 7:1** Judge not, that ye be not judged.

**2** For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

**3** And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

**4** Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

**5** Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

**6** Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

**James 4:11** Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of

the law, but a judge.

**12** There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

**James 2:12** So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

**13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

**Romans 14:10** But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

**11** For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

**12** So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

**13** Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

**Memory Verse:** Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.—John 7:24.

**Aim:** To show that only God knows the motive of every heart, and if we render carnal judgment, we bring condemnation on ourselves.

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday** I Corinthians 13  
**Tuesday** I Corinthians 6  
**Wednesday** Luke 11:29-54

**Thursday** John 7:1-26  
**Friday** I Samuel 16  
**Saturday** Ecclesiastes 12

## INTRODUCTION

In any well-ordered society there must be judges. A *judge* is "one who governs and dispenses justice, judgment and protection." We find

the first reference to a judge in Genesis 18:25. Abraham was talking to God about Sodom, and he asked, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" So the Lord is the first one spoken of in the Scriptures as judge.

After Israel came out of Egypt, we find "Moses sat to judge the people" (Exodus 18:13). This was too much for one man, so elders were appointed to assist (verses 24-26). These men were to be "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" (verse 21).

For over 300 years Israel was ruled by judges as described in the book of Judges. Later we find that they had both civil and ecclesiastical system—See II Chronicles 19:11. In the New Testament the high court of Israel was the Sanhedrin, and there were also lower judges in every town.

Paul speaks of saints choosing wise men to judge certain matters among themselves, rather than going before unbelievers—I Corinthians 6:1-6. So there is a proper role for judges to play in the civil and in the religious realm. This should always be done in justice, fairness, and in the fear of God. I trust the Lord will help each one to come to a proper understanding of this important subject as you study today's lesson.

## MEDITATIONS

**IMPROPER JUDGING—Matthew 7:1—Judge not**—Jesus is here giving instructions as to how we are to conduct ourselves in reference to the faults of others. It is quite possible that Jesus had in mind the scribes and Pharisees who were very rigid and severe. We find them condemning Jesus and His disciples more than once because He "transgressed" their traditions. This statement by the Master is directed at harsh and uncharitable judgments, thinking evil where no evil is, and then speaking it abroad to the harm of innocent people. Paul informs us that love "thinketh no evil" (I Corinthians 13:5).

**GOD SEES ALL—Matthew 7:2—Ye shall be judged**—To know that with what judgment we judge others we shall be judged, should make everyone be careful in what they think and say. It is so easy to draw conclusions on what seems to be, when it is not really that way at all. Among the family of man you will find people judging you just as severely as you judge them. This is another reason we should judge righteous judgment.

**A SPLINTER AND A BEAM—Matthew 7:3—Why beholdest thou**—Adam Clarke says the word *splinter* is a better translation of the Greek word than *mote*. The thought expressed here is that in our eyes our faults are very small in comparison to others, but that is not really the way it is. It may well be his fault is the splinter and ours the beam. Self-love blinds many to what the facts are. Christians should always be honest, and that includes being honest with themselves as well as others.

**CLEAR SIGHT NEEDED—Matthew 7:4—Let me pull out—**All have faults! Someone who takes the attitude he is always right, he does not make mistakes, he does not have any faults, is not really in a position to help others with their faults. With a beam in our own eye we need to work on ourself. "That man is utterly unfit to show the way of life to others who is himself walking in the way of death."—Clarke.

**STRONG LANGUAGE—Matthew 7:5—Thou hypocrite—**A hypocrite is one who professes to be that which he is not. A person who is always picking and finding fault with others while professing to be a Christian needs something he does not have. Get the beam out of your own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the splinter out of thy brother's eye. This was strait forward preaching to the Pharisees that were on the mountainside with Him that day, and it is still good for our day.

**A HOLY PEOPLE—Matthew 7:6—Give not—**God's people are a holy people, redeemed by the blood of the Son of God. To them the Lord's supper and other ordinances are sacred. In fact, anything that is dedicated to God is to be looked upon as sacred. Belshazzar greatly displeased the Lord when he drank wine out of the vessels that had been brought to Babylon from the temple in Jerusalem. Here Jesus speaks not of literal dogs or swine, but of those who do the things that He has just been talking about, and have no real regard for sacred things, even though they make a profession of religion. "They trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

**SPEAK THE TRUTH—James 4:11—Speak not evil one of another—**Improper judging could cause one to speak evil of another, i.e., backbiting, slander, etc. James says we are not to do this, for to do so would be to judge your brother and speak evil of the law. That is, you judge and condemn the law considering it unworthy to be kept, and that it is not a sin to break it. By so doing you reject the law of Christ and set up your rule of life.

**ONE LAW GIVER AND JUDGE—James 4:12—One lawgiver—**There is one lawgiver and judge, and He is able to save to the uttermost. One who breaks the law and teaches others to do so sets himself up as the lawgiver and usurps the office of Christ, the supreme Judge. How important it is that we take the Word of God seriously and live it out in our daily lives.

**BE DOERS OF THE WORD—James 2:12, 13—So speak ye, and so do—**Man shall not live by bread only, but by every Word of God. Have respect for every command of the New Covenant, for this is the only way to know "the law of liberty." Knowing, obeying the truth, sets you free. Whom the Son makes free is free indeed; not free to disobey, but free from sin, and thus able to obey the gospel. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." So the one who shows no mercy shall receive no mercy at the hand of God.

**THERE IS NEED OF CHARITY—Romans 14:10, 11—It is written**—In this fourteenth chapter of Romans Paul deals with conscience matters. What the Word of God condemns is not conscience matters. In Paul's day he had to deal with converted Jews who did not fully realize the Old Covenant law had expired, and with Gentiles who saw no need of following the Old Covenant ceremonial laws. There was need of charity on the part of both Jew and Gentile toward one another. Do not unchristianize a brother if he does not eat meat. We need to remember that all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Yes, Christ is the Judge of all.

**THERE IS COMING A DAY—Romans 14:12—Every one of us**—When we stand before Christ to be judged, as we all must, we will not be obliged to account for the conduct of each other; each one will give account of him or herself. **Verse 13—Judge this rather**—Let us stop rash judgment. It is not proper Christian conduct. We are to love one another, we are to help one another. We are not to put stumbling blocks in our brother's path. There is an enemy in the world that is doing all he can to cause the Christians to fail. You are not to aid him in his evil task.

**OUR MEMORY VERSE—John 7:24—Judge righteous judgment**—How often we judge by the outward appearance. Even the prophet Samuel did when he went to Bethlehem to anoint a new king, but the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him [Eliab]" (I Samuel 16:7). To judge righteously we must not be governed by appearance, position, fame or money, but by the facts. Let us all strive to judge righteously, knowing that with what judgment we judge we shall be judged.

## CONCLUSION

This lesson dealt primarily with harsh, uncharitable judgment which is wrong. We are not to understand from this that there is no standard for the church, that everyone is free to do as they please. Such is not true. God's ministers are told to lift up a standard for the people. "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet" (Isaiah 28:17). Just as in the civil life, not all are "judges"; so in the church, not everyone has the authority to deal with problems. Do not cause more problems by trying to judge matters that are out of your realm. And let all judgment be righteous.

"As leaders and overseers of the church, elders would naturally have the judicial affairs of the church principally in their hands. What is true of the elders generally is especially true of the pastor. He and the other spiritual leaders should act as judges in ordinary church trials ... A brotherly attitude and respectfulness on the part of all are important. All show of ill-feeling should be frowned upon."—R. R. Byrum, *Problems of the Local Church*. I would add to that, there are times when the entire congregation are to judge, as is shown in Matthew 18:15-17.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What kind of judgment does the Word condemn?
  2. Who is to judge when problems arise?
  3. On what basis is judgment to be rendered?
  4. Why should judgment NOT be based on the outward appearance?
  5. Who will be the final judge?
- 

### LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN FOR MARCH 15 THE STRAIT AND NARROW WAY

**Scriptures:** Matthew 7:7-14; Isaiah 35:8; Proverbs 14:12; John 14:6.

**Matthew 7:7** Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

**8** For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

**9** Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

**10** Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

**11** If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

**12** Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

**13** Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

**14** Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

**Isaiah 35:8** And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

**Proverbs 14:12** There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

**John 14:6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

**Memory Verse:** And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.—Isaiah 35:8.

**Aim:** To show there is only one way to eternal life.

#### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday** Ezekiel 33:1-20  
**Tuesday** Revelation 3  
**Wednesday** Isaiah 35

**Thursday** Deuteronomy 28:1-14  
**Friday** Galatians 1  
**Saturday** John 10:1-14

### INTRODUCTION

We are told, Moses, one of Israel's greatest leaders, "when he was come of years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26).

Joshua, the great leader challenged Israel, "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:14, 15).

Everyone must make a decision, as Moses and Joshua did, as to who you will serve, but we need to understand, just any worship, just any religion, will not get us to heaven, will not give us eternal life. The aim of our lesson today is to show that there is only one way to eternal life. We should seek until we find the strait and narrow way, and then we should walk therein.

## MEDITATIONS

**ASK, SEEK, KNOCK—Matthew 7:7, 8—It shall be—**All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. When one realizes his true state, he needs to ask God to forgive him, to *seek* pardon, and, if he is truly in earnest, he will find pardon. Our asking, seeking, and knocking does not end there. As a Christian we need to have a well-ordered prayer life. The Scriptures encourage us, ask and ye shall receive! Of course, we must ask in faith, nothing wavering. Ask for the "old paths," which is the good way. Seek first the kingdom of God. Seek to please God in all things. If you will, then you will find what you are seeking for.

**GOD'S LOVE IS GREATER THAN MAN'S—Matthew 7:9-11—What man—**A proper father will lovingly care for and provide for his children, even denying himself, if need be, that his children not suffer. He will not give them a stone for bread, he will not give them a serpent for fish. What is Jesus telling us? He is telling us that God, as our heavenly Father, has such love for us that it far exceeds the love of the best of earthly fathers. Therefore, He will more willingly give us good things than our earthly father.

**THE GOLDEN RULE—Matthew 7:12—Therefore—**Therefore make righteousness the rule of your life. Do unto others as you would have them do to you. How different this world would be if the family of man would be guided by this principle. "Christ came to teach us not only what we are to know and believe, but what we are to do."

**TWO GATES—Matthew 7:13, 14—Enter ye in—**All through the Scriptures we find presented the fact that there are only two ways. One is strait and narrow, the other is broad. True conversion and regeneration is the way one enters the gate and starts on the narrow way. No one can walk the narrow way while living a life of sin. Do not allow false prophets to deceive you. You must leave a life of sin to walk the way that leads to eternal life. Jesus uses the words *strait* and *narrow* to show that the way to eternal life is different from the broad



road. Anything, as it were, goes on the broad road, and about the same could be said about many religious groups. In fact, most preachers would scoff at the thought of living a holy life in this present evil world. Yet, that is exactly what the Word of God teaches. So few are willing to say, "Good-bye old world I'm through." So few are willing to measure to the standard of modesty, separation from the world with its fads and fashions. That is why the broad is traveled by many! The masses are not on the strait and narrow way, yet it is the only way that leads to eternal life.

**A HIGHWAY LEADS SOMEWHERE—Isaiah 35:8—The way of holiness**—Whether we are on the broad road or the strait and narrow way, the highway leads somewhere. All mankind are on one or the other of these ways. How can we expect to travel the broad road and end up in heaven? No, there is a way that is strait and narrow, and it is the highway of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it. This highway is for the "redeemed." You do not have to be wise in this world's wisdom to walk the highway of holiness; you just have to have a pure heart and let the Spirit lead you.

**BE WARNED—Proverbs 14:12—A way which seemeth right**—Again, God made man to worship, and Satan does not care how much you worship, as long as it is vain worship. He does not care how religious you are as long as your religion is false. Paul tells us, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:15). We can deceive ourselves, others can deceive us, Satan can deceive us, and we think we are right, but we need to make sure we ARE right. How? By seeking the truth with all our heart, asking God to show us what is right, willing to obey the truth when it is revealed to us.

**THE RIGHT WAY—John 14:6—I am the way**—Jesus Christ is "full of grace and truth." He is the eternal Word, the light of the world. He is the only Savior this world has. He is the only way one can come to the Father. To reject Christ is to reject the Father. To reject Christ is to reject the "strait and narrow way" that leads to eternal life.

## CONCLUSION

Everyone of us are eternity bound. We are traveling one of two roads. You cannot travel both at the same time. If we want to have eternal life we must get on the way that leads there. Jesus Christ gave His life, shed His blood, and rose again the third day to make it possible for YOU to have eternal life. I trust His dying will not be in vain in your behalf.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Has God determined before hand who will be saved?
2. Can all be saved?
3. What must one do to be saved?
4. Where does the broad road lead?
5. Where does the narrow road lead?

## LESSON NUMBER TWELVE FOR MARCH 22

# BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS

**Scriptures:** Matthew 7:15-23; 15:13, 14.

**Matthew 7:15** Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

**16** Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

**17** Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

**18** A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

**19** Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

**20** Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

**21** Not every one that saith unto me,

Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

**22** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

**23** And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

**Matthew 15:13** But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

**14** Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

**Memory Verse:** Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.—Ephesians 5:6.

**Aim:** To alert the student to the fact that not all ministers are teaching the true gospel.

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday**  
**Tuesday**  
**Wednesday**

**Ezekiel 13**  
**Jeremiah 23:1-22**  
**Jeremiah 23:23-40**

**Thursday**  
**Friday**  
**Saturday**

**Ezekiel 33:1-20**  
**II Corinthians 11**  
**Galatians 1**

### INTRODUCTION

In the Old Testament a true prophet was one who got a message from God and delivered it to the people, or, in other words, one who spoke for God. He had to be a courageous man, for God's message has never been popular with the masses. A true prophet received his calling directly from God. Thus, their authority came from Him alone, not from the king, not from the people, but from God.

A false prophet would be one who claims to have a call from God, who would have the people believe he had a message from God and was speaking for God, but in reality was not.

Ezekiel was a true prophet, and he was called not only to give God's message to Israel, but to prophesy *against* the false prophets who claim to be true. "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say unto them that prophesy out of their own

hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God, Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like foxes in the deserts. ... They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The Lord saith it; albeit I have not spoken? Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 13:2-8).

False prophets were not limited to Old Testament times! Jesus spoke of the time leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem, and He said, "Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ... For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:11, 24).

Peter informs us, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (II Peter 2:1).

Your eternal destiny depends on who and what you believe and do. Therefore, study the Word and beware of false prophets.

## MEDITATIONS

**THE TRUE NATURE OF THE FALSE PROPHET—Matthew 7:15—Ravening wolves**—When the Master Teacher speaks we need to listen. He warns us that false prophets would come in sheep's clothing. They would come professing to be true Christian ministers, but in heart they are ravening wolves. Wolves were a great menace to sheep, and something the shepherd had to always watch out for. "The Hebrew word translated *ravenous* means 'to rip and tear,' indicating the bloodthirsty nature of the wolf."—*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Thus the "nature" of the false prophet and the reason we need to beware of them.

**WAYS TO KNOW—Matthew 7:16—By their fruit**—We are to know the false prophet by his "fruit." We hear so often, "You must not judge." It is true we are not to render carnal judgment, but we know a tree by the fruit it bears, and Jesus said that is how we are to know the false prophet. A true prophet of God does not "rip and tear" the sheep. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" The answer is no. **Verse 17—Every good tree**—A good tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. That is true in the natural world; why should we think it would be different in the spiritual? A good tree does not produce sin. A false prophet cannot be a true pastor of a Church of God congregation. A true minister will bring forth good fruit. That is not to say he cannot be mistaken about something, but a pure heart will act with pure motives.

**A CONTRAST—Matthew 7:18—A good tree cannot—**We are not to understand this verse as teaching that a person cannot backslide, even a minister, but we are to understand that love to God and man is the root of the good tree; therefore the fruit is good. On the other hand, a sinner, a corrupt tree, does not really love God and is not seeking to please God, and cannot be a true prophet of God as long as he continues in that state.

**A SOLEMN WARNING—Matthew 7:19—Hewn down—**One who continues a life of sin, bearing evil fruit, will be cut off from this life and be eternally lost. This is a solemn warning to every unsaved person. If there be unsaved studying this lesson, I would encourage you to seek the Lord, departing a life of sin.

**WORDS ALONE WILL NOT DO—Matthew 7:20, 21—Not every one—**Jesus again informs us we can know a tree by its fruit, and then adds, not every one that says “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom, but he that doeth the will of God. The apostle James tells us, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.” Christianity is a life that you live, not just words that you say. God has a “will” for everyone! Christians are they who seek to do His will.

**BE CAREFUL—Matthew 7:22, 23—Many will say—**There are many preachers in the world. Many seem to be doing a great work for the Lord. Some even work miracles and supposedly do it in the name of Jesus Christ, yet Jesus says, “I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” How do you explain this? Did not Jesus say false prophets would come in “sheep’s clothing”? Paul tells us, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (II Corinthians 11:13-15). Revelation 16:14 speaks of “spirits of devils, working miracles.” This is why we are to “beware of false prophets.”

**NOT ALL RELIGION IS OF GOD—Matthew 15:13, 14—Every plant—**In verse nine, Jesus said, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine, the commandments of men.” There is only one pure religion, and that is the one God has “planted.” There is “one faith” and we are to earnestly contend for it. All others will be rooted up. In regard to verse 14, Adam Clarke says, “This passage does not at all mean that blind leaders should not be pointed out to the people, that they may avoid being deceived by them, for this our Lord does frequently, and warns His disciples and the people in general against such false teachers.” Clarke feels the words, “Let them alone,” means, “Don’t mind them: pay no regard to them.” Certainly do not follow them, for “if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall in the ditch.” In other words, fail of the grace of God.

**MEMORY VERSE—Ephesians 5:6—Let no man—**In verses 1 and 2, Paul instructs the saints, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.” Then in verses 3-5, he speaks of sinful things, pointing out that those who do such things “hath [no] inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” Then Paul adds, “Let no man deceive you with vain words.” This is an individual responsibility! Those who are of God will do as Paul said in verses 1 and 2; those that are not of God will do as verses 3, 4 and 5 say. Preachers who teach we are all sinners and that we sin more or less every day should not be heeded. Study the Scriptures, keep your heart open to the truth, love it and live it. “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” Known disobedience to the Word of God is sin. Sin separates from God, and if not repented of and forsaken will bring the wrath of God.

## CONCLUSION

**“FALSE PROPHETS**—those who falsely claim to utter revelations that come from God, to foretell future events, or to have God’s power to produce miracles, signs and wonders. In the Bible, false prophets fell into three general categories: (1) those who worshiped false gods and served idols: (2) those who falsely claimed to receive messages from the Lord: and (3) those who wandered from the truth and ceased to be true prophets. ...

“A recurring characteristic of the false prophets is that they often are found in the employment of the powerful and that they are careful to speak pleasing, positive, and flattering words to their employers. Jeremiah condemned the false prophets who were always saying, ‘Peace, peace’ when there was no peace (Jeremiah. 6:14). The false prophets preached a popular message: there would be victory against Babylon. Jeremiah said, ‘The prophets prophesy falsely ... and my people love to have it so’ (Jeremiah 5:31).”—*Nelson’s Ill. Bible Dict.*

God has given us His Word to live by. If followed in humble obedience, it will lead us to eternal life. Satan knows this, and being the evil spirit he is, he does everything he can to keep souls from obtaining salvation, even to having his own churches and ministers. He does not care how religious you are, as long as your religion is vain. Therefore, we need to take this warning from the Lord very seriously and “beware of false prophets.”

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the work of a true prophet, or minister?
2. Who is a false prophet?
3. What did Jesus mean when He said false prophets would come in “sheep’s clothing”?
4. How do false prophets work “miracles”?
5. How can one avoid being deceived by a false prophet?

## LESSON NUMBER THIRTEEN FOR MARCH 29

# BUILDING UPON THE SOLID ROCK

**Scriptures:** Matthew 7:24-29; James 1:22-25; Luke 6:46.

**Matthew 7:24** Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

**25** And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

**26** And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

**27** And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

**28** And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

**29** For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

**James 1:22** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

**23** For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

**24** For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

**25** But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

**Luke 6:46** And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

**Memory Verse:** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

—II Corinthians 5:10.

**Aim:** To show the necessity of building our lives on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

**Monday**     **Isaiah 28**

**Tuesday**   **I Corinthians 3**

**Wednesday**   **Matthew 16**

**Thursday**

**Friday**

**Saturday**

**Matthew 7**

**Luke 6:39-49**

**James 1**

### INTRODUCTION

The foundation is one of the most important, if not the most important, parts of any structure. You may have a beautiful building, but how long will it stand if the foundation is faulty?

We read in Isaiah 28:16, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." This "foundation" God laid in Zion is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

The congregation in Corinth seemed to have developed a "party spirit," some saying they were of Paul, others of Apollos. Paul asked them, "Who is Paul, who is Apollos? They are only ministers by whom you believed." "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (I Corinthians 3:9). The

church is God's house, and it is being built on Christ! "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (verse 11). "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). The church is made up of individual members, and Paul exhorted the congregation at Corinth, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon," because our work shall be made manifest, and it will be tried by fire. It is the responsibility of each one individually to make sure you build your "house"—life—upon that "sure foundation."

## MEDITATIONS

**HEARERS AND DOERS—Matthew 7:24—Therefore—**Jesus had set forth many precious truths, and as He comes down to the close of His "message," He again impresses His audience with the need of not just hearing what He had taught but *doing* what He taught. Remember, last week we had His words, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Now He says to them, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." Solomon informs us, "He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good" (Proverbs 19:8). *Upon a rock*—Luke informs us that the man who built his house on the rock "dugged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock" (Luke 6:48). Jesus, of course, is speaking of us building our lives. And to build upon Christ, there is some clearing away that must be done first. One must repent of and forsake his sins before he can start a house that will stand.

**TIMES OF TESTING—Matthew 7:25—Rain ... floods—**We cannot say enough about the beauty and the desirability of living a true Christian life! It is the only life really worth living, and certainly the only one that will give us eternal life. Nevertheless, there are trials, there are tests, there is an adversary who does his utmost to turn the Christian aside and get him to fail. Jesus informs us, if our life is being built on the Rock, even though the storms come, the house will stand.

**HEARING AND NOT DOING—Matthew 7:26, 27—That house fell—**The foolish man heard the same as the wise man, but he did not think it was necessary to do all that "Preacher" said! Possibly, he thought a mere religious profession would do. Join church, attend services once in awhile, drop an offering in the plate, and go on living a life of sin. After all, we are all sinners, you know. While the other man was still digging, he was already going up with his house. His business was doing well, his health was good, he had a good standing in the town, was well thought of, had a good wife and some children, but he too had to face some problems! He did not have a foundation; he had built his house on the sand. So when the "storms" came, failure came. His house fell and great was the fall of it. Broken homes,



wrecked health by riotous living, shady deals, shoddy work, business failures, etc. The wicked may prosper materially for awhile. It may seem they have less problems than the saints of God, but things are not always as they seem. Even if their prosperity lasts the lifetime, there is a hereafter. What about eternity? Build your life on the Rock and your house will stand.

**THE GREATEST OF ALL TEACHERS—Matthew 7:28—When Jesus ended these sayings—***“They were astonished at his doctrine. They heard the law defined in such a manner as they had never thought of before; and this sacred system of morality urged home on their consciences with such clearness and authority as they had never felt under the teaching of their scribes and Pharisees. Here is the grand difference between the teaching of scribes and Pharisees, the self-created or men-made ministers, and those whom God sends. The first may preach what is called very good and very sound doctrine: but it comes with no authority from God to the souls of the people; therefore, the unholy is unholy still; because preaching can only be effectual to the conversion of men, when the unction of the Holy Spirit is in it; and as these are not sent by the Lord, therefore they shall not profit the people at all.”*—Clarke.

**THE POWER OF THE WORD—Matthew 7:29—One having authority—**What Jesus had set forth was quite different from what the Rabbi's had been teaching the people, therefore, they were astonished at His doctrine. Doctrine is anything that is taught, whether it be true or false. Jesus, of course, had set forth true doctrine. Not only were they astonished at His doctrine, but they were made aware that *“He taught them as one having authority.”* All heaven was back of Him and He spoke as no other man spake. He was, and is, the living Word, the greatest Teacher that ever lived, and ALL that He taught was truth. That is why He is the Rock, and that is why if you will build your life on His teachings it will stand, even in the midst of storms.

**THE WORD TO LIVE BY—James 1:22—Be ye doers of the word—**Jesus used the parable of the wise man and the foolish man to teach us that we must be doers of the Word and not just hearers. James brings us the same message in plain, simple words, *“Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only.”* One who is only a hearer deceives himself, even as the man who built his house on the sand.

**THE WORD IS A MIRROR—James 1:23, 24—He beholdeth himself—**Remember, the foolish man *“heard”* Jesus just as the wise man did. Many hear the Word. They see they need to do something about their soul's salvation, but they use this excuse, or that excuse, and pretty soon they forget. This is self-deception! It leads to eternal loss. When you hear the Word, your soul is stirred, that is the time to act! Do not put it off until some other time; you will *“forget”* what you looked like. This is good for the Christian as well. If you need to measure up, if you need to lay aside some things, if you need to stop doing something, do it. Be doers of the Word and not just hearers only.