

Sunday – November 5, 2017

Preparation

This week's reading will bring us through the end of the book of Luke and his account of the final hours of Christ's life. Though movies have been made, books have been written, and man continues to attempt at "re-creating" the final hours of our Lord's life, there is truly nothing that can compare to the account of the preserved word of God, and furthermore, the actual experience our Lord faced while being crucified, ultimately dying on the cross. We can't possibly relate to our Lord as His road to the cross began with rejection and betrayal by one of His own (Luke 22:47-48). Our finite minds can't comprehend the pain and agony he faced and felt as He was physically beaten, or as the crown of thorns was placed on His head. We cannot imagine the pain of the nails being driven into His hands and His feet. Yes, we can try to conjure up in our minds how He felt, yet, it would still fail in comparison to the real thing. What's not often discussed is the mental and emotional pain the Lord faced throughout the entire process. In every way possible, our Lord and Saviour literally "poured out his soul unto death" (Isaiah 53:12). As we read, may we be reminded on one thing: He did it for us! As Isaiah records in Isaiah 53:4-12, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the

transgressors.” As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Wow. Considering Isaiah 53 alone, how truly indebted to the Lord are we? Our hearts should be both broken and, at the same time, filled with joy and thanksgiving because of the sacrifice He made on the cross for each and every one of us. As we conclude the book of Luke, may it truly serve as a time of reflection, yet at the same time may it serve as a time of provocation to allow “the life also of Jesus...be made manifest in our body.” (2 Corinthians 4:10)

To complete the week of Daily in the word, we’ll begin our journey through the book of John. Just as Matthew presents Jesus as King, Mark as a servant, Luke as the Son of man, John presents Him as “Son of God”. The phrase “Son of God” shows up ten times throughout the book of John. As John testifies concerning Jesus in John 1:34, “And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” Then again testifying of the deity of Christ in John 3:18, “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Oh what a Saviour! Praise the name of the Lord for His grace and mercy and that even in our lowest estate, He chose to come to this earth, and, “in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

TODAY'S READING: LUKE 22-24

OVERVIEW: The wicked plot of the religious leaders to kill Jesus and to contract Judas (22:1-6); Jesus' last Passover (22:7-13); the converting of the Passover meal into His own supper (22:14-28); prayer in the garden (22:39-46); Jesus' arrest (22:47-54); Peter's denial (22:55-62); Jesus is mocked, blasphemed, and beaten (22:63- 71); Jesus before Pilate (23:1-7); Jesus before Herod (23:8-10); Jesus returned to Pilate (23:11-24); Pilate releases Jesus to His accusers to be crucified (23:25-49); Jesus' burial (23:50-56); Jesus' resurrection (24:1-12); the ministry of the risen Christ (24:13-45); Jesus' commission (24:46-49); Jesus' ascension (24:50-53).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The ground we will cover in today's reading is ground that we have walked through in both Matthew and Mark's Gospel. Though you have already read it two times in as many weeks, may God use it to minister to your heart with a fresh sense of wonder and appreciation today. This is the manifestation of God's love for us (I John 4:9), and the revelation of the Gospel (I Cor. 15:1-4). In other words, as far as salvation is concerned, this is the heart of the Bible.

Because we have become at least somewhat familiar with this information, our comments today will be centered in chapter 22:7-20, as the Lord establishes the observance of communion, or what we sometimes refer to as the Lord's Supper.

First of all, keep in mind that this is the PASSOVER meal that our Lord is eating with His disciples (Luke 22:7, 15). To understand the meaning of the Lord's Supper then, we must have an understanding of the PASSOVER, because it is actually the BREAD and CUP of the Passover meal that our Lord turned into His OWN Supper.

I. The biblical and historical meaning of the Passover.

- 1. A general understanding of the Passover Meal.** The Passover meal was a commemorative feast that reminded the JEWS of what God had done in DELIVERING them out of the bondage of EGYPT.
- 2. The particular circumstances of the first Passover (Exodus 12)** God's people were being held in bondage in the dominant world power, EGYPT: being held captive by the will of its wicked king, PHARAOH. Day after day they labored as SLAVES under the domination of the taskmaster's whip, as they

trudged out their existence in EGYPT. God delivered them from Egypt by a series of plagues, the last of which was the curse of death upon the FIRSTBORN. The only way they could escape the death of the firstborn in their house was to kill a spotless lamb, and APPLY its BLOOD to the top beam and the two side posts of the door. When the angel of death passed through the city to execute judgment, He would “pass over” every house to which the blood of the lamb had been applied. God instituted the “passover” meal on that night, and commanded them to celebrate it each year so they would be continuously put in REMEMBRANCE of His delivering power that was manifest in bringing them out of the bondage of Egypt by the blood of the Lamb.

3. The “big picture” of the Passover We were being held in bondage in the course of this WORLD, being held captive by the will of its wicked king, SATAN (Ephesians 2:2; II Timothy 2:26). Day after day, we labored as SLAVES under the domination of the taskmaster of SIN, as we trudged out our existence in the course of this WORLD (Romans 6:14; Gal. 1:4). God delivered us from the curse of death upon our FIRST BIRTH, because we applied the BLOOD of the true “Passover Lamb”

(I Cor. 5:7), the Lord Jesus Christ, to our lives. God instituted a meal that He has commanded us to observe so we will be continuously put in REMEMBRANCE of His delivering power that was manifest in bringing us out of the bondage of this world and sin through the BLOOD of the spotless lamb of God on the cross (Luke 22:7-20; Matthew 26:17- 28).

II. The biblical and historical understanding of the Lord’s Supper.

1. The transformation of the bread and the cup of the Passover

A new meaning of the bread. *“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19)*

A new meaning of the cup. *“Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” (Luke 22:20) *In other words, “From now on, don’t go back to the picture; go back to the reality.”*

2. The meaning of “eating the bread” and “drinking the cup.”

There are two basic things that a person needs to come to grips with in

order to be saved

#1 – Who Christ is.(i.e. You must believe that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh.)

#2 – What Christ did.(i.e. You must believe that Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross to atone for man's sin.)

Jesus' metaphor of "eating the bread" and "drinking the cup" in John 6. The religious leaders are appalled by Jesus' claim to be God. Jesus is trying to get them to understand, that "If you never come to grips with who I am, and what I have come to do, you will never receive eternal life."

The connection of "eating the bread" and "drinking the cup" in the Lord's Supper. We are brought back to the very two things that saved us

#1 – That God opened our eyes to understand that Jesus Christ is, in fact, God in a human body.

#2 – That we placed our faith in what Jesus Christ, as God, did through the shedding of His blood for the remission of our sin.

Tuesday – November 7, 2017

TODAY'S READING: JOHN 1-4

OVERVIEW: Christ is the Word (1:1-3, 14); Christ is the Light (1:4- 13); Christ is the Son of God (1:15-18), 30-34, 49); Christ is the Messiah (1:19-28, 35-42); Christ is the Lamb of God (1:29, 35-36); Christ is the King of Israel (1:43-49); Christ is the Son of Man (1:50- 51); Christ and the disciples (1:9-2:12); Christ and the Jews (2:13- 3:36); Christ and the Samaritans (4:1-54).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

We have come to the fourth and final of the Gospels, the Gospel of John. One of the obvious questions that surfaces in every generation of believers is, why are there four Gospels, and not just one?

Certainly, the easiest answer is the simple fact that God wanted it that way! That's good enough for me, but perhaps we can site three very basic reasons why God wanted that way:

1 - The Practical Reason.

If you were a police officer investigating an accident at an intersection and had found four people who had witnessed the accident from the four different corners of the scene, it would provide you with all the information you would need to prove conclusively what had actually taken place. The four Gospel accounts allow us to do the same.

2 - The Presentational Reason.

As we have seen, each Gospel is written to a particular audience with a very particular way of presenting who Jesus Christ actually is. We saw that Matthew was written to the Jews to present Jesus Christ as the King of the Jews. Mark was written to the Gentiles (perhaps more specifically, the Romans) to present Jesus Christ as the Servant of the Lord. Luke was written to the Greeks to present Jesus Christ as the Son of Man. And John is written to the world to present Jesus Christ as the Son of God. It is interesting to note that the word "world" is found 59 times in this Book (almost one-fourth of the times it is found in the entire Bible!). John wants every tribe, tongue, people and nation of the world to hear and understand that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, God in human flesh, and is the source and meaning of life. In fact, when John comes to the end of his Gospel he declares that very calculated two-fold purpose: *"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:*

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ (i.e. the “anointed,” the Messiah), the Son of God (i.e. God in a human body); and that believing ye might have life through his name” (20:30-31).

In presenting this Gospel to the world, keep in mind that the greatest barrier to “world communication” is not geography. It is not monetary. It’s not even politics (the world is quickly moving to a one-world government!). The greatest barrier has always been and is LANGUAGE! So take just a second to look up these verses to see what this Gospel that seeks to present Christ to the world is so intent on: 1:38, 41, 42; 5:2; 9:7; 19:19-20. John wants every culture in the world to understand exactly what is being said, so they will BELIEVE Jesus Christ is God, and RECEIVE the life He offers.

3 - The Peripheral Reason.

It is quite interesting to note what God reveals are on the four corners of His throne. In Revelation 4:6-7, John writes, *“And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.”*

The connection of the four beasts of Revelation to the four Gospels seems more than apparent by the likeness of each beast to the content of each gospel, right down to the very order in which they are listed.

□ 1st Beast: Like a LION. As Matthew’s purpose was to reveal Christ as the King of the Jews, He is presented as the *“Lion of the tribe of Judah”* (Rev. 5:5).

□ 2nd Beast: Like a CALF. As Mark’s purpose was to reveal Christ as the Servant of the Lord, He is presented as the One who MINISTERS in service and sacrifice.

□ 3rd Beast: Like a MAN. As Luke’s purpose was to reveal Christ as the Son of Man, He is presented as the perfect Man.

□ 4th Beast: Like an EAGLE. As John’s purpose was to reveal Christ as the Son of God, He is presented as the Word who descended from heaven like an eagle and was made flesh.

In keeping your bearings in the Gospel of John, it is important to realize that this Gospel is centered around the Passover Feasts. John takes us through three Passovers in this Book, which ultimately culminate with the crucifixion.

□ 1:1-2:13 is the beginning of Christ's ministry up to the first Passover recorded in John's account.

□ 2:14-5:1 takes us up to the second Passover Feast.

□ 5:2-6:4 takes us up "nigh" (near) to the third Passover to the actual record of Jesus eating the Passover Feast with His disciples in 13:1-2, and we move into the night before His crucifixion.

Why is everything built around the Passover? Keep in mind the things we saw in yesterday's comments from Luke 22 — Jesus is none other than the fulfillment of the Passover Lamb (I Cor. 5:7)! That is why John the Baptist said what he said concerning Christ in today's reading: "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (1:29).

The Passover was the commemoration of the most significant even in Jewish history: God's deliverance from the slavery and oppression in Egypt under Pharaoh, its wicked king. And how were they delivered? Through the blood of a spotless lamb! In this Gospel, John takes us to the final Passover, and the shedding of the blood of THE spotless LAMB of God! This one-time historical event has been delivering people from the slavery of this world (Egypt – Eph 2:2) and its wicked king (Satan- II Tim. 2:26) for nearly 2000 years! May God use each of us to declare what John the Baptist declared in 1:29 to the lost people in our world today!

TODAY'S READING: JOHN 5-7

OVERVIEW:

Christ and the Jewish leaders (5:1-47); Christ and the multitudes (6:1- 71); the conflict over Moses (7:1-8:11).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we saw in yesterday's comments, John clearly identifies in chapter 20, verse 30 and 31, that the purpose of this Gospel was to reveal the signs Christ gave during His earthly ministry to prove His deity, so that the gift of life (both eternal and abundant – John 10:10) can be ours.

It is important to know that the first three Gospels have been referred to historically as the "Synoptic Gospels." The word "synoptic" comes from a Greek word meaning "to see together." These three Books, as we have seen, cover the same basic material. Over 90 percent of the material covered in John's Gospel is not covered in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. While these first three Gospels deal primarily with the "events" in the life of Christ, John deals primarily with the "meaning" of these events. Perhaps the clearest example is the feeding of the 5000. While all four gospels record the event, only John follows the miracle with the sermon of Christ being the "Bread of Life" (John 6), which provides the explanation of the miracle.

But not only does John emphasize the meaning of the events in the life of Christ, He also emphasizes the PERSON of Christ. John records key sermons that Jesus preached in which He identified WHO He is, and WHAT He came to the earth to do. It is significant that in John's coverage of these sermons, John records the seven "I AM" declarations of Christ. "I AM" is significant in the fact that it was the name Jehovah God used to reveal who He was to Moses in Exodus 3:14. As we have noted on previous occasions, seven in the Bible is the number of "perfection" and/or "completion." Remember, John's purpose in this Gospel is to reveal that Christ is "perfectly" and "completely" God (20:30-31)!

1. I AM the Bread of Life.(6:35,41,48,51)
2. I AM the Light of the World.(8:12;9:5)
3. I AM the Door of the Sheep.(10:7,9)
4. I AM the Good Shepherd.(10:11,14)
5. I AM the Resurrection and the Life.(11:25)

6. I AM the Way, the Truth, the Life.(14:6)
7. I AM the True Vine.(15:1,5)

Do note that there are other occasions in John's Gospel when Jesus refers to Himself as the "I Am" in reference to His deity (4:26; 8:28, 58; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8), but the above seven are unique in that they are not only descriptive of His deity, but of how He as God provides life (20:30-31).

Another very distinct, unique and interesting quality of John's Gospel is that of the many miracles Christ performed, John chose (under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, of course) to record seven. And in keeping with his purpose in everything that he recorded in this Gospel (20:31), these seven were specifically chosen to reveal that "*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*" Not only, however, were these miracles specifically chosen, but they are revealed in a very specific order because they form a "perfect" and "complete" picture of salvation.

The first three show the MEANS of salvation:

1. Water into wine (2:1-11)—Salvation is by the WORD of GOD.
2. Healing the nobleman's son(4:46-54)—Salvation is by FAITH.
3. Healing the paralyzed man (5:1-9)—Salvation is by GRACE.

The fourth miracle stands by itself to teach that dedicated disciples must give the Bread of Life to lost sinners.

4. Feeding the 5000(6:1-14)— Salvation is brought to the world by HUMAN MEANS.

The last three show the RESULTS of salvation:

5. Calming the storm (6:15-21)—Salvation brings PEACE.
6. Healing the blind man (9:1-7)—Salvation brings LIGHT.
7. Raising of Lazarus (11:38-45)—Salvation brings LIFE.

It is also significant to note that each of these seven miracles actually introduced the discourse that followed. For example: the discourse with Nicodemus was the direct result of the miracles that Nicodemus had witnessed (3:2); the healing of the paralyzed man (5:1-9) led to the discourse in 5:10- 47; the feeding of the 5000 was the backdrop of the discourse concerning the Bread of Life (6:1-59); the healing of the blind man in 9:34 that led to him being cast out is what led to the discourse concerning Christ being the Good Shepherd Who never casts anyone out (10:1-41).

As we did for each of the other gospels, the following will provide an overall analysis of the Gospel of John:

1. Information About The Author

- His name: John.
- His name means: “Jehovah” (The Lord) is a gracious giver.”
- He is referred to in scripture as the disciple whom Jesus loves. (Jn. 21:20-24)
- His father’s name is Zebedee. (Mt. 4:21)
- He has a brother named James. (Mt. 4:21)□He was intolerant of others. (Lk. 9:49-56)
- He is one of the two Sons of thunder. (Mk. 3:17)
- His initial ministry was limited to Jews. (Gal. 2:9)
- He was imprisoned on an island called Patmos. (Rev. 1:9)
- He also wrote the books of Revelation, and I, II, III John.

2. Facts About The Gospel

- Approximate date of writing: 85-90 A.D.
- Written from: Ephesus
- Dates of recorded events: 26 A.D. – 33 A.D.
- Theme: Deity of Christ
- Christ is seen as: Son of God
- Key verse: John 20:31
- Key word: Believe (99 times)
- Chapters: 21
- Verses: 879
- Words: 19,973

3. Features Of This Gospel

- The gospel that identifies Christ as the Son of God more than any other gospel.
- The gospel that has the least number of events recorded in the other gospels. (7)
- Contains 15 fulfilled prophecies

4. A Simple Outline Of This Gospel

Three Witnesses

- Witness #1 - of His words and works. Chapters 1-12
- Witness #2 - to His witnesses. Chapters 13-17
- Witness #3 - to the world. Chapters 18-21

Thursday – November 9, 2017

TODAY'S READING: JOHN 8-10

OVERVIEW:

The conflict over Moses (7:1-8:11); the conflict over Abraham (8:12- 59); the conflict over Christ's Sonship (9:1-10:42).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we continue seeking to get our bearings in John's Gospel, and seeing how it relates to the other Gospel accounts, there is plenty to glean by observing the introductory genealogy in each of the Books. Because Matthew presents Christ as the King of the Jews, Christ's genealogy runs through David, back to Abraham (Matt. 1:1). Because Mark presents Christ as the Servant of the Lord, the significant thing about Mark's genealogy is that there is none! A servant's genealogy is insignificant! His significance is determined by what he does (i.e. His work). Because Luke presents Christ as the Son of Man, His genealogy is traced through His human mother back to the first MAN. And because John presents Christ as the Son of God, Christ's genealogy takes us back to the very "*beginning*" (John 1:1; Gen. 1:1) to show Christ's deity (that He is, in fact, God and very God), and the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has always eternally existed in the Godhead. There has never been a time that Christ wasn't, and that He wasn't God and completely co-equal with the Father (Heb. 1:8; Phil. 2:6). There came a time in history when He was begotten as a SON (John 1:18; Heb. 1:6,8), but He was never a "begotten God" as the Jehovah's False Witnesses teach and some very popular versions of the Bible teach in John 1:18! If I were a Jehovah's False Witness and a Christian met me at their door with a New American Standard Version, I'd make a beeline for John 1:18!

Today's reading is absolutely jam-packed with irrefutable biblical evidence that Jesus Christ is God. One of the key arguments Jehovah's False Witnesses assert is that Jesus never actually claimed to be God. All I can say, is how do you spell "BLIND" (I Cor. 4:4)?!!

Familiarize yourself with 8:12-57 before we take just a second to comment on Jesus' statement in verse 58: "*Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*"

Do you understand what is actually happening here? Jesus was declaring to the Pharisees (and to the whole world!) that He was God, using the same name for

HIMSELF that Jehovah Himself used when He revealed HIMSELF to Moses in Exodus 3:14! He claimed to be the Great “I AM”!!! Listen, there is absolutely nothing that Jesus could have said that would have been a stronger claim of deity! Note that Jesus did not say, “Before Abraham was, I WAS.” Jesus is not simply claiming here that He existed before His physical birth (i.e. that He was a begotten God that was begotten of the Father, as were the angels, before Abraham.) He uses the term “I AM” to show that He was not only “a god,” but “THE God” — “JEHOVAH GOD”!!!

And be it known, that that is not simply “my” interpretation, or “one way” of interpreting the meaning of the verse! That this verse is specifically teaching that Christ is, in fact, Jehovah God is made abundantly clear by the response of the Pharisees in the very next verse (verse 59)! They understood exactly what Jesus was claiming! That’s why they *“took up stones to cast at him.”* Stoning, according to Leviticus 24:16, was the penalty for blasphemy! They wanted to stone Him because He claimed to be God!

The same exact thing happens in chapter 10, verses 22-33. Jesus makes His absolute claim of deity in verse 30 (again, how totally ludicrous to say that Jesus never claimed to be God!), stating, *“I and my Father are one.”* The Jehovah’s False Witnesses can claim all they want that that doesn’t mean that Jesus was claiming deity, but the passage teaches otherwise! Again, those who were listening to Jesus in John 10 understood exactly what Jesus meant by what He said, evidenced by their reaction to it. In verse 31 they *“took up stones again to stone him,”* because that was the Old Testament penalty for blasphemy. Jesus even forced them to identify exactly why they were responding in such a manner so there would never ever be a question about His claim: *“Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God”* (10:32-33).

There is no doubt about it, folks, Jesus Christ is God!

TODAY'S READING: JOHN 11-14

OVERVIEW: The raising of Lazarus (11:1-46); the Pharisees' plot to kill Jesus (11:47-57); Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet (12:1-11); the triumphal entry (12:12-19); Jesus' answer to the Greeks (12:20-50); Jesus washes the disciples' feet (13:1-17); Jesus foretells His betrayal, His death, and His second coming (13:18-14:14); Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit (14:15-31).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As has been mentioned, and as you have no doubt already noticed, the Gospel of John is the most unique of all of the Gospels. It is unique for numerous reasons, but perhaps the main reason for its uniqueness has not yet been mentioned: its unique author. As far as Jesus' disciples are concerned, John is in a category all to himself.

John is, without a doubt, the greatest picture or illustration of what a Christian should be in the entire New Testament. As Jesus begins His ministry and calls the Twelve, what soon becomes evident is that out of all the disciples, John is going to be:

- **A UNIQUE FOLLOWER.**
- As Jesus calls the Twelve, it is interesting to observe that in a loose sense, they actually picture and represent all of Christianity. There are things that were true about that group that have been true of every group of believers who have ever gathered together.

You see, of the Twelve, there was one that made the same claim as all of the others. He looked like a Christian. He knew how to speak Christianese. He knew how to present himself as a Christian. The only problem was that he had never genuinely been saved. Of course, that was Judas. Perhaps that same ratio exists in the church today. Maybe one out of twelve have a "profession" of salvation, but no real "possession."

Then, of the rest of the eleven, there were eight. And these guys were saved, and just really "good folk." They attended the meetings of the assembly. They sang the songs; they gave their offerings, and were a part of the activities. But that's about as far as it went. They were just kind of satisfied with being "average." I think most pastors would tell you that just like the disciples, that description fits about two-thirds (8 out of 12) of their congregation.

But then there were the three. There were three of the disciples that couldn't be

satisfied with the status quo. There were three who had a more intimate relationship with the Lord than all of the others. Of course, they were Peter, James and John. They witnessed greater miracles than the others (Matt. 17:1; Luke 9:28; Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51). The Lord revealed to them what He revealed to no one else (Mark 13:3). He shared more of His heart with them than He did the others (Mark 14:32-34). All the way throughout Jesus' ministry, they were just more in tune with the Lord. There is that same 25 percent in churches today. While it seems others are just passively walking through life, they're walking with their eyes fixed on things which cannot be seen (II Cor. 4:18). They walk up mountains with the Lord, and He reveals to them His glory (Matt. 17:1-8). They go further than everyone else (Mark 14:32-33).

And yet, even out of those three, there's that one that goes even further! And that, of course was John. John is an incredible picture of somebody who goes all the way with Christ. At the crucifixion, Judas had already done his thing. James is gone. Peter is following afar off (Luke 22:54). All of the disciples have scattered (John 16:32). All except one. You know where you find John at the crucifixion? He's right where He's supposed to be! He's at the cross, at the feet of Jesus (John 19:26). Man, what a unique follower! The only one who followed Jesus all the way. Are you that one out of twelve?

And secondly, God has for this "unique follower,"

- **A UNIQUE TITLE.**

- On six different occasions when the Bible is making reference to John, when it could have very easily simply said "John," the Holy Spirit inspired it to be written, the "*disciple whom Jesus loved.*" It is a phrase not used of any of the other disciples. Didn't Jesus love them? Certainly He did. But Jesus had a very special love for John. And do you know why Jesus had such a special love for John? It was because John had a very special love for Jesus! John is a great example of what it is to love Jesus with all of your heart. And that love for Jesus gave John something else:

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- **A UNIQUE CONFIDENCE.**

- In the upper room with His disciples when Jesus revealed that one of the Twelve would betray Him, Matthew 26:22 says they "*began every one of them to say unto him, Lord is it I?*" All of them except John. John 13:25 says that John's question was, "*Lord, who is it?*" John may not have had enough spiritual discernment to figure out which one would betray Him, but there was one thing he knew for sure. It wasn't going to be him! But there is at least one other thing that makes John more unique than perhaps any other person in the Bible, and that is that John had:

- **A UNIQUE PRIVILEGE.**

- In fact, John had the privilege of privileges! John 13:25 says that in the upper room the night before Jesus was crucified, he had the unbelievable privilege of laying his head on “*Jesus’ breast.*” And do you realize Whose breast that actually is? It is God in human flesh! Here is John with his head on Jesus’ breast, as he listens to the very heartbeat of God!

That may sound like an over-spiritualization, or you may think it is dramatizing the point, and yet the fact is, the problem we face in Christianity today is that we don’t have our head on “*Jesus’ breast*”! Because we don’t, we don’t hear the heartbeat of God!

Most Christians are so in love with themselves (II Tim. 3:2), they hear and know their own heartbeat. Most Christians are so preoccupied with people’s opinion of them, they definitely hear and know the heartbeat of others (I Cor. 4:3). Most Christians are so engulfed in the world and enamored with the things of this world, they hear and know the heartbeat of the world. But realize today, that the Book you hold in your own two hands today, is God’s heartbeat (John 1:1, 14). Through it, lay your head on Jesus’ breast, and listen today with John (John 13:25), to the very heartbeat of God!

Saturday – November 11, 2017

Reflection

If we profess to be a born again, son of God, the word of God is precise on exactly how we became such. As the Holy Spirit via John penned it in John 5:24, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” There is no alternate route to our Saviour. It first comes by hearing the word of God. As 1 Peter 1:23 reminds us, we are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” Paul writes in Romans 10:13-17, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Therefore, according to scripture, without hearing the word of God it would have been impossible for us to receive the faith to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:31) for salvation.

Secondly, as we hear the word of God, it is then our responsibility to believe. Of course, we could have chosen not to, for countless people have. However, if that were our “testimony” then the result of “everlasting life” would have never been an option for any of us. Hearing the word and then choosing to willfully reject it results in condemnation and death. As Jesus teaches in John 3:18, “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” It’s really quite simple. We should praise the Lord for the opportunity He has given each and every one of us to “hear” His word.

That being the case, as we reflect on our salvation experience and what it took for us to become a son of God, may John 5:24 also provoke and exhort us to do our part in allowing others to “hear the word”. What a sad testimony it would be to know that we held the truth within our hands (the written word of God), as well as within our hearts (the living Word of God), and chose to keep silent, thereby preventing others from receiving the life of which we’ve been so graciously and mercifully given. Sadly, there has been and will be many who

refuse to share the gospel; may it not be said of us. Surely, through our time together in reading the word and being guided by Daily in the word, if we didn't before, we now see the need and, therefore, our responsibility to "Preach the word". Can we truly call ourselves "Christians" if we refuse to allow Christ to be known to a world that so desperately needs Him? The answer to that question speaks for itself. As Paul wrote to the church of Thessalonica, our prayer should be that "the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you." (2 Thessalonians 3:1)

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Luke 23:14-15 "Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him."

John 3:18 "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

John 5:39 "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

John 8:7 "So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
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