

He Came Down From The Mountain, But Not The Cross

By Tom Wacaster

If the Sermon on the Mount were all that Matthew recorded, that small piece of inspired literature would declare the very majesty of the One Who spoke those words. The sermon now complete, our Lord leaves the mountain to enter His market place. The very first words we encounter as we enter the eighth chapter of Matthew capture our attention: “And when he was come down from the mountain” (8:1). Strictly speaking those half dozen English words describe His descent from an earthly mountain to the plains below. But suppose Jesus had stayed in the mountain? What if He had built some monastery and lived out His life on isolation? Had He done so, the miracles in this chapter, yea the whole of Matthew, would have never been recorded, and the teachings and instructions delivered on the mount would have been nothing more than the wisdom of just another Rabbi speaking to His band of devoted zealots who, at the end of their lifelong journey, would have summed up the experience in the words of the two men traveling to Emmaus: “But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel” (Luke 24:21). Thank God that Jesus did come down from that mountain! Consider the following.

He Came Down From The Mountain Of Happiness To Bear Our Sorrows

Each of the three miracles of healing in this portion of our study is vitally connected with that beautiful chapter of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. Matthew told us these things were done “that it might be fulfilled which was

spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying: Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases” (8:17). The Old Testament passage is Isaiah 53:4-6: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” “Griefs” and “sorrows” – pay attention to those two words, keeping in mind the context of Isaiah’s prophecy. The sorrow to which Isaiah refers was deeper and more profound than the emotional ache in the hearts of men that might arise from time to time. The Suffering Servant did not come to open a grief-counseling center or to wipe the tears of those whose lives had been disrupted by physical disease and multiple maladies, and then go about business as usual.

Our Lord was fully aware that back of all the disease and suffering is the problem of sin. The true sorrow of the world can be traced to sin, whether a person’s own individual sin or the sin of humanity. Sin was introduced into the world by Adam (Rom. 5:12-21), and it spread into every corner of this globe and to every successive generation by individual choice. Jesus’ power to heal the leper by the touch of His hand, or to heal the centurion’s servant from a distance by His spoken word, finds its significance in His overall mission to “seek and to save that which is lost” (Luke 19:10). Was this not the point in the case of the man sick of the palsy where Jesus asked His critics: “Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?” (Luke 5:23). When it is said that Jesus bore “our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (Isa. 53:4) it is heaven’s way of telling us of the great mission of our King to address

the root cause of those sorrows. He did this by being "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:5). Can you imagine a king who would be willing to pay the penalty for the crimes of the citizens of his kingdom? Pick your dictator or despot, and the story is the same. It is most often the case that the innocent suffer for the crimes of the king. But our King came down from the mount of happiness to bear our sorrows.

Continued next week.

Tom Wacaster serves on the faculty of the Memphis School of Preaching

Jesus Has All Authority

Article Selected

Jesus has come to Jerusalem and taken the gloves off. By His unparalleled authority, He is directly challenging the religious establishment whose shallow righteousness has been rejected by His Father. He has come to take the Old Law out of the way and establish His church. It's teaching like this parable in Luke 20:9-18 that will provoke those leaders to the point that they will trump up charges and bribe false witnesses to arrest, try, and have Him crucified. This parable is stark and shocking, and the moral as heavy as an anvil. Notice.

THESE LEADERS WERE GUILTY OF IMPROPER STEWARDSHIP (9). The "man" in the parable represents God, the Father. He made Israel a nation and gave the Jews a Law to follow and keep. The Jews, particularly the religious leadership, were entrusted with faithfully carrying it out, but they did not.

THEY WERE GUILTY OF TAKING WHAT DIDN'T BELONG TO THEM (10). In fact, these leaders--dubbed "the vine-growers" by Jesus in this parable--thought that they were in charge. They sought to make people subject to them, to follow their rules (cf. Rom. 10:3-4). The end result was vain religion (Mat. 15:8-9).

THEY WERE GUILTY OF ABUSING THOSE SENT TO THEM (11-15). The "slaves" sent to them were presumably prophets and teachers, no doubt inclusive of John the Baptist. These were the Father's spokesmen, come to teach and correct them. Each one sent was treated the same, sad way: they "beat him and sent him away empty-

handed." Last of all, the son was sent (13-14). The "owner" (the Father) sent Him, saying, "I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him" (13). Instead, seeing Him as the heir, they plotted to kill Him (14). Obviously, Jesus is referring to Himself and the very thoughts these religious leaders were thinking as He told the parable!

THEY WERE GUILTY OF LOSING WHAT WAS ENTRUSTED TO THEM (16-18). Instead of being convicted by this parable, these religious leaders recoil at the moral of the parable: "What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others" (15-16). Their emotion boils over and they audibly reply to Jesus' parable, "May it never be!" They missed the travesty of the behavior they and their forefathers had shown to God's messengers and the sin they were about to perpetrate on His Son. They didn't want to lose their grip on the power and influence they had taken. But Jesus doubles down, changing the imagery from a vineyard to building construction. They were going to reject Jesus, the stone, but He would be made the chief corner stone. He would judge and destroy them, if they did not abandon their rebellion.

Jesus is full of love, kindness, and peace. But, that's an incomplete picture of Him. He came to establish His rule and reign. He must be King and Lord of our lives. We must submit to His way and truth to enjoy His life.

Upcoming Events

TONIGHT!– Youth Devo after evening services at the home of the Scherffius’. Boys bring drinks, girls bring desserts.

Dec. 19—White Elephant gift exchange at the building after evening worship services. Please bring a gift for the exchange and some finger foods.

Dec. 31—New Year’s Eve fellowship at the building @ 7pm. Please bring games and finger foods.

Prayer List

Prayer Requests

Lenny Moore, who was hospitalized last week.

Members

Jeff Cannady, Les Daltrey, Scott DeDear, Ken and Sandra Marie, Ann Pantel, Veronica Serenil, Clark Withers, Dee Gilpatrick, Faye Henderson, Sandy Malone.

Sign up sheets for hosting Youth Devos, preparing communion, and opening & closing the building for 2022 are on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Food Helpers for the month of December - Team B.
There is a list of teams on the bulletin board.

Service Roster

Week of December 12, 2021

Sunday Morning

Announcements..... Kevin Sheeran
Scripture Reading..... James Cammock
Song Leader Jesse Moser

Opening Prayer..... Kevin Sheeran
Closing Prayer..... Clifton Rutherford

Lord’s Supper & Offering

Bread..... Mike Atkinson
Cup..... Rick Bass
Offering..... Ken Dorries
Assist..... Fred Scherffius
Assist..... Kirk FitzSimmons
Assist..... Leon Morales

Sunday Evening

Announcements..... Kevin Sheeran
Song Leader Rick Bass

Opening Prayer..... Jesse Moser
Closing Prayer..... Bryant Siegel

Lord’s Supper & Offering..... Ken Dorries & Rick Bass

Wednesday Evening

Adult Class..... Ronnie Scherffius
Song Leader Kirk FitzSimmons
Devotional James Cammock

Other

Usher..... Allen Clifton
Prepare Communion Randles

Congregational News

Birthdays

Steve Randle Dec. 13
Harper Stryker..... Dec. 13

Anniversaries

James & Leta Reeves Dec. 12

If you have any prayer requests or upcoming events to be announced, please contact our secretary, Nina Siegel, at (361) 573-0030.

Our Elders

Mark FitzSimmons
Ronnie Scherffius
Ron White

Our Deacons

James Cammock—Evangelism
Lupe Escojido— Benevolence
Bryant Siegel—Education and Finance

Our Preacher

Ronnie Scherffius

Weekly Reading

“Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” Psalm 100:3-4

Service Times

Sunday Morning Bible Class.....9:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship.....5:00 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Class.....7:00 P.M.

Attendance Records

Week of December 5, 2021

A.M. Bible Class.....55
A.M. Worship.....75
P.M. Worship.....52
Wednesday Bible Class.....66

Offering week of December 5, 2021.....\$2,372

Supported Works

Mani Pagidipalli *India*
John & Carla Moore *Bible Land Passages*
Anthony Scherffius *Southwest School of Bible Studies*



5901 N. Main
Victoria, TX 77904
361-573-0030
midtowncoc2017@gmail.com

midtowncoc.org

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