

Text: Matthew 7-9

Section 1

1"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2"For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3"Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4"Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5"You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. 6"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. (Matthew 7:1-6)

“Do not judge” does not mean that we are to excuse sin in our brothers and sisters, but rather that we are not to set ourselves up as standards of right and wrong. God’s Word is the only Standard by which all are rightly judged. Jesus does give us a disciplinary model to follow when a Christian brother or sister is caught in sin. His call for multiple witnesses also eliminates the chance of “trumped up” charges being used by a self-righteous person to expel a believer from the body.

15"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16"But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. 17"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)

The admonition about “pearls before swine” is hard to understand, and often ignored. We are to desire and to seek the salvation of every individual. We are to share the Gospel with as many people as we can. However, when a person consistently and perhaps even violently refuses to believe, we are not to continue pressing that person. We can still pray that God will change his heart and bring him to faith in Christ, but we are not to waste our time and effort in such a battle.

4And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. 5But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean From now on I will go to the Gentiles." (Acts 18:4-6)

Section 2

7"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8"For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9"Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10"Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! 12"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:7-12)

God is our Father, and desires the very best for His children. Assuming that we are not asking for things that are sinful or contrary to His will, He will answer and provide.

14This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

However, God does sometimes refuse our requests. He does this not out of spite, but out of love, and of wisdom that knows that often we do not know what is best for us. No (good) earthly parent will give his child something that is inappropriate or dangerous, no matter how badly the child thinks he wants it. Likewise, when God “says no” in response to our requests, we are to trust that He has done so for our own good, and for His glory.

7Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself! 8Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness " Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)

The “golden rule” encountered in this passage is, in effect, a restatement of the “second greatest commandment.”

28One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" **29**Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; **30**AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' **31**"The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31)

Section 3

13"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. *14*"For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. *15*"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. *16*"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? *17*"So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. *18*"A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. *19*"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. *20*"So then, you will know them by their fruits. *21*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. *22*"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' *23*"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' (Matthew 7:13-23)

The path that leads to eternal life is narrow and difficult. While the gift is free to all who will repent and believe, saving faith places us on a path that requires self-denial, endurance of trials and tribulations, rejection from the world, and perhaps even physical danger. The one that will gain eternal life must not love his life in this world!

23And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. **24**"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. (Luke 9:23-24)

Many professing Christians, and even many ministers today reject this idea, and twist the Bible’s message into one promising wealth, abundance, and worldly happiness. God may very well provide these things, but he is under no obligation to do so—His only promise is to supply all of our needs, not our wants. Those that preach otherwise deliver a false gospel, which Paul warned would come.

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: **2**preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. **3**For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, **4**and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:1-4)

The true Christian will obey God. Again, we do not always do so perfectly, but we are to strive to do so nonetheless. Jesus commands us to “abide” or “stand firm” in Him, and we do this by obeying His commandments.

4"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. **5**"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **6**"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. **7**"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8**"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. **9**"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. **10**"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. (John 15:4-10)

Section 4

24"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. *25*"And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. *26*"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. *27*"The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall." *28*When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; *29*for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes. (Matthew 7:24-29)

Jesus Christ is the only “Foundation” that will stand at the last day. At the end of time we will be judged by our works, and any work that is not of God will be burned up, but those that are of God will survive, and will yield a reward. Only those whose “Foundation” is Jesus Christ will survive. Even if all of the Christian’s works are burned up, if he is grounded in Christ, he will stand.

10According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

At the final judgment, those that built their lives on some other “foundation” will be cast into eternal torment. Coming to Christ through faith and repentance places our names in the Book of Life. If your name is not there, you will suffer—consciously—forever. Jesus promises eternal life with Him, away from the lake of fire and from all sin, death, pain, and hurt, to all who will repent of sin and believe on Him. This is the “Good News,” and we are to share it with all who will listen!

11Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

Section 5

1When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. 2And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." 3Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." 5And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, 6and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented." 7Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." 8But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9"For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." 10Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. 11" I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; 12but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that very moment. 14When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. 15He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. 16When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. 17This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES." (Matthew 8:1-17)

So, besides preaching the Gospel, Jesus came and healed. This not only showed both His compassion and His power, but also was in fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, thus confirming His identity. Matthew refers us to the following verse:

**4Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:4)**

Next, let’s consider *what* He healed. It is significant that He was able to heal lepers. Leprosy was treated with great seriousness by the Mosaic Law, and was considered to be a special affliction sent by God, and correctable only by Him. Instead of seeking healing through physicians and medicines, lepers were to consult the priests and to follow their instructions. If the priest declared the person unclean, he was to be separated from the people, and to return only when he could present himself whole before the priest. He was entirely at the mercy of God for his healing. That this leper came to Jesus anticipating healing thus shows that this man recognized not only His power, but also His deity.

1Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2" When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or a scab or a bright spot, and it becomes an infection of leprosy on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. 3" The priest shall look at the mark on the skin of the body, and if the hair in the infection has

turned white and the infection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is an infection of leprosy; when the priest has looked at him, he shall pronounce him unclean. 4"But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and it does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and the hair on it has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate him who has the infection for seven days. 5"The priest shall look at him on the seventh day, and if in his eyes the infection has not changed and the infection has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him for seven more days. 6"The priest shall look at him again on the seventh day, and if the infection has faded and the mark has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a scab. And he shall wash his clothes and be clean. 7"But if the scab spreads farther on the skin after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall appear again to the priest. 8"The priest shall look, and if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is leprosy. (Leviticus 13:1-8)

Next, let's consider *who* Jesus healed. He healed a leper, an outcast from the Jewish people, then healed a Roman centurion's servant, a Gentile. Jesus commended the man for his great faith, and performed the act of healing that he sought. Jesus demonstrated that His salvation, while preached to the Jews first, was available to all that will come to Him by faith, regardless of ethnicity.

25As He says also in Hosea,

**"I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,'
AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'"**

**26"AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,'
THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD." 27Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH
THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE
SAVED; 28FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." 29And
just as Isaiah foretold,**

"UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY,

**WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH." 30What shall we
say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;**

**31but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but
as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33just as it is written,**

"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,

AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." (Romans 9:25-33)

Section 6

18Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea. 19Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." 20Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." 21Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." 22But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead." (Matthew 8:18-22)

Here we have two men that came to Jesus seeking to follow Him, but with their own reservations or agendas. The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day were notorious for practicing religion for the sake of self-aggrandizement. Seeing His great power, this scribe likely expected and immanent consummation of Christ's earthly reign, and wanted to assure a place for himself in the Kingdom. Jesus reminded the scribe of how poor and lowly He was, and we never hear anything from the scribe again. One would think that a scribe, being well-versed in the Law and Prophets, would know what Isaiah said about the Messiah—it is the opposite of what the scribe expected.

1Who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,

And like a root out of parched ground;

He has no stately form or majesty

That we should look upon Him,

Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

3He was despised and forsaken of men,

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

And like one from whom men hide their face

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Isaiah 53:1-3)

Next, a man came to Jesus perhaps genuinely wanting to follow Him, but wanting to wait until the death of His father. If Jesus is Lord and God He is to be followed completely, and He expects those that follow Him to be willing to abandon home, wealth, family, even *life* if necessary for the sake of doing His will. While we are commanded to honor father and mother, when forced to choose between following Christ and following family, we are to follow Christ. Thus, this man's reservations, while perhaps rising from noble sentiments, made him unfit to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

26"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. **27**"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26-27)

62But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

29But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29)

Section 7

*23*When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. *24*And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. *25*And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!" *26*He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. *27*The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matthew 8:23-27)

The disciples had seen Jesus demonstrate great power, yet they did not yet understand just how powerful and mighty He was, and perhaps didn't yet understand just *Who* He was. Jesus rebuked them for the weakness of their faith, and the calmed the storm. Likewise, we as His followers are tested often by trials, difficulties, "storms" of life, and often we fail to continue in undisturbed faithfulness. This, however must be our goal. God, who controls all things, has promised to make everything "work out" for those that follow Him. Therefore, to persist in worry rather than walking by faith, is sin.

8"Remember this, and be assured;

Recall it to mind, you transgressors.

9"Remember the former things long past,

For I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is no one like Me,

10Declaring the end from the beginning,

And from ancient times things which have not been done,

Saying, 'My purpose will be established,

And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; (Isaiah 46:8-10)

28And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

6Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7**And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

5Trust in the LORD with all your heart

And do not lean on your own understanding.

6In all your ways acknowledge Him,

And He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Section 8

*28*When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. *29*And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" *30*Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them. *31*The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." *32*And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. *33*The herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs. *34*And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region. (Matthew 8:28-34)

Jesus here again demonstrated His great power in both the physical and the spiritual realms by casting out the demons. For the sake of time, I will not elaborate on this great act of healing but instead focus on the reaction of the people of the city. They came out, not rejoicing in the healing experienced by the formerly demon-possessed men, not seeking their own healing, not wanting to hear the Gospel, and certainly not worshiping Him as God. No, they asked Him to leave. Why did they reject Jesus? The same reason people

reject Him today: He exposes sin, and demands the confession and abandonment of it. Those that wish to continue in sin cannot bear to hear the Name of Jesus spoken, because it forces them to view themselves as evil and fallen.

19" This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20" For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:19-20)

Section 9

1 Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city. 2 And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." 3 And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? 5 "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? 6 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." 7 And he got up and went home. 8 But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men. (Matthew 9:1-8)

Yes, Jesus forgave the sins of those that sought Him by faith. The scribes correctly viewed this as a claim to deity, and accused Him of blasphemy. Why would Jesus claim to be God? First of all, because He was and *is* God. Secondly, He did so to demonstrate that He was the promised Messiah. Isaiah's prophecy identifies the Messiah as the Incarnation of God Himself.

**6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)**

But why use this healing as an opportunity to assert deity? The paralytic came to Him with an immediate physical need. Why did He not simply heal him and continue on His way? The ultimate end of faith in Jesus Christ is spiritual healing—regeneration, justification, sanctification, SALVATION. If Jesus had only healed this man physically and left his spiritual need unaddressed, he would ultimately be worse off than he was before, since he would still be destined for Hell. Forgiveness of sin is necessary for entrance into the Kingdom of God—no sin is allowed there. We must be washed, we must be forgiven, we must be saved from sin through faith in Christ or we will be denied entrance into that glorious existence.

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

Section 10

9 As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him. 10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?" 12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. 13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:9-13)

As was the case with the first disciples that Jesus called, so was the case with Matthew. Jesus called, and Matthew left his crooked profession forever. We see no evidence of deliberation or reticence on his part: Matthew willingly left the riches and opulent lifestyle that his job surely generated in order to follow Jesus. This shows the great power of the call of God on a person's life: everyone that the Father has given to the Son will come to Him gladly and willingly. I pray that we all have and will have the same love for Him, forsaking all if necessary in order to gain eternal life.

44" No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:44)

37" All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. (John 6:37)

Although I have referred to this parable often in my lessons, I must do so again. The Kingdom of God has no place for the self-righteous. Only those that recognize that they have no good in themselves and throw themselves entirely upon Christ's mercy will be saved.

9And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: **10**"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11**"The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12**'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' **13**"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' **14**"I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

Section 11

*14*Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" *15*And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. *16*"But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results. *17*"Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved." (Matthew 9:14-17)

What is this business about wine and wineskins? This is a metaphor representing the effect of Christ's message upon people. One cannot simply "add Jesus" to their former lifestyle and expect to be saved. This is the idea of putting new wine into old wineskins. As new wine ferments, it releases gases and expands, and an old, worn out skin will burst as a result. New wineskins are more pliable, and have the capacity to expand somewhat as the wine ferments. Those that think they can "add Christ" and continue in sin are deceiving themselves—eventually this faith proves to be fleeting and non-saving. Faith in Christ is only effectual when one has been changed by Him. The true believer, the one destined for Heaven, is a new person when He comes to Christ. While some sin is unfortunately still present in him, his life is marked by a continual turning away from sin and toward Christ.

17Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

8"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

Section 12

*18*While He was saying these things to them, a synagogue official came and bowed down before Him, and said, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live." *19*Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples. *20*And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak; *21*for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well." *22*But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well." At once the woman was made well. *3*When Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd in noisy disorder, *24*He said, "Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at Him. *25*But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. *26*This news spread throughout all that land. *27*As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" *28*When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." *29*Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith." *30*And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!" *31*But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land. (Matthew 9:18-31)

So this hemorrhaging woman came to Jesus seeking healing. In all likelihood, this "hemorrhage" was continuous menstruation, a condition that was not only debilitating, but also made her ceremonially unclean—this woman was unable to participate in corporate worship for twelve years! Thus, when Jesus healed her, He not only restored her physical health, but restored to her the privilege of offering worship to God.

25'Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. (Leviticus 15:25)

Jesus raised the dead and gave sight to the blind. Once again, He demonstrated not only His power and mercy, but also His office as Messiah. When John the Baptist had a "crisis of faith," if you will, Jesus reminded John of these things in order to reassure John that He was, indeed, Christ.

2Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples **3**and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" **4**Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: **5**the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are

raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. 6" And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me." (Matthew 11:2-6)

Jesus told the blind men, *"It shall be done to you according to your faith."* Please keep in mind that it is the Object of one's faith that makes it effective, not the strength or weakness of that faith. We don't have "faith in faith," but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The following story demonstrates Christ's love and mercy, in that He honored the plea of a man with weak faith not only for his son's healing, but also for greater faith.

14When they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them.

15Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him. **16**And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" **17**And one of the crowd answered Him, Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; **18**and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it." **19**And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" **20**They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. **21**And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. **22**"It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" **23**And Jesus said to him, "If You can?" All things are possible to him who believes." **24**Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." **25**When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." **26**After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!" **27**But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. (Mark 9:14-27)

What a great comfort this story should be to us! When our faith is weak, remember this man and his story. Though his faith was weak, it was correctly placed (in Christ). More importantly, his prayer for greater faith was one that our Lord honored, and we can expect that He will do the same for us.

Section 13

*32*As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. *33*After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." *34*But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." *35*Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. *36*Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. *37*Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. *38*"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:32-38)

Ladies and Gentlemen, there are lost people everywhere. Even in the "Bible Belt" they are all around us, I assure you. These people need to know about God and His love...and also about His wrath and His judgment. Not all will be saved, but some, even many will, if only someone will tell them about Jesus. You and I need to be that someone, to go out and work His fields, bringing in His harvest. After all, our Lord commanded it!

18And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19**"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20**teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)