



The Stories & Illustrations of Jesus in Chronological Order

SNOOK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Workbook by Ray Reynolds, Ph.D.

Jesus, the Master Teacher

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Jesus, the Master Teacher:

INTRODUCTION

Stories have the ability to fascinate us and educate us. People have used storytelling since the beginning of time. Jesus, the Master Teacher, use dozens of stories in His teaching. We often call these “parables” which represent an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

The parables of Jesus come in many shapes and sizes. Some parables are long and others are short. Some parables involve stories of humans, while others are about inanimate objects. The difficulty in applying the stories is that we must learn to properly study them.

Here are some questions you can use to help you with application:

- 1) *What is the historical setting of this parable?*
- 2) *What are the cultural implications and references for this parable?*
- 3) *What prompted this parable? Or what can we learn from the context?*
- 4) *To whom is Jesus speaking? Why?*
- 5) *What are the details of this particular parable?*
- 6) *What is the central truth of this parable?*
- 7) *What words/phrases are repeated?*
- 8) *What was the conclusion/application of this parable in the context?*
- 9) *What is the connection between this story and kingdom living?*

Once these questions have been asked, and properly answered, we can begin making application for us today. However, our first goal should NOT be to focus on how we can apply it. If that is our objective we will miss much of the meaning.

May God bless you in your study!

The Author

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #1 = Attitudes of a Believer
The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12, Luke 6:20-26)

Introduction: Everyone loves a good story. Everyone loves a good teacher. Imagine if we could find someone who was gifted at both story-telling and teaching! This is where we have the opportunity to look to Jesus, the Master Teacher. When given an opportunity to begin His ministry, He started by teaching simple, practical lessons, and illustrated them with brilliance. Nearly every teaching of Christ includes some kind of a story, illustration, word picture, allegory, biblical reference, or kingdom parable. His first recorded sermon, and one of His most famous ones, begins with the great illustration of what we call the “Beatitudes.” Let’s study them together.....

Discussion:

- I. ***Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3)***
This reflects the HUMILIATION of self.
- II. ***Blessed are those who mourn (Matthew 5:4)***
This reflects the CONTRITION over sin.
- III. ***Blessed are the meek (Matthew 5:5)***
This reflects the SUBMISSION to God / others.
- IV. ***Blessed are those who hunger/thirst (Matthew 5:6)***
This reflects the PASSION to be right.
- V. ***Blessed are the merciful (Matthew 5:7)***
This reflects the COMPASSION for those hurting.
- VI. ***Blessed are the pure in heart (Matthew 5:8)***
This reflects the SANCTIFICATION from world.
- VII. ***Blessed are the peacemakers (Matthew 5:9)***
This reflects the COOPERATION with others.
- VIII. ***Blessed are the persecuted (Matthew 5:10)***
This reflects the CONVICTION enough to suffer.
- IX. ***Blessed are YOU (Matthew 5:11-12)***
This reflects the RESOLUTION to be steadfast.

Conclusion: Did you notice that each of the beatitudes consists of three components: 1) a claim, 2) a characteristic, and 3) a consequence? Do you possess these attitudes? Will you follow the direction of the Master Teacher?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #2 = When Salt Becomes Pepper

The Salt Without Taste (Matthew 5:13, Mark 9:50, Luke 14:34-35)

Introduction: Some of you may like pepper, but most of us would probably prefer salt. Why is that? We like salt because it seasons, but also because it gives food a distinct taste. In the same way, Jesus calls His disciples to be the “salt of the earth” in order to season the earth with many good works. We are to have an extremely positive influence on the lives of those around us. Pursuing the “salt” metaphor through the New Testament reveals several ways we can impact others for good. Let’s study together.....

Discussion:

I. Saltiness Promotes Peace

- Peaceful Christians are positive peacemakers (Matthew 5:9)
- Peaceful Christians are purpose driven servants (Matthew 5:38-42).
- Peaceful Christians are polite in turmoil (Matthew 18:15-17).
- Peaceful Christians are powerful builders (Romans 14:19).
- Peaceful Christians are pleasantly mature (II Corinthians 13:11).
- Peaceful Christians are persevering unity (Ephesians 4:4-6).

II. Saltiness Promotes Transparency

- Transparent Christians love others (Matthew 5:43-48).
- Transparent Christians lighten their loads (Matthew 11:28-30).
- Transparent Christians learn from life experiences (Acts 4:13)
- Transparent Christians listen to the Scriptures (Romans 10:17)
- Transparent Christians live in Christ (Galatians 2:20)
- Transparent Christians look up for strength (II Timothy 4:6-8).

III. Saltiness Promotes Communication

- Christian communicate by nurturing their prayer lives (Matthew 6:1-13).
- Christian communicate by testing their heart (Matthew 12:34-35).
- Christian communicate by seasoning their words (Colossians 4:16).
- Christian communicate by defending their hope in Christ (I Peter 3:15).
- Christian communicate by imparting grace to their peers (Ephesians 4:29).
- Christian communicate by considering their speech (James 3:8-10).

Conclusion: What happens when salt ceases to become salt? It’s just a worthless grain, a rock, a stone without a purpose. Jesus says it should be thrown out! As Christians we do not realize our own worth. Salt often sits on a table unused for many meals, until it is needed by someone. You are needed and you are valued!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #3 = You Can Run, But You Can't Hide!

The City on a Hill (Matthew 5:14)

Introduction: Sandwiched in between two of Jesus' most famous illustrations (salt and lamp) is another wonderful message that is often overshadowed by the others in the context. Jesus reminds His believers that they would be a "city on a hill" because they would not be hidden if they chose to live for God. This goes beyond just being salt (pleasing to God) and a lamp (visible to God and others). There is nothing wrong with associating this particular illustration with being the lamp in the house, but Jesus seems to be using them as different ideas. What does that mean? Let's study together....

Discussion:

I. A City on a Hill is More Significant for Visibility

- Those who follow God should not be hidden in the world (Matthew 5:13-16).
- Those who follow God should not get comfortable in the world (John 15:18-19).
- Those who follow God should not blend in with the world (Romans 12:1-2).
- Those who follow God should not return to the world (I Peter 4:3-4).
- Those who follow God should offer a contrast to the world (I John 2:15-17).

II. A City on a Hill is More Susceptible to Attack

- When you are on a hill you have prepared for battle (II Corinthians 10:3-5)
- When you are on a hill you have prepared for persecution (II Timothy 3:12).
- When you are on a hill you have prepared for suffering (I Peter 4:12-13).
- When you are on a hill you have prepared for injury (I Peter 5:8).
- When you are on a hill you have prepared for endurance (Revelation 2:10).

III. A City on a Hill is More Secure for Safety

- Christians must see our unchanging foundation (Matthew 7:24-27).
- Christians must see our unwavering God (Romans 8:31).
- Christians must see our unquestionable support (Hebrews 3:12-14).
- Christians must see our understanding High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16).
- Christians must see our undeniable position (Hebrews 10:39).

Conclusion: The extent of the influence of a believer is much further than they could ever imagine. What is food without salt? What is a dark room without light? Jesus knows that in order to draw all men to Himself, He needs us to shine the light He has personally given to us. This is why the term "witness" is used in reference to a Christian disciple. We are compelled, like a city on a hill, to shine as a beacon of hope. When others around us begin to ask us about our light, we tell them where the light comes from... the LIGHT of the world.

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #4 = Who Turned Out The Light?

The Lampstand (Matthew 5:15-16, Mark 4:21-23, Luke 8:16-18)

Introduction: Jesus began His ministry in the region of Galilee. He begins with a very powerful sermon we call the “Sermon on the Mount.” I’ve often heard this called the “Constitution of the Church.” Jesus lays some very important groundwork. These verses teach us that we are to be witnesses of Jesus on this earth. This particular section focuses on how Christians are the light of the world. Let’s study together....

Discussion:

I. What Does This Mean?

We follow a new mission, with a new purpose, and a new focus.
We keep things in the light and avoid the darkness.
We keep the focus on our Heavenly Father.

II. How Can This Happen?

Live like Jesus, because we belong to Him (**Colossians 1:18**)

Instant in season and out of season (**II Timothy 4:2**)

Given to hospitality (**Romans 12:13**)

Hoping for what we do not see (**Romans 8:24-25**)

Teaching the truth in love (**Ephesians 4:15**)

Overcoming evil with good (**Romans 12:21**)

Fervent in spirit (**Romans 12:11**)

Telling the good news to everyone we meet (**Mark 16:15-16**)

Having the mind of Christ (**Philippians 2:5**)

Equipping the saints and edifying the body of Christ (**Ephesians 4:12**)

Willing to sacrifice themselves for Christ (**Romans 12:1-2**)

Opposing those who teach false things or follow the evil path (**II Peter 2:1**)

Righteous people that keep the law (**I Timothy 1:9**)

Loving one another (**I John 3:23**)

Devoted to the ministry of saints (**I Corinthians 16:15**)

Conclusion: These are very important things we need as Christians if we hope to survive in the world today. We need to live these things as the church. We have been called to shine our light! If we are not shining our light, as we are commanded, how will people see a way out of the world of darkness?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #5 = Conflict Resolution 101
The Adversary (Matthew 5:25-26, Luke 12:58-59)

Introduction: Christ has just begun His amazing Sermon on the Mount, but He knows that there are future adversaries in His audience. He is probably already aware of the frustration and disdain the Jewish leadership had for John the Baptizer. Therefore, He prepares His disciples for conflict. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. We Must Agree With Our Adversary

We should be wise enough to know our earthly adversaries (**Romans 8:31-39**).

We should be wise enough to know our real enemy (**I Peter 5:8**).

We should be wise enough to know our weaponry (**Ephesians 6:10-20**)

II. We Must Acknowledge The Ways of Our Adversary

We should be wise enough to know our earthly court system (**I Corinthians 6:1-11**).

We should be wise enough to know our real Judge (**John 5:22-23**).

We should be wise enough to know our dilemma (**Matthew 7:1-6**).

III. We Must Accept Our Appointment

We should be wise enough to know our earthly struggles (**Romans 3:23**)

We should be wise enough to know our real judgment (**Hebrews 9:27**).

We should be wise enough to know our eternal destiny (**Matthew 7:13-14**).

IV. We Must Attempt to Have Peace

We should be wise enough to seek peace with our earthly neighbors (**Hebrews 12:14**).

We should be wise enough to seek peace with our God (**Romans 5:1**).

We should be wise enough to seek peace within ourselves (**Philippians 4:7**).

V. We Must Avoid The Accusations of Our Adversary

We should be wise enough to see the tactics of Satan (**Revelation 12:10**).

We should be wise enough to see the example of Jesus (**Matthew 26:59-60**).

We should be wise enough to see the fate of Christians (**Colossians 1:22**).

Conclusion: On that final Day of Judgment, where do you see yourself? What could you do to avoid a horrible fate? What could you do to assure your eternal destination? In the meantime, before death or the second coming of Jesus, we need to learn how to deal with things we face in this world. How do you handle your adversaries? What could you learn from Jesus and the Bible?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #6 = Sawdust & A 2x4

The Speck & the Plank (Matthew 7:1-6, Luke 6:37-43)

Introduction: People are really hurting in the church today. Many of us do not realize the power of our words and actions. Jesus encouraged Christians to judge with righteous judgment but what does that mean (**John 7:24**)? Things are not always black and white. The Bible reveals that only God knows our heart. This parable is one that can help us to better understand judgment and mercy when dealing with others. Let's open our Bibles and study it together.

Discussion:

I. The Paradox of Judging

Judgment will be given back to the judge (**Matthew 10:15**).

Judgmental people look at the speck in their brother's eye (**Galatians 6:1-2**).

Judgmental people have a plank in their own eye (**Matthew 23:1-36**).

II. The Pride of Judging

Christians should not give holy things to the dogs (**Exodus 29:37**).

Christians should not give our pearls to swine (**Matthew 9:13**).

Christians should know that God has a holy purpose (**I Peter 1:15-16**).

III. The Problem of Judging

Judging Is Dangerous (**Luke 9:51-55**).

Judging Is Hypocritical (**James 1:10**).

Judging Is Deceitful (**Romans 14:10**).

Judging Is Futile (**Mark 10:17-31**).

Judging Is Divisive (**Proverbs 6:19**).

Judging Is Prideful (**Matthew 6:33**).

Judging Is Sinful (**Matthew 18:15-17**).

Conclusion: You may hear the words of another person, or witness their actions, but you do not know their heart. Only God knows the hearts of men. There is no way to win when you are being a judge, because it is God's job. There are eternal consequences to judging others. Think twice before you render judgment upon a brother or sister. You may actually be sealing your own eternal fate. Do you need to repent or change? Have you decided to surrender your entire life to Christ? There is a loving and merciful God waiting for your response. What will you do?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #7 = Have It Your Way
The Narrow Gate (Matthew 7:13-14, Luke 13:24)

Introduction: All of us are on a spiritual journey as we travel through this life. We may or may not choose to make it a religious one, but we are on a spiritual path to self-discovery and questions that are often left unanswered. Every day we make choices that affect our direction. While they look different, and seem different, there are really only two paths of choice, according to Jesus. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. *Jesus Taught About 2 Gates*

There is a wide gate (Matthew 16:18).

There is a narrow gate (John 10:7).

Which gate will you choose?

II. *Jesus Taught About 2 Ways*

There is a broad way (Romans 3:23).

There is narrow way (Matthew 5:20).

Which way will you choose?

III. *Jesus Taught About 2 Crowds*

There is a large crowd (Proverbs 21:2).

There is a small crowd (Matthew 6:33).

Which crowd will you choose?

IV. *Jesus Taught About 2 Destinations*

There is a road that leads to death (Revelation 20:15, 21:8).

There is a road that leads to life (Matthew 25:46).

Which destination will you choose?

V. *Jesus Taught About 2 Choices*

There is a foolish choice (Matthew 7:26-27).

There is a wise choice (Matthew 7:24-25).

Which choice will you make?

Conclusion: You alone are blessed with the freedom to decide your own fate. You and I have the power to determine our own eternal destiny. God has shown us the gate to enter, the way to follow, the crowd to encourage us, descriptions of the destination, and the choice is ours. Will you get prepared?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #8 = Hurricane Proof Your Home
The Two Builders (Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 6:47-49)

Introduction: There are around sixty parables of Jesus in the gospels, but this particular one is a favorite to many Christians. Today I want us to consider the parable of the wise man and the foolish man. These two men are hoping to see their homes withstand a hurricane. Are they successful? Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. *The Survivors in the Story*

Rock people build character (**I Peter 2:21-25**).
Rock people build inner strength (**I Corinthians 3:16-17**).
Rock people build good judgment (**Matthew 7:7**).
Rock people build a powerful inner spirit (**II Timothy 1:7**).
Rock people build true security (**Romans 8:31**).
Rock people build on a solid foundation (**I Corinthians 3:11**).
Rock people build an identity (**II Timothy 2:19**).

II. *The Victims in the Story*

Sand people lack character (**Ephesians 2:19-22**).
Sand people lack inner strength (**I Corinthians 3:16-17**).
Sand people lack good judgment (**I Timothy 6:18-19**).
Sand people have a weak spirit (**II Timothy 1:7**).
Sand people have insecurity (**Romans 8:1-31**).
Sand people build on a weak foundation (**Romans 15:20-21**).
Sand people lack an identity (**II Timothy 2:19-21**).

III. *The Hurricanes of Life*

We should dig deep within ourselves to get prepared.
We should have a good foundation in Christ.
We should be ready to weather the elements.
We should praise God in the storm.

Conclusion: We must hear and obey the word of God (**Romans 10:17**). We know that we must become obedient, trusting, and faithful. How can we become true believers? How can we prove ourselves to God and to the world? Jesus has urged us through this story to change our hearts and lives to be more focused upon Him and His teachings. One day we will be judged by the words of Jesus (**John 12:47-48**). Will you be ready?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #9 = God's Prescription for Multi-Vitamins

The Great Physician (Matthew 9:10-13, Mark 2:15-17, Luke 5:29-32)

Introduction: The word *physician* is one that we are all familiar with because we frequent doctor's offices often in life. I find it interesting that only two doctors mentioned in the New Testament. One is Paul's companion Luke the beloved physician (**Colossians 4:14**) and Jesus, the Great Physician (**Luke 4:23**). If we were to follow the advice of God, the Great Physician, what might He prescribe? Let's study together....

Discussion:

- I. *Vitamin "A" = Assurance*
Psalm 38:3-8, Psalm 51:17, I John 1:9, I John 5:13
- II. *Vitamin "B" = Belief*
Psalm 34:19-20, John 3:16, Philippians 4:6-7, Hebrews 1:1ff
- III. *Vitamin "C" = Comedy*
Proverbs 15:13, Proverbs 17:22, Philippians 4:4, I Peter 1:8
- IV. *Vitamin "D" – Diversion*
Deuteronomy 5:14, Matthew 11:28-30, Mark 2:27, Hebrews 4:1-10
- V. *Vitamin "E" – Exercise*
Proverbs 23:21, II Thessalonians 3:7, I Timothy 4:8, I Timothy 5:13
- VI. *Vitamin "F" – Forgiveness*
Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 18:21-35, Colossians 3:13, I John 1:8-9
- VII. *Vitamin "K" – Kindness*
Ephesians 4:32, I Thessalonians 5:15, II Timothy 2:24, II Peter 1:5-7

Conclusion: If find it interesting that Jesus is the Great Physician even though He never studied biology, chemistry or human anatomy; but, He is the only one who can offer an abundant life (**John 10:10**). He never spent time in a lab, with the intricacies of hematology; but, it is His blood that justifies (**Romans 5:9**). He never endured a laborious residency; but, He left all He had to experience all we have to go through (**II Corinthians 8:9**). He never used anesthetics on a person; but, He is the one who has said, "Come unto me...I will give you rest" (**Matthew 11:28**). He never performed surgery with a scalpel in hand; but, His word can surgically excise demons (**Mark 1:21-28**). Truly He is greater than all physicians!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #10 = The Dilemma of the Bridegroom

The Grooms Attendants (Matthew 9:14-15, Mark 2:18-20, Luke 5:33-35)

Introduction: In order to understand this wonderful parable we must consider the context: Jesus has healed and forgiven the sins a paralytic man, called a new disciple (Matthew), and then joins Matthew in his home for dinner with “many” tax collectors and other “sinners.” The Pharisees rebuked Jesus in front of His disciples for having such fellowship with these people. Jesus’ reply to that rebuke is simple (vs.12-13). When they could not question His authority, His heart, or His intentions, they must have withdrawn their efforts. At this time the disciples of John were also present, possibly because they felt more relaxed in that kind of an atmosphere. Seeing an opportunity to discuss an important practice to them (fasting) they ask, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?” This parable is Jesus’ answer to their humble question. Let’s study together.....

Discussion:

I. The Purpose of Betrothal

There were two great events: the betrothal (a year for virgins - **Genesis 24:55**, and a few days or a month for widows) and the wedding.

The betrothal included exchanging rings and adoption into the family.

“During this period the bride-elect lived with her friends, and all communication between herself and her future husband was carried on through the medium of a friend deputed for the purpose, termed the ‘friend of the bridegroom’ **John 3:29**” (Smith’s Bible Dictionary).

II. The Purpose of the Wedding Festivities

The ceremony and the festivities at a marriage were commonly prolonged for at least week and began with a parade to the bridegroom’s home.

The guests were invited to celebrate and have a good time (FEAST, not to fast).

The friends or companions of the bridegroom had access to the bride’s chamber room during the entire bridal feast (**Judges 14:10-11**).

Proper preparation and organization went into that final evening when the guests would feast and the couple would consummate the marriage.

If the bridegroom was suddenly taken away from them by accident, sickness or death, there would be a reason to fast.... But as long as he was present it was party time!

III. The Purpose of Fasting

Fasting is not the problem, it’s the occasion and purpose (usually accompanied by mourning).

After the establishment of the church the disciples continued to fast (**Acts 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 23, Romans 14:12, I Corinthians 7:5**), because the Bridegroom is Jesus!

There was no occasion for the disciples to fast while Jesus was with them to comfort them and encourage them, but now we eagerly wait for His return!

Conclusion: In the New Testament the image of the bridegroom is transferred from God to Christ (**Matthew 9:15, John 3:29**) and that of the bride to the Church (**II Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:22-33, Revelation 19-21**). How are you in your relationship to the Lord?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #11 = The Old & New Garments

The New Cloth on Old Garments (**Matthew 9:16, Mark 2:21, Luke 5:36**)

Introduction: When Jesus faces a difficult situation He often diffuses it with a simple application from a parable. In fact, Jesus makes a habit of using illustrations that were applicable to the people of that day. In the context, Jesus has healed a paralytic man and called a new disciple (Matthew). The context also reveals that Matthew has invited Jesus and his disciples into his home for dinner. Matthew also invited “many” tax collectors and other “sinners.” The Pharisees rebuked Jesus in front of His disciples, but notice the reply Jesus makes in vs. 12-13. Since they were offended by Jesus’ answer they challenge Him and His disciples for not fasting. After assuring the Pharisees that His disciples would fast one day He gives them applicable parables. Let’s study together....

Discussion:

I. The Old Garment

Jesus is clearly using these two illustrations (garments and wineskins) in reference to Judaism (OT) and Christianity (NT).

The old garment refers to the Old Law that served its purpose, but it had a hole worn into it. God could have used His wisdom to repair the old garment, but why not start over with a completely new garment?

II. The New Patch

Jesus did not intend on destroying the Old Law (**Matthew 5:17-18**).

New patch work on the Old Law would have been useless, and it was never God’s intention to create a permanent law (Moses).

By fulfilling the Old Law, Jesus wiped “*out the handwriting of requirements*” (**Colossians 2:14**). The Old Law was NOT completely abolished, just fulfilled (**Ephesians 2:14-18**).

III. The New Garment

Jesus clearly removed the garment (OT) by declaring that it had fully served its purpose and began working on the new garment (NT).

This becomes clear when we study the book of Hebrews.

When Jesus died He removed every rite, ritual, and practice of the Mosaic Law.

IV. The Tear

Man has suffered since the Fall of Man in the garden.

Romans 3:20-21, 31 reveals that the Old Law existed to provide a moral standard and was never intended to be permanent.

Paul noted that if someone attempts to keep part of the law he is “*a debtor to keep the whole law*” (**Galatians 5:3**) and James would agree (**James 2:10**).

Conclusion: The OT and NT now complete the full revelation and will of God. **Galatians 3:24-25** says, “*Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*” Praise the Lord for His eternal wisdom!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #12 = The Old & New Wineskins

The New Wine in Old Wineskins (Matthew 9:17, Mark 2:22, Luke 5:37-39)

Introduction: The previous parable of Jesus clearly is associated with this one. Jesus is attempting to prepare the people of His day to see change was coming! There was a transition that would take place at the cross, and at Pentecost. This change would alter the course of human history and undo the fall of man in Genesis. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. The Wine

No matter the skin, wine was still wine.

Traditionally the older the wineskins the older the wine.

If a wineskin was old and full it was probably well fermented.

The Old Testament uses wine and the vine as a symbol of Israel and salvation (**Exodus 15, Judges 1:19, Psalm 80:8-9, 104:15, Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 2:21, Hosea 10:1, John 15:1-8**).

II. The Old Wineskin

Jesus is using these two illustrations in reference to Judaism (OT) and Christianity (NT).

Jesus is noting that it would be absurd to patch the old law with the new gospel of Christ.

Any attempt to combine the old and new would result in destruction.

The old covenant made way for the new, which brought its completion and fulfillment.

III. The New Wineskin

Once the old covenant was fulfilled the new could not be incorporated into it.

Jesus had taught this repeatedly throughout His parables (also see Galatians & Romans).

After the establishment of the church the Christians followed the apostles' doctrine (**Acts 2**) which was handed down from Christ.

God designed a better covenant for Christians (see Hebrews & Colossians).

IV. The Preserved Wine

Jesus never intended on destroying the Old Law.

Jesus said, "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*" (**Matthew 5:17-18**)

This is why Jesus uttered the words "It is finished!" on the cross.

Conclusion: It is important to remember that the life and ministry of Jesus lay on the crossroads of the two covenants. This is why these particular stories are told. Jesus lived and taught under the Old Law, but died in order to establish the New Law. **Hebrews 8:13** reminds us that when the Bible refers to a "new covenant" it proves that "*He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*" God preserved those of the old covenant and now He is preserving the new.

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #13 = Bringing in the Sheaves

The Harvest (Matthew 9:37-38, Luke 10:2)

Introduction: The Bible repeatedly reminds us that we are called to teach others the good news (**Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16**). However, we are also supposed to be committed to praying for laborers. Why? Because Jesus commands us! We are instructed to pray for those in the harvest because many in this world remain lost. There are probably thousands who have not heard the saving message of the gospel. There seems to be too few laborers to reach all of them with the good news. So Jesus said to His disciples: *“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”* (**Matthew 9:37-38**). Also consider **John 4:34-38**. Let’s study together.....

Discussion:

I. Ask For Help

If we ask the Harvest Master, He will keep sending more workers.
However, we are compelled to take the action.
Will you ask for help?

II. Seek the Lost

If we keep soul winning, we will find them.
However, we are compelled to take the action.
Will you seek the lost?

III. Knock on Doors

If we keep knocking on doors of opportunity, they will open.
However, we are compelled to take the action.
Will you knock on doors?

IV. Trust the Lord

When the Lord commands action, He does so for a specific reason.
The command to pray comes with a wonderful and powerful promise.
*“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find.
Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you”* (**Matthew 7:7, NLT**).
In other words, Jesus assures us that prayer works.

Conclusion: Jesus taught these principles to His disciples, not just because it was commanded by the will of God, but also because it is good for us! It is one of the ways we can show Him we love Him (**John 14:21**). We should be compelled by the gospel to tell everyone we can that Jesus lived, died, was buried, and rose again! Share the good news!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #14 = The Spoiled Children

The Children in the Market (**Matthew 11:16-19, Luke 7:31-35**)

Introduction: This particular parable seems strange when it is not considered in the context in which it was written. Let's back up and notice the context (**Matthew 11:1-15**). In the previous verses, Jesus has described the nature of John the Baptizer and his purpose. Why? The disciples of John had come to Jesus. These disciples wanted to know if Jesus was the Christ. Jesus responds to them by describing His work and then explaining John's work in hopes that they would realize their own work. When he completes the parable He rejects the sinful people that refused to follow Him (Bethsaida & Chorazin). But they still haven't learned because Luke tells us that Simon (Pharisee) takes him home in **Luke 7** and when a prostitute comes in he flips out! So what is Jesus saying? Let's study this story together. . . .

Discussion:

I. The Spoiled Children

This generation of people in that day refused to hear anyone.

The spoiled children could not decide which game to play (wedding vs. funeral).

II. The Marketplace

This is an example of the world and the religious arena of Jesus's day.

The differing life-styles of John and Jesus were justified by their results.

The hypocrisy of the Jews is later mentioned again (**Matthew 23:1-39**).

III. The Humble Children

There seems to be one group of children that is doing the right thing.

Humble children of God know that there is a time and season for everything.

IV. The Ministry of John

John called this generation to mourning and repentance (**Matthew 3:1-17**).

The prostitutes and tax collectors were coming in droves.

V. The Ministry of Jesus

When Jesus arrives on the scene He begins teaching about love and mercy.

John's message was the funeral (**Matthew 3**) Jesus' was the wedding (**Matthew 5-7**).

Conclusion: The gist of the parable is that some people will never change. The spoiled children refused to play with the other children. No matter what you do you will never please everyone! However, it is important to try and reach all people (**I Corinthians 9:19-27**). Let's us strive to be humble and work to save all of mankind.

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #15 = Stand Together or Not At All

The Divided Kingdom (Matthew 12:25-29, Mark 3:23-27, Luke 11:17-22)

Introduction: The context reveals that the Pharisees were pestering Jesus because he had cast the demons out of the demon-possessed. They were verbally accusing Him of being a devil Himself, or even worse, Satan in the flesh, the ruler of all demons! Mark does tell us that His family was also involved (**Mark 3:20-21**). This parable confirms that the power of Jesus was divine and that His kingdom is at war with Satan. Let's study together....

Discussion:

I. The Miracle

Jesus turns the attention from Himself for a brief moment to point out that even some of the Jews were able to perform this miraculous act.

He could have been referring to those described in **Acts 19:13-18** or he could have been referring to His own disciples (**Matthew 10:1-4**).

Their own people served as judges since they understood His power.

II. Division vs. Unity

One reoccurring theme throughout this section is the need for unity.

Kingdoms, cities, and families need unity to survive.

It is not God's will that people be divided, unless it means being divided from the world (**Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1-2**).

Jesus prayed for unity among the believers (**John 17**) and the NT shows a plea from God for unity (**I Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:1-6**).

III. The Mission of Satan's Kingdom

Jesus reminds His hearers that Satan has a plan for the people.

He wants to inflict pain and suffering upon all of humanity.

The demons may tremble and believe at the presence of God, so much so that they confess His name, but they are united in their mission.

Remember that Satan had his hand in unity at the Tower of Babel (**Genesis 10**).

IV. The Mission of Christ's Kingdom

Satan's mission is united, but Christ's is unbeatable.

Satan's kingdom may be strong, but Christ's is stronger.

Even after the establishment of the church casting out demons was proof of the power of the Holy Spirit and the kingdom of Christ (**Acts 2:43, 16:16-18, 19:13-18**).

Conclusion: The kingdom of Satan is alive and active today, but the kingdom of Christ is alive and active today. Only one has the power of God! God will never be destroyed. And those that are a part of His kingdom should not fear! We will be victorious.

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #16 = Only The Strongest Will Survive

The Strong Man (Matthew 12:29)

Introduction: The context of this parable is the same as the parable of the Divided Kingdom (Matthew 12:25-29, Mark 3:23-27, Luke 11:17-22). The Pharisees were challenging Jesus because he had cast the demons. Jesus then accuses the Pharisees of misunderstanding the purpose of the casting out of demons. This miraculous act assured the people that Jesus was able to overcome Satan and have victory over sin and death. Let's study together....

Discussion:

I. *The Strong Man & His House*

The context reveals that the strong man resembles Satan and his power.
The strong man feels content and safe in his kingdom, controlling his house.
How can someone break into a strong man's house and rob Him?
Luke's account adds that fully armed guards were placed in the palace.
Satan has followers, some are of this world and some not, none stronger than Jesus!

II. *The Stronger Man & His Power*

Jesus is clearly the "stronger" man in the story, revealing the kingdom was near.
Satan is called the "prince of this world" (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), one with power over the air (John 5:11, Ephesians 2:2), reigning in an earthly kingdom (Matthew 4:8-9), and controlling a spiritual host of wickedness (Ephesians 6:11-13, Revelation 12:7).
He faced Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-15), Michael (Daniel 10:13, Jude 9, Revelation 12), Job (Job 1-2), Joshua the high priest (Zechariah 3:1), and other angels (Ezra 1:1, Revelation 12).
He had already tried to conquer Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11) but Jesus succeeded.

III. *The Plundering of Satan's Goods*

The Jews should have noticed the signs of this conquest of good over evil and rejoiced at the coming of the kingdom (Genesis 3:15).
They should have prepared their hearts to receive Jesus and His kingdom which had the power to perform many wonderful works.
However, they loved darkness rather than light and chose to resist Jesus (John 3:19).
For this reason Jesus pronounced the woes on the Pharisees (Matthew 23:1-39).

Conclusion: Jesus revealed His divine power on earth. However, we must know that Satan is still active (I Peter 5:8-11), persecuting the seed of Jesus (II Timothy 4:12) and afflicting us (II Corinthians 12:7). We must arm ourselves in the name of Jesus (Ephesians 6:10-20).

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #17 = In the Belly of the Earth
The Sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:38-42, Luke 11:29-32)

Introduction: This particular story of Jesus is often overlooked. However, in two gospels we have recorded Jesus' revelation that just like Jonah, He would be in the belly of the earth for three days. This would be a spectacular miracle! The Pharisees had seen many miracles, but this would outshine them all! He would raise from the dead! Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. The Testimony of Jonah

Jonah was a testimony of the love and mercy of God upon Nineveh.

Jonah was a testimony of the mighty power and will of the God of Israel.

Jonah was a testimony of the impending judgment of God.

Can you imagine what Jonah was thinking at the time (before, during, and after)?

II. The Testimony of the Ninevites

The Scriptures tell us that Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites.

The Scriptures tell us that the people repented when they heard his message.

The Scriptures tell us that the prophet was angry with God's decision.

Can you imagine what they saw, what they heard, and what they felt?

III. The Testimony of Jesus

The Jews were rejecting Jesus and the grace of God He offered.

The Jews were rejecting the teaching and ministry of Jesus and His disciples.

The Jews were rejecting the work of God in the world (miracles).

Can you imagine what this must have done to Jesus and His confidence?

IV. The Testimony of World

The world has a choice to reject Jesus or accept Him.

The world did not need signs and wonders after Jesus left the earth.

The world must hear of the historical Jesus and His resurrection from the grave.

Can you imagine what will happen if people do not hear or accept the gospel?

Conclusion: The Ninevites repented when they heard Jonah's preaching. Some people repented when they learned about Jesus (Acts 2:37). Many who read the Bible will learn from both of these stories and do the right thing. However, there are many, like the Jews that will reject the message of God. They will demand a sign. They will never be content with their knowledge of God and His will for their lives. Let's spread the good news!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #18 = The Empty House

The Unclean Spirit (Matthew 12:43-45, Luke 11:24-26)

Introduction: There is something strange about an empty house. Many neighborhoods have at least one old empty abandoned house. Some may rumor that it's haunted or that something terrible happened there some time ago. Usually it's just a house that is vacant, for sale, or forgotten by previous owners. Houses are meant to be lived in. Our bodies are houses. Paul notes that our bodies are houses of God (I Corinthians 6:19-20). What will you do with your house? What will go in it? In this story of Jesus, the Lord tells us that we have to make a choice. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. Our Houses Will Be Full of Something

We are created by God for the purpose of worship.

God allows us to pursue our heart's desire, and He hopes that He is our desire.

In **Mark 12:30** Jesus said, "*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.*"

We long for companionship and relationship.

"Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone?" (Ecclesiastes 4:11)

Jesus came into the world to deliver us from evil.

However, some people return to their evil paths and wicked ways.

Often those who have obeyed and fall away cannot return (**Hebrews 6:4-6**).

II. We Must Fill Our Houses With God

St. Augustine said "Our hearts are made for thee, O Lord, and will not rest, until they rest in You." (Confessions)

What would happen if we replaced the 7 demons with the 7 characteristics of the Holy Spirit?

Isaiah 11:2-3 says, "*And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear.*"

III. We Must Open Our Door For God

Even after we come to Christ we can fall away. What will we do then?

Revelation 3:20 says, "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*"

Conclusion: Will you open the door for the Lord? Will you allow Him to fill your temple? Will you allow His Spirit to live inside of you? Let God fill your house!!!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #19 = Are You Sowing the Seed?

The Sower and the Seed (Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15)

Introduction: This is such a great parable and it has such a wonderful meaning. I remind you that a parable is an “earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” The purpose of the parables were to (1) conceal and (2) reveal (Jesus explains this in our text). This is why he says, “*He who has ears, let him hear.*” Jesus was very careful in His teachings. Let’s study together about the parable of the sower.

Discussion:

I. Challenge #1 – The Sower (Christians are like the Sower)

A. Career - What is interesting is to me is the sower.

1. Where did he come from? – God’s child
2. Why is he sowing? – God’s work
3. Who will sow with him? – God’s commission
4. When will he stop? – God’s reward

B. Commitment - This sower is really dedicated (he has done this before).

1. He seems to know what he is getting into.
2. He seems to know the success/failure ratio.
3. He seems to know the types of soil/people he will run into.
4. He seems to know the success stories of those whose lives he would impact.

C. Conclusion - Success or failure, good or bad, he never gives up.

1. He recognizes the dangers of sowing the seed.
2. He recognizes the dangers of NOT sowing the seed.

II. Challenge #2 – The Soil (People are like the soil the Sower encounters)

A. The Seed Along The Path

II Corinthians 4:4, II Timothy 4:2

B. The Seed On Rocky Ground

Proverb 17:24, Ephesians 4:14

C. The Seed Among The Thorns

Matthew 6:24, James 1:14

D. The Seed On Good Soil

John 15:1-8, Galatians 5:22-23

Conclusion: We have to meet the challenges of evangelism and we can’t give up!!! How has the seed landed in your heart? Are you willing to be a Sower and produce fruit? “*He who has ears, let him hear!*” Listen to the Word of the Lord and obey it!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #20 = The Sneaky Enemy

The Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

Introduction: This particular parable seems to be similar to the “Parable of the Sower” and it also relates to the “*kingdom of heaven*.” Why is Jesus talking about weeds in the king’s garden? Let’s consider a deeper understanding of this particular story.

Discussion:

I. THE SOWER = THE SAVIOR

- A. He that sows the good seed is the Son of Man (v.37).
- B. This is the most frequent title that Jesus applies to Himself (more than 70x).
- C. **Revelation 14:14** describes Jesus as the Son of man with a gold crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand awaiting the day to start the harvest.

II. THE ENEMY = THE DEVIL

- A. The enemy that sowed them is the devil (v.39), the father of all lies (**John 8:44**).
- B. He is equally the father of all evil (**Genesis 3**) and seeks to devour us (**I Peter 5:8**).

III. THE FIELD = THE WORLD

- A. The field is the world (v.38) which is full of both good and evil.
- B. Going out into the world is our commission (**Mark 16:15-16, Matthew 28:18-20**).

IV. THE GOOD SEED = THE CHURCH

- A. The good seed are the children of the kingdom (v.38) or Christians in the church.
- B. We live in the world but are not of the world (**I John 4:17, 5:4**).
- C. Can we be distinguished as different and peculiar (**I Peter 2:9**)?

V. THE BAD WEEDS = THE WORLDLY

- A. The tares (or weeds) are the children of the wicked one (v.38).
- B. They can be carnal people or sinful Christians (hypocrites - **Matthew 7:21-23**).
- D. It says “*while men slept, his enemy came*” (v.25, **Ephesians 5:14, Revelation 3:12**).

VI. THE HARVEST = THE JUDGMENT

- A. The harvest is the end of the world (v.39).
- B. No one can escape the Judgment Day (**Hebrews 9:27, I Peter 4:17-18, II Peter 3:7**).

VII. THE REAPERS = THE ANGELS

- A. The reapers are the angels (v.41) who will assist in bringing an end to the world.
- B. In the meantime, we need to work (**Ephesians 4:11-16, 5:27, Jude 14**).

Conclusion: Our enemy is sneaky, cold-hearted, calculated, and conniving. Our enemy has become an enemy of the shadows, working in secret. He wants to terrorize us into thinking He could be anywhere and strike at any time. What should we do? Wait upon the Lord!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #21 = Judge Me By My Size, Do You?

The Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-19)

Introduction: I love the line by Yoda in *The Empire Strikes Back*: “Judge me by my size, do you?” Small people/things can turn out to be BIG! When you hear this illustration it is hard to forget it. The parable of the mustard seed illustrates the unexpected and previously undisclosed nature of the coming of God’s kingly reign. Jesus is the King of kings, the King of the Jews. The kingdom has come now but, like a mustard seed, it began as something small and humble. John the Baptist tried to prepare the people for the kingdom. Jesus told them how to gain entrance into the kingdom. Let’s study together. . . .

Discussion:

I. *The Destiny of the Kingdom of Heaven*

- A. The kingdom of God is/was the church (Matthew 16:17-19, Acts 1-2).
- B. The Jews were expecting Jesus to be a physical King that would reign over the people and drive away the Romans who occupied Jerusalem.
- C. The Christian movement began in Jerusalem, but as we see through the book of Acts it spread into all the world very quickly (Acts 2:47, 6:1, 8:1-4, 16:5).
- D. The kingdom includes all races, nations, classes (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16).

II. *The Dexterity of the Mustard Seed*

- A. The mustard seed is the smallest seed but even small seeds grow into big trees.
- B. Jesus taught if one has faith like a mustard seed he can move mountains (Matthew 17:20) or transplant a mulberry tree in the sea (Luke 17:6).

III. *The Diligence of the Sower*

- A. The Lord is the one who sowed the seed.
- B. As the kingdom (body of Christ) we continue to sow the seeds of the kingdom today (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-49, Galatians 6:9).
- C. We plant seeds but God will give the increase (I Corinthians 3:6-7).

IV. *The Declaration of the Saved*

- A. There are BIG differences between believers and non-believers (saved vs. lost).
- B. The kingdom (Matthew 16:17-19, Colossians 1:13-14) would grow up over the rest of the world and be blessed by God...but also would be a blessing (Matthew 23:11-13).
- C. The birds probably represent the Gentile nations who would come into the kingdom (I Kings 17:1-7, Ezekiel 17:23, Acts 10:9-23, Revelation 22:2).

Conclusion: The Jews thought they were too good and too righteous to lower themselves to teach pagans. Therefore, Jesus teaches that they would miss out on the kingdom of heaven. Those who were considered unclean would find themselves nesting in the arms of the kingdom or the church, and finding salvation. God loves to make things simple!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #22 = Just A Little Leaven, A Piece of Heaven

The Leaven (Matthew 13:33, Luke 13:20-21)

Introduction: What happens when you add just a little yeast to the dough? That's what happens when God becomes a part of something. It rises! We begin to see the value He has in us and what value we can have in the world. Yeast is fairly small, but like the mustard seed, it can make a huge difference. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. The Leavened Lump

- A. Believers have the opportunity to spread the gospel throughout the entire world (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16).
- B. God will use His kingdom to influence the world.
- C. We help the entire world to rise (Christian morality, law, ethics, etc.).

II. The Working Woman

- A. Rarely does Jesus use women to describe the work of God, but they are workers!
- B. One other example is the woman with the lost coin in **Luke 15**.
- C. It was the business of the woman to do the cooking (consider His mother).
- D. Jesus attempted to reach out to every race, sex, age, and income.

III. The Flourishing Flour

- A. Why did Jesus refer to the "three measures" of meal?
- B. The truth is that it may have simply been a figure out of the air, but more than likely this was the amount usually used for a meal.
- C. What would happen if we considered it the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

IV. The Blossoming Bread

- A. Leaven can be used for good or evil.
- B. God will work things together to achieve His desired outcome (**Romans 8:28**).
- C. No part of the loaf (world) will be untouched by the leaven (church).
- D. Paul describes the growth of the church in the same way (**Romans 10:17-18, 16:25-26, Colossians 1:6, 23**).

Conclusion: Notice how at the end of the story everything was leavened. We should not measure the growth or success of the kingdom by visible standards. We need to look inside! Believers must remain confident and not lose heart. We need to look within ourselves. As Christians we can have a lasting influence if we learn how to rise! We need to rise up to the challenge. We need to rise above our circumstances. And, one day, we will rise up away from this world to our eternal home!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #23 = Selling Out to Buy Big

The Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)

Introduction: This particular parable is often associated with the parable of the pearl of great price (we will study next). The hidden treasure would have been more valuable than a pearl. The man in this story is lucky but he carefully considers his actions. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. *The Hidden Treasure*

- A. It was not uncommon in Jesus' day to hide valuables before a raid.
- B. They did not have banks, safes, or vaults.
- C. We have treasures in heaven (**Matthew 6:19-21**).
- D. We have the unsearchable riches of Christ in the kingdom (**Ephesians 3:8**).

II. *The Accidental Find*

- A. The man did not have a map to lead him to the treasure.
- B. He just happens to stumble upon this great treasure.
- C. This accident may have been part of the providence of God.

III. *The Joyful Discovery*

- A. When we find a bargain, or a rare jewel, we are elated.
- B. When we or others obey the gospel we should be joyful.
- C. Consider the joy you had when you were baptized into Christ (**Acts 2:38ff**).

IV. *The Value of the Treasure*

- A. A true collector will do whatever it takes to get what they desire.
- B. A good collector would try to get it at a cheap price, but refuses to sell it.
- C. Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder!

V. *The Great Reward*

- A. The man purchased the field and the treasure in it.
- B. He may have had to sell everything he had, but he made it back with his purchase.
- C. Consider the words of Jesus in **Matthew 19:29-30**.

Conclusion: Jesus seems to be illustrating the people who learn of the gospel message and allow it to impact their heart. Much like the Jews on Pentecost, the message of the gospel forces us to repent and turn our lives over to God. The kingdom of heaven demands action! He wanted the reward, he was willing to act, and willing to sacrifice. It was worth it all!!!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #24 = The Coveted Prize
The Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45-46)

Introduction: The world is full of collectors. Turn on your television and we even have reality shows that surround these collectors. There are people who collect stamps, coins, art work, antiques, automobiles, and vintage toys. Collectors will do just about anything to locate and purchase their coveted treasure. Sadly some will debase themselves to do dishonest things. They might consider stealing or bribery. While there are others that save up and spend their own hard earned money on it. What would you give up for a treasure? In this story we see a man willing to go to any lengths. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. *The Pearl*

- A. This pearl stands out against many spiritual "pearls" in the world.
- B. This pearl is unlike any other item of great value.
- C. This pearl is the ONE and ONLY pearl of great price.
- D. This pearl reflects the kingdom (the church), the bride of Christ.
- E. This pearl was uniquely formed in the mind of God in eternity (**Ephesians 3:10-11**).
- F. This pearl was prophesied about by the prophets of God (**Micah 4:1**).
- G. This pearl was purchased so that we might have salvation (**Acts 2:38, 47**).
- H. This pearl was purchased with a great price to our God (**Acts 20:28**).
- I. This pearl was given a strong and established foundation (**I Corinthians 3:10-11**).

II. *The Prize*

- A. The kingdom of heaven is worth more than family (**Matthew 4:21-22**).
- B. The kingdom of heaven is worth more than the world (**Mark 8:36**).
- C. The kingdom of heaven is worth more than money (**Mark 10:17-22**).
- D. The kingdom of heaven is worth more than friends (**I Corinthians 15:33**).

III. *The People of God*

- A. The kingdom of heaven is worth more than anything else to God.
- B. There is no way with words to describe how much God loves us.
- C. Consider the words of John in **John 3:16**.
- D. The Lord now wishes to adopt us into His kingdom!

Conclusion: What items do you need to abandon or sell in order to obtain this pearl? Would you be willing to go as far as Jesus did for you? The Bible clearly teaches us that Jesus died in our place, suffered for our sins, and He did all of this willingly because He loves us. Have you thanked him for His sacrifice?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #25 = We Catch Them, He Cleans Them

The Dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50)

Introduction: This parable is often paralleled to the Parable of the Tares. Both of them show good and bad side by side and then separated. We should also consider that both describe the work of angels, the punishment of the wicked, the reward of the righteous, the eternal fires of Hell, weeping and gnashing of teeth, and both end with the same explanation by Jesus (*“so it will be at the end of the age”*). Let’s study together....

Discussion:

I. The Dragnet

- A. The dragnet was the largest kind of net (Matthew 4:18, John 21:1-13).
- B. The dragnet was to be thrown out into the sea.
- C. Remember the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-47).
- D. The gospel reaches the entire world, but only a few are drawn to it (Acts 10:34-35).
- E. This encourages us to get out and work (John 4:35).

II. The Sea

- A. The sea seems to represent the world.
- B. In the sea we can find *“some of every kind.”*
- C. The word *“gathered”* is interesting because it applies to good and bad.
- D. The good are *“gathered”* (Psalm 50:5, Isaiah 40:11, John 11:5-15).
- E. The Scriptures also say that the wicked are *“gathered”* (John 15:6).

III. The Fishermen

- A. The disciples understood that this parable applied to them.
- B. Remember that the disciples were called to be *“fishers of men”* (Matthew 4:19).
- C. We are called to open the eyes of the world (Acts 26:18).
- D. We are all called to work in the kingdom of heaven (Acts 15:7, II Corinthians 6:1).

IV. The Fish

- A. This parable emphasizes that every *“kind”* can be caught in the net.
- B. There was a devil in the garden, a Ham in the ark, a Korah among the Israelites, a Judas among the apostles, and a Diotrephes among the church leadership.
- C. There are often wicked people claiming to be Christians (Matthew 7:1-2, 20, John 15:1-8).

V. The Gathering

- A. The fish are supposed to be gathered by the fisherman.
- B. God often sends His angels to do His work (Hebrews 1:13-14).

Conclusion: It is providential that that it occurs among the parables of the mustard seed, leaven, hidden treasure, and pearl of great price. We have much work to do!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #26 = Out With The Old & In With The New

The Householder (Matthew 13:52)

Introduction: This particular story is unique in that it connects the former parables in the context. When Jesus asked the disciples if they understood the previous parables they answered, “Yes, Lord.” Now He challenges them one last parable (in that setting). It is important to note that after He concludes these parables and returns to His home synagogue, He gets rejected (vs.53-58). Let’s study together.....

Discussion:

I. *The Householder*

- A. There is no doubt that the Householder refers to the Lord (**Habakkuk 2:20**).
- B. Jesus illustrates to the disciples that He has given them everything they need.
- C. He will continue to emphasize to them that it takes much sacrifice in the kingdom.

II. *The Old Treasure*

- A. The old treasure probably refers to those under the old covenant (note the scribes).
- B. The Jews followed the old law, an excellent system, but change was coming.
- C. People often forget that the Old Testament was given to Moses, and to the Jewish people, but intended to only be temporary (**Exodus 34:27-28, John 1:17, Hebrews**).
- D. If we continue to follow the OT alone we would be forced into that covenant relationship (**Deuteronomy 4:7-8, 7:1-8, Romans 7:1-7, Galatians 3:8-16, 21-25**) and we would be completely without hope and without Christ (**Ephesians 2:11-16**).
- E. While it offers good standards they are no longer binding (**Ephesians 2:11-16**).
- F. Jesus didn’t come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it (**Matthew 5:17-18, Luke 24:44**).

III. *The New Treasure*

- A. After the cross the Old Law passed and it began a transition into the New Law.
- B. The New Law has now come and the New Kingdom has been brought into view.
- C. The New Kingdom was established on Pentecost (**Acts 2**).
- D. Notice the illustration of the scribe: profitable, worthy of great work, etc.

Conclusion: Every Christian teacher is considered as a scribe. We are to be trained, learning a skill, and focused on using it. Scribes had to meet specific standards in order to please the master. The training for us under the new covenant is the most valuable thing. We are students of the word of God. A Christian cannot be a Christian teacher unless he has received Christian training from Christ. Jesus is the Master Teacher and He is training us, to be His disciples, through His parables. We are entrusted with His word. Will you allow yourself to be trained? What will you do with your training?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #27 = Leaving the 99

The Lost Sheep (Matthew 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-7)

Introduction: The occasion for the parable in Matthew came as a result of a question asked by the disciples in regard to who was the greatest in the kingdom. The parable in Matthew led Jesus into a lengthy discussion where he took a little child and set him in their midst and taught about faith (**Matthew 18:3**). Jesus used this opportunity in Luke to show them how to have love for the lost by giving a parable about a lost sheep. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. The Lost Sheep Teaches Us About Relationships With Others

- A. At this time Jesus was teaching tax collectors and sinners (**Luke 15:1**).
- B. After hearing this complaining Jesus spoke a parable (**Luke 15:3**).
- C. "What man of you having a hundred sheep" (**Luke 15:4, John 10:14**)

II. The Lost Sheep Teaches Us To Love Others

- A. "If he loses one of them" (**Luke 15:4, Isaiah 53:6, II Peter 3:9**)
- B. This is the tragedy of our age (**Hebrews 2:1**).
- C. In spite of our wanderings isn't it wonderful to know that the grace of God is sufficient to reclaim us when we do go astray.

III. The Lost Sheep Teaches Us To Be Concerned About Others

- A. "Does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness" (**Luke 15:4, Luke 19:10**).
- B. This is the way God feels when we go astray from His flock.
- C. When one of His sheep (one Christian) turns away from Him, it hurts Him and He longs to bring them back into His fold (**Hebrews 6:6**).
- D. God through Christ seeks those who are lost.

IV. The Lost Sheep Teaches Us Put Others Before Ourselves

- A. "Go after the one which is lost, until he finds it" (**Luke 15:4**)
- B. God is not satisfied with our lost condition (**John 3:16, Romans 5:7-8**).
- C. This is exactly what Jesus did when he came to earth (**Luke 23:39, Luke 23:40-42**).

V. The Lost Sheep Teaches Us To Rejoice Over The Saved

- A. "When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing" (**Luke 15:5-6**).
- B. We need to really get excited when people are saved! Look at heaven (**Luke 15:7**)!

Conclusion: This is such a wonderful parable! It teaches us about compassion and love but it also connects us to the mind of God. God loves you and He can't stand the thought of spending eternity without you. He's sacrificed His one and only Son for you. And when you are lost, or can't find your way, He will take your hand and lead you home!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #28 = Showing Mercy

The Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-35)

Introduction: The text we will study in this lesson is one of the most famous in the entire Bible. Jesus taught His disciples often about forgiveness. He was also a very forgiving person. Just look at His death on the cross and some of His final words. This parable is very memorable story, sad but influential. Let's study this parable together

Discussion:

I. *The Backstory*

- A. The prelude to the parable includes some dialogue between Peter and Jesus.
- B. Rather than explain His teachings on forgiveness He tells this parable.
- C. Jesus made sure that they understood the parable.

II. *The King*

- A. The servant owed 10,000 talents, but the debt was forgiven.
- B. 10,000 talents would equal about 60 million denarii (use of hyperbole).
- C. Therefore, this servant owed his master 60 million days of work!
- D. He would have to work every day for 164,383.5 years to pay the debt!

III. *The First Servant*

- A. The king could have sold his possessions and divided his family.
- B. Notice that “*payment*” would “*be made*” but not fulfilled, because the debt was huge!
- C. This servant kept on pleading for time, to pay an imaginable amount.
- D. The king was moved with compassion (**Psalm 145:8**).

IV. *The Second Servant*

- A. This servant worked for the first servant and he owed 100 denarii.
- B. This is such a small amount of time, and money, but did not find mercy.
- C. This could be paid off in just a few months, unlike the debt of the first servant.
- D. His change for forgiveness was refused (notice the request and punishment).

V. *The Result*

- A. The first servant refused to forgive, so he was not forgiven (**Matthew 6:12**).
- B. Remember that forgiveness has several dimensions:
 - (1) downward from God, (2) inward to ourselves, and (3) outward to others.
- C. Our forgiveness is dependent on how we forgive others.

Conclusion: When we learn to appreciate the love and forgiveness of God we will be compelled to share it with others. Praise the Lord that we serve a loving and gracious God!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #29 = Equal Wages

The Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16)

Introduction: The parable of the workers in the vineyard is unique. If you've read it then I suppose you might join in the frustration with the workers in the end. This parable shows our work and God's grace. Let's study this wonderful parable together. . . .

Discussion:

I. *The Landowner*

- A. It is obvious that the landowner represents God.
- B. God owns the vineyard, is in control of His vineyard, and He calls the workers.
- C. He can do what He wishes with the vineyard and His money.

II. *The Vineyard*

- A. The "kingdom of heaven" represents the church.
- B. Christians are connected to the True Vine (**John 15:1-8**).
- C. The vineyards in Palestine became a symbol of God's relationship with the Jews.

III. *The Harvest*

- A. Vineyards required much labor and many laborers (**Proverbs 24:31**).
- B. Keeping a vineyard required pruning (**Leviticus 25:3, John 15:2-6**).
- C. The grape harvest arrived in late September and was a joyous time (**Isaiah 16:10**).

IV. *The Laborers*

- A. The first group of laborers went to work at 6:00 AM.
- B. The second group of laborers went to work at 9:00 AM.
- C. The third group of laborers went to work at 12:00 PM.
- D. The fourth group of laborers went to work at 3:00 PM.
- E. The last group of laborers went to work at 5:00 PM.

V. *The Payment*

- A. The steward dispensing the money gave them all the same wage.
- B. God is gracious and He decides to give us all the same payment.
- C. God decides who is called, who is chosen, and who is rewarded.

Conclusion: Jesus was trying to help the apostles understand that they would not get the most in the kingdom. If we serve God and trust Him, He will provide. We should not try to compare paychecks, especially on the Day of Judgment, because we will all receive the same payment, no matter how much we work did or our years of service. We need to trust in God and be thankful for just being able to serve Him!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #30 = The Tale of Two Brothers

The Two Sons (Matthew 21:28-32)

Introduction: This story is a typical drama. A father, two sons that don't want to work, and a difficult job... what could make for a better story? Neither of the boys want to work. One says he will go and the other refuses. One does the work and the other does not. Which one is the better son? Is there a third option? Let's study together. . . .

Discussion:

I. *The Penitent Son*

- A. The father's plea was for this son to go into the vineyard and work.
- B. The son's response was one of stubbornness and rebellion.
- C. The NKJV says that he "*regretted*" and others translations say "*repented*" but the gist of it is that he was sorry and regretted his response to his father.
- D. This is a response from a sincere heart (**II Corinthians 7:10**) and Jesus compares this son to the publicans and harlots.

II. *The Pretentious Son*

- A. The father's plea was for this son to go into the vineyard and work.
- B. He did not reject the request of the father and agreed to do the assigned work.
- C. Whether he lied about his intention, disregarded his duty, or willingly rebelled against his father's will, the promise was broken.
- D. This is a response from a wicked heart (**Matthew 15:9**) and Jesus compares this son to the chief priests and religious leaders of His day.

III. *The Patient Father*

- A. There is no doubt that the father in this parable obviously represents God.
- B. God grants us all an invitation to work in His kingdom.
- C. He is patient to wait for us to respond to His will.

IV. *The Promise of Our Heavenly Father*

- A. The Lord is not "*slack concerning His promise*" (**II Peter 3:9**).
- B. He is fair and is no respecter of persons (**Acts 10:34-35, Titus 2:11, Revelation 22:17**).
- C. He accepts our decision (**Isaiah 43:25, Matthew 28:18-20, I Corinthians 6:9-11**).

Conclusion: God is a God of second chances! He is longsuffering, patient, and kind. Notice how little emphasis is placed upon the response to the father's plea for work or the father's reaction to those responses. Instead, emphasis is on the action. The chief priests did not approve of the publicans and the harlots, but they were headed into the kingdom first because of their penitent heart. Which son would you be? The first son? The second son? Or will you be the third son who promises to do the work and then completes it?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #31 = Don't Know What You've Got Until It's Gone

The Wicked Vinedressers (Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12, Luke 20:9-18)

Introduction: In this parable, Jesus adapts the one told by the prophet in **Isaiah 5:1-7**. Using His own style He illustrates obedience to God. Let's study together. . . .

Discussion:

I. The Landowner

- A. The landowner represents God (**John 15:1-8**).
- B. God owns the vineyard, plants it, controls it, hires the workers, etc.
- C. It only makes sense that He deserves the fruit.

II. The Vineyard

- A. God has used the illustration of a vineyard throughout the Bible.
- B. In this day the vineyards in Palestine became a symbol of God and His relationship with the Jews (**Psalm 80, Isaiah 5, 27, Jeremiah 2:21**).
- C. However, the religious leaders killed the prophets and rejected the Messiah!

III. The Hedge, Winepress, & Tower

- A. A good landowner would want his servants to be comfortable.
- B. The hedge was meant to be there for protection and privacy.
- C. The winepress was there to put the grapes to good use.
- D. The tower was there just in case of an emergency (storm, enemy, etc.).

IV. The Harvest & The Vineyards

- A. When it comes time to gather the fruit... the Lord will know who has been working and who has been idle (**Matthew 7:15-20**).
- B. They had forgotten their work and their place.

V. The Servants & The Son

- A. The servants that are sent to collect the harvest represent the prophets.
- B. God sent the nation of Israel men like Moses, Aaron, and Joshua, then elders, then judges, then kings, and finally prophets (rejected and killed).
- C. Finally, He sent Son (**John 3:16**).

Conclusion: The final result is that the people in charge were not worthy of their position. Therefore, God took the kingdom away from them. The parables tell us the prostitutes and tax collectors were more worthy of the kingdom of God. It should be our prayer that the church never find itself in the same predicament. We are the Lord's church!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #32 = Here Comes The Bride
The Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14)

Introduction: This parable is often confused with the parable of the great supper found in **Luke 14:15-24**. Both parables have a similar context, but both are distinctly different. Remember that this parable immediately follows the parables of the two sons and the wicked vinedressers. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. *The King & The Son*

- A. The king and the son represent God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- B. The church is married to Christ (**Romans 7:1-7, Ephesians 5:22-32**).
- C. This same analogy is made throughout the OT in referring to the Israelites.

II. *The Marriage & Wedding Feast*

- A. This illustration was often used as a symbol of the kingdom.
- B. Like a great feast, and a marriage ceremony, the blessings of Jesus are wonderful for those who are willing to accept His invitation.
- C. These ceremonies would usually last for at least a week (long celebrations).

III. *The Significance of the Invitation*

- A. It was customary to send out invitations, but the hour was not announced.
- B. If you received an invitation, and did not respond immediately with an excuse, you obligated yourself to be there.
- C. When the feast day arrived the servants went out to tell the exact time and place for the wedding feast (late withdrawals would be insulting the king).
- D. The Jews had been given the invitation to the kingdom first, but they refused to enter (i.e. John the Baptist's preaching and the prophets - **Matthew 21:34-36**).

IV. *Compelling Guest to Attend*

- A. Israel refused the invitation so beggars, sinners, and outcasts came instead.
- B. The Lord's invitation was an open door for Gentiles (**Matthew 8:11-12, 28:18-20**).
- C. Under the new covenant God's invitation to all (**Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16**).
- D. God is no respecter of persons (**Acts 10:34, I Peter 1:17**).

Conclusion: Anyone who wants to approach God must be clothed in His righteousness and wearing what He has given us (i.e. Jesus' blood, baptism). The wonderful thing is that He provides the righteousness for us (**Romans 6-8**). Are you married to Christ? Have you been covered by the blood of Jesus in baptism?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #33 = When The Timing Is Right

The Fig Tree (Matthew 24:32-35, Mark 13:28-31, Luke 21:29-33)

Introduction: This parable is arguably one of the most unique of Jesus' stories. However, the people of His day were familiar with stories of trees. David used an illustration about a tree to discuss the righteousness of a believer (**Psalm 1:3**). Jewish farmers understood the season and they looked forward to each season and anticipated the changes. What happens when things don't go as planned? Also, many of the Jews were waiting for signs and wonders to usher in the coming of the Christ. Instead of emphasizing His own miracles He points to the signs of the Fall of Jerusalem and hints about His own second coming. This parable helps to explain some of the controversy about the end times and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. A Sign of the Seasons

- A. The fig trees, like most, begins becoming tender and bringing forth leaves in the springtime (early April).
- B. The fig tree is native to Palestine.
- C. It is important to note that Jesus spoke this parable on the Mount of Olives where fig trees were growing all around Him (Bethpage, which means "house of figs").
- D. When things are in bloom, the people know that summer is around the corner.
- E. People begin looking for these signs to determine the change in the seasons.

II. A Sign of the Times

- A. Prior to this parable Jesus was asked three questions: "*When will these things be?*" (the fall of the temple), "*And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?*" (**Matthew 24:3**).
- B. Jesus clearly teaches that the fall of the temple was near and the signs were already taking place (70 AD).

III. A Sign of the End Times

- A. Jesus clearly teaches that there are no signs of the end of time.
- B. The only hints He gives are that heaven and earth will pass away, His word will endure forever, and even He does not know when He will return.
- C. We just have to wait for Him to come back and be prepared.

Conclusion: It seems that hundreds of religious programs air each year telling the world that the "signs of Jesus' coming" are at hand. That means that they know more than Jesus. Isn't that arrogant? Are you ready for the second coming?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #34 = Ready For Service

The Faithful & Wicked Servants (Matthew 24:45-51, Luke 12:42-48)

Introduction: It is important to note that this parable directly follows a question by the apostle Peter (Luke 12:41). He wants to know if the previous thoughts and stories were for the disciples or all people. Jesus had just dealt with the rich fool, spoke about true discipleship, and was beginning to talk about the second coming. Now, Peter seems to interrupt the Lord's teaching to ask about parables. What was Jesus' response? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The Choice of the Master

- A. It is obvious that the Lord is the Master who leaves His servants to be in charge.
- B. He is serious about the work of the kingdom and cannot tolerate hypocrisy.
- C. Some people are ready for radical discipleship and others do not have strong faith.
- D. **Matthew 12:33-27** says we will give an account for everything we say, think, and do.

II. The Wise & Faithful Servant

- A. All servants/stewards of the Lord are called to lead and serve.
- B. Christians are given specific talents and responsibilities (**Matthew 25, Ephesians 4:11-16**).
- C. We must be steadfast and seek first the kingdom (**Matthew 6:33**).
- D. A wise servant is concerned about the Master's commands.

III. The Foolish & Unfaithful Servant

- A. Unfaithful Christians try to position themselves in order to gain a personal advantage.
- B. The deliberate offenders, that have called themselves servants of the Master, will be punished like unbelievers (**Romans 6:1ff**).
- C. This is why people fall from grace, they rebel against the will of God.
- D. We cannot be saved if we refuse to be obedient and faithful.

IV. The Master's Return (a.k.a. The Second Coming)

- A. Like the master in the story, Jesus is coming again!
- B. We must be prepared because he is coming like a thief in the night.
- C. Those who are ready will be rewarded and the rest will be punished.
- D. There will be a reward (**Galatians 6:10, James 1:27**).
- E. There will be punishment (**II Peter 3:3-4**).

Conclusion: In many of Jesus' parables there is one good servant and one evil servant. The obvious reason is because there are only two choices: the right one and the wrong one. We cannot forget that the Master is returning soon and His servants must be prepared. We cannot get sidetracked or just pretend to work. We need Christians that have a radically changed faith and are dedicated to Christian service. The unfaithful servant was condemned for his actions, but the faithful one was rewarded. What will God say to you? How will you be treated when He returns?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #35 = Not Enough Oil For The Lamp

The Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)

Introduction: In this parable the kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins waiting to meet the bridegroom. These young women were supposed to be watchful and ready. Half of them are prepared and the other half are not. Half are rewarded and half are punished. What can we learn from them? Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. *The Purity of the Kingdom*

- A. The virgins are used to symbolize the purity of the church.
- B. The church is to be without spot and or blemish (**Ephesians 5:27**).
- C. "Many are called but few are chosen" (**Matthew 20:16, 22:14**).
- D. We cannot put our hand on the plow and then look back (**Luke 9:62**).
- E. Christians can fall from grace (**Galatians 5:4**).

II. *The Preparation for the Marriage*

- A. The marriage feast was an important event.
- B. It was important to the bridegroom and the wedding party.
- C. In order to meet the bridegroom they needed lamps.
- D. Christians are supposed to be the "light of the world" (**Matthew 5:14**).
- E. **Philippians 2:15** speaks of us shining as lights in the world.
- F. There can be no darkness in God's presence (**I John 1:5-7**).
- G. **Matthew 7:16** says that we will be known by our fruits.
- H. Those who do not bear fruit cannot abide in the Vine (**John 15:1-8**).

III. *The Planning Determines the Reward*

- A. The first group was prepared, but the others were not prepared (**Matthew 7:13-14**).
- B. The oil represents the reserve and depth of a Christian's life (**Matthew 7:24-27**).
- C. The oil represents the good soil mentioned in **Matthew 13**.
- D. The oil represents the deep faith that sustains us (**I Corinthians 15:58, Hebrews 3:6**).
- E. The oil represents the endurance of a Christian (**II Timothy 4:6-8**).

Conclusion: Jesus said that the one who endures will be rewarded and saved (**Matthew 10:22, Revelation 2:10**). These virgins knew the bridegroom was coming. There is no doubt that He is coming again (**Acts 1:11**). Only God knows when Jesus will come again (**Mark 13:32**). He waited in the days of Noah (**II Peter 3:9**) and now He is waiting for the right time to return. We need to be ready and watchful. Don't be caught when the door is shut! We still have time to trim our lamps and prepare for His coming!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #36 = Using Your God-Given Talents

The Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

Introduction: Too many churches are obsessed with church growth. I am concerned about church health. Healthy churches will grow because it's natural. How can we grow? Work! We need to be using our God given talents! Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. *The Distribution of the Talents*

Christians have been given talents by God.

Matthew 25:14-18, Ephesians 4:11-16, I Corinthians 12:13-27

Do you know your talent?

II. *The Dedication of the Servants (vs.19-23)*

Christians are given opportunities to use these talents.

Matthew 25:19-23, Acts 1:9-11, Luke 10:30-32, James 4:17

Do you faithfully use your talent?

III. *The Day of Reckoning*

Christians must find their place in the kingdom before it is too late!

Matthew 25:24-30, Matthew 7:21ff, Ephesians 4:11-16, Hebrews 9:27

Do you know what will happen if you ignore your talent?

IV. *The Demonstration of Faith*

Christians are commanded to work/live in unity together.

I Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:3, Psalm 133

Do you know others who have your talent?

V. *The Duty of a Believer*

Remember the curse placed on the barren fig tree (**Luke 13:6-9**).

Remember that we are called to bear fruit for the kingdom (**John 15:1-8**).

Remember that every Christian has been given gifts (**I Corinthians 12:12-26**).

Remember that faith without works is dead (**James 2:17-19**).

Remember that if you know good and refuse to do it you sin (**James 4:17**).

Conclusion: Have you been to Washington, D.C.? Have you toured the White House? What was it like? How many people actually live in the White House? Why? Why is it that people think God will let them live in His house if they refuse to work in His kingdom? Does the president let lazy people live in the Lincoln bedroom? Can someone who refuses to serve the government just walk into the Oval Office and declare it their own territory? Yes, it's the people's house, but you have to do your job to keep your position. And to keep your position you must be accountable for the job you have been selected to do. What has God required of you? How are you serving Him? Are you useful in His earthly kingdom? Will you have a place in His eternal one?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #37 = Sheep vs. Goats

The Sheep & Goats (Matthew 25:31-46)

Introduction: In the final judgment the people will be divided into two groups. Jesus says that one is classified as sheep, the other as goats. The king responds to both the sinners and the saints. Their judgment was a result of their works, or lack of works. Jesus gives specific examples of missed opportunities. He also showed them how their ministry was effective. The sheep were saved and the goats were condemned. Where will you stand? How can you know where you are? Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. The Judgment Day for the Sheep & Goats

- A. Jesus describes the final judgment.
- B. This separation is a specific description of the acts on that final day.
- C. Jesus Himself will do the judging (**Matthew 7:21**) while the angels watch.
- D. He will set a group (sheep) on the right and another (goats) on the left.

II. The Separation of the Sheep & Goats

- A. Everyone in these parables are believers or considered themselves to be believers.
- B. There are two kinds of Christians: real Christians and pseudo-Christians.
- C. The saved (sheep) enter the kingdom prepared for them (v.34).
- D. The lost (goats) are turned away to eternal punishment (v.46).
- E. Remember that in **Leviticus 16:9-10**, it is a goat (scapegoat) that bears the sins of Israel on the Day of Atonement, not a lamb (the animal is not evil).

III. The Work of the Sheep & Goats

- A. We know what makes the difference between the sheep and the goats, their works.
- B. What did the sheep do? They gave food, drink, hospitality, benevolence, clothing, they visited the sick and imprisoned.
- C. What did the goats neglect? They did not give food, drink, hospitality, benevolence, clothing, or visit the sick and imprisoned.
- D. Jesus was involved: "*When you did it to one the least of these. . . . you did it to Me!*"
- E. He gave us His definition in **Matthew 12:46-50, 19:30, 20:16**.

IV. The Destination of the Sheep & Goats

- A. The reward of the sheep (the righteous) is eternal life.
- B. The reward of the goats (the unrighteous) is eternal condemnation.

Conclusion: It is important to note the unrighteous are not condemned for doing evil, but for their failure to do good (**James 4:17, Ecclesiastes 9:10**). If we choose to follow God we will experience His grace and mercy. However, if we choose to ignore Him we will suffer His wrath and judgment. What will you choose?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #38 = God Gives The Increase
The Growing Seed (Mark 4:26-29)

Introduction: This parable is also called the parable of the “growing grain” or the “scattered seed.” While there are many parables of Christ recorded by the other gospel writers, John Mark is the only writer that recorded this parable. Jesus reveals that the kingdom is supposed to grow, but it may be slow and in secret. Let’s study together.....

Discussion:

I. The Farmer/Sower

- A. Jesus began by planting His word in the hearts of the disciples.
- B. Later His disciples would share His teachings with the world (commission).
- C. On the Day of Judgment He will gather the kingdom in His harvest.
- D. Obviously, the seed is the word of God and it must be planted in the heart of man.

II. The Gradual Development of the Seed

- A. Consider God’s patience in salvation (**Genesis 3:15, 12:1-3, John 3:16**).
- B. Consider God’s patience with the kingdom (**Isaiah 2:1-4, Daniel 2:44, Micah 4:1-4**).
- C. Consider God’s patience for preparing the way (**Malachi 3:1, Matthew 3:1-2**).
- D. Consider God’s patience with the church (**Acts 2, 17:30, Ephesians 3:3-11**).

III. The Harvest & The Reaping

- A. The blade appears (growth requires faith, patience, and time).
- B. The head appears (maturity does not happen overnight).
- C. The full head of grain completes its cycle.
- D. This is a sign of bearing good fruit for the kingdom (**John 15:1-8**).

IV. The Sickle & The Reaper

- A. Only God can make the seed grow (**I Corinthians 3:6-7**).
- B. Only God can bring in the harvest (**Revelation 14:14-16**).
- C. Only God can determine the growth of the church (**Acts 2:47, Ephesians 5**).
- D. Only God can know the difference between the good and bad (**John 15:1-8**).

Conclusion: On the last day the Father will receive the kingdom, and after judgment, will reward the faithful (**Matthew 25:31, I Corinthians 15:24, II Peter 1:11**). We have to be careful not to end the application of this parable with the judgment scene. Clearly the farmer benefited from a great reward! There is a great emphasis placed on the growing of the seed, but the growth is meaningless if the harvest is not successful.

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #39 = Only God Knows
The Watchful Doorkeeper (Mark 13:32-37)

Introduction: Just prior to the parable Jesus has addressed two questions: (1) When will the temple be destroyed? AND (2) When will you return again? It would be wise to study Matthew's parallel teaching in **Matthew 24** and Luke's account in **Luke 21**. Jesus spent some time describing the destruction of the temple (70 AD). However, when it comes to his second coming there would be no signs. He would come like a thief in the night and Jesus was not aware of the exact date (**Matthew 24:32**). Everyone needs to stay prepared at all times and stop looking for signs of His coming. Let's study together.....

Discussion:

I. *The Owner of the House*

- A. Jesus was about to suffer and die, but would rise again (**Matthew 20:17-19**).
- B. Jesus would then return to heaven (**Acts 1:9-11**).
- C. Jesus offers them some peace (**John 14**).
- D. Jesus commands His disciples to keep watching (**Mark 13:35-37**).

II. *The Servants in the House*

- A. Every Christian is a servant of God and appointed to serve Him.
- B. It should be our goal to find a task for kingdom work (**Ephesians 4:11-16**).
- C. The house of God (the body of Christ) must be maintained by the servants of God (**I Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 10:21, I Peter 4:17**).

III. *The Doorkeeper of the House*

- A. The church needs porters, superintendents, and/or janitors.
- B. We should have elders (bishops, overseers, pastors, shepherds, presbyters) to oversee and feed the flock (**Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, I Peter 5:1-4**).
- C. We should have deacons (**I Timothy 3:8-13, Philippians 1:1, Acts 6:1-6**) to serve.
- D. We should have evangelists (preachers) to teach and preach (**I-II Timothy**).

IV. *The Return of Jesus*

- A. The destruction of the Temple was a sign of God's power.
- B. The teachings, miracles, and signs of Jesus were also a sign of God's power.
- C. What more should one need to get ready for the second coming?

Conclusion: The facts are clear: Jesus is coming, judgment day is unavoidable, and we will all be held accountable for our own lives. We need to be ready! Are you ready? Stop wasting time looking for signs and just get ready! He is coming soon!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #40 = I Owe, I Owe... So Off To Work I Go!

The Creditor Who Had Two Debtors (Luke 7:40-47)

Introduction: Have you seen the bumper sticker “*I Owe, I Owe So Off To Work I Go!*”? I love that! And I want to address that issue, but in a spiritual way not a financial standpoint. There is an interesting story found in Luke 7. What does this story really mean? Let’s study together...

Discussion:

I. What Do We Know About The Creditor?

- A. The Creditor is conducting business as usual.
- B. His servant owes him 500 denarii.
- C. The Bible speaks of God’s forgiveness (**Matthew 26:28, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14**).

II. What Do We Know About The First Debtor?

- A. The first debtor owes 500 denarii (that’s about 500 daily wages).
- B. There is absolutely no way to repay God what we owe Him (**Romans 3:23**).
- C. Clearly two things are evident from the story so far. . . .
 - 1. We sin way too much to ever believe we could save ourselves.
 - 2. God is so merciful that He will forgive us if we are repentant.
- D. God knows that we are undeserving, but forgiveness can come anyway.

III. What Do We Know About The Second Debtor?

- A. The second debtor owes 50 denarii (that’s about 50 daily wages)
- B. Simon was still a debtor and a sinner, unlike the prostitute.
- C. We are loved by God, so we should love (**I John 4:20-21**).
- D. We are forgiven by God, so we should forgive (**Matthew 6:12**).
- E. We teach and encourage because that’s what others have done for us (**Matthew 28:18-20**).

IV. How Will We Be Affected By The Story?

- A. Maybe we will be more merciful, loving, and forgiving if we understand this story.
- B. God saves us because of our faith (**Luke 7:50**)!
- C. Your faith will either move you or paralyze you (**James 2:18**).
- D. Your faith can be powerful even if it is small (**Matthew 7:20**).
- E. The Hall of Fame of Faith listed in **Hebrews 11** includes men and women who knew without faith it is *impossible* to please God (**Hebrews 11:6**).
- E. With faith ALL things are *possible* (**Mark 9:23**).

Conclusion: When we contemplate the entire scheme of redemption, the love that God had to send His one and only Son into the world in the first place, and the fact that Jesus sacrificed Himself for a human race that despised and rejected Him, maybe we will fully grasp the situation. We need to remember that we owe everything we have to God. Are you in need of God’s forgiveness? Are you telling others about the forgiveness God? Are you living for Jesus? Are you working?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:
Lesson #4I = Won't You Be My Neighbor?
The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

Introduction: I truly believe that if the church could grasp the context of this story, and make proper application, it would revolutionize the church. There are some brief observations that we need to notice. First, consider the verses prior to the parable (vs.25-29). Second, remember that Jesus is responding to a question. Finally, we need to consider the lawyer and his motives. This parable is really a story that relates to anyone in any culture. And it is told in the context of the greatest commands (**Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34**). Let's study it together. . . .

Discussion:

I. Why Did Jesus Tell This Story?

- A. The Lawyer's Test (**Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37**)
- B. The Savior's Answer (**Acts 2:37-47, I Peter 2:9**)
- C. The Story's Context (**Luke 10:30, John 4**)
- D. The Religious Right (**Deuteronomy 22:4**)
- E. The Loving Liberal (**Galatians 6:10**)

II. Which Character Describes You?

- Character #1 – The Traveler (v.30)
- Character #2 – The Thief (v.30)
- Character #3 – The Priest (v.31)
- Character #4 – The Levite (v.32)
- Character #5 – The Samaritan (v.33)

III. What Choice Would You Make?

- Choice #1 – We Can Respond Like The Thieves - Beat Him!
- Choice #2 – We Can Respond Like The Priest - Ignore Him!
- Choice #3 – We Can Respond Like The Levite - Despise Him!
- Choice #4 – We Can Respond Like The Samaritan - Help Him!

Conclusion: Jesus asked the man to identify the real neighbor (vs.36-37). The answer, of course, was the Samaritan, but the lawyer could not bear to say that, so he said, the one that “*showed mercy*.” Jesus then told him to go and do likewise. He told him to be like the Samaritan! Are we showing love, compassion, mercy, and doing good works like the good Samaritan? Who will be your neighbor? Remember the Golden Rule (**Matthew 7:12**). Let's seek our neighbors in need and do good deeds. May God help us to always do the right thing!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #42 = Keep On Knocking, But You Can't Come In!

The Friend Who Came at Midnight (Luke 11:5-8)

Introduction: This parable follows two very important events. First, Jesus had just returned from a period of prayer. Second, His disciples had asked Him to teach them how to pray. Keep in mind that John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray, but apparently Jesus had not spent a lot of time teaching His disciples about prayer. He had no doubt talked about prayer, prayed in their presence, and even encouraged them to pray. However, they were hungry for more! Jesus will pray with them (model prayer/Lord's prayer) and address the "who," "how," and "what" of prayer before addressing the "why" as he tells the parable of the persistent friend. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The Persistent Friend

- A. A man goes to his friend because he is in need.
- B. The friend is desperate for help from his neighbor.
- C. The man does not want to be embarrassed by his lack of provision.

Romans 8:28-31, Matthew 28:20, Philippians 4:13

- D. It is great to know that we can count on one another.

Galatians 5:13, I Peter 4:10, Galatians 6:10

II. The Patient Neighbor

- A. The drama has unfolded, the plot thickens, and a hero is needed.
- B. The Lord can supply all of our needs according to His riches (**Philippians 4:19**).
 - 1. He promises everlasting bread when we are hungry (**John 6:35**).
 - 2. He promises living water when we are thirsty (**John 4:10**).
 - 3. He promises light when we are in the darkness (**John 8:12**).
 - 4. He promises us rest when we are exhausted (**Matthew 11:28-30**).
- C. We need to help others when we are given the chance.

III. The Persuasive Prayer

- A. Jesus rose early to pray alone in a solitary place (**Mark 1:35**).
- B. Jesus withdrew into the wilderness to pray (**Luke 5:16**).
- C. Jesus prayed all night in preparation for the selection of His apostles (**Luke 6:12-13**).
- D. Jesus offered a beautiful prayer before His death (**John 17**).
- E. Jesus agonized in the garden of Gethsemane (**Matthew 26:36-46**).
- F. Jesus even prayed on the cross (**Matthew 27:46**).

Conclusion: We need to keep some specific things in mind: (1) *Never, never, never quit praying!* Persistence with God will always pay off. (2) *Never give up on God!* He will not let you down! You may not see Him, you may not hear Him, and you may not feel Him, but He is there! (3) *Never forget that God is in control!* The Lord can make the lame walk, the blind to see, the mute to speak, the dead to walk again, and He controls the wind and the waves. Yes, prayers are answered in God's time, but He is still God. Nothing can change that. Just trust in Him!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #43 = Building Bigger Barns

The Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21)

Introduction: Jesus was in the middle of a wonderful discourse on dealing with hypocrisy, dependence on God, confession, and the Holy Spirit, but He was interrupted. Maybe Jesus paused, but His discourse does not seem to be concluded. This man blurts out a question completely off the subject. It looks like he may have had his brother with him. Jesus takes this opportunity to teach a lesson on greed and covetousness. Why is this such a hard teaching? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. What Can We Learn About the Man Asking the Question?

- A. He was determined to win a conflict.
- B. He was refused to give up his inheritance.
- C. He was not paying attention to Jesus' earlier teaching (vs.7-8).
- D. He wanted to "get ahead" in life (Matthew 6:33, 7:7).

II. What Can We Learn About the Man Answering the Question?

- A. Jesus can answer the tough questions.
- B. Jesus knew the man's heart.
- C. Jesus knew the man's intent.
- D. Jesus IS the answer for question (Matthew 5-7, II Timothy 6:6).

III. What Can We Learn From The Story?

- A. The farmer was blessed by God (Luke 12:16, Ephesians 1:3).
- B. The farmer was selfish and covetous (Luke 12:17, Proverbs 23:7).
- C. The farmer was ignorant (Luke 12:18, James 4:14-16).
- D. The farmer was arrogant (Luke 12:19, Luke 6:38, James 1:17).
- E. The farmer was foolish (Luke 12:20, I Thessalonians 5:2, II Peter 3:10).
- F. The farmer was rebuked and punished (Luke 12:20, Ecclesiastes 2:4-8).
- G. The farmer learned a valuable lesson one day to late (Luke 12:21, Matthew 6:19-21).

Conclusion: I heard a preacher say once that the three things, concerning money, interests God: 1. What did we do to obtain it? – Was it through honesty and hard work? 2. What is our attitude toward it? – Am I covetous and selfish with it? 3. What are we going to do with it? – Have I used it wisely? **Colossians 3:5-6** describes covetousness as idolatry and we can only serve one God. Remember that the rich man in this story was not an immoral man (he had not committed adultery or even stolen anything). He loved money! **I Timothy 6:10** says that the "love of money" is the root of all kinds of evil. Many of us have a problem in depending on tomorrow. Why? What can we do to change? We need to trust that God will take care of us. What can we do to please God? Consider the rest of this text (**Luke 12:22-40**). We should trust in God and make our treasures last for eternity! Are you wise? Then follow this teaching of Jesus and you won't be labeled a fool.

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #44 = Dressed & Ready For Service

The Watchful Servants (Luke 12:35-40)

Introduction: This parable has some similarities to the one of ten virgins found in **Matthew 25:1-13** and the one of the two servants in **Matthew 24:43-51**. Luke records a more detailed story. Since Jesus has already addressed the positive aspects of discipleship (vs.22-34), now He considers some things from a negative perspective. He begins this parable by urging His disciples to be ready to serve. God has always expected His servants to be ready for service. This parable encourages us to be watchful. If we are watchful servants we will be rewarded by God. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The Master

- A. The master, which describes Jesus, is said to be away (wedding).
- B. When He returns He knocks on the door to see if His servants are ready to receive Him.
- C. We do not know what hour Jesus will return so we must be prepared at all times.
- D. The Romans had a system of four night watches (**Matthew 14:25**).
- E. The Jews had a system of three night watches (**Lamentations 2:19**).

II. The Servants

- A. The servants represent the disciples of Christ (no idea when the master is coming).
- B. Jesus taught His disciples that there would be no signs (**Matthew 24:36, 42-44**).
- C. The servants will not hear Him walking on the pathway and/or sounding trumpets
- D. The servants will not see Him shining lights along the pathway.
- E. The master sneaks up to see if someone is guarding the door or looking out the window.

III. The Cautious Watch

- A. Servants might become lazy and cease work after much time passes.
- B. If they knew a thief (or enemy) was about to come, they would watch until he arrived.
- C. Jesus compares Himself to a thief, not to steal, but because He is sudden and forceful.
- D. To prevent the plunder the servants were appointed during each watch of the night.
- E. Jesus will return (**Matthew 24:43, Thessalonians 5:2-4, II Peter 3:10, Revelation 3:3, 16:15**).

IV. The Blessing

- A. The watchful servants will eventually be served by the Master.
- B. The servants would be greatly rewarded for watchfulness and service.
- C. The servants would become honored guests in the house.
- D. God will honor those who have served Him on the earth with a great wedding feast.
- E. This parable was for all people (**Luke 12:41-48, Matthew 25:1-13, 24:43-51**).

Conclusion: God has called us to serve Him. As God's servants we must let our light shine. This takes patience, perseverance, endurance, and dedication. There are many ways to be distracted from our mission but we need to stay focused! There will be many unprepared for Jesus' second coming. As faithful servants must always be ready for Christ's return! Will you be ready?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #45 = The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From The Tree

The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9)

Introduction: This particular parable comes immediately after some of the most memorable words of Jesus on repentance (**Luke 13:3, 5**). Jesus had just learned that Pilate, the Roman governor, had killed some Galileans and “mingled their blood” along with their sacrifices. He uses this opportunity to call for individual repentance as well as national repentance. After this brief speech He tells the parable of the fig tree. . . .

Discussion:

I. The Farmer

- A. God is the farmer (**Isaiah 5:1-7, Matthew 13**).
- B. The Lord knows when it is time for the harvest.
- C. He knows the hour and time of His coming.

II. The Tree

- A. Christians are the tree (**Jeremiah 2:21, John 15:1-8, Luke 13:3,5**).
- B. God will give us several chances before the end comes.
- C. If we refuse the opportunities to repent we will perish (**Luke 13:3,5, Acts 17:30**).

III. The Keeper

- A. Jesus is the keeper of the garden (**John 3:16-17, Matthew 25**).
- B. He wants to ensure that we have time to do the right thing.
- C. He will work around us, in us, through us, and in spite of us!

IV. The Fruit

- A. We can all bear the fruit of the Spirit (**John 15:1-8, Galatians 5:22-23**).
- B. We can all do good works for the kingdom (**Ephesians 2:10, 4:16**).
- C. Everyone is given an opportunity to choose their own path.

V. Lessons to Learn

- A. The nature of God is longsuffering (**Matthew 21:43**).
- B. The second chances will run out (**II Peter 3:7-15, Luke 13:3, 5, Acts 2:38, 3:19, 17:30**).
- C. The winning result come through Christ (**Luke 14:26-27**).

Conclusion: God is a loving, patient, and gracious God. But Christians are called to bear fruit. If we refuse to do what God has planned we will perish. In order to bear fruit we must completely surrender to the will of God and see our own potential. Are you ready to bear fruit for the kingdom of God (**John 15:1-8, Galatians 5:22-23**)?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #46 = Lego My Ego

The Humbled Guest (Luke 14:7-11)

Introduction: One of the greatest challenges that Jesus faced in His ministry was over the law of Sabbath keeping. Prior to the parable, we can read about Jesus performing a miracle on the Sabbath. The Pharisees were critical of the timing of this miracle. Jesus challenges them by noting that they would be more concerned about an ox or donkey than the weak, sick, or needy. This parable is a response to their ignorance and can be seen like a proverb or a wise saying. We must not forget that Jesus was eating in the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees and He was watching them closely. Since He had noted how those invited were selecting the best places to sit He decided to tell this story. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The Wedding Feast

- A. The wedding feast is a symbol of the kingdom of God.
- B. Would you choose a high place? Would you choose the low place?
- C. Jesus wants us to think about the honorable thing to do in this moment.
- D. **II Timothy 2:21**, Paul encourages us to be “*vessels of honor*.”
- E. **Romans 12:10** reminds us to show “*honor*” to one another.

II. The Highest Place

- A. The highest place, or head of the table, is reserved for the greatest in the kingdom.
- B. Two individuals were celebrating their marriage, but there is a small dilemma.
- C. Jesus is trying to teach us not to have HUGE egos! (**I John 2:16**)
- D. Jesus is telling this story to people that were filled with pride.
- E. Solomon said, “*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall,*” (**Proverbs 16:18**) and “*a man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor*” (**Proverbs 29:23**).
- F. Pride is not just in social settings but in our relationship with God!
- G. The Lord hates pride (**Proverbs 8:13**) because it defiles man (**Mark 7:21-23**).
- H. Pride is of the world, not of the Father (**I John 2:15-17**).

III. The Lowest Place

- A. What would happen if you humbly sit in the lowest place?
- B. There is a wonderful proverb in the story: “*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*”
- C. This proverb was one of Jesus' favorites and He used it in many times in His teachings
- D. (**Matthew 23:6-12**, **Luke 18:14**) and His brother learned it and spoke it often (**James 4:6**).
- E. This proverb is found in the Old Testament (**Psalms 18:27**, **Proverbs 18:12**, **29:23**), and Peter also used it in his teaching (**I Peter 5:5**).
- E. There is honor in humility because the Lord blesses the humble (**Psalms 25:9**, **Proverbs 3:34**).

Conclusion: There is only one group of people who can enter the kingdom. They are the humble and servant minded people who humble themselves in the presence of God. The low man on the “totem pole” may not be desired by man, but doing good, thinking positive, and finding joy in the moment can be useful. There are some underlying thoughts that could lead us to realize we need to find contentment and be thankful. We need to seek humility and commitment despite our position. Will you let go of your ego?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #47 = Special RSVP Invitations

The Feast Invitations (Luke 14:12-14)

Introduction: Have you ever sent out invitations? Graduation? Wedding? Baby Shower? Retirement party? Special Events? Jesus wants us to think about the people we invite into our homes. He challenges both our hospitality and our motives. Do we invite people that we know will return the favor? What would happen if we invited people we knew could not repay us? What if we gave without thought of reward and with an open hand and heart? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. *Giving Generously Without Reward*

- A. Giving generously has always been a part of God's plan (**Deuteronomy 15:10-11**).
- B. Giving generously does not mean holding onto what we have, but opening our hand to those in need (**II Corinthians 9:1-15**).
- C. Giving generously to others is the same as giving to the Lord (**Matthew 25:35-44**).
- D. Giving generously to others will be rewarded, though that should not be our motivation in giving (**Luke 6:38**).
- E. Giving generously includes expecting nothing in return (**Luke 14:14**).

II. *Giving With An Open Hand & Open Heart*

- A. Giving has always been a part of God's plan (**Leviticus 19:10, 33; 23:22; 25:35-38; Deuteronomy 24:14, 19-21**).
- B. Giving starts with the right attitude (**II Corinthians 8:1-5**).
- C. Giving includes helping those who are poor (**Matthew 26:11**).
- D. Giving includes helping the least of the kingdom (**Matthew 25:35-44**).
- E. Giving includes helping the widows and the orphans (**James 1:27**).

III. *Giving Whenever & Wherever We See A Need*

- A. God is honored by our generous gifts (**Exodus 35:22**).
- B. God honors us when we give generously (**Ezra 2:68-69**).
- C. God will reward us for giving generously to others (**Mark 9:41**).
- D. God's people are willing to share generously with each other (**Acts 2:44-45**).
- E. God's love is reflected in our generous giving (**1 John 3:17**).

Conclusion: Only worldly people give to those who will give back (**Matthew 5:46, 7:11, Luke 6:30**). Only worldly people help others in an effort to help themselves. I want to issue you a challenge to give to someone this week that cannot repay you. Help someone who cannot help you. You can make a difference!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #48 = Please Excuse Me

The Dinner Guests (Luke 14:15-24)

Introduction: This parable, like many others, was spoken at a time when it fit the occasion. Jesus had a way of knowing exactly what stories were appropriate in every given situation. This one is about an unlucky host, an unbelievable banquet, ungrateful people, some unlikely dinner guests, and some unexpected results. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. THE UNLUCKY HOST (v.14)

- A. This host has prepared a wonderful banquet.
- B. The supper represents the provisions that God has made for our own salvation.
- C. Listen to what Jesus said in **Matthew 21:21** and **Matthew 23:13**.
- D. Notice the graciousness of the host and his desire to do good for others.

II. THE UNBELIEVABLE BANQUET (v.15)

- A. It says a certain man "*gave a great supper*" and invited many guests (v.16).
- B. God has blessings in store for us and we have to choose whether to accept them or reject them.
- C. Listen to what Jesus said in **Matthew 6:26** and **Luke 11:13**.
- D. "All spiritual blessings" come (**Ephesians 1:3**) because God is the giver of all "good gifts" (**James 1:17**).

III. THE UNGRATEFUL PEOPLE (vs.16-20)

- A. Now, the story has an interesting plot twist . . . there are no guests!
- B. The people that were invited "*began to make excuses*" (v.18).
- C. To be fair, let's take a look at these three excuses (They fit perfectly into the three sins of I John 2:16).
- D. These excuses represent a lack of honor and respect towards the host (**Luke 9:57-62**).

IV. THE UNLIKELY GUESTS (vs.21-22)

- A. The servant went back and "*reported these things to his master*" (v.21).
- B. The master instructed the servant to go out again (v.21).
- C. Remember the context of the story. . . Jesus is in the house of a Pharisee.
- D. These new guests were "compelled" to come in to the great supper.

V. THE UNLIKELY GUESTS (vs.21-22)

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VI. THE UNEXPECTED RESULTS (vs.23-24)

- A. Notice that the servant did everything that his master commanded.
- B. Now, the house is filling up, but there are still empty spaces.
- C. The servant went out to persuade anyone who would be willing and able (v.24).
- D. There is a great illustration about God's kingdom here.

Conclusion: We should never neglect or reject the invitation of the Lord! The heart of this parable is about our appreciation for what God has offered us. Do you reject God's grace? Have you been rejected by others who are unwilling to accept the Lord's call? You have been given a great invitation today. How will you respond? Will you offer the Lord excuses? On the Day of Judgment, according to **Matthew 25:31-46**, many people will give Him excuses and they will be lost. Don't give Him your excuses. Give Him your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #49 = How To (NOT) Build A Tower

The Unfinished Tower (Luke 14:25-30)

Introduction: It seems that everywhere Jesus went there were people that wanted to follow Him. Mark records that this dialogue follows the two-fold miracle in healing the blind man. Matthew records that it follows the confession of Peter and the rebuke from our Lord after Peter confronted him about His death. Jesus was clearly trying to define the terms of discipleship. This commitment to follow Christ is not an easy one. The context and theme prove that disciples must count the cost of discipleship. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. THE WISE BUILDER = FINISHED TOWER

- A. A wise builder builds a tower because he does it the right way.
- B. What makes him wise?
- C. Consider these thoughts about wisdom. . . .
 - 1. **Proverbs 2:8** says, *"For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."*
 - 2. **Proverbs 1:7, 9:10** says, *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"*

II. THE FOOLISH BUILDER = UNFINISHED TOWER

- A. A foolish builder decides to build a tower.
- B. What makes him foolish?
- C. Consider these thoughts about foolishness. . . .
 - 1. **Proverbs 12:15** says, *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice."*
 - 2. **Proverbs 30:32** says, *"If you have been foolish, exalting yourself, or if you have been devising evil, put your hand on your mouth."*
 - 3. **Proverbs 14:16** regard the works of foolish people as *"reckless and careless."*

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOWER YOU ARE BUILDING

- A. The witnesses and neighbors will judge both towers.
- B. What is your tower? Salvation? Obedience? Dedication? Commitment?

IV. THE GREAT COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

- A. There are conditions of discipleship (**Matthew 6:33, 7:24-27**).
- B. We must be ready for persecution
 - 1. **Matthew 5:10** – *"Blessed are those who are persecuted"*
 - 2. **Romans 8:35** says that *"persecution"* will not separate us from Christ
 - 3. **II Timothy 3:12** – *"Yes, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer..."*

Conclusion: Many people do not count the cost of discipleship. Christian living requires us to take up our cross daily. Do you have a strong foundation? Are you counting the cost? Jesus has already paid the price for your work. All you have to do is provide the effort. He will complete the work He has begun in you (**Philippians 1:6**). Are you ready to get back to work?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #50 = How To (NOT) Go To War

The Unprepared King (Luke 14:31-34)

Introduction: The former parable (the tower) sets the tone for this parable. If the tower in the previous parable is a military tower it would do us well to consider them both together. However, since it seems to be a slightly different parable we are studying them separately. Both parables have to do with counting the costs of discipleship. Remember the context must be considered (vs.26-27, 34-35). Disciples must place Christ and His kingdom as our first priority. Let's study together

Discussion:

I. PREPARATION = Considering Your Actions

- A. A wise king decides to go to war with a neighboring king.
- B. After careful consideration the king must make a decision.
- C. The wise king knows that peace is the only answer.
- D. Considerate kings will make their people happy (**Haggai 1:5, 7**).
- E. There must be a balance in the life of a believer (**I Corinthians 1:26**).

II. PREPARATION = Resolving the Conflict

- A. Think about war and conflict (**Mark 9:50, James 4:1-3**).
- B. Think about the enemy before you enter into the conflict (**Matthew 5:9, John 16:33**).
- C. Think about what it would take for a peaceful agreement (**Mark 8:14-30, James 3:17**).

III. PREPARATION = Clearing Your Mind & Your Schedule

- A. Christians must forsake all things (**F.A.I.T.H. – Forsaking All I Trust Him**).
- B. Christians must approach conflict with caution (**Luke 9:62, Philippians 4:8**).
- C. Christians must realize God will handle it in His own time (**I Peter 5:6**).

IV. PREPARATION = Committing to God's Provision

- A. We can allow pride to hinder our commitment to God (**Isaiah 55:8-9**).
- B. We often forget who our Commander is, our enemy is, and our role (**John 21:18**).
- C. We must focus on the Christian walk/fight.
 - 1. Paul talks about the good fight of faith (**I Timothy 1:18, 6:12, II Timothy 4:7**).
 - 2. Paul teaches us about the armor of God (**Ephesians 6:10-20**).

Conclusion: When you go to war you need to be prepared. Not prepared to fight, but prepared to consider your actions, resolve the conflict, keep a clear mind and schedule, and be committed to God. Are you ready to serve the Lord's army? Have you truly counted the cost of discipleship? Don't rush into the fight until you have properly prepared for war!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #51 = Sentimental Value

The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10)

Introduction: The parables in **Luke 15** are some of the most familiar in the Bible. These parables stress the lost state of man, God's desire for his restoration, and the joy that follows. God loves His children and desires for them to be back in His arms. In this story today, a woman had ten silver coins, but loses one. She lit a lamp, swept the house, and searched carefully. When she finally found it she celebrates. What can we learn? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. What Can We Learn From The Woman?

- A. The story was perhaps told for women listeners, because the coin was lost at home!
- B. You can attend good churches, be in good families, and be good people, but still be lost.
- C. We need to search for those who are lost to bring them to Christ (**Luke 15:10, 19:10**).
- D. Angels are interested in salvation (**I Peter 1:10-12**) though they do not aid in the work.

II. What Can We Learn From The Coin?

- A. The coin may have been one of the ten pieces of silver worn in a woman's headdress.
- B. They were held together by a chain and worn across the headdress.
- C. We could compare it to losing our wedding ring or a family heirloom.
- D. The coin would have been valuable, but that was not what spurred the search.
- E. It was special to the woman, but not just for its financial value.
- F. We value things that the rest of the world would think as worthless.
- G. The Bible compares the value of a soul above all else (**Matthew 16:26, Mark 8:37**).

III. What Can We Learn From The Search?

- A. The diligent search for the coin (**II Peter 3:9, John 3:16**).
- B. The necessity of the lamp (**Matthew 5:16, I John 1:7**).
- C. The sweeping of the house (**Psalms 51:10, I John 1:9**).
- D. The careful search yields results (**Matthew 7:7, Isaiah 55:6-7**).

IV. What Can We Learn From The Celebration?

- A. She called all of her friends and neighbors and told them that she had found the coin.
- B. They probably knew what she was searching for but did not assist.
- C. They may have had excuses as to why they could not help.
- D. They did not assist, but they were still invited to come and rejoice over the good news.
- E. This illustrates the joy God & His angels have when a lost sinner returns (**Luke 15:5-7, 10**).

Conclusion: If there is one thing we can learn from this story it is that we are valuable to God. He will do whatever it takes to save our souls. What will we do in an effort to save ourselves? What will we do to save others? How will we react when someone is saved? It is clear what God's response will be to our decision. What will you decide?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #52 = When The Lost Get Found

The Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32)

Introduction: Jesus spent most of His time with people who messed up. He was criticized by the Pharisees for associating with prostitutes, tax collectors and other sinners. Christ told the parable of the prodigal son to confront the self-righteousness of these religious leaders. This entire chapter is one that we all should take to heart. Jesus teaches how important it is to be saved and how God truly feels as our Heavenly Father. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The Message Of The Story

- A. The Father - There was a certain man that had two sons (vs.11-12).
- B. The Younger Son - He went into a "*far country*" and wasted all that he had (vs.13-21).
- C. The Servants - The servants join in on the celebration (vs.22-24).
- D. The Older Son - The older son heard what was happening (v.25-30).

II. The Misery of Sin

- Step #1 - Desire (v.12)
- Step #2 - Demand (v.12)
- Step #3 - Departure (v.13)
- Step #4 - Dissipation (v.13)
- Step #5 - Destitution (v.14)
- Step #6 - Degradation (vs.15-16)
- Step #7 - Depression (vs.17)

III. The Miracle of Salvation

- Step #1 - Realization (v.17)
- Step #2 - Repentance (v.18)
- Step #3 - Returning (vs.19-20)
- Step #4 - Resignation (v.21)
- Step #5 - Restoration (v.22)
- Step #6 - Rejoicing (v.23)
- Step #7 - Revival (v.24)

IV. The Meaning of the Story

- A. The Characters - The meaning of this parable is simple because the characters are clear.
 - 1. The father is God who longs to have us come home.
 - 2. The prodigal son is the erring child of God.
 - 3. The servants are the Christians that understand and respect God's love.
 - 5. The older son represents the Christians that have hardened hearts.
- B. Sin Will Tempt Us - We can be enticed by the things of the world.
 - 1. The famine is the trials that erring Christians, or non-believers, experience.
 - 2. This will help them to see their situation, but many will not return.
- C. God Will Save Us - The prodigal son had to come to his senses before he returned.
 - 1. We can help people to come to their senses and love them when they return.
 - 2. God could punish us for disobedience but He rewards us for returning.

Conclusion: I often wonder how long the father sat there watching for his son or why he didn't follow him. He must have prayed, wished, and longed for his son to return. How many fathers would love to see their children do the right thing? God feels the same way! God can clean up any life, no matter how messed-up it may be, because he wants all men to be saved (II Peter 3:9). God will receive any sinner that repents (Luke 15:7, Acts 17:30).

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #53 = The Pitfalls of the Rich & Infamous

The Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13)

Introduction: As with many of the stories of the Bible, you must consider the context. **Luke 16** must be seen in the context of **Luke 15**. In **Luke 15**, Jesus responded to the murmuring of the Pharisees and scribes, about His fellowship with sinners, by telling three parables: the lost sheep (vs.1-7), the lost coin (vs.8-10), and the “prodigal” or lost son (vs.11-32). Now Jesus turns to His disciples to teach for a moment. He takes this opportunity to teach a parable that is considered difficult by many who read it. It is complex and often misunderstood. People have often wondered if Jesus was commending the man in the story for his dishonesty. Let’s study together. . .

Discussion:

I. Rich vs. Poor

- A. Dr. Luke frequently talks about the poor (**Luke 6:20, 7:22, 14:12-14, 18:22, 21:24-**).
- B. In this story, a rich man hears that his steward was wasting his goods.
- C. Why was he afraid? He was worrying about his money!
- D. Jesus is trying to get his disciples to trust in God, not their paycheck.
- E. Christians don’t trust in those things (**Matthew 6:19-21**).

II. The Master vs. The Steward

- A. The master is shrewd (**Matthew 3:7, John 8:44, Revelation 2:13**).
- B. The steward is rewarded (**Exodus 22:25, Deuteronomy 23:19**).
- D. The world loves to see others cheat the law or find loopholes.
- E. We live in this world, but we are not of this world (**I John 4:1-9**).

III. Deviance vs. Integrity

- A. The steward is angry and worried (**Isaiah 5:21, Matthew 10:16**).
- B. The steward determines to meet with the debtors (**Malachi 1:6, Ephesians 6:5-8**).
- C. The steward has them change their bills to reflect smaller debts (**Luke 12:14-17**).
- D. The religious leaders were supposed to be wise and full of integrity, but they failed.

IV. Earthly Rewards vs. Heavenly Rewards

- A. God intends for us to be good stewards with all that we have and to use it to His glory.
- B. We need to learn how to handle money (**Matthew 6:20-21, I Timothy 1:10**).
- C. We should seriously consider the seriousness of this story (**Luke 16:8**).
- D. Christians should be seen as more giving than and more generous and full of integrity.
- E. Unrighteous mammon and worldly riches tempt man (**I Timothy 6:17**).

Conclusion: The heart of this story is about stewardship. This is a common subject among Jesus’ teaching. The Lord holds us accountable and desires for us to be good stewards. The shrewd steward was rewarded and commended by his master for being unrighteous. When we are wise stewards we will be rewarded and commended by our Master for being righteous. Honesty and good works will always be rewarded by God. Are you worried about your riches? Are you a good Christian steward? Are you full of integrity? Are you concerned about spiritual things? Are you looking forward to heavenly rewards? May God help us to avoid the pitfalls of the rich and infamous!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #54 = Trading Places

The Rich Man & Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

Introduction: I suppose the parables of the lost sheep, coin, and boy are classified as some of the “*tender*” parables. We might classify this one under the title of “thought provoking.” This particular parable gives us a glimpse of life beyond the grave and the danger of neglecting our own soul. While some will argue that this is a figurative account, I believe it to be literal, and the places should be considered as being real. One specific thing that proves it is factual is that real names are used. Nevertheless, this parable has many interesting aspects that should be studied. Let’s consider them together

Discussion:

I. The Rich Man

- A. There was a certain “*rich man*” that lived on the earth (v.19).
- B. The scriptures clearly teach that we should care for the poor.
- C. “*The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.*” (**Proverbs 29:7**)
- D. Earlier he condemned the Pharisees for being “*lovers of money*” (**Luke 16:14-17**).
- E. Later in **Luke 18:22** Jesus will tell a rich man to give to the poor to save himself.

II. The Poor Man

- A. There was a certain “*beggar*” named Lazarus (v.19).
- B. Jesus and his disciples encouraged the poor.
- C. Earlier in **Luke 7:22** it says this was the sign of the Messiah’s coming and the kingdom.
- D. His half-brother, James taught this in **James 2:1-9**.
- E. The OT required Jews to see after those who could not help themselves (**Deuteronomy 5:7**).

III. The Rich Man’s Punishment

- A. Both of these men died and were taken to await judgment (vs.22-23).
- B. The rich man could not get to Paradise and Lazarus could not come to Hades.
- C. The rich man represents people that are unwilling to help others.
- D. Hades represents the place of torments and Paradise is a place of rest.
- E. After we die there are no second chances (**Hebrews 9:27, Matthew 25:31-46**).

IV. The Poor Man’s Reward

- A. Talk about trading places! The former beggar now has it made (**Matthew 8:11**).
- B. Lazarus represents people that have faith and patience.
- C. Paradise represents the place of rest where people will wait for Heaven.
- D. So what can we learn from this beggar, turned rich man? (**Philippians 1:21, 4:11**)
- E. Notice also that the gospel writer, Luke, presents another one of his bi-polar reversals.
- F. Lazarus put God first and had faith that God would take care of him (**John 12:8**).

Conclusion: Before we close did you sense your presence in this story. You are here. No. You are not the rich man. You’re not Lazarus either. And, of course, you’re not Father Abraham. You are one of the five brothers of the rich man. The rich man wants you to tell his family about the torments of eternal condemnation. And Lazarus wants you to tell people about the joys of eternal life. When your life ends you will end up in one of these two places: You will either be in Hades (which will lead you to Hell) or Paradise (which will lead you to Heaven). Where would you like to spend eternity? Where would you like your family to spend eternity?

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #55 = The Work of a Servant of God

The Condescending Master (Luke 17:7-10)

Introduction: It is a common thing to find the master and servant relationship described in the parables of Jesus. Matthew's gospel alone records three parables with that particular theme (The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant in **Matthew 18:21-35**, The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard in **Matthew 20:1-16**, and The Parable of the Talents in **Matthew 25:14-30**). In the previous chapter Jesus had taught the parable of the Unjust Steward and the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Jesus was dealing with the Pharisees that were "*lovers of money*" (**Luke 16:14**) and guilty of many other offenses (**Luke 17:1-2**). Just prior to the parable for consideration today, Jesus taught about forgiveness to His disciples. In order to avoid the love of money, the offenses of the Pharisees, and an erroneous view of forgiveness, the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith (**Luke 17:5**). Therefore, Jesus taught them the Parable of the Mustard Seed (**Luke 17:6**) and follows that parable with this one. Let's study together...

Discussion :

I. The Role of the Master

- A. The Master Reigns
- B. The Master Rules

Matthew 25:14-30, Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 12:1-12, Ephesians 4:11-16

- C. How do you respond to the Master?

II. The Role of the Servant

- A. The Servant Works
- B. The Servant Serves

Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:8

- C. How are you serving God?

III. The Work & Service is a Blessing

- A. We Are Blessed To Be God's Servant
- B. We Are Blessed To Be In God's House
- C. We Are Blessed To Receive Any Reward
- D. We Are Blessed To Except Our Role
- E. We Are Blessed If We Have The Right Attitude

Luke 19:10, Philippians 2:5-11, I Peter 2:21-25

Conclusion: Do you know your place in God's kingdom? Are you using your talents without grumbling or complaining? Do you know the grace of God? Are you doing good works? God loves you and will provide everything you will ever need, but don't get prideful and arrogant when you serve God. Remember that He must be the Lord and Master of your life.

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #56 = The Reward of a Nagging Woman

The Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)

Introduction: The parable of the persistent widow is found just following Jesus' teaching on the Second Coming. Christians must not give up and cannot be discouraged. We must be persistent in prayer and not lose heart. This lesson teaches us about the power of persistence and perseverance. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. What Can We Learn From The Characters?

A. The Judge

1. He was a judge in the local legal system.
2. He was unjust in his decisions and, therefore, corrupt.
3. He had no respect, fear, or awe toward God (**Proverbs 1:7**).
4. He had no respect for men (**Matthew 7:12**).

B. The Widow

1. The widow had lost her husband so she had no one to protect her (**Psalm 68:5**).
2. She is in some kind of trouble that she cannot handle on her own.
3. She seeks help because she knows that a judge can help.
4. She is strong willed and does not give up easily.
5. She was a woman of faith.
6. The judge finally grants her request.
7. She is a perfect example for Christians today.

C. The Adversary/Enemy

1. There are endless proverbs that refer to the unrighteous.
2. In many of those proverbs it says they prey on the weak.
3. God will avenge the widows, orphans, and the poor.
4. God will not stand by and watch oppression (**James 1:27**).

II. What Can We Learn From The Story?

A. The Judgment (Luke 18:7)

B. The Explanation (Luke 18:8)

C. The Power of Prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17).

III. How Should This Story Affect Us?

- A. The Judicial System - The judge was corrupt, but did the right thing.
- B. The Salvation of the Helpless - The widow was helpless and could not protect herself.
- C. Justice is Served - The adversary/enemy eventually is punished for the persecution.
- D. Security is Available - God can do all things!
- E. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Jesus Is Coming Again)

Conclusion: Do you feel like God isn't listening? He is. Do you feel like your all alone? You are not alone! Do you feel like you're annoying God with your prayers? You may be annoying, but God is still listening. And He will deliver you from temptation and trials in His own time! Even if you feel overwhelmed, you need to know that He's coming back to save you! He will reward you!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #57 = When The Right Get It Wrong

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)

Introduction: In this particular parable we learn about the importance of humility. Humility is a characteristic of Christian living but also of prayer. Specifically, we should note that forgiveness and blessings must be sought with earnestness and sincerity (**Psalm 51**). This parable also teaches us about the actions of a man while contrasted with his heart (**I Samuel 16:7**). There may only be two men in this short story, but there is a lot to learn from this wonderful parable. We must notice that Jesus is speaking to those that “*trusted in themselves*” and were “*righteous*” (v.9). Remember the Lord does not despise the righteous; instead he despises those who think they are righteous and, therefore, despise others. Let’s study together...

Discussion:

I. The Pharisee & The Publican

- A. The Prayer Lives of Two Worshippers - Two men went to the temple to pray (v.10).
- B. The Pious Pharisee - The Pharisee’s prayer is mentioned first (vs.11-12).
- C. The Penitent Publican - The tax collector’s (publican) prayer is mentioned second (v.13).
- D. The Problematic Paradox - Who is REALLY right and who is REALLY wrong?

II. The Personal Application

- A. The Danger of Religious Zeal - First of all, we must remember to whom Jesus was talking.
 - 1. He was speaking to the religious leaders of His day.
 - 2. They were extremely self-righteous and they trusted in themselves.
 - 3. They needed to humble themselves before God (**James 4:10, I Peter 5:5-6**).
 - 4. Jesus chose to tell them a story to help them see the error of their ways.
 - 5. We cannot get so caught up in what we are doing that we forget why we are doing it!
- B. The Deception of Good Works - Consider the Pharisee
 - 1. The Pharisee in this story was not an immoral or ungodly man.
 - 2. His sin was his arrogance, hypocrisy and doing all the right things for the wrong reasons!
 - 3. He only saw good things in his life (**Matthew 7:21-23**).
 - 4. He made a comparison with himself to the publican, which is a huge mistake.
 - 5. Remember that we are “*not saved by works, lest any man should boast*” (**Ephesians 2:9**).
- C. The Depth of Grace - Consider the tax collector (publican)
 - 1. The Romans were in charge of this region.
 - 2. Tax collectors of Jewish origin were thought of as traitors of their religious faith and God.
 - 3. The tax collector (publican) was aware of the failures in his life.
 - 4. He acknowledges to God and to those around him that he was a sinner and needed God’s grace (**Ephesians 2:5-8, John 3:16**).
- D. The Dilemma of Prayer - There are some important lessons to learn from these prayers.
 - 1. We cannot bully God into granting us forgiveness.
 - 2. We cannot persuade God that we are good enough for Him.
 - 3. We cannot make ourselves look better than others.
 - 4. We cannot receive forgiveness if we have a rebellious spirit.
 - 5. We just need to pray for one another and ourselves (**James 5:16, I Thessalonians 5:17**).

Conclusion: What can we learn from the prayer life of the Pharisee and publican? Jesus says that the humbled will be exalted. He also says that those that try to exalt themselves will be humbled. It seems that when we try to lift ourselves up we can get into trouble. However, when we lift others up we are lifted up as well. How can we lift others up? What will we gain from it? If getting it right means you’re doing it with the wrong attitude, what are you really accomplishing? Let’s do our best and let God do the rest!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #58 = Kingdom Business

The Minas (Luke 19:11-27)

Introduction: This parable, also called the Parable of the Pounds (or coins), is considered to be one of the last of Jesus. It is similar to the Parable of the Talents (**Matthew 25:14-30**). The parable teaches the same lesson, but in a different light. Keep in mind that this parable is told immediately following the story of Zacchaeus. They could not understand how salvation could come to the household of Zacchaeus. Jesus was preparing them for the establishment of His kingdom/church (**Matthew 16:17-19**), established on Pentecost (**Acts 2**), that would be open to all nations. What did He say? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The King (vs.1-13)

- A. The nobleman had to go away to become king.
- B. The nobleman had every right to pursue a kingdom without a king.
- C. The Lord would have to go away to receive His kingdom (**John 14:1-4**).
- D. After He ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God, He received His kingdom (**Daniel 7:13-14, Acts 2:30-36**).
- E. Unfortunately, many will reject the Lord as king.

II. The Faithful Servants (vs.14-19, 26)

- A. The nobleman calls ten servants to receive a mina (three month's wages).
- B. These servants represent the people (the disciples) who accept the Lord as their king.
- C. Jesus reminds His disciples that they were to serve and follow His will, even after He was gone (**Matthew 24:44, Matthew 25:14-30, John 14:1-4, Acts 1:6-7**).
- D. Clearly, there is work that needs to be done before He returns!
- E. Only the faithful workers will be rewarded (**Matthew 25:14-30**).

III. The Unfaithful Servants (vs.14-15, 20-25, 27)

- A. Many of the servants did not want the nobleman to reign as king. They rejected their own king!
- B. The servant with one mina was to be punished, and the servants begin to argue.
- C. God is fair (**Isaiah 11:4**), God is just (**Deuteronomy 32:4**), God is the king of Kings and lord of Lords (**Revelation 19:16**), but people will still disagree with His judgments.
- D. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God was at hand (**Matthew 16:28, Luke 17:20-21**).
- E. The King will punish the unfaithful at His second coming (**II Thessalonians 1:7-9**).

IV. The Kingdom

- A. We cannot neglect to see that each servant was given a special task.
- B. We are part of the body, members of the church, subjects of the kingdom, servants of the King.
- C. The Lord requires His servants to do His business until He comes again (**Luke 2:49, John 19:14**).
- D. Jesus even told His disciples in **Matthew 10:16-42** that they needed to be ready for persecution.
- E. We must be the salt of the earth (**Matthew 5:13**), the light of the world (**Matthew 5:14**) and a shining city on a hill (**Matthew 5:14-16**).
- E. We need to live everyday as if the Lord was returning for His kingdom!

Conclusion: We are kingdom people and kingdom builders. We need to start doing kingdom business. It's time to become what we've always talked about... being kingdom people. It's time to do everything we've talked about doing... God's work! Are you ready to receive your reward? Are you prepared for Him to return? Are you using your talents to His glory? It's time to do our "Father's business!"

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #59 = The Great I AM

The “I AM” Statements (John 6:35, 8:12, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1)

Introduction: The beloved apostle John records seven unmistakable comments by Jesus. Now, two thousand years later, these statements remain positive, powerful, and provocative. They make us stop and take notice of what Jesus really came to do on earth: connect with humanity to save us from our sins. As you read through the gospel of John, we encounter different conversations in which Jesus makes very specific statements about Himself. Jesus does not always explain these things, just states it as a fact. What did He say? Why did He say it? Let’s study together...

Discussion:

I. “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35, 48).

- * This statement came after the feeding of the 5000.

- * This event reminds us of the miraculous manna in the desert (Exodus 16:13-18).

II. “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12, 9:5).

- * This statement came after the beginning of the Festival of lights.

- * This was meant to remind people about Jesus’s creative work (Genesis 1, John 1).

III. “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9).

- * This is a reference to the kingdom of God and the work of Christ in it (Psalm 23: 2).

- * Salvation is only found in and through Christ Jesus (John 3:3, 14:6, Psalm 23:6).

IV. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

- * The Lord is our shepherd (Psalm 23).

- * Remember all the previous parables about sheep: The Lost Sheep (Matthew 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-7), The Sheep & Goats (Matthew 25:31-46), etc.

V. “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live” (John 11:25).

- * Remember Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus (John 3).

- * Jesus will prove this with the resurrection of Lazarus in this chapter.

VI. “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

- * Salvation cannot be found outside of Christ (Acts 4:12).

- * Jesus offers us direction, substance, and eternal life beyond this world.

VII. “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser” (John 15:1).

- * Our goal should be to bear good fruit for the kingdom (Galatians 5:22-23).

- * If we bear fruit we will escape the fire (I Corinthians 3:12-15, 4:5).

Conclusion: There is much to be learned from these “I AM” statements from Jesus. However, there is another important point to be made. There is an obvious connection to the statement made to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). Jesus clearly reveals that before Abraham... He is/was/and continues to be... the GREAT I AM (John 8:58, 18:6). What a great declaration! Jesus is God!

Jesus, the Master Teacher:

Lesson #60 = Where Is The Light?

The Illustrations to the 7 Churches of Asia (Revelation 2-3)

Introduction: In the book of Revelation we see Jesus walking around the seven lampstands. It is clear that these lampstands represent seven churches of Asia Minor. He speaks to them through letters. In each of those letters He says, “I know your works” (**Revelation 2:1, 2:8, 2:12, 2:18, 3:1, 3:7, 3:14**) then he proceeds to commend, criticize, offer commands, and reveal their compensation. Let’s study together.....

Discussion:

I. What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Ephesus?

Commendation: They rejected evil, they had perseverance and patience.

Criticism: They no longer loved Christ, they were no longer fervent.

Command: Repent, do the first works, He was coming quickly to remove their lamp.

Compensation: The tree of life.

II. What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Smyrna?

Commendation: They were gracefully bearing the suffering of persecution.

Criticism: None. They may have been fearful and discouraged by poverty.

Command: Be faithful until death.

Compensation: Receive a crown of life.

III. What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Pergamum?

Commendation: Steadfast and held the faith.

Criticism: They tolerated immorality, idolatry, and heresy among the membership.

Command: Repent.

Compensation: They would receive hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name.

IV. What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Thyatira?

Commendation: They had love, service, faith, and great patience.

Criticism: They tolerated cults, idolatry, and sexual immorality.

Command: Judgment was coming, keep the faith.

Compensation: They would rule over nations and receive the Morning Star.

V. What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Sardis?

Commendation: Some kept the faith.

Criticism: They were a dead church.

Command: Repent and strengthen what remains.

Compensation: The faithful would be honored and clothed in white.

VI. What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Philadelphia?

Commendation: They persevered in the faith.

Criticism: None.

Command: Keep the faith.

Compensation: They would have a place in God’s presence, they would have a new name, and see the New Jerusalem.

VII. What Did Jesus Say to the Church at Laodicea?

Commendation: None.

Criticism: They were not committed, lukewarm, and seemed to be indifferent.

Command: Be zealous and repent.

Compensation: They would share the throne of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: These are not necessarily parables, but they are great illustrations meant for the kingdom. Clearly Jesus intends for His kingdom (the light of the world) to illuminate their communities. We must take the things that we can learn and use that knowledge to change the world. Will you follow the teachings of the Master Teacher? Will you shine the light of Jesus or allow your lamp to be snuffed out? May God continue to bless His kingdom!