

Luke 17-18 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

VIII. The Judean Ministry 9:51-24:53

J. The Teaching of Jesus 12:1-19:27

22. Dealing with offenses 17:1-4

Covered these vs. in depth on Sunday.

23. The attitude of faithful servants 17:5-10

⁵And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.”

There’s some question as to whether we’re to understand this as a *reaction* to vs. 1-4, or if this was spoken at a *different time*.

Keep in mind that chs. 12-19 are Luke’s *synopsis* of Jesus’ teaching all over Judea over a period of several weeks.

He doesn’t divide his narrative into neat little sections so we can know with certainty what goes with what.

There are *some* commentators who see what the apostles say here as a *reaction* to Jesus’ instructions on forgiveness in v. 4 – that we’re to forgive someone of the same sin, 7 times in a single day if 7 times they come to us in sincere apology & repentance.

But in light of how Jesus responds to their request for more faith, I think it’s better to understand this as a separate incident; one *not* connected to vs. 1-4.

This request on the part of the apostles came about as a result of watching Jesus, and realizing they were in training to follow His example.

He’d been telling them the time was swiftly approaching when they would carry on His mission & they were understandably spooked.

So they asked for the one thing they thought they needed more of – Faith.

Jesus answered their request by telling them they didn’t need *MORE* faith; they needed to *USE* the faith they already had.

⁶So the Lord said, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

A mustard seed was a *symbol of smallness* in their idioms of speech.

Just as we use the phrase “a speck of dust” to refer to something tiny, they used the mustard seed.

Jesus is saying that it’s not the *amount of faith* that’s important, but the *application* of faith that makes the difference.

The disciples already had all the faith they needed.

Their attachment to Jesus as the Messiah was their tap into real faith.

But they weren’t *following through* on that faith in the way they ought to.

Jesus tells them faith has to be put to work – and the primary way one *applies* faith is in our *speech*.

Look at it; He says –

“If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

Now, don’t worry; I’m not going to go off into some metaphysical, occult nonsense about naming & claiming your own reality.

But at the same time, we need to realize that one of the reasons the cults & false teachers are able to seduce so many is because there’s a kernel of truth in some of what they say.

The health & wealth prosperity teachers have an aberrant view of faith & God.

And they distort what Jesus says here into a self-serving means of carnal satisfaction.

But we must be careful we don’t let our rejection of their heresy rob us of a crucial truth.

And that truth is this – Faith is put to work in our lives, first and foremost by our speech.

Let me prove it. Turn to Romans 10

⁵For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.”

There are 2 ways to be righteous – by keeping the law, and by faith in Jesus Christ.

Keeping the law produces *personal* righteousness.

Faith in Jesus gains us His righteousness.

Now – does anyone keep the law perfectly?

No – so an attempt a personal righteousness is a losing proposition.

Jesus is the only One who kept the Law perfectly,
And faith in Him results in God crediting us with THAT,
with HIS righteousness.

In v. 5 here, Paul refers to the unattainable righteousness that comes through the law.

In v. 6 he speaks of the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ.

⁶But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down from above) ⁷or, “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

This is a little confusing but what Paul means is that the faith that brings the righteousness of Christ is not a faith in *our efforts* – as though Jesus needed our help to complete His mission of salvation.

He secured our salvation wholly & completely and we did **NOTHING** to earn it.

⁸But what does it [true faith] say?

Now – note carefully how Paul answers this question about the nature of genuine faith.

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

True faith isn't something that resides only in the heart.

True faith, the faith that saves, is expressed in our speech, our words.

It becomes our confession – by which Paul means the general tenor & tone of *all our conversation*.

If you want to know what lies in a person's heart, then listen to what he/she says.

Not just the occasional word now & then – but the overall direction & subject of their speech.

Anyone can mouth the words, “Jesus is Lord”; even the rankest pagan – but only the true believer’s speech will *consistently* hold forth that confession, day after day, week by week, month after month.

Jesus said that it was out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks – and that is what Paul is saying here. [Luke 6:45]
True faith manifests itself in our speech, in our confession.

Now, here’s the deal – What Jesus is saying here in v. 6 is this –
We’ve all been given a *measure of faith* – without it we could not be saved.

The Spirit planted the seed of God’s word in our hearts – as it says in Romans 10:17 –

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

That seed has taken root & produced salvation in us.

We’ve already got a mustard seed’s worth of faith – the next step is to USE it, by speaking forth those things the Spirit directs us to.

If the Spirit tells us a certain tree stands in the God’s way, as His agents on Earth, we’re to speak the word of spiritual authority, & the tree will move.

Jesus purposefully uses *this illustration* so that His followers will realize the application of their faith is not just to be used in spiritual & abstract ways, but in regard to things of daily & practical need.

When He speaks of a mulberry tree, He’s not referring to the well-rooted antagonism of the Sadducees, the opposition of the Pharisees, or some other esoteric & symbolic “tree.”

He means a *literal* mulberry bush.

Picture this – you’re walking around the park one fine Summer evening, just communing with the Lord, enjoying sweet fellowship with Him, when you come to a thick post in the middle of the sidewalk.

It’s there for no real reason you can see, and immediately *you just know* it ought not be there.

A deep-seated & strong sense of the wrongness of that post rise in your spirit; it presents a danger and stands in the way of God’s plan somehow.

So, though you feel a bit strange doing it, you stand there in front of the post, you point at it and say, “Post, you do not belong there. In the name of the Lord Jesus I command you to come out of there and be cast into the junkyard.”

Now – nothing happens. The post doesn’t rip out of the sidewalk and go hovering off into the sunset.

But 2 days later you notice a City Parks crew is at work & you go over to find them removing the post.

Well, now – you find yourself moved toward a big, fat stack of pride.

You feel like telling that crew 2 days ago you *ordered* that post removed.

What a great man/woman of faith you are!!! Wow, aren’t *you* special?

Jesus deals with that temptation next -

⁷And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’? ⁸But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

When a servant comes in from a long day of working in the fields & flocks, the Master doesn’t pamper him or gush out high praise.

He doesn’t sit the servant down and serve him for all his faithful service rendered that day.

No – when the servant arrives at the house, he’s got more chores to do; make supper and clean up.

Only then, when all his tasks are complete does he rest.

A servant’s duty is to serve. He isn’t commended for doing what he’s supposed to do.

Jesus applies the lesson as it relates to **FAITH** . . .

¹⁰So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”

Great & miraculous works of faith aren’t cause to get all proud & boastful!

Anything we might do in faith, no matter how miraculous it may

be, is only something the Spirit prompted us to do in the first place!

So no one can go around with his or her chest puffed out in arrogance for their great faith.

On the contrary, to **NOT** have done it would have been the sin of disobedience.

We are all servants of God – every one of us.

And as such, He's given us all we need to serve Him here on this Earth.

The main tool is faith.

As servants, we ought to be busily at work expanding the boundaries of His kingdom.

And when a great victory is won, there's no room or place for boasting.

There's no sense in making celebrities out of those who perform wonders.

When a miracle occurs, the praise ought to go to God alone, never to some man or woman.

They are but a servant. The power is all of God.

In light of what Jesus says here, it's surprising we've made stars out of certain Christian celebrities.

Another thing we can draw from this is a flat refutation of the faith teacher's misuse of the Word of Faith.

They say the faith is a cosmic force and that words are the containers of faith.

By speaking the right words, you can create your own reality and have whatever you want.

God becomes a genie who exists to do your bidding as you speak the Word of Faith.

But in what Jesus says here, the shoe is on the other foot – we are the servants who live to do God's bidding.

Faith is not the means for getting our will done in heaven – it's a tool for getting God's will done on Earth.

24. A lesson on gratitude 17:11-19

¹¹Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

For some reason, Jesus took a quick trip back to Galilee, & as He was on His way back to Jerusalem, He passed through *Samaria*; a

region of half-Jews who were at odds with the Jews of the North & South.

12Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.

Leprosy was a dangerous & dreaded disease in the ancient world.

In Israel as in most ancient countries, lepers were isolated from everyone else for fear of contagion.

They tended to live together in little communes on the outskirts of larger towns where relatives & friends would bring them food & supplies.

These lepers knew they couldn't approach Jesus but His reputation as a healer preceded Him & they cried out.

13And they lifted up *their* voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14So when He saw *them*, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

We read that when Jesus cleansed other lepers, He *touch*ed them.

Not so here – He just spoke to them & told the 10 to go to the priests.

The priests were the one's who'd been tasked with the duty of diagnosing leprosy, and to declare its healing in the rare case that it occurred.

These lepers had already been to a priest – the last time they saw a priest was when they heard the awful words – "It's leprosy!"

When Jesus told them to go back to the priest, it could mean only one thing – they were cured.

So they went, and as they did, they were healed.

That Jesus sent them to the priests means these lepers were *Jews*.

Though this was Samaria, these Jewish men, desperate as they were for companionship, found others suffering from the same malady living in this commune and settled among them.

15And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

Only one of the 10 lepers turned around and came back to give thanks to Jesus for the healing.

And he, apparently alone of the 10, was a Samaritan.

17 So Jesus answered and said, **“Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18** Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?”

Jesus *missed* the 9 who didn't show gratitude.

We would think that those who receive wonderful answers to their prayers would give abundant thanks to God, but sadly, that is not the case.

Many pray but do not praise, & Jesus misses it!

19 And He said to him, **“Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”**

I'd like to combine what we learn here with the lesson Jesus taught on the word of faith in v. 6.

It's important that we *verbalize* our praise & gratitude to God.

Rather than grumbling about what's wrong, express thanks for what's right.

The well-known Bible commentator Matthew Henry had his wallet stolen.

He was tempted to complain bitterly, but decided instead to look for reasons to praise God in the midst of the situation.

That night he sat down and wrote in his diary the things he was thankful for:

- 1st - That he'd never been robbed before.
- 2nd - That though the thief took his wallet, he didn't take his life.
- 3rd - Even though he took it all, it wasn't very much.
- Finally, because he was the one *robbed* & not the one *robbing*.

25. Lessons on the Kingdom 17:20-37

a. vs. 20-21 • The “internal” Kingdom

20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, **“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21** nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ **For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”**

Everyone knew that the Messiah would bring the Kingdom of God.

And the Pharisees understood clear enough that Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah.

So they put the question to Him – “When’s the Kingdom going to arrive?”

Jesus’ answer was straightforward though they didn’t understand Him – The Kingdom had already come! It came with Him! For He was the King of the Kingdom.

The Pharisees idea of the Kingdom was a geo-political entity that would be identified by military, political, & economic might.

In their minds, the Kingdom would be about armies & bureaucracy.

It’s trapping were the marks of Earthly power and prestige, and they fancied themselves its chief citizens, the first ones in line to receive the plumest appointments.

Jesus tells them they’ve got it all wrong.

The Kingdom isn’t about external rule enforced by military might.

The Kingdom of God is internal, a thing of the heart.

The dominion of God is where ever He rules over the affections & desires of the inner person.

That was the word Jesus spoke to His opponents, the Pharisees.

He has a very different revelation about the Kingdom for His followers.

b. vs. 22-37 • When the Kingdom comes

²²Then He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.

The time will come when His people will crave for the consummation, when the Kingdom will finally come & Jesus will rule on Earth.

Life will be harsh & hard as they seek to follow Him in the midst of a world in rebellion against God.

And though they will yearn for the Kingdom, it will not arrive,
YET.

²³And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after them or follow them.

The desire for the Lord’s return will be so great it will provide a platform for false teachers & con-men.

They will seek to capitalize on that desire by claiming to have special revelation about the end-times.

When we read this we think of such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses who've made several claims as to the day of Christ's return.

Even saying "Look, He's here – in the Spirit in our organization." There was Whisenant's booklet, *88 Reasons Why Jesus Is Returning In 1988*.

The list is long of those over the generations who've done the very thing Jesus warns against here – and ten's of thousands of gullible people have run after them.

²⁴For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.

When Jesus comes again, it will be like the lightening that shatters the sky – no one will need to tell anyone else – for every eye will see Him.

His coming for His own will not be secret or unknown to them.

²⁵But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

Before the Lord can come as Conquering King, He must first fulfill His role as Suffering Servant, as foretold by the prophets.

²⁶And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

Jesus must be speaking here of His return for His people in the Rapture.

I say that because the Book of Revelation & other passages tells us that when Jesus comes again to rule on Earth as King, the world will be at war, Armageddon, the consummate battle of all history

It will be a time of global chaos with the life of every man, woman, & child in imminent danger of being snuffed out.

Already, there will have been a quarter of the world's population wiped out, then later, another third killed in the judgments God unleashes.

Yet, Jesus speaks here of His coming at a time when it's business as usual.

Just as it was when Noah entered the ark and the flood came.

Jesus adds to this setting -

²⁸Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;

²⁹but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them all*.

³⁰Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Revealed to His people who've been waiting for Him & yearning for His return.

Again – it's a scene of normal life, business as usual, when all of a sudden the hammer falls.

But as it was with both Noah & Lot, the godly were removed before the judgment descended.

³¹“In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. ³²Remember Lot's wife. ³³Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will

preserve it. ³⁴I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left.

³⁵Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. ³⁶Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.”

In these vs., Jesus speaks of 2 groups of people; those taken up in the Rapture, and those who are left behind, and come to realize too late that they've played the fool and missed the Blessed Hope.

It's to that group Jesus speaks first in vs. 31-33.

He tells them that when the Rapture occurs, then judgment will follow swiftly, so swiftly they won't have time to pack up the things that have held their heart captive to the world.

They will need to flee from the place of judgment as fast as their legs can carry them.

In Matthew 24 we discover Jesus was referring specifically to Israel & Jerusalem.

He warns the Jews to get out and flee to a place of refuge in the eastern wilderness where they will be protected from the horrors of the last days.

Those who dawdle, trying to hang on to the World will end up as Lot's wife – falling under the same judgment as the World. Then in vs. 34-36, Jesus speaks of those who will be taken up in the Rapture.

It will be instantaneous.

Notice that Jesus presents the Rapture occurring when some are asleep, some are working in the morning while others are at work in the afternoon.

It's a picture of a global event that occurs at a moment, with different time zones covering 24 hours.

37 And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

Jesus' response here is difficult to sort out because it doesn't seem to fit their question.

Actually, this was a common idiom meaning a thing would happen

when the necessary conditions were met. ^[1]

The disciples asked where all these events He'd been talking about would take place.

Jesus said that it would all come to pass at the time and place ordained of God.

Judgment would fall when the world was ripe for it.

Remember, He began by telling them in v. 22 that they would yearn for the Kingdom to come.

Here He tells them it *won't come* till precisely the right time.

As much as they wanted to see Him reigning on Earth, they must realize that when the Kingdom does come, it will invade the rebellious kingdoms of man and the dominion of the devil.

They will *not welcome* the Kingdom of God – they will do their best to fight it.

It will be with much travail & trouble that the Kingdom will finally come.

So, let me say it again – To the disciples' question Jesus said, when all of the necessary conditions are met – then the Kingdom will

come.

The Bible describes certain political, economic, spiritual, social, and military characteristics regarding what the world will be like just prior to Christ's return.

Those conditions are well in place today. The stage is set.

Among the many passage which describe these things is 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

But know this, that in the last days perilous [dangerous] times will come: for men will be . . .

- lovers of themselves, [modern psychology → self-esteem]
 - lovers of money, [capitalism run amuck]
 - boasters, [celebrity]
 - proud, [humility is despised]
 - blasphemers, [Modernity & it's rejection of the transcendent]
 - disobedient to parents, [marriage & family redefined]
 - unthankful, [sense of endowment]
 - unholy, [secularism]
 - unloving, [self]
 - unforgiving, [self & my rights!]
 - slanderers, [no honor, the delight in defaming, scoffing, mocking]
 - without self-control, [even approved by the law]
 - brutal, [gangs, might makes right]
 - despisers of good, [mockers, scoffers; art, etc.]
 - traitors, [loyalty not a virtue; marriage, parenting]
 - headstrong, [foolishly stubborn, not parented rightly]
 - haughty, [do your own thing, no one can judge you]
 - lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
 - having a form of godliness but denying its power.
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26. God will avenge His people 18:1-8

¹Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

Luke tells us the lesson of this parable – it was to teach perseverance in prayer.

²saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. ³Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ ⁴And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, ⁵yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’”
⁶Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

This was one of several parables Jesus told that reasons from the lesser to the greater.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that He's saying God is at all *like* this wicked judge.

Not at all! Rather, the point is this – if this wicked man would answer this poor, pitiful, powerless woman simply to be rid of her annoyance,

HOW MUCH MORE will our good & kind heavenly Father come to the aid of His own kids?

Specifically, God will not overlook their cries to Him about the injustices they've patiently endured for His name's sake.

He will vindicate them & return the on the heads of their persecutors the judgment due them.

In Revelation 6, we read about the martyrs who cry out to God for vengeance on the ungodly.

They're told to wait just a little while longer until their numbers is filled up – then judgment will fall.

It's human nature to desire revenge.

But God calls his people to relinquish revenge to Him.

The reason why is because He sees things we do not and has a far better plan than our revenge would plot.

Over the years, I've learned that the sweetest revenge of all, is not to see someone writhing in agony but to see them repent and come to faith in Jesus.

They used to mock Jesus freaks, then they become one! Ah, such *sweet revenge*.

But what does Jesus mean by the last part of v. 8 –

Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?

This is a challenge to the disciples, not just those first disciples, but of every era.

The period between His first & second coming would be long!

Would they persevere? Would they be like the widow of this parable, holding on even in the face of apparent disinterest on God's part?

Would generations of persecution thin the ranks of the faithful till none were left?

Or would they hold on, despite the evidence to the contrary?

Would faith look above & beyond their circumstances to the God

Who *IS* there, and Who *WILL* come through?

Well, here we are! There's faith in this room, and if He were to come tonight – He'd find the faith He was looking for right here.

27. The mark of genuine righteousness 18:9-14

⁹Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ ¹³And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

This is my text for Sunday.

28. Another Kingdom lesson 18:15-17

¹⁵Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw *it*, they rebuked

them. ¹⁶But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁷Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”

Children were the duty of women, men did not trouble themselves with them.

The disciples thought Jesus was far too important to deal with a pack of kids, so they tried to shoo them away.

Jesus rebuked them, and called the children close.

Then He gave an important revelation – the Kingdom of God they were so excited about & had such lofty ideas regarding – well, it’s most prime candidates weren’t the sophisticated, powerful wealthy, & influential of the world.

The kingdom was comprised of those who were child-like, Simple people who simply believe with an uncomplicated faith in God; a confident solid trust in Him.

29. The peril of possessions 18:18-30

¹⁸Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁹So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

Jesus challenged this man by asking if his greeting was *sincere* or just meant as flattery.

When he called Jesus “good” was he confessing an insight into Jesus’ true identity as God, or was he merely being trying to endear himself?

Then Jesus answered the man’s question about how to gain eternal life.

²⁰You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’”

Jesus answered by telling the guy he had to obey the law.

²¹And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.”

“Done! I’ve kept the law from my earliest days till now.”

²²So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You

still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

Jesus wasn't adding to the law. He was pointing out this man hadn't even kept *the very first command*.

Far from obeying the law as he thought, he'd utterly *failed* at keeping it.

This man made the mistake *most* of the people of that day were making – that the law governed only *outward* behavior.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus had made it clear that the law also covered the inner issues of the heart.

It isn't enough to not commit the *act* of murder; a harbored hatred that wishes someone ill is a violation of the command.

It isn't enough to not commit adultery; a nurtured lust & fantasy breaks the command too.

The first command is to have no other gods but this man had made a god of his wealth & possessions.

Jesus knew it and put His finger on the man's error.

²³But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

The other gospels tell us the man turned away.

He'd rather keep his earthly possessions than have eternal life.

²⁴And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?” ²⁷But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

The reason what Jesus said was so troubling to the disciples was because they'd been taught & had come to believe that wealth was a sign of God's favor.

In their thinking, the wealthy *already enjoyed* the promise of eternal life.

When this rich man approached Jesus, he came with a mindset that was pretty sure he was *already in*, that eternal life was something he already had.

He thought Jesus was going to assure what he already assumed.

He thought his wealth was the *evidence* of God's reward for his keeping the commandments.

So when Jesus called him out by exposing him as *covetous*, he was devastated.

Jesus then used his grief to correct the disciples' assumptions about who's saved.

Wealth & abundant possessions are no evidence of eternal life.

In fact, wealth may very well stand in the way of eternal life if it's more important than God.

This was such a revolutionary concept, the disciples staggered at it.

They asked, if the rich aren't assured of heaven, then who could be?

Jesus answered by saying that salvation doesn't come about as the result of man's ability or effort – it's solely the work of God.

28 Then Peter said, "See, we have left all and followed You."

Good old Pete – he was quick to jump on the idea of selling out all to follow Jesus.

29 So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, **30** who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Whatever we give up to follow Jesus, He will restore many times over.

God will be a debtor to no one.

The rewards that we will enjoy as Christians who've entered the family of God are tremendous.

And when this life is over, a glorious eternity in heaven awaits.

30. A 3rd prediction of the trouble to come 18:31-34

31 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. **32** For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. **33** They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." **34** But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the

things which were spoken.

Jesus knew full well what awaited Him in Jerusalem not many days hence.

All these things had been foretold in the OT.

And though He told them it was coming, they spiritualized it so that when it came, they didn't recognize it for what it was.

The prophets had said all this would happen – and it did –

LITERALLY!

Jesus tells them it's coming – and it did – **LITERALLY.**

Their error was to interpret it spiritually, symbolically, less than literally.

This ought to be an important lesson for us as we study prophecy as it relates to the Last Days.

Should we understand prophecy literally or spiritually?

Is the Antichrist a person or a philosophy, a mere symbol of evil?

Is the mark of the beast a literal mark on the hand & forehead or a spiritual abstraction for Sunday worship?

It's amazing the things people come up with when they stop taking the Bible literally.

I'm stunned the way people like Hank Hannegraaf & R.C. Sproul spiritualize prophecy to make it fit their Preterism.

31. Healing a blind man 18:35-43

³⁵Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. ³⁶And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. ³⁷So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. ³⁸And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ³⁹Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

The crowd tried to hush him because he was calling Jesus the Messiah.

The title "Son of David" was a messianic label.

This blind man was expressing his faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

And the crowd tried to hush him because at this point, which is just a couple weeks before the end, official word had gone out

from the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem that Jesus was on the official hit list.

Calling Jesus “Messiah” would result in this man’s ouster from the synagogue and put him totally outside Jewish social life. But the guy was more concerned to regain his sight than worried about other things.

40 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, **41** saying, “What do you want Me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, that I may receive my sight.”

I find this curious. It was obvious the man was blind. Why did Jesus ask him what he wanted?

He did so to teach a very important lesson – that we must be specific when we pray.

Up to this point the man had merely cried out to Jesus for attention – he;’d not made his request clear.

Jesus knew what the man wanted & needed – but he needed to *speak* it.

His faith needed to be *vocalized* in his request for the divine touch.

42 Then Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” **43** And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God.

When you pray, bring as much specificity to your prayer as you can.

Broad, all-encompassing prayers sound generous, but they can often be safe ways for us to avoid disappointment, if we’re not really sure God is going to answer.

“God bless all the missionaries.”

If He does or doesn’t, how are you going to know.

Merely show-faith often hides behind such expansive prayers. But if you pray for a specific missionary, regarding a specific request, that’s riskier.

Because now you’re going to know if God does or doesn’t answer your prayer.

Be specific when you pray – not dictating to God what to do, but asking Him to give you wisdom to know how to pray, then pray it, specifically.

[\[1\]](#) Guzik, David *Commentary on Luke*