

Getting the Gold out of the Word

TEACHER MANUAL

STUDIES 1 - 11

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

GETTING THE GOLD OUT OF THE WORD

Studies 1 - 11

Teacher Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS		
Study	Title	Pages
1	Getting The Gold Out Of The Word	1
2	Four Great Christian Privileges	10
3	Appointed And Anointed For Service	17
4	Soldiers of Christ, Arise!	25
5	How To Face A Crisis	35
6	Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus	43
7	Salvation - Full, Free And Forever!	50
8	The Most Worthwhile Work In The World	57
9	What Is The Lord Jesus To You?	63
10	The Twenty-third Psalm	69
11	The Philippian Jailor	79

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

GETTING THE GOLD OUT OF THE WORD

STUDY 1

Scripture Portion: Psalm 119:162

Psalm 119:162 - *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*

What a great time the psalmist was having as he read and meditated on God's Word. He was just thrilled with it, as so many of God's people have been through the years.

This should be the experience of every Christian. Every true believer should be able to say,

Psalm 119:162 - *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*

It is a wonderful thing that God, in His love for us and in His desire for our salvation, has given us not only His Son, the Word Incarnate, but He has also given us the Bible, His written Word. In it we have all that we need to know in order to make us wise unto salvation -

2 Timothy 3:15 - *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

2 Timothy 3:17 - *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

Here, in this longest of the psalms, David, the writer, mentions God's Word in practically every one of the 176 verses.

He does this, however, under one or another of ten different synonyms for the Word of God, such as: law, way, testimonies, commandments, precepts, word, judgments, righteousness, statutes and truth.

Little wonder that one writer has described this psalm as a 'masterpiece' and a 'compendium of heavenly wisdom!'

It is the exultant cry of king David, the poet, in **verse 162**, that we are to think about this. He was so thrilled as he read the scriptures that he could not restrain his sense of joy and excitement, and he cried out -

Psalm 119:162 - *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*

He realized what a treasure house of good things God's Word is, so he dug deeply, and

went on digging. The discovery of treasure after treasure in its pages filled him with joy.

So should it be with us if we love the Lord, if we are as earnest and as dedicated in our reading and studying of the Bible as he was.

Before we examine David's treasure, let us look at his treasure house.

WHAT THE BIBLE IS.

David tells us that the Bible is God's Word -

Psalm 119:162 - *I rejoice at thy word,.....*

In fact, he uses this reference to the scriptures eight times in this one section of eight verses.

Psalm 119:161-168 - *Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.*

162 I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

163 I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.

164 Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.

165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

166 LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.

167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.

168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.

Our Bible is much larger than David's was, of course, for since his time the canon of scripture has been completed so that now the Bible consists of sixty-six books.

But the wonder of this sacred volume is seen at once when we remember that its sixty-six books were written by some forty different writers, all of whom came from different walks of life.

They were all quite different with regard to their background, experience and ability. Their writings are spread over a period of 1600 years! There was, therefore, no opportunity for collusion or comparison of notes before they each wrote their book or books.

They could not meet together and say, "Do you think we ought to write this down.....? If so, I will write the same thing."

It would have been an impossibility for any thing like that to have taken place because the distance of time was too great in relation to the life span of man.

What happens when we place all sixty-six books of the Bible into one volume?

We find there is a perfect unity about all the writings of these forty different writers. This in itself is a miracle. It reveals the fact that they were the writers only, the instruments in God's hands.

God is the Author of the Book. Whereas the forty men did the writing, God superintended all that they wrote. Thus, we read in -

2 Timothy 3:16 - *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

That is, all scripture is God-breathed. We also read of the way in which all this happened, in -

2 Peter 1:21 - *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

This is why the Bible is called God's Word.

As God gave it to us, it is entirely free from error. As such, it is to be relied upon and is altogether trustworthy.

We should mention that today there are very many translations and paraphrases of the original scriptures, some of which vary a great deal. But, the scriptures, as originally given, are inspired throughout and are infallible.

Thank God for this! We can fully trust the Bible, for it is God's Word to us.

In these days, more and more people are trying to tell us that the Bible is not trustworthy, that it is only the product of man's efforts and, therefore, it is full of errors.

This is not true!

The Bible is utterly reliable in its histories, poetical books, prophecies, and in the teaching epistles of the New Testament.

2. WHAT THE BIBLE CONTAINS.

Let us make it clear again that the Bible contains everything that we need for our salvation and sanctification, for living the Christian life and for serving God effectively.

2 Timothy 3:15-16 - *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

We see here, not only that it is by the Word of God that we are made 'wise unto salvation,' but it is also profitable for us.

Do you wonder that David tells us that God's Word contains "great spoil, great treasure, great riches?"

As Edwin Hodder puts it in one of his hymns -

Thy Word is like a deep, deep mine,
And jewels rich and rare
Are hidden in its mighty depths
For every searcher there.

What are the jewels rich and rare which are contained in the Bible?

I suggest that there are five in particular which ought to be mentioned.

The Bible has power to make us humble.

Psalm 119:161-*my heart standeth in awe of thy word.*

God's Word brings us down until we stand in awe and reverence before Him.

Moses had this experience of a great humbling at Horeb.

Exodus 3:2-6 - *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*

3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

God says in -

Isaiah 66:2 - *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

The Bible is the only book which has the power to make us truly humble before the Lord.

The Bible has power to make us honest.

Psalm 119:163 - *I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.*

What a glorious thing it is to have the desire implanted into our hearts to be transparently honest, to obey the precept in -

Psalm 34:13-14 - *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.
14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

and to say with the writer in -

Psalm 101:3-7 - *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.*

4 A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.

5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

The Bible shows us how to be utterly honest. It gives us the power to be finished altogether with sin in every shape or form.

c. *The Bible has the power to make us worshipful.*

Psalm 119:164 - *Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.*

What a God-centered man the psalmist was and how full of praise. Should we, who are indwelt by Christ, be less full of praise?

Surely, when we meditate upon the Lord's grace and goodness to us, we find ourselves agreeing with the writer of -

Psalm 92:1-5 - *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:*

2 To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

5 O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

Our lives are so often praise-less.

If we really love and read the Bible, it will fill us with praise and adoration.

4. The Bible has the power to make us restful.

Psalm 119:165 - *Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*

The word “offend” may be translated “disturb.”

How many things there are to disturb us! But a regular reading of God’s Word will result in our hearts and minds being filled with peace and quietness.

By reading and submitting to the truths of God’s Word, and thus by humble submission to the Lord Himself, we take Christ’s yoke upon us, we learn of Him and we find rest unto our souls.

Matthew 11:29 - *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

We will also enter into the experience of -

Isaiah 30:15 - *For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.*

e. The Bible has the power to make us confident.

Psalm 119:168 - *I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.*

One rendering of this verse is, “*I have all my life under Thine eye.*”

This is another way of being able to say -

Psalm 31:15 - *My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.*

Thus we have seen that the Bible has the power to make us humble, honest, worshipful, restful and confident.

What treasure there is in God’s Word! What a mine of wealth is stored up there!

But if we are to find this treasure for ourselves, something is needed on our part.

What is needed?

3. **WHAT WE HAVE TO DO WITH THE BIBLE.**

If the Bible is, as the hymn suggested, 'a deep, deep mine,' full of priceless blessings, our part is to dig down into the mine to search for the great spoil which waits to be uncovered and brought to the surface.

This is what the psalmist delighted in doing. He rejoiced because he was constantly finding 'great spoil.'

Do we search the scriptures? Do we read and compare this verse with that verse, this truth with that truth, as did the Bereans did?

Acts 17:11 - *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

Do we meditate upon the great truths contained in God's Word as did the psalmist?

Psalm 104:34 - *My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.*

Or do we neglect our Bible? Do we read it casually or only occasionally or only when we go to church?

Wonderful blessings are 'hidden' in God's Word. But we must search for them and dig them out if we are to find them.

The words 'findeth great spoil' suggest labor, effort, patience, and then the joy of discovery.

This is what is required.

If we will dig deeply, search diligently, into this wonderful 'mine of truth,' what will be the result?

David tells us that the result will be great joy -

Psalm 119:162 - *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*

Bible reading and Bible study produce great joy.

4. THE RESULT OF GETTING THE GOLD OUT OF THE BIBLE.

The result is not only joy, but *great* joy. David was not only joyful, but he was thrilled with a joy that knew no bounds. It was joy unspeakable.

1 Peter 1:8 - *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*

Many Christians lack this joy, but all may have it. God wants us to be joyful. One way in which He makes us joyful is through His Word.

What is the joy of which David speaks? I suggest that it is a threefold joy.

1. It is the joy of discovery.

It is the joy of finding something for yourself, of finding hidden treasure.

I can think of countless occasions when, as I have been reading my Bible, I have suddenly made a great discovery.

Some glorious truth has almost leaped out of the pages and my heart has been overjoyed. In communion with God, through His Word, He has shown something to me which was previously hidden.

Indeed, for hours afterwards I have experienced the glad uplift of experiencing that the joy of the Lord has been my strength.

Nehemiah 8:10 - *Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*

2. It is the joy of fellowship.

It is the joy of fellowship with the Lord Himself. This is the wonderful thing about the Bible. When we meditate on it and bow humbly before the Author of the Book, we actually commune with Him!

As we read and linger over the words, Jesus Himself draws near. Afterwards we are able to say -

Luke 24:32 - *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

c. It is the joy of testimony.

When we have found something which is very valuable, we want to tell others about it. Especially if the something we have found is someone.

When we dig deeply into the Bible, we find the Lord Himself, Christ in all the scriptures.

Luke 24:27 - *And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

We want to tell others about Him. Finding Him for ourselves places within us a desire to share Him with others.

This is what happened with Andrew when he came to know the Lord for himself.

John 1:41-42 - *He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

And so, the lessons we have learned are these: the Bible is God's Word. It contains 'great spoil,' wonderful treasure, infinite riches, and that spoil needs to be dug out. When it is dug out, it gives great joy to the finder.

Will you dig, and dig, and dig, and get the gold out of the Word?

If you will do this, you will become a joyful, radiant and useful Christian. Every day will be for you a day of new discoveries as you read and study God's Word.

FOUR GREAT CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES

STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: Isaiah 33:15-17

Isaiah 33:15-17 - *He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;*

16 He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.

17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.

These verses begin by presenting us with what we might describe as God's 'Portrait of a Christian,' a New Testament believer.

It is a full length portrait in black and white. Indeed, there are six different views of the same person.

Take a good look at God's picture of one of His children.

He is one who -

#1 - walketh righteously,

#2 - speaketh uprightly,

#3 - despiseth the gain of oppressions,

#4 - shaketh his hands from holding of bribes,

#5 - stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood,

#6 - shutteth his eyes from seeing evil.

How do we fit into this picture? Do we walk in righteousness, speak honestly, despise anything that is underhand or dishonest, refuse to be corrupted by worldly gain? Are we slow to hear evil and careful about what we see?

Being a Christian, a true believer in our Lord Jesus Christ, touches the whole life - feet, mouth, heart, hands, ears and eyes.

Romans 6:13 - *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Romans 12:1-2 - *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye*

present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Now notice in -

Isaiah 33:16-17 - *He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.*

17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.

that we are told about the Christian's privileges, the privileges we enjoy or are to enjoy as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

They are four in number. They refer, not to a few Christians, but to all Christians.

1. OUR POSITION IN CHRIST.

Verse 16 tells us that the man described in -

Isaiah 33:15 - *He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;*

shall dwell on high.

Does this mean that we will go to heaven when we die? No. It means, in New Testament language -

Ephesians 2:6 - *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

The moment we were born again, we were placed into a new and wonderful position - 'in Christ.'

Once we were 'in Adam,' but now -

1 Corinthians 15:22 - *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

We are a heavenly people, citizens of heaven -

Philippians 3:20 - *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

Right here and now God wants us, and has made provision for us, to dwell on high. Yet how many of us are living very much on earth's level and are failing to rise up into the enjoyment of that fulness of life and blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus?

Many Christians are living like spiritual paupers, when God wants them to live like sons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ -

1 John 3:1 - *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

Romans 8:17 - *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

How are you traveling to the palace of the King? By what class are you traveling to glory - second class or first?

God wants you to travel first class all the way and, in His Son, He has made every provision for you to do so!

2. OUR PROTECTION IN CHRIST.

As for the Christian, his place of defense will be the munitions of rocks.

Isaiah 33:16 - *.....his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks:.....*

Here is our protection -

Colossians 3:3 - *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

Psalms 91:1 - *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

Every true Christian lives a protected life.

Physically?

Yes, for nothing can happen to the Christian's body apart from God's permission. This

does not mean freedom from trouble, trial, accident and death itself. It does mean that nothing just *happens* to the believer, for -

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

After all, the body is the least important part of the Christian. To die is to be with Christ, which is far better.

Philippians 1:23 - *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*

What a wonderful protection we have. How true is the old hymn -

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure:
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.

3. OUR PROVISION IN CHRIST.

We are told about this in -

Isaiah 33:16 - *.....bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.*

For the sustenance of the new life, God gives us bread and water.

Will God always supply the material needs, the need of food, for instance, of His children?

Psalms 23:1 - *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

Psalms 34:10 - *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.*

Philippians 4:19 - *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Now look up -

Psalms 37:25 - *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

Compare with -

1 Kings 17:2-7 - *And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,
3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is*

before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

The meaning of **verse 16**, however, is that there is absolutely everything we need in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

Colossians 2:9-10 - *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

Now look up -

John 6:35 - *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

Do you realize how much is yours in Christ? In Him we have -

A life that can never be forfeited.

John 10:28 - *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

b. A relationship which can never be broken.

Galatians 3:26 - *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

3. A peace which can never be destroyed.

Ephesians 2:14 - *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

4. An acceptance which can never be questioned.

Ephesians 1:6 - *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

e. An inheritance which can never fade.

1 Peter 1:4 - *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

5. A title which can never be disputed.

Revelation 1:6 - *And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

If you want a really exciting study, go through **Ephesians**, and other New Testament epistles, and underline the words “in Christ!” How rich we are! We can sing with the hymn writer -

*Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find.*

But, notice the word “given” in **verse 16**.

The Lord has given the provision we need, but we must appropriate it, possess our possessions.

Obadiah 17 - *But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.*

Is God’s word to you -

Isaiah 55:2 - *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.*

4. OUR PROSPECT IN CHRIST.

Isaiah 33:17 - *Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.*

What a glorious prospect!

Job 19:25-27 - *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:*

26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

Notice the prospect is twofold. We will see the place, but, best of all, we will see the Person.

It is great to know that heaven is our home and to know that we will go there to live forever.

But the glory and the wonder of our heavenly home centres in the Saviour Himself. When we see Him -

1 John 3:2 - *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

*When in His beauty my Saviour I see,
When I shall look on His face,
Tongue cannot tell of the joy it will be,
Saved by His wonderful grace!*

APPOINTED AND ANOINTED FOR SERVICE

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: Luke 4:18-19

Luke 4:18-19 - *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,*

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

There is a charm and beauty about these words. These are introduced to us by -

Luke 4:16-17 - *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

In the time of Christ, synagogues were scattered all over the Roman world wherever there were settlements of Jews. While the heart of the temple service in Jerusalem was the offering of sacrifices, the heart of the synagogue service was the reading and explaining of the scriptures.

It was customary to have two portions read, one from the law and one from the prophets.

A visiting rabbi had the privilege of reading the second portion and of giving an exposition. The congregation would be sitting on the floor and the rabbi would stand on a raised platform.

When our Lord stood up to read, He quoted a prophecy, which related to Himself, from

-

Isaiah 61:1-2 - *The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;*

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

It is significant to notice that He stopped short of the words, “and the day of vengeance of our God.”

Why did He do this?

Because He was now fulfilling only the prophecies which related to His first advent.

Hebrews 9:26 - *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

Hebrews 9:28 - *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Notice the importance of the words in -

Hebrews 9:21 - *Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.*

It was as though our Lord said, “That which Isaiah wrote in prophecy, I have come now to fulfill in history.” Fulfilled prophecy becomes history.

In this study we will see that these words of our Lord, so applicable to Himself, are also applicable to those of us who believe on Him and who are His servants.

Luke 4:18-19 - *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,
19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

John 4:12 - *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?*

John 20:21 - *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

Let us, therefore, look at Him as we study these verses. Let us also realize the commission that rests upon us.

1. **HERE IS OUR PATTERN FOR SERVICE.**

Notice that in **verse 18** the pronoun me occurs three times, “Me.....Me.....Me.....”

What should a servant of the Lord be like?

What should he do?

What should he say?

Here is our pattern in the glorious Person of our Lord -

1 Peter 1:21 - *Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.*

We are to be like Him in what He WAS.

He was the Son of God.

Romans 1:4 - *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

He was holy.

Hebrews 7:26 - *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

We, through faith in Him, become the sons of God.

John 1:11-14 - *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

We, through our union with Him, become partakers of His holiness.

Hebrews 12:10 - *For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

b. We are to be like Him in what He DID.

What one word describes our Lord's earthly ministry? In other words, what He did?

Surely the answer is in -

Acts 10:38 - *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

We are to be like Him in this respect.

3. We are to be like Him in what He SAID.

He only ever taught those things which were given to Him by the Father.

John 8:28 - *Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*

John 14:10 - *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*

In this respect also, we are to be like our Lord.

The Lord Jesus is our Pattern for service: in what He was, in what He did and in what He said.

These are the three marks of the true servant of God.

2. HERE IS OUR PROGRAM FOR SERVICE.

What is our program?

It is outlined for us in -

Luke 4:18-19 - *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,*

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

where we find the word preach three times, “preach.....preach.....preach.”

Jesus came to preach and we are to preach.

Mark 16:15 - *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

Mark 16:20 - *And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.*

1 Corinthians 1:21 - *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

There is no substitute for preaching!

But what are we to preach?

The answer is - The Gospel! **Verse 18** makes this quite clear - the good news - not good advice, not what we must do to be saved -- but what God in Christ has done for our salvation.

2 Corinthians 5:19-21 - *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

We are to preach the gospel to the people who desperately need it and whose need only the gospel can meet.

Who are these people?

In **verse 18**, five classes are mentioned. These are the people to whom we are to preach the gospel and for whom the gospel has the complete answer to their every need.

4. The Bankrupt.

“The poor.”

The gospel is for rich and poor alike, but the reference here is to those who are spiritually poor. It was to this kind of poverty that our Lord was referring to in -

Matthew 5:3 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

The gospel meets us when we have nothing at all left, nothing to offer, when we are helpless and hopeless!

Romans 5:6 - *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

5. The Brokenhearted.

“To heal the brokenhearted.”

Is there any healing balm in the whole wide world to compare with the gospel, the good news of God's love in Christ, to help men and women who are bruised and broken, sad and desperate and who need healing for their souls?

He is the great Physician!

There are many quack physicians, and of these we must beware.

Job 13:4 - *But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.*

c. *The Bound.*

“Deliverance to the captives.”

One cannot help thinking of the woman of whom we read in -

Luke 13:11-13 - *And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.*

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

The Lord graciously “laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight.”

This is what the Lord can do.

John 8:36 - *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

4. The Blind.

“Recovering of sight to the blind.”

By nature we are all blinded by sin -

2 Corinthians 4:4 - *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Many people are blinded by religion, orthodoxy and prejudice. Only the Lord can open blind eyes.

John 8:12 - *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

e. *The Bruised.*

“To set at liberty them that are bruised.”

This has special reference to people who have been the special objects of Satan’s attacks. They have been overwhelmed by his wicked efforts to batter and bruise them and to banish them. Upon them are the marks of sin and suffering.

Thank God. The gospel can bring relief and salvation!

This was our Lord's missionary program: to preach the gospel to these five classes of people. It is our program too.

3. HERE IS OUR PERIOD FOR SERVICE.

This is indicated in the words in -

Luke 4:19 - *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

How long have we to preach the gospel? Only as long as the day of grace lasts.

2 Corinthians 6:2 - *(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

It refers to the period of time when men and women may come and be saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

John 6:37 - *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

Revelation 22:17 - *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

Our period for service is, therefore, a limited period. When "the day of vengeance of our God" comes, God's judgment will fall upon the ungodly.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 - *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,
8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*

The day of judgment is not far ahead.

John 9:4 - *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*

James 5:8 - *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

Soon it will be too late to plead with sinners to come to Christ.

Luke 13:24-28 - *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

25 *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:*

26 *Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.*

27 *But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.*

28 *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.*

4. HERE IS OUR POWER FOR SERVICE.

The Lord Jesus, though He was the Son of God, needed to wait for the anointing and empowering of the Holy Spirit to rest upon Him in order that He might enter upon and fulfill His earthly ministry. Thus, He was able to say, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.”

Only as we are thus empowered can we serve the Lord effectively.

Luke 3:22 - *And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.*

Acts 1:8 - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

SOLDIERS OF CHRIST, ARISE!

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Deuteronomy 20:1-10

Deuteronomy 20, records the laws that God gave to His people in relation to warfare. The first ten verses form the basis of this study. The particular emphasis is upon the fact that some who would fight in the Lord's battles are unfit for battle.

Read and compare **1 Chronicles 12:1-15**, especially -

1 Chronicles 12:8 -*And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains;*

By way of introduction to the main message of these verses, it is important for us to emphasize the following facts.

#1 - The Christian life is a warfare.

In the New Testament it is spoken of as a walk -

Ephesians 4:1 - *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

a race -

Hebrews 12:1 - *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

a pilgrimage -

1 Peter 2:11 - *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

but also as "the good fight of faith" -

1 Timothy 6:12 - *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

It is important to remember that the Christian life is not just a picnic. It is a very stern business. "It is hard to be a Christian."

#2 - *The Christian life is warfare against a formidable enemy.*

If warfare is involved, then there must be two sides. You cannot fight unless there is an enemy to fight.

Deuteronomy 20:1 - *.....horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou,.....*

In actual fact, our enemies are not people, not flesh and blood as we are reminded in -

Ephesians 6:12 - *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Our enemies are marshaled into three great companies. They are described as:

a. The world.

John 17:14 - *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

The flesh.

Galatians 5:17 - *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

The devil.

1 Peter 5:8 - *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

Never underestimate the power of these enemies!

#3 - *As Christians, we have a great Captain. Under Him victory is assured.*

We are left in no doubt about this.

Deuteronomy 20:3 - *And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;*

We are no match for our enemies. They cause us to faint, fear, tremble and to become terrified. However, we are assured by -

Deuteronomy 20:4 - *For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.*

that we can be -

Romans 8:37 - *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

#4 - The success of any warfare depends upon the soldiers as well as the Captain.

The Lord wins His victory through the willing cooperation of His soldiers.

God's purposes today for the frustration of evil, are safe in His hands, but He must have soldiers who are true to Him. We have to be -

2 Corinthians 6:1 - *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*

He works out His great purpose in the world through His church.

#5 - Many soldiers in the Lord's army are unfit for battle.

This is the teaching of **Deuteronomy 20:1-10**.

Deuteronomy 20:4-8 - *For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.*

5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.

6 And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.

7 And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.

8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.

picture for us four kinds of Christians who are unqualified or disqualified, for spiritual warfare because they are not fit to fight.

Notice in **verses 5-8**, the expression which is repeated - "let him go and return to his house."

How solemn this is!

Here are a people who are engaged in a warfare against a formidable enemy. They are fighting under a great captain who is depending upon them to press the battle to the gates, but they are not fit for battle.

What, then, are the qualifications, or the disqualifications, for fighting in the Lord's army?

1. **THOSE WHO ARE NOT WHOLLY DEDICATED TO THE LORD ARE UNFIT FOR BATTLE.**

This truth is brought out in -

Deuteronomy 20:5 - *And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.*

It would appear that, in those days, it was the custom for God's people to dedicate a new house to the Lord, just as many Christians do today. However, it is the spiritual application of all this that is important.

We are all houses or "temples" -

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?
20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

Where there is incomplete dedication of ourselves to the Lord, we are not fit for battle.

Romans 6:13 - *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Romans 12:1-2 - *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Are all our members, all the 'rooms' of our 'houses' (our heart, will, mind, ears, eyes, hands, feet, lips, etc.) dedicated to Him and to His service?

Incomplete dedication disqualifies us for warfare and for fighting in the Lord's army.

Let this truth search your heart.

2. **THOSE WHO HAVE NOT TASTED THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT ARE UNFIT FOR BATTLE.**

This truth is brought out in -

Deuteronomy 20:6 - *And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.*

There was a law in regard to eating the fruit of a vineyard as is shown in -

Leviticus 19:23-25 - *And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised: three years shall it be as uncircumcised unto you: it shall not be eaten of.*

24 *But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy to praise the LORD withal.*

25 *And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof: I am the LORD your God.*

The spiritual application is that we must be producing and enjoying the fruit of the Spirit in our lives before we are qualified to fight in the Lord's battles.

Galatians 5:22-23 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

23 *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Ask yourself how many of these nine fruits have you 'eaten?'

1. Love.

Is **Romans 5:5** - *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

2. Joy.

Am I experiencing -

John 15:11 - *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

c. **Peace.**

Do I constantly experience -

Isaiah 26:3 - *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

4. Longsuffering.

Am I described in -

Ephesians 4:32 - *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

e. **Gentleness.**

Am I like Jesus?

2 Corinthians 10:1 - *Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:*

6. Goodness.

Am I like Barnabas?

Acts 11:24 - *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*

g. **Faith.**

How much of this have I?

Luke 17:5 - *And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.*

8. Meekness.

Have I put this on?

Colossians 3:12 - *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

1. Temperance.

What about -

1 Corinthians 9:25 - *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

3. **THOSE WHO HAVE FAILED TO FULFILL SOME OBLIGATION ARE UNFIT FOR BATTLE.**

This truth is brought out in -

Deuteronomy 20:7 - *And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.*

If a man had promised to marry a woman, he was to marry her before being free to fight.

Deuteronomy 24:5 - *When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.*

What are the obligations that we must fulfill before we are fit for battle?

1. There are obligations to God.

For example, we must fulfill our vows.

Deuteronomy 23:21 - *When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.*

We must put Him first.

Matthew 6:33 - *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

We must make Him known.

Mark 16:15 - *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

b. *There are obligations to others.*

For example, we must be reconciled to them.

Matthew 5:23 - *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;*

We must be scrupulously honest in all our dealings with other people.

Romans 12:17 - *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

We must bear their burdens.

Galatians 6:2 - *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

4. **THOSE WHO ARE FEARFUL AND FAINT HEARTED ARE UNFIT FOR BATTLE.**

This truth is brought out in -

Deuteronomy 20:8 - *And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.*

Courage is required for fighting. Fear and faint-heartedness not only dishonor God but they discourage and upset the morale of our fellow believers and of others.

Faithfulness in reading, studying and meditating in the Word of God and in prayer will quickly banish unworthy fear and timidity.

Isaiah 41:10 - *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

In conclusion, notice the following spiritual principles.

1. God's method is frequently one of subtraction and not of addition.

Notice the words 'let him go' in -

Deuteronomy 20:5-8 - *And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.*

6 *And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.*

7 *And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.*

8 *And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.*

Judges 7:2-7 - *And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.*

3 *Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.*

4 *And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.*

5 *So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.*

6 *And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.*

7 *And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.*

2. The Lord puts quality before quantity.

How searching is this truth!

- c. There is no conscription in the army of our King.*

He does not coerce us to become His soldiers.

But, what a privilege it is to be not only a saint -

Ephesians 3:8 - *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;*

but also a soldier -

2 Timothy 2:3-4 - *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please
him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

Psalm 110:3 - *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of
holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.*

HOW TO FACE A CRISIS

STUDY 5

Scripture Portion: Daniel 2:1-16

Key Verse - Daniel 2:19 - *Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.*

Sooner or later everyone will face a crisis, a point of time when an important decision has to be made. In fact, life is made up crises. It is quite possible that you are facing such a time now.

What should you do? How should you act so that the decision you make is the right one?

I want to say at once, that the thing to do in a time of crisis is to pray.

If we had the space, we could list many people of whom we read in the Bible who were faced with a crisis, and they prayed. God graciously heard and answered their prayer. He undertook for them, guided them and brought them safely through their crisis time.

The one example I want to give you is that of Daniel.

You will need to read the record for yourself, in **Daniel 2**.

In order to gain the benefit of this effort, my part is to help you. Actually, it makes thrilling reading, quite apart from the sheer, down-to-earth help it offers us.

King Nebuchadnezzar had had a most amazing dream, but he had forgotten it, **verse 1**.

So he summoned his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and other “wise” men, **verses 2-4**.

He demanded that they should reveal the dream to him together with the interpretation of it, **verses 5-9**.

The wise men of Babylon protested. They told the king that it was impossible for anyone to reveal what the dream had been, quite apart from the interpretation of it, **verses 10-11**.

This made the king furious. He ordered that his wise men, which included Daniel and his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, be put to death, **verses 12-13**.

Daniel sought an interview with the king and promised that he would reveal the dream and the meaning of it, **verses 14-16**.

This was a very bold thing to do.

This was certainly a very real crisis in the life of Daniel and his three friends, only one of many crises which this great man of God experienced during his long and eventful service for the Lord.

Each time he faced a crisis, what did he do?

He prayed.

We, who live 2500 years later in the history of the world, should likewise resort to the place of prayer in our times of crisis.

What a difference it would make if we would do this in times of **national crisis!**

For an illustration of this, read -

2 Chronicles 14:11-12 - *And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.*

12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

We should also pray to the Lord in times of **religious crisis**, as did the early Christians.

Read **Acts 9:36-43**.

It may be at this particular moment you are facing a **personal crisis** concerning your health, your business, your loved ones, or.....? What should you do about it?

The answer is: do what Daniel did - **pray!**

If you will read **Daniel, 2:14-23**, you will see how to pray in a time of crisis.

Let me suggest the sequence.

SET ASIDE A TIME FOR PRAYER.

It is a significant thing that Daniel asked of the king - **time**. Why did he want time?

He wanted time to pray.

He had his regular set times for prayer, as we learn from -

Daniel 6:10 - *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

The need now, however, was for a special time of prayer, for he was facing a crisis.

If you are facing a time of crisis now, the first thing you should do is to set aside a definite time in order to seek the face of God and place the matter which is perplexing you into His hands for solution.

Will you do that?

Then what should you do?

2. GO TO THE PLACE OF PRAYER.

Daniel 2:17 - *Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:*

It simply means that he not only decided to pray, but he actually did pray. In his house he had a place of prayer, a special room where the windows were open toward Jerusalem.

The Lord Jesus had a place of prayer -

Mark 1:35 - *And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*

Luke 6:12 - *And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*

Peter had a place of prayer -

Acts 10:9 - *On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:*

The God fearing women of Philippi had a place of prayer -

Acts 16:13 - *And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.*

Do you have a place of prayer, somewhere where you are in the habit of going when you want to speak to the Lord?

Well, in the hour of crisis, go to that place, as Daniel did.

While it is important, in certain circumstances, to go alone, it is also helpful to go with others, to have the encouragement of their fellowship in prayer.

The next thing to notice is -

3. SEEK FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER.

Jesus authorized us to pray privately -

Matthew 18:19 - *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

Daniel sought the prayer fellowship of his three companions.

Can you picture him telling his three friends about the crisis? Can you see these four men down on their knees pleading with the Lord to hear and answer their prayers?

Surely God would not refuse such petitions!

In the Bible, we are encouraged to pray with others. So, if you are in the midst of a crisis, go to one or more like-minded believers, share your problem with them and then pray together.

4. BE DEFINITE IN PRAYER.

If you will look again at -

Daniel 2:18 - *That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*

you will see that the four men prayed “concerning this secret.” In other words, they prayed about this specific matter.

Their prayers were not vague and indefinite. They wanted something. They asked God for it, just as Gideon prayed for a sign and got it -

Judges 6:39 - *And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.*

just as Hannah prayed for a son and God heard her prayer -

1 Samuel 1:10-13 - *And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.*

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

just as Elijah prayed that it might not rain and God answered that prayer -

James 5:17 - *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*

What do you need at this moment? Well, ask God for it!

If it is money, pray for money. If it is healing, pray for healing. If it is patience and courage to endure suffering, pray for patience and courage.

Whatever it is, ask the Lord and He will help you.

Listen to His gracious word -

John 14:13-14 - *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

If you will ask God, for Jesus' sake, to hear and answer your cry, He will certainly do so. He says He will!

See what the Lord Jesus said in -

Matthew 7:7-11 - *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Be definite in your asking and God will be definite in His giving!

5. WATCH YOUR MOTIVE IN PRAYER.

Daniel 2:18 - *.....that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*

Does this mean that they were praying that they might save their own skins, “Lord, do not let us perish with the others?”

I think, in order to understand the meaning of their prayer, we need to turn back to -

1 Kings 18:36-37 - *And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.*

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

Elijah prayed to God to do a mighty thing, and to do it in order that the people might recognize the power and presence of God Himself.

In other words, Elijah’s motive was right. He asked God to do something that would be for His glory.

Daniel’s motive was also right.

If God is to hear and answer our prayers, then our motive must be right also. The true motive which we should have in anything that we ask of the Lord is that He may be glorified and that His kingdom may be extended.

Jesus conditions the answers to our prayers by saying that we must ask in His Name -

John 14:13-14 - *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Here is the same idea. Our motive must be right when we pray. What we ask for must be pleasing to the Lord and in accordance with His will.

There is something else to notice.

James 4:3 - *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

This reminds me of the man who prayed for the conversion of his wife so that she would

be less irritable and less of a nagger!

We understand his problem, but surely his motive in such a prayer should have been that God would be glorified in the salvation of her soul.

There is something else to notice.

6. EXERCISE FAITH IN PRAYER.

That is to say, when you pray, pray believingly.

The incident before us clearly shows us that Daniel had implicit trust in God that He could and would hear and answer his prayer. He prayed for mercies of the God of heaven.

Daniel 2:18 - *That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*

Daniel knew in his heart, when he offered his prayer, that God would hear and answer him.

One reason why our prayers do not prevail is because of our unbelief.

Can we not trust our almighty, loving, heavenly Father to hear and answer our prayers?

Of course we can!

All through the Bible He promises to hear and answer the prayers of His people.

Numbers 23:19 - *God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

There is one final thing to notice.

7. RECEIVE THE ANSWER TO PRAYER.

If you will read **Daniel 2:19-23**, you will notice the kind of answer that God gave to Daniel's prayer. It was a definite answer -

Daniel 2:19 - *Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.*

It was a miraculous answer, also indicated in **verse 19**. It was an answer that called for thanksgiving and that glorified God as we learn from -

Daniel 2:20-23 - *Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:*

21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

What are you going to do in your time of crisis? Are you going to pray? Will you not come before the Lord and commit yourself and your needs into His hands, then trust Him to see you through?

O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Always remember this:

The God Who lived in Daniel's day is just the same today!

TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: Hebrews 3:1; 12:3

Hebrews 3:1 - *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

Hebrews 12:3 - *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

The word 'consider' occurs in both of our key verses. To consider the Lord Jesus Christ means to set our whole mind upon Him and to be fully occupied with Him.

What a holy and inspiring exercise!

Consider Him in -

#1 - The splendor of His pre-incarnate glory.

Isaiah 6:1-3 - *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.*

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

#2 - The wonder of His incarnation.

John 1:1 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:14 - *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

#3 - The mystery of His hidden years.

Luke 1:80 - *And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.*

#4 - The perfection of His real manhood.

1 Timothy 2:5 - *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

#5 - The majesty of His works and teachings.

John 7:46 - *The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.*

#6 - *The grandeur of His all-sufficient work.*

Hebrews 10:12 - *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

#7 - *The blessedness of his return and reign.*

Luke 1:32-33 - *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

How inexhaustible is this consideration. How truly inspiring, for the writer to the Hebrews tells us that such a consideration does something to us!

Hebrews 12:3 - *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

In other words, if and as we fix our eyes upon the Lord Jesus and become fully occupied with Him, all our thinking will be brought into proper adjustment.

This is very important because our thoughts govern us.

Proverbs 23:7 - *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:.....*

How often our thinking is wrong!

Occupation with Him will set our thinking right. So here is the remedy for all our wrong mental attitudes.

What are the most common ailments among Christians?

Let us mention these and apply the exhortation of our key verses, **Hebrews 3:1 and 12:3.**

DISCOURAGEMENT.

Do you ever get discouraged? What is the remedy?

The remedy is to *consider Him.*

Discouragement usually comes as the result of wrong thinking. When the Hebrew Christians were suffering dire persecution, the writer of this epistle sought to bring relief

to their depressed and troubled minds by urging them to turn their eyes upon Jesus.

Hebrews 12:2 - *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Perhaps you have been discouraged because of some misunderstanding or because of persecution.

Hebrews 12:3-4 - *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Perhaps you have been discouraged because you have seen few results from your work. Perhaps you are discouraged because of loneliness or isolation. Perhaps a friend has failed you and this has discouraged you.

But the remedy for discouragement is to look away to Jesus, to turn your eyes upon Him and to occupy yourself with Him. If you will do that, your discouragement will be banished.

2. SELF PITY.

Do you ever feel sorry for yourself and gripped by self pity? What is the remedy?

The remedy is to *consider Him*.

If we are filled with self pity, it is because of wrong thinking. When we are gripped by self pity, we are very little good for anything.

We feel that no one has suffered what we have suffered. We lose all sense of grit, grip and grasp on life. We lose our grace also.

How easy it would have been for the Lord Jesus to be sorry for Himself, for He was truly Man. He was tempted in all points just as we are tempted!

Hebrews 4:15 - *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

But He never succumbed to self pity or felt sorry for Himself. The way for us to get rid of our self pity is to look away to Him Who was stoned, cast out, misunderstood and, in the end, crucified.

Hebrews 12:4 - *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

If you are wallowing in self pity, turn your eyes upon Jesus at once. Fix your gaze upon

Him. Occupy yourself with Him and your self pity will disappear.

3. PRIDE.

Do you suffer from this? What a question to ask.

The remedy, if you do, is to *consider* Him. Pride, like discouragement and self pity, is the result of wrong thinking. To know whether we suffer from pride, we need to ask the following questions, face up to them and answer them honestly.

Am I upset when my friends do not pat me on the back?

Do I feel hurt if I am not thanked for some work that I have undertaken?

- c. Do I turn against people if they criticize me?
- 5. Do I find myself saying (or thinking) that I am better than others?
- e. Do I find fault with others? Is this because I am jealous or envious, or proud?
- 6. Do I think that I am always right and that others are always wrong?
- g. Am I very critical? Do I, therefore, put myself on a pedestal?

These are penetrating questions.

What is the remedy for this horrible pride?

Here are three scriptures that will help.

Matthew 11:28-29 - *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matthew 20:26-28 - *But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;*

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

John 13:1-6 - *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot,

Simon's son, to betray him;

3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

In other words to *consider Him*.

Philippians 2:5-8 - *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

If you are suffering from pride, turn your eyes upon Jesus, fix your gaze upon Him and you will be humbled at His feet.

4. INFERIORITY COMPLEX.

Have you an unhealthy lack of confidence in yourself and in your own power and ability?

The remedy for this is to *consider Him*.

Here again, if we suffer from the wrong kind of inferiority feeling, it is due to wrong thinking. Some Christians are miserable and defeated all the time. They are in bondage to the wrong kind of timidity, nervousness and fear.

It is perfectly true, in one sense, that we are nothing, that we have nothing, that we can do nothing and that we are insufficient and inadequate.

But, it is also true that, through faith in the Lord Jesus, we are the children of God. We are members of the Royal Household of God. Indeed, we are kings and priests.

Revelation 1:5-6 - *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,*

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

If you are plagued with inferiority feelings, turn your eyes upon Jesus, become occupied with Him, hold your head up high and go forth in His strength.

5. UNBELIEF.

Is lack of faith your besetting sin?

The remedy is to *consider Him*.

Here again, unbelief is the result of wrong thinking. How often the Lord has to say to us, "Where is your faith?"

Luke 8:25 - *And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.*

"Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Matthew 14:31 - *And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

The Lord Jesus Himself was surrounded by unbelief. Yet He was always filled with a great confidence in His Father God. Never once did He falter.

When He was at the grave of Lazarus, He had faith that God would hear and answer His prayer.

John 11:40-42 - *Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

In Gethsemane He had faith in His Father's purpose for Him.

Luke 22:39-44 - *And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.*

40 *And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.*

41 *And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,*

42 *Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

43 *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

44 *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

If your are filled with unbelief, **consider Him**. Become fully occupied with Him for He is "the Author and Finisher of our faith."

Hebrews 12:2 - *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

O Christian, *consider Him*.....lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face
And

Your discouragement will vanish, your self pity will be stifled, your pride will be smashed, your inferiority feelings will go and your unbelief will be banished.

This is not a study on psychology. We do not banish discouragement, self pity, pride, inferiority feelings and unbelief simply by changing our mental attitudes.

But, when we look away to Jesus and gaze upon Him, the Holy Spirit does something for, and with, and in us. He produces the change, the transformation.

1 Corinthians 3:18 - *Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.*

See exactly what He does!

SALVATION - FULL, FREE AND FOREVER!

STUDY 7

Scripture Portion: Hebrews 7:25

Hebrews 7:25 - *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is a wonderful Saviour for, as the Amplified New Testament renders our key verse -

Therefore He is able also to save to the uttermost--completely, perfectly, finally and for all time and eternity--those who come to God through Him, since He is always living to make petition to God and intercede with Him and intervene for them.

The Lord Jesus is the world's greatest Teacher. He is the world's most sure Guide. He is our perfect Example. He is the greatest Hero. He is the infallible Leader.

But, our first great need is not for a teacher, a guide, an example, a hero, a leader but for a Saviour. It was in order to be our Saviour that Jesus came to earth to die for us.

Matthew 1:21 - *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Luke 19:10 - *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

1 Timothy 1:15 - *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

Hebrews 9:26 - *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

His death upon Calvary was necessary in order that He might be our Saviour. But, having died upon Calvary, He rose again and is now exalted. At this moment He is alive in heaven -

Hebrews 7:25 - *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

It is important for us to notice that He is not only *willing* but He is *able* to save. It is possible to be willing but not to be able, just as it is possible to be able but not willing. Jesus is both able and willing, willing and able, to save completely, adequately, eternally,

all those that come unto God by Him.

What exactly does this mean? In what respect is He able to save us?

1. OF WHAT DOES HIS SAVING ABILITY CONSIST?

The word “save” implies deliverance from danger.

For an illustration of this, look up -

Matthew 14:29-30 - *And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.*

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

The Lord Jesus is able to save us from every evil, from sin, self, death, hell and the devil, and to bring us back into right relationship and full fellowship with God.

The word “save” or “salvation” does not only mean deliverance from danger, but it includes the whole idea of bringing us back into a positive and right relationship with the Lord Himself.

The Lord Jesus saves from the guilt and penalty of sin.

By nature we are under condemnation because of sin.

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

John 3:36 - *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Romans 6:23 - *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

But, by His atoning death upon the cross and because He is our risen and exalted Lord, the Lord Jesus has provided and offers to us a full and free salvation from the guilt and the penalty of sin.

Romans 8:1 - *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

The Lord Jesus saves from the filth and the impurity of sin.

These are strong words, but sin is horrible.

Isaiah 1:5-6 - *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.*

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Compare David's prayer in **Psalm 51:1-10**.

We cannot cleanse ourselves from the impurity of sin, but He can. He is able and willing to do it.

Compare -

Zechariah 13:1 - *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.*

1 John 1:7 - *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

The Lord Jesus saves from the power and the mastery of sin.

John 8:34 - *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

John 8:36 - *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

The ability of the Lord Jesus is such that He can break the fetters of sin. He can completely free the sinner who has previously been in the grip of sin.

Luke 13:11-12 - *And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.
12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*

d. The Lord Jesus saves from the bondage of self.

There are three ways in which He is able to do this.

5. He can save us from an unhealthy lack of confidence in self.

While there is one sense in which we should have no confidence in ourselves, there is another sense in which we should have confidence in the fact that, if we are Christians, we are the redeemed ones of the Lord. We are precious to Him and we are a special people.

Compare -

Isaiah 43:1 - *But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.*

Malachi 3:17 - *And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*

6. He can save us from an unhealthy over-confidence in self.

It is quite wrong for anyone to think that we have the ability or strength in ourselves to live the Christian life or to serve God. There is such a thing as an over-confidence in the flesh. Compare -

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 - *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*
6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Philippians 4:13 - *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

- g. He can save us from unhealthy manifestations of the flesh and the old nature.**

Look up the horrible list which is given in -

Galatians 5:19-21 - *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,*
20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

- h. The Lord Jesus saves from fear, worry, anxiety and fretting.**

He saves from the fear of man, the fear of failure, the fear of success, the fear of the future and the fear of death.

Compare the following great words -

Psalms 34:4 - *I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*
Read **Psalms 37:1-11**.

Isaiah 26:3 - *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because*

he trusteth in thee.

Philippians 4:7 - *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

i. *The Lord Jesus saves from every evil thing.*

He does not save *from* trouble, but He delivers us in the *midst* of trouble.

Psalms 50:15 - *And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

He does not save from disappointment, but He makes His grace sufficient.

2 Corinthians 12:9 - *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

He does not save from accident, sometimes He permits this, but He promises that nothing will happen to us that is contrary to His will.

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

2 Timothy 4:18 - *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

j. *The Lord Jesus saves from hell to heaven.*

Those whom He saves will one day go to be with Him -

John 14:2-3 - *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

They will be with Him and will have new bodies -

Philippians 3:20-21 - *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

They will be with Him for ever and ever -

1 Thessalonians 4:17 - *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together*

with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

k. He saves from sin to salvation.

Matthew 1:21 - *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

7. He saves from death to life.

John 5:24 - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

m. He saves from alienation to fellowship with God.

Ephesians 2:12-13 - *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14. He saves from tears to joy.

1 Peter 1:8 - *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*

o. He saves from wrath to a conscious enjoyment of the love of God.

What a wonderful Saviour He is, for He is able to save in these ways, and in every other way.

He is not only able to save but He is willing to do so!

2. WHO IS HE ABLE TO SAVE?

The answer is -

Hebrews 7:25 - *.....them.....that come unto God by him,.....*

He is able and willing to save everybody who will come unto God by Him because of -

John 14:6 - *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Acts 4:12 - *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

What does this mean?

Here are five simple steps that one who needs to be saved should take.

(1) I need to be saved.

(2) I believe the Lord Jesus is able to save me.

(3) I believe He is willing to save me.

(4) I here and now ask Him to save me.

(5) I believe I am saved and that Jesus saves me now.

The Lord Jesus is fully able and willing to save to the uttermost:

all that come unto God by Him,

all who come unto God by Him initially, who do, once and for all, trust the Saviour for salvation,

all who go on coming unto God by Him, who continue day by day to trust Him as Lord and Saviour for He is able to be saving to the very end those who are in the habit of coming unto God through Him.

He is a wonderful Saviour. He saves fully, freely and forever!

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
Trusting only Thee,
Trusting Thee for full salvation
Great and free.

THE MOST WORTHWHILE WORK IN THE WORLD

STUDY 8

Scripture Portion: John 1:35-45

Key verse - John 1:45 - *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

The most worthwhile work in the world is to seek, find and bring another soul to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this study, we are to see how Philip brought Nathanael, and how we, as followers of the Lord Jesus, are to engage in this greatest of all tasks, the task of soul-winning.

Please read **John 1:35-45** carefully. Notice the significant sequence that we have in this section of scripture.

#1 - John and Andrew find the Lord through John the Baptist.

John 1:35-37 - *Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;
36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!
37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

#2 - Andrew found Peter.

John 1:40-42 - *One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.
41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*

#3 - Jesus found Philip.

John 1:43 - *The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.*

#4 - Philip found Nathanael.

John 1:45 - *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

Each of these individuals was found by someone.

What are the lessons we learn as we look in particular at Philip who found Nathanael?

Here are a few.

THE MOST IMPORTANT AND WORTHWHILE WORK IN THE WORLD IS TO
SEEK THE SALVATION OF OTHER PEOPLE.

Just look at those three tremendous words in **verse 45**, “Philip findeth Nathanael.”

Have you ever done the equivalent of that?

If you have, then you have never done anything greater than that, for the greatest and most worthwhile work that any one of us can engage in, is that of seeking the salvation of some other soul.

Think what it meant for Nathanael when Philip found him. It meant that he was saved, brought into fellowship with the Lord, transformed and thrust out into His service.

Think what this work means in the light of -

James 5:19-20 - *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

Daniel 12:3 - *And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

An evangelist once put the question to himself, “What shall I wish I had done thousands of years hence?”

Spurgeon once said, “Even if I were utterly selfish and had no care for anything but my own happiness, I would choose, if I might, to be a soul-winner.”

Brainerd said, “I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so long as I could but gain souls for Christ.”

We may judge of the importance and the greatness of this work when we remember that Jesus left heaven and went to Calvary - to win souls.

THE MOST RECENTLY CONVERTED PERSON CAN, AND SHOULD, ENGAGE
IN THIS WORK.

Philip had only just found the Lord himself. At once he set out to seek Nathanael. He certainly lost no time. After all, why should he lose time?

John 1:43-45 - *The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.*

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

He had made a tremendous discovery. How long should he have waited before sharing his discovery with someone else? He had the prime qualification for being a soul winner - he knew the Lord personally.

If you know the Lord as your own personal Saviour, you are at once qualified to begin this work of soul winning.

The biggest preparation for this work is a heart full of love for the Lord Himself. So, do not imagine that you are too young a Christian or that you do not have the necessary gift or graces.

If you know the Lord yourself, you can tell someone else what you know of Him. You can commend Him to them. Now is the best time to do that. You will never have a better time than this.

3. THE MOST POWERFUL MEDIUM THAT GOD BLESSES IN THE SALVATION OF MEN AND WOMEN IS THE PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF THOSE WHO KNOW THE LORD FOR THEMSELVES.

The Lord always used His Word to produce the miracle of conversion.

Psalm 19:7 - *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

1 Corinthians 1:21 - *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

But how often the first contact or impression is made upon a soul by the personal testimony of a Christian!

It was so here. We are told about the kind of testimony we should give in -

John 1:45 - *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

Our testimony should be informal, as was Philip's.

There was nothing sophisticated or clever about it. It was given in simple heart-to-heart language. Philip just told his friend what he knew about the Lord.

b. Our testimony must be informed.

Verse 45 surely indicates this. Philip knew this man. He also knew the scriptures. He was, therefore, able to draw upon his knowledge of the Word of God when seeking to make a point of contact with Nathanael.

15. Our testimony should be infectious.

It is quite obvious from reading **verse 45**, that Philip was passionate in his appeal to Nathanael. He really meant business. Doubtless, when he spoke to his friend, his eyes flashed, his face lit up and his words were warm and moving.

If all God's people had a testimony like this, and gave it like this, there would soon be a very wonderful movement of the Spirit of God upon the hearts and lives of many who are now -

Ephesians 2:1 -*dead in trespasses and sins:*

Never lose an opportunity to give your testimony. Never be afraid of doing so!

4. THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF MEETING OBJECTIONS, DOUBTS AND PREJUDICES IS TO URGE THE ONE WHOM WE ARE SEEKING TO WIN TO THE LORD TO COME AND SEE FOR HIMSELF.

John 1:46 - *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

Nathanael was a thinker and a very sincere man. He was, what might be called, an honest doubter. Philip knew this man. He knew that arguing would not win him. But he also knew that one thing would convince him.

If only Nathanael could meet with Jesus, that would do it!

Most people whom we seek to win to the Lord have problems of one kind or another. The important thing is never to argue. Do what the man born blind did -

John 9:25 - *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*

Say to the soul whom you are seeking to win, "Come and see for yourself!"

-
5. THE MOST GLORIOUS ASSURANCE WE HAVE AS WE ENGAGE IN THIS WORK IS THE CONFIDENCE THAT THE LORD IS ALWAYS THERE BEFORE US IN HIS KNOWLEDGE OF, AND CONCERN FOR, THE SOUL WE ARE SEEKING TO WIN.
-

John 1:47-48 - *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Long before Philip thought of Nathanael, the Lord knew all about him and longed for his salvation.

Mark 16:19-20 - *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

This reminds us of the fact that soul winning work is not primarily man's work. First and foremost it is the Lord's work. He does that work through us, His servants.

*He knows that I am longing some weary soul to win
And so He bids me go and speak the loving word for Him.
He bids me tell His wondrous love and why He came to die.
And so we work together, my Lord and I.*

6. THE MOST THRILLING MOMENT THAT CAN COME TO US IS WHEN THE SOUL WE ARE TRYING TO WIN ACTUALLY CONFESSES THE LORD.

John 1:49 - *Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*

Just try and picture the joy that must have filled Philip's heart at that moment.

It is important for us to remember, however, that even if we have been faithful in giving our testimony to some other person, it may not be our privilege to lead that person to Christ.

Sometimes the Lord uses many instruments before He finally brings to Himself the one whom He is seeking.

7. THE MOST ENCOURAGING INCENTIVE WE CAN HAVE TO WIN OTHERS, IS THE FACT THAT THE LORD HAS A GLORIOUS PLAN AND PURPOSE FOR THE SOUL WE ARE TRYING TO WIN.

This truth is brought clearly before us in -

John 1:50-51 - *Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. 51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*

When we seek to win a soul, we never know who we may be winning.

Nathanael became a disciple of Jesus, one of the twelve.

We may be winning a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Carey, a Hudson Taylor, a David Livingstone.

What matters most is that we would be winning one more soul for whom the Saviour died.

WHAT IS THE LORD JESUS TO YOU?

STUDY 9

Scripture Portion: Luke 24:13-35

The incident recorded in **Luke 24:13-35**, concerns two people, Cleopas and another disciple, who were joined by Jesus as they walked the seven-mile journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus. It would be well to read through this portion of scripture a number of times to catch the full significance of all that is stated.

Jesus had been cruelly crucified. And, although these disciples did not believe it, He had risen from the dead. As they journeyed, they were talking of the awful events that had to do with the Saviour's death upon the cross. Then suddenly, a very wonderful thing happened.

Luke 24:15 - *And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.*

But they did not recognize Him.

This brings us to the first relationship that the risen Lord bears toward men and women.

1. AT FIRST, HE WAS ONLY A STRANGER.

There He was, the risen Lord Jesus, but they did not know Him. They did not recognize Him. He was a stranger to them.

This should cause us to pause and ask the question, "What is He to me? Is He no more than a stranger?"

There are tens of thousands of good people to whom the Lord Jesus is nothing but a stranger. They know about Him. They can talk about Him. But they do not know Him. They are in the same position as these two travelers were in.

Luke 24:16-18 - *But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.*

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

Notice the question in **verse 18**, "Art Thou only a stranger.....?"

Is that how it is with you? You know about Him yet you do not know Him?

1 Samuel 3:7 - *Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.*

What does He mean to you? If He is only a Stranger to you, He can become far more than that.

As we read on in the story, we discover how the Lord revealed Himself to these two disciples.

2. THEN HE BECAME THEIR FRIEND.

Before long, as we read the account, we discover that they were treating Him as an intimate friend and were confiding in Him, **verses 19-24**.

What a Friend He is!

As these two disciples told the story of their sorrow, how readily He listened.

And He is just the same in His willingness to listen to us when we speak to Him of our problems, difficulties and sorrows. He is -

Proverbs 18:24 - *A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

He is the Friend of sinners -

Matthew 11:19 - *The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.*

He is the Friend who “knows the worst about us and loves us just the same.”

No one was better qualified to sympathize with these two disciples than Jesus, for He knew all about them.

He knew about their sadness and their problems, just as He knows all about you and about your problems.

What is He to you - Stranger? Friend?

He was more than a Stranger, more than a Friend to these disciples.

3. HE THEN BECAME THEIR REDEEMER.

Luke 24:21 - *But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and*

beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

Luke 24:25-26 - *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:*

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

The Lord Jesus came to die for us in order that He might redeem us from the guilt and penalty of sin -

Galatians 3:13 - *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

from the inward pull of self -

1 Peter 1:18 - *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*

from the power of Satan -

Romans 8:23 - *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

What a wonderful thing it is to be able to speak of Him as “my Redeemer” -

Job 19:25-27 - *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:*

*26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:
27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

Is He your Redeemer?

Do you know Him in this way, not as a Stranger and not only as a Friend, but as your Redeemer?

These disciples knew Him in that way.

But notice again, He revealed Himself to them in a yet fuller way.

4. HE WAS ALSO THEIR TEACHER.

Luke 24:27 - *And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

In the earlier part of their walk it almost seems as though they thought that Jesus needed instruction -

Luke 24:18 - *And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?*

They soon discovered that He was *their* Teacher. He was the One Who could tell them all that they needed to know.

It is well for us to remember the following points.

1. He is the best Teacher.

It must have been wonderful to listen to Paul as he expounded the gospel, or to have been able to listen to Moody or Spurgeon preach, but what must it have been to have Jesus as their Teacher?

He is the most wonderful of all teachers. His teaching is sublime.

We can, in fact, have Him as our Teacher, for He ministers to us through the gracious agency of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:26 - *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

2. He uses the best Textbook.

We get an illustration of this in -

Luke 24:27 - *And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

Why did our Lord speak of Moses? Because Moses wrote of Him.

John 5:46 - *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.*

Moses wrote the Pentateuch, the books of **Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.**

But why did the Lord Jesus speak of “all.....the prophets?”

Luke 24:25 - *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:*

Because all the prophets anticipated His coming. They prophesied of the fact, the

manner and the circumstances of His birth, ministry, death and resurrection.

What a Bible reading our Lord gave to these two disciples on the Emmaus road! Little wonder that their hearts burned within them by the time He had finished expounding the scriptures and revealing Himself in them.

Luke 24:32 - *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

“Behold the Book, whose leaves display Jesus,
Jesus, the Life, the Truth, the Way.
Read it with diligence and care,
Search it, for thou shalt find Him there.

c. *His teaching centres upon the best theme.*

His theme was -

Luke 24:27 - *.....the things concerning himself.*

That is, His birth, His life, His ministry, but particularly His suffering upon the cross and His glory.

Luke 24:26-27 - *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?
27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

Is the Lord Jesus your Teacher?

From what, or from whom, do you take your standard for living?

When you want to decide the kind of person you should be,
the kind of way in which you should live,
the kind of friends that you should make,
the kind of clothes that you should wear,
the kind of books that you read,
the kind of pleasures you should engage in,
the amount of money you should spend, or
the church you should join.....

to whom do you go to learn about these things - the newspaper, the television, the radio, the cinema, some modern writer - or to the Lord Jesus? This is the test.

Is He your Teacher? If so, do you submit to and obey His will? In other words, are you a true disciple of Christ?

But there is one more thing to notice.

5. HE WAS THEIR LORD AND MASTER.

Have a careful look at -

Luke 24:28-31 - *And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.*

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

Notice in **verse 28** that Jesus never forces Himself upon us, though He loves to have us invite Him to draw near to us and to dwell with us.

Revelation 3:20 - *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

They asked Him to be their Guest, but, He soon became the Host as we are told in -

Luke 24:30 - *And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.*

It was His prerogative to preside over them. He did just this. And this is just how it should be with us.

What is the Lord Jesus to you - Stranger? Friend? Redeemer? Teacher and Master?

Is your whole life under the sway of this wonderful Lord? Are you recognizing and rejoicing in His Lordship?

“Under Thy sway, Lord, under Thy sway,
Jesus, Thou Conqueror, have Thine own way,
Fashion me, make me, strong for the fray:
Always victorious under Thy sway.”

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

STUDY 10

Scripture Portion: Psalm 23:1-6

- | | | |
|----------------|---|------------------------|
| (1) Beneath me | - | green pastures. |
| (2) Beside me | - | still waters. |
| (3) With me | - | my Shepherd. |
| (4) Before me | - | a table. |
| (5) Around me- | | mine enemies. |
| (6) After me | - | goodness and mercy. |
| (7) Beyond me- | | the house of the Lord. |

How is that for a sermon outline?

This wonderful **23rd Psalm**, which is such a favorite with God's people, is, of course, so full of truth and teaching that there are endless ways of treating it from a homiletical point of view and of applying it to ourselves.

For example, even in the opening five words, "The Lord is my Shepherd," there are five ways in which we can place the emphasis.

#1 - "*The* Lord....."

There is only one Lord Who is worthy and qualified to be the Shepherd of His people.

Who is that?

#2 - "*The Lord*....."

It is wonderful that He Who is so great, holy and wise should condescend to enter into this Shepherd-sheep relationship with His people.

#3 - “The Lord *IS*.....”

The tense is important, for, whatever may have happened in ten years’ time, right here and now “The Lord is my shepherd!”

#4 - “The Lord is *MY* Shepherd.....”

The personal possessive pronoun is all important! He is the Shepherd, but, more wonderful, David could say, “He is mine!”

Can you?

This psalm is not, of course, a psalm for everybody. It is only for those who can say, “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

#5 - “The Lord is my *Shepherd*.....”

The shepherd assumes full responsibility for his sheep. The Lord does this for all those of us who are His sheep.

What does our Shepherd do? What provision does He make for His sheep?

Let us look at Nellie Harley’s outline. Let us try to amplify her thoughts as we put some ‘flesh’ upon the ‘bones’ which she passed on to us.

1. BENEATH ME - GREEN PASTURES.

Here is something very wonderful! David says -

Psalm 23:2 - *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:.....*

These green pastures speak to us of the complete satisfaction which is to be found in Christ and in Christ alone.

If the Lord is our Shepherd, then every moment of every day during our earthly pilgrimage, we can be absolutely sure that we have the green pastures beneath us which the Lord has provided for us and upon which He has made us to lie down.

What does this mean?

It means that, in Christ, we have everything we need for time and for eternity.

I wonder whether you have entered into the satisfaction of knowing this?

The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus -

Ephesians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

To the church at Colosse he wrote -

Colossians 2:9-10 - *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

Oh, that we might take hold of this glorious, this mighty truth that in Jesus Himself all our needs are fully met, not only for this life but for the life to come!

But I want you to notice that David says, “He maketh me *to lie down* in green pastures.” The sheep lie down! I am given to understand that a sheep only lies down when its stomach is completely satisfied.

The Lord’s provision for His sheep is such that they can lie down because they are completely satisfied. As we get older, we realize more and more the significance of this truth.

According to this world’s estimate, Nellie Harley did not have much to satisfy her down here in her humble little home and with her very frugal means.

It is wonderful to be able to turn our eyes away from the things the world can offer, even if we can afford them. They can never measure up to the satisfaction which our Lord can give us as He makes us to lie down restfully, peacefully and with deep inward satisfaction in His green pastures.

I am so grateful for this. Does that sound selfish?

The green pastures symbolize the satisfaction which is to be found in Christ alone, a satisfaction which is so complete that we are able to lie down.

2. BESIDE ME - STILL WATERS.

David says -

Psalms 23:2 - *.....he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

or, as this may be rendered, *the waters of quietness.*

A sheep will not drink from a turbulent stream. It will only drink from still waters.

These ‘still waters,’ these ‘waters of quietness,’ speak to us of the rest of heart and mind and the perfect peace which is experienced by the one who can truly say, “The Lord is

my Shepherd.”

The significance of this reference to ‘still waters’ is seen when we turn to -

Isaiah 26:3 - *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

when we read the apostle’s words in -

Philippians 4:6-7 - *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

“He leadeth me beside the still waters.”

It took me a long time to get there! Indeed, I would be very cautious in claiming that I have got there. But I do know something of the wonderful peace, rest and freedom from care and anxiety which Jesus gives. You may know this, too.

If your life is filled with restlessness, care and anxiety, I can suggest something to you which will help to calm and soothe your frayed nerves.

Go to a quiet place by the seashore where you can hear the gentle lapping of the waves; or go into the woods and listen to the wind as it gently moves through the trees and to the carefree song of the birds.

It will do you good to get away from the noise of traffic, the sound of the radio, the sight of television and the thousand-and-one things which make life so noisy and fill us with such strain and stress.

If you can, play a game of golf, or walk along a quiet country lane.

Then do it!

But I can give you a much more effective prescription for frayed nerves and for the debilitating effects of strain and stress than the above suggestions.

Come to the Good Shepherd and ask Him to lead you beside the ‘still waters.’ As you do this, you will find the peace which only He can give and which no one can take from you.

To go down by the seashore, to walk along the country lane, to play a healthy game of golf are all very good, but, in doing these things, you can still take all your cares with you.

What you need first and foremost, therefore, is to get the experience of the ‘still waters’ through fellowship with, and surrender to, the Lord Himself. You can then do all these

other things with a carefree mind and a joyful spirit.

But, it is very possible to feel lonely beside the 'still waters.' It is possible to be in a crowd and to long for the companionship of a friend.

Perhaps the people who experience this loneliness most of all are those who have been blessed with a happy partnership in marriage. They have had to face the terrible experience of bereavement. Now they are left - alone!

Has our psalm any message for such people?

Yes. Indeed it does!

See how the Shepherd Himself wonderfully meets the need for companionship, friendship and fellowship.

3. WITH ME - MY SHEPHERD.

Psalm 23:4 - *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;....*

Perhaps this verse is the one from which, in such circumstance, we can gain the most comfort.

In some respects, we are all walking through the valley, for this life is a valley of tears. Wherever we look, we are faced with bereavements, afflictions, trials, testings, troubles and upsets. The valley in which we are walking is constantly overcast by dark, gloomy shadows. Indeed, it is a valley of death.

For this reason above all others, we are so often and so naturally fearful. I want to tell you that the realized presence of the Lord Jesus Christ banishes fear.

In his gospel, Matthew tells us of one such occasion when the Lord's disciples were caught in a terrible storm while they were crossing the lake.

Read **Matthew 14:22-27**.

In spite of the fact that they were used to sailing in these waters, the fury of the storm was so dreadful that they were afraid they would sink and be drowned. Suddenly, however, Jesus walked to them over the water. As He drew near to them, He said, "It is I: be not afraid."

Immediately their fears were dispelled.

The presence of Christ banishes fear for He has said -

Hebrews 13:5-6 - *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

Someone once said to me, “My great problem is fear. When I get up in the morning, when I go to bed at night, even if I wake up in the night, I am filled with fear! What can I do about it?”

I replied, “Well, there is a sense in which you can do nothing about it, for you have not the will, the strength or the ability in yourself to deal with your fears. However, I am glad to be able to tell you of One Who can deal with your fears and can actually remove them!”

I then told her that the Lord Jesus is able, and only too willing, to remove her fears.

I know what I am writing about, for I have proved His power in this way in my life. Jesus can set us free from fear: fear of the past, fear of the present and fear of the future.

How does He do this? He makes us deeply aware of His presence with us.

In David’s own words -

Psalms 23:4 - *.....I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;.....*

What good news this is for anyone who is being overcome by fear. The realized presence of the Lord Jesus, our wonderful Shepherd banishes fear.

Here is the remedy for all our fears: with me is my Shepherd. How can I fear if I am with Him, if He is with me and the two of us are traveling through the valley together?

4. BEFORE ME - A TABLE.

What did the psalmist mean when he said -

Psalms 23:5 - *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:.....*

Do sheep have a table? Yes.

I have been told that, when the sheep reached a new patch of tender grass, there would often be enemies, such as serpents and scorpions, lurking close by.

These could be very dangerous to the sheep. So, what did the Shepherd do?

He prepared a table, a kind of platform or raised part upon which the sheep could feed in safety.

What does this 'table' tell us?

It tells us that all Christ's sheep are absolutely safe. The Shepherd makes ample provision for their safety. He will not let any harm come to one of His sheep. He is concerned not only for their well-being, but for their safekeeping.

One of the rather lovely things about my friend Nellie Harley was the fact that, if I made it known that I would be in the vestry for counseling at a given time, then she would come to see me. When she had made her way in and had settled herself upon a chair, I would say to her, "How can I help you?"

She must have come to see me many times and always gave the same reason.

"Well, I do not want to take up your time, but I do want to be absolutely sure that everything is all right!"

I knew very well that everything was all right between her and her Lord, but Satan persisted in coming to her and reminding her of things in years gone by. He suggested to her that perhaps, after all, she was too bad, that she was not really saved and that she would not, in fact, go to heaven!

What a wicked deceiver he is!

Revelation 12:9 - *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

What did I do when my friend came to see me in this distressed state of mind?

I always turned to the Word of the Shepherd. I would read them and explain them to her. Then she would go away happy and reassured.

I would, for example, turn to -

John 5:24 - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

Then I would turn to -

John 10:27-30 - *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.*

Maybe I would then read -

2 Timothy 1:12 - *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

I would, of course, point out that the Shepherd has guaranteed the absolute security of every single one of His sheep; that in that day not one of them will be left out of count.

Miss Harley would then struggle to her feet. As she began her walk across the room, this loving, sensitive soul would say, "Thank you very much! I am so glad I came. I am sure now that everything is all right. I am resting upon the promises of God so everything must be all right!"

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!

- G. Keith

But what about these enemies to which David refers, the serpents, the lions, the bears?

David did not forget these in his psalm. Neither did Nellie Harley forget them in her sermon. The Shepherd's provision for His sheep is complete!

5. AROUND ME - MINE ENEMIES.

Psalms 23:5 - *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

The enemies are there all right, as we know only too well.

But the great thing to remember is that, in the safe keeping of the Shepherd, and with reliance upon His power to keep us, we can believe to be victorious over them.

As the apostle Paul reminds us -

Romans 8:35 - *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

Romans 8:37-39 - *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is no enemy from which the Lord cannot deliver us and over which He cannot make us victorious!

We may be beset by unbelief. We may be tempted to be proud. We may have to fight jealousy, or battle against deceit, selfishness, an evil temper, or some secret sin of the flesh, the mind or the spirit.

But, thank God, through faith in our living Shepherd-Lord, we may be victorious all along the line. When He died and rose again, He dealt with all these enemies. He lives to share His victory with us!

It is not our victory. It is His!

1 Corinthians 15:57 - *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

6. AFTER ME - GOODNESS AND MERCY.

Psalm 23:6 - *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:.....*

“Surely,” says David.

The word ‘surely’ means the idea of the reasonableness of things. If the Lord is my Shepherd, it is only reasonable and logical to believe that He will guide me safely through my earthly journey and then take me home to be with Him for ever.

But it is even more than that.

It conveys the whole truth of positive assurance concerning the present benefits and the final preservation of the people of God. They will experience goodness and mercy now, then they will find entrance to their heavenly home later on!

What a good thing it is that we do not know what the future holds for us! What will happen to us next week, or next year? Where we shall be? What will be the state of our health? And so on.

We do not need to know what God has planned, what He will permit ere we reach our heavenly home. Although we do not know what the future holds for us, we do know who holds the future!

All we need to know is that our loving Shepherd is watching over us, caring for us, guiding us, and, here in **Psalm 23:6**, the psalmist reminds us that goodness and mercy are following us and will continue to follow us right through to the end of our earthly journey.

Are you fearful and fretful as you look out into the unknown future and as you wonder what your lot will be during the remaining days of your earthly life?

Your Shepherd has promised that His goodness and His mercy will follow you every day until the end of the journey. Isn't that enough? Surely you can rest your head and your heart upon that?

If the Lord is your Shepherd, what will happen to you when this fleeting life is over? Where will you go? Where will you be?

David tells us -

7. BEYOND ME - THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.

Psalm 23:6 -and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

When you die, will you go to be in the house of the Lord for ever?

If you can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," then you will.

If you cannot say, "The Lord is my Shepherd," then you will not go there, for the Shepherd's house is the one He has prepared for all His blood-bought children.

Is He your Shepherd?

Can you really say, "The Lord is my Shepherd. He is mine and I am His?"

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR

STUDY 11

Scripture Portion: Acts 16:16-34

In this concluding study in our series, we are to consider the record of what must surely be one of the most dramatic conversions - that of the jailor of Philippi.

The emphasis throughout this incident is not only evangelistic, but it is instructive in that, in the small section of scripture before us, a great deal of basic biblical truth is presented in a clear and definite way.

How thrilling it is to read of Paul and Silas who, although they had been so cruelly treated, were able to pray and sing praise to the Lord at midnight, when, humanly speaking, their spirits were at the lowest possible ebb!

Suddenly, while they were in the midst of their prayer and praise meeting in their prison cell, with the prisoners in the other cells listening to them, God stepped in.

Another soul was swept into the kingdom, not only one other, but a whole family was gathered in.

What exactly happened?

Look at this strong, and probably, tough jailor and see!

THE SHOCK HE EXPERIENCED.

Suddenly there was a great earthquake.

Acts 16:26 - *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.*

To gain the force of this, we need to read **Acts 16:19-25**.

The jailor was asleep because he felt confident that the prisoners were quite safe and secure in the inner prison.

What a shock he received when, suddenly, the place began to shake and the prison doors opened!

And what a greater shock he received when he found that Paul and Silas had not

attempted to escape!

What extraordinary prisoners these were!

Acts 16:27-28 - *And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.*

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

Every true conversion produces a “shock.”

There is a sense in which every true conversion is accompanied by an earthquake - by a might spiritual shaking of the Holy Spirit.

Such was the case here.

Acts 16:29 - *Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,*

The jailor received not only a physical shock but a spiritual and an emotional shock in his conscience. This led to his asking the most important question of all.

THE QUESTION HE ASKED.

Acts 16:30 - *And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

Did he have concern at all about his soul’s salvation when he went to sleep? We do not know, but he certainly felt deeply concerned now.

He probably knew of the conversion of Lydia -

Acts 16:14-15 - *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

and of the demon possessed girl -

Acts 16:16-18 - *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:*

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

What we can be quite sure about is that he suddenly became convinced that he was a lost man and that his greatest and most urgent need was to be saved.

No one asks a question like this unless he realizes his awful peril and danger. It is when we realize that God's wrath is upon us -

John 3:36 - *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

that we are perishing -

2 Corinthians 2:15 - *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:*

that we are spiritually dead -

Ephesians 2:1 - *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*

that we cry out -

Acts 16:30 - *And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

Have you asked this most important question? What is the answer to this question?

3. THE ANSWER HE RECEIVED.

Acts 16:31 - *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

There is a whole sermon in this sentence. How ready Paul and Silas were to preach it!

Some preachers are not ready.

Some are vague and too long-winded.

But these two men were ready to give, in concise and clear terms, the answer to the important question asked by the jailor.

In this one brief sentence, **verse 31**, several vital truths are emphasized.

Justification is by faith alone, plus nothing.

We learn this from the word 'believe.'

John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 5:24 - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

Ephesians 2:8 - *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

It is not 'believe and.....' but simply 'believe.'

b. *The nature of saving faith.*

We learn this from the word 'on.' The jailor did not have to only believe about Christ. He had to trust in Him.

Romans 10:9-10 - *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

3. Jesus is the only Saviour.

John 14:6 - *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

d. *Our Lord's full title.*

He is the Lord Jesus Christ, indicating His deity, His humanity and His Messiahship.

4. The assurance of salvation.

The jailor could be sure he was saved - 'shalt!'

f. *It is salvation now!*

We are saved the moment we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ever afterwards, through faith in Him.

Compare -

Luke 23:43 - *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

John 5:24 - *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

7. Salvation is for everybody.

The jailor could be saved by believing and all his household could be saved in the same way, 'and thy house.'

Romans 10:11-13 - *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Now look at -

Acts 16:32 - *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.*

We can just imagine the careful and prayerful explanation of the gospel that Paul and Silas would give to the jailor and his household. Compare (especially **verse 20**) -

Matthew 28:19-20 - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

There is great need today for what might rightly be described as Teaching Evangelism.

4. THE FAITH HE EXERCISED.

Acts 16:32 - *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.*

It is quite clear that the jailor believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

He received Christ as His Saviour -

John 1:12 - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

Now compare -

Acts 16:34 - *And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

What a beautiful scene this brings before us! A whole household sitting down together to a meal and rejoicing together in the Saviour! Look back to -

Acts 16:33 - *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*

Here was a tremendous change which had taken place in the heart and life of this man. He actually 'washed their stripes' and 'set meat before them!'

A true change of heart will quickly show itself in a change of life.

Luke 19:8 - *And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.*

But to conclude this study, notice that two lots of water were used as evidence of the true conversion of this household.

A little water was needed to bathe the backs of Paul and Silas, but a lot of water was needed for another purpose.

Think about this!

5. THE CONFESSION HE MADE.

Acts 16:33 - *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*

Undoubtedly the jailor and his family confessed the Lord with their mouths.

Romans 10:9-10 - *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

They also confessed by baptism which, undoubtedly, Paul and Silas would have explained to them.

Matthew 28:19-20 - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Notice about their baptism.

a. *There was something urgent about it.*

Acts 16:33 tells us that they were ‘baptized the same hour of the night.’

2. There was something corporate about it.

They were baptized with others. ‘He and all his....’ They had all trusted Christ. They all confessed Him by baptism.

c. *There was joy and gladness about it.*

Where does it say that?

It does not actually say it, but who can doubt that it was experienced?

This was the case as recorded in -

Acts 8:39 - *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*