

WEEK ELEVEN

Salvation Crystal Clear

Curtis Hutson

Many who think they are going to Heaven are going to be disappointed. All of the ten virgins went out to meet him. All thought they were ready, but only five were. Jesus said to the others, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

There is an old spiritual song that our black friends used to sing. "Ever'body talks about Heav'n ain't goin' there!" Those words are absolutely true. Many who think they are going to Heave heave only a false hope.

R. A. Torrey once said that a man is better off with no hope than a false hope. He went on to explain that if a man has a false hope, he will go through life thinking he is saved and never come to know Jesus Christ as Saviour, while if a man has no hope at all, he is more likely to find the true hope, the only plan of salvation, and trust Jesus Christ as Savior.

The ark had only one door. Jesus said, "I am the door: by

me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Christ is the only door to Heaven, the only entrance. D. L. Moody said, "He is the open sesame to Heaven." He is the password.

There was not one door for the housecat and another for the lion, the king of the jungle. Everything that rode the ark to safety had to go in the same door.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST:
WINTER WALKS WITH JESUS

ONE THING I KNOW

Am I imagining things or does Jesus seem to make a habit out of healing on the Sabbath? We read of the Sabbath forty-five times in the gospels and 75% of those references have to do with Jesus supposedly breaking the Sabbath. It seems as though every time He heals, it's on the Sabbath.

Was Jesus making a point? I think He was. He gave rest and relief on the day of rest. Think ahead to the millennial reign of Christ! Imagine a one thousand year Sabbath! We will experience rest from sin, healing and life at it's fullest! Through it all, we will have no one to thank more than Jesus.

Imagine the things we will see clearly for the first time. We will know the same joy

as this blind man who was given sight for the first time.

His life was transformed. The beggar's life was gone. He didn't have to feel his way around the streets any more. There was no need for anyone to guide him by the hand ever again. His eyes drank in the rich colors of the world that surrounded him. Imagine his gaze as he studied the world around him.

Once again, those pesky Pharisees thought they had to do God's work and steal the joy. There is always someone who thinks their job is to find happy people and make them sad. They want to turn the optimist into a pessimist. Rather than enjoy the thrills of the day, they want you to focus on the problems of tomorrow.

His parents were intimidated by them. They didn't want to give up their comfortable seats in the synagogue, so they would not confess Christ. The young man did not know what to believe at first. He just knew what God had done. He could not confess Christ till Christ revealed Himself to him. But He did know that God had done a work in him.

We may not know everything but we sure can tell others what we do know. Interestingly, when he proclaimed what he did know, Christ gave him even greater insight. That same principle works for us too. Don't fret over the things you don't know yet. Just stay busy confessing those things you do know!

DAILY READING: John 9

DAY
1

Cities/Places

1. How long had the man been blind?
2. Why did Jesus say he had to work while it is day?
3. On what day did Jesus heal this man?
4. What did this man's parents fear?
5. What do you like about the blind man's response to the Pharisees?
6. How would you explain verse 39?
7. Why did Jesus say that the Pharisee's sin remains.

APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

THE LORD IS MY GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10 and Psalm 23 should be read together. They compliment and complete one another.

David says, "The Lord is my Shepherd" and Jesus replies, "I am the Good Shepherd."

The Psalmist writes "I shall not want. Thou makes me to lie down in green pastures" and "thou preparest a table for me." The Savior responds, "by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

A pasture is a place of nature beauty and nourishment. Green pastures represent dining in the lap of luxury for sheep. They did not wander where their next meal was

coming from. They were sleeping in it. They need only wake up, lean over and take a bite. So too for the Christian we can count on Him to "give us this day our daily bread."

We learn from these that He both restores the soul and saves the soul. He leads in paths of righteousness and His sheep hear His voice and follow Him.

Is there a more familiar refrain than "Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." And how comforting it is to hear Jesus say, "I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep!"

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" is most certainly an answer to "My cup runneth over."

We learn also of the security of the believer. Our salvation and security is not dependent upon us but upon Him. Our hands may slip. Our grip might loosen. But He is relentless. His grasp is strong and unwavering. He never tires. What a comfort it is to know that our eternal souls are in His hands and not our own!

The Lord Jesus is my Good Shepherd!

DAILY READING: John 10

1. Who enters some other way?
2. How does the Good Shepherd call His sheep?
3. Who will the sheep not follow?
4. What does Jesus say He has the power to do?
5. What season was it?
6. Why did the Jews wish to stone Him?
7. What was the purpose of Jesus' miracles (works)?

APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

DAY
2

Cities/Places

I NEVER KNEW YOU

It ought to be close to impossible to read this passage without reexamining our relationship with God, at least for a moment.

These words of Christ are indeed sobering. I don't want to be accused of causing Christians to doubt their salvation. I heard one evangelist (emotionalist would be a better word) say "If you are 99% sure then you are 100% lost!" There is no biblical basis for that statement. It was said simply to create doubt and bring a big altar call. However, hell is hot and eternity is forever, so we ought to take time to be sure.

My attention is always drawn to the fact that Jesus is speaking to familiar people. We find them dining in His presence and sitting under His teachings. Isn't it amazing that one could listen to Jesus preach and still die and go to hell? Many today are sitting under gospel preaching but failing

to walk through the open door.

The pivotal point of this story is the moment when the door is shut. The open door represents a time when one could freely enter in. They could enjoy the Master's company at times and the blessings and benefits of His graciousness. They saw no need for commitment or to enter in? Perhaps they thought there was plenty of time. Maybe they didn't see the need to walk through the door. After all they knew Him and He knew them: or so they thought.

They were startled when the door shut. Even more startled when the Master would not open. Reading this, I'm sure that your mind wanders back to Noah's day. There was so much time to accept and believe. But once the door was shut the opportunity was gone. The author of Hebrews gives us some sobering words.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27.

When I examine my salvation I ask myself not how good I am but if I have followed God's plan for salvation. I don't mean just going through the motions but from the heart. Can I see 2 Corinthians 5:17 in my life? Can the fruit of a believer be seen in me? (Matthew 7:20) If and when I do stray, does God chasten me? (Hebrews 12:5-8)

When I go back to these biblical principles I find comfort in my salvation. You too should look for these "signs of life." Don't count on empty and insincere prayers, church attendance or Christian heritage to get you in. Determine now to enter in the open door of faith and repentance. Make Jesus the Lord of your life. Hear His voice and follow the Good Shepherd!

DAILY READING: Luke 13:22-35

1. Where is Jesus headed?
2. What will many not be able to do?
3. Who will shut the door?
4. How will those without appeal to the Master?
5. His response will be what?
6. What did the Pharisees say Herod would do?
7. It seems strange that Pharisees would be concerned for His welfare? Can you think of any Pharisees that might be concerned? If so which?
8. What did Jesus intend to do in Jerusalem?

APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

DAY
3

Cities/Places

THE WAY UP IS DOWN

I love the way Jesus tends to turn the tables. The first shall be last. The last shall be first. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. He that exalteth himself shall be abased. All of these teachings of Jesus turn the world's philosophy on it's head.

We know these teachings yet I think many of us get trapped in the world's way of thinking. We still tend to exalt ourselves. We still tend to rush to the front of the line. We still fight against humbling ourselves. We are so much like the Apostle Paul when he wrote, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Romans 7:19

Experience, practice, prayer and the Holy Spirit are really the only means by which we can incorporate this into our life. Will you determine to let God do this work in you?

We find this truth practically portrayed in the parable that follows. Several were called to a great feast. However, in their pride they felt that they had more important

things to tend to. They had other priorities. So they excused themselves from the feast. What a picture this is of people today who have no time for God. They will tell you of their warm feelings and love of God. They acknowledge that they ought to be in church but they just don't have time.

As a result, those who were not initially invited are welcomed. Jesus is painting a verbal picture of the Jewish rejection of the Messiah that opens the way to the Gentiles. However, the application is even broader. We find that the Gospel goes to every creature!

The servant is bidden to go out into the highways and hedges and compel folks to come in. The highway is easy to understand. Hedges are simply fences. Simply put, this is door to door soulwinning.

We are to compel or give others a reason to come. Did you notice how little attention was given to those who outright rejected the invitation. Time was spent giving the good news to those who would hear it!

This doesn't mean that we should give up on those difficult cases. But it does tell us to concentrate on getting the news to the needy who will receive it.

Notice also the urgency. The servant is told to go quickly. The feast was ready. The room was prepared. The time was now!

Finally, give attention to his purpose: "that my house may be filled."

Sometimes we find excuses to justify poor attendance in church. Some suggest that God isn't interested in numbers. We make ourselves feel good by saying "its the quality not the quantity that counts." There are a couple problems with that thinking. The first is that it is unbiblical. Second, every unsaved soul is a number that counts in hell. Every soul not in a good Bible preaching church is a soul not living up to his full potential in Christ. While I agree that numbers shouldn't be used for personal bragging rights, we must confess that every soul is a person made in the image of God that needs to know and grow in Christ!

DAILY READING: Luke 14

1. How did Jesus stump the lawyers and Pharisees?
2. Why should you not choose the best seats?
3. What happens to those who exalt themselves?
4. What happens to those who humble themselves?
5. Why is this so hard to do?
6. What was the Master's reaction to the excuses?
7. Why is soulwinning important?

APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

DAY
4

Cities/Places

LOST

I'm a loser.

I don't mean that in the way that it sounds. I simply tend to misplace things. I lose them. Even as I write this, I have something very important that I can't find.

Last week, I lost a card with a prospect's name on it. I needed a couple ladies to follow up on a visit. But I couldn't find the card with the name, address and phone number. I searched all over my desk. I rummaged through the papers and books. I looked to see if I had accidentally thrown it away. I checked in my vehicles. I looked at home. I went through my pants pockets, shirt pockets and suit pockets. I looked everywhere. I was very dismayed that I

could not find it. I felt very irresponsible. I was discouraged because there were people ready to follow up but I had lost the information. Virginia and I were both praying about it. (She and Margaret were going to visit.)

Then one day, sitting at my desk, I just happened to glance at the bulletin board in my office. There it was. I had tacked it up there so I wouldn't lose it! LOL!

Jesus uses similar illustrations of people who have lost items that are valuable and precious to them. They were in great consternation. They would not give up on the search.

I am reminded on the McCann family. Their daughter Madeline went missing two years ago. Just yesterday, they were on the news and still searching.

This is the picture Jesus gives of those who search for lost souls. It is here that He illustrates with the parable of the prodigal son. Does your heart not rejoice with him when you see the son walking home?

Jesus tells us that there is rejoicing in heaven over just one sinner that repents! Throw a party in heaven: tell someone of God's saving grace!

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

DAILY READING: Luke 15

DAY
5

Cities/Places

1. Who draws near to hear Jesus?
2. Who murmured against Him?
3. Who does the shepherd call when he finds his sheep?
4. Some have suggested that the coin was part of a headpiece that signified her married status. The loss of the coin would be like the loss of a stone from a wedding ring. How would you feel if you were her?
5. Why do you believe the brother that remained was bitter? Should he have been?
6. What did he retain that his brother had lost?

APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?



TABLE TALK



PASTOR'S MESSAGE