

**Helping Our
Children Present
Jesus as the Son of
God
Part II**

**Growing Godly Family Series
Manual 27**

By

Duane L. Anderson

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Growing Godly Families Series

This series of manuals is the result of a series of weekly e-mail topics that have been prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. They originally started out as a one page topic that gradually grew to the point where most topics are about three pages in length.

This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders to give them Biblical principles for the development of godly physical and spiritual families. Because they give Biblical principles for developing godly families, they are also helpful for new Christians that want to grow and become godly families.

Mark 10:43-45 says, "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." In these verses Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership. The purpose of this series is to help every family develop their full potential as godly families.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate in this world before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Success produces rewards until we die but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, "So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life." I Corinthians 10:31 says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." The Growing Godly Families Series is designed to help your family life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

Table of Contents

	Page
28. Jesus Forgave the Woman Caught in Adultery	1
29. Jesus Taught that He is the Light of the World	4
30. Jesus Explained How to be Set Free	7
31. Jesus Warned that the Devil is the Father of Many	10
32. Jesus Taught that He is the I AM	13
33. Jesus Healed a Blind Man	16
34. Jesus Was Recognized as a Prophet by the Man	19
35. Jesus Was Proclaimed as the One who Gives Sight	22
36. Jesus Was Worshiped as the Son of God	25
37. Jesus is the Door of the Sheepfold	28
38. Jesus is the Good Shepherd	31
39. Jesus and the Father are One	34
40. Jesus was Accused of Blasphemy	37
41. Jesus Heard that Lazarus was Sick	40
42. Jesus Told the Disciples that Lazarus had Died	43
43. Jesus Told Martha Lazarus Would Rise Again	46
44. Jesus Told Mary Lazarus Would Rise Again	49
45. Jesus Raised Lazarus from the Dead	52
46. Jesus Knew the Religious Leaders were Plotting His Death	55
47. Jesus was Anointed by Mary	58
48. Jesus Entered the City of Jerusalem	61
49. Jesus Said that the Hour Had Come for Him to Die	64
50. Jesus saw that Many Wanted the Praise of Men	67
51. Jesus Offered the People the Opportunity to Choose Life	70
52. Jesus Washed the Feet of the Disciples	73
53. Jesus Explained why He Washed the Feet of the Disciples	76
54. Jesus Explained that one Would Betray Him	79
55. Jesus Gave the New Commandment	82

Jesus Forgave the Woman Caught in Adultery

In our last topic we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children that we accept others including those who disagree with us. Christ showed that He accepted us by dying for us while we were still sinners. In contrast, we saw that the Pharisees mocked and made fun of those who disagreed with them. In our topic today we will see that they attempted to trap Jesus so that they could destroy Him.

We see how the scribes and Pharisees tried to trap Jesus. John 8:1-6 says, “But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?’ This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.” Here we see that the scribes and Pharisees tried to trap Jesus the next day.

Jesus spent the night out on the Mount of Olives. This is the place where Jesus usually went at night when He was at a feast in Jerusalem. Luke 26:39 says, “Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him.” Then early in the morning Jesus returned to the temple to teach the people that wanted to hear Him. In fact we see that He sat down as He taught them. While Jesus was sitting there teaching, the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to Him.

The word translated “when they had set” means to make stand in the presence of others. This word is used in Acts 4:7 when Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin. That verse says, “And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, ‘By what power or by what name have you done this?’” In Acts Peter and John were set in middle so that they could be questioned by the Sanhedrin about the man that they had healed. Here in John this woman was placed in the middle where everyone could see her so that the scribes and Pharisees could use her to trap Jesus in His words. Then the scribes and Pharisees said, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.” The fact that this woman was caught in the very act shows that it was a trap because it takes two people to commit adultery.

In order to catch her in the very act, the other person was probably a part of those who were standing there accusing the woman. Then the scribes and Pharisees said, “Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” These men thought that they could accuse Jesus either way He answered. If Jesus did not say, “Stone her” then they would have accused Him of breaking the Law of Moses. Leviticus 20:10 says, “The man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.” If Jesus said to stone her, the scribes and Pharisees would have immediately told the people gathered there that Jesus did not practice what He taught about forgiveness or compassion.

Instead of answering the question of these men, Jesus just bent over and started writing in the dust on the ground in front of Him. He acted as if He did not even hear the men. John 8:7-9 says, "So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." The Pharisees thought that they had caught Jesus in a trap because He did not answer them. As a result, they just continued to ask Jesus their question.

Finally Jesus stood up. He looked at the scribes and Pharisees and said, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." Jesus just told these men to follow the instructions of Deuteronomy 17:6-7. Those verses say, "Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you." This meant that the witnesses had to identify themselves as witnesses of the fact that they had caught this woman in adultery as well as identifying the other person that was guilty.

Then Jesus had said that the one who was not guilty of the same sin had to be the first one to begin to throw stones at the woman and the other person. Once Jesus had spoken these words to the men He bent down and started writing in the dust again. Suddenly the men realized that they had to be innocent before they could throw a stone at the woman. It was no longer a question to trap Jesus. Instead their question had become a question that forced each man to examine his own heart. People try to avoid examining their own hearts because Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" That day each of these men was forced to examine his heart.

The scribes and Pharisees claimed that they kept the law. I Timothy 4:2 tells what they had really done. That verse says, "Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron." They had lied to themselves and accused others so many times that they had seared their consciences. Suddenly Jesus had forced them to listen to their own conscience before they did anything to the woman. They had been caught in their own trap. The oldest man condemning this woman was the first to move. If he was like people today he probably took two or three steps backward, then six or eight more. Finally when he was far enough away from the crowd he turned around and walked quickly away. He was quickly followed by all of the others from the oldest on down to the youngest one who had accused the woman that day.

Many people had asked the question through the years, "What did Jesus write in the dust on the ground?" We do not know but it may have been the Ten Commandments. Whatever it was, Jesus allowed these men time to think so that their own consciences became the thing that convicted them. Finally there were only two people left standing there. That was Jesus and the woman. John 8:10-11 says, "When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, 'Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.'" Jesus was the One who had committed no sin. However, Jesus chose to set the woman free from her sin instead of condemn her.

Jesus asked two questions but only one required an answer from the woman. The first question was, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours?” This question caused her to look around her. She may have been so ashamed that she was just looking at the ground waiting for the first stone to hit her. Since it would have taken a few minutes for all of the men to leave, the woman also had time to think. She knew that she was a sinner. She also realized that Jesus was filled with love and compassion for her. She fully understood why Luke 15:1 says, “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him.” As the woman looked around she saw that all of her accusers were gone.

Then the woman was able to answer the second question that Jesus asked. The second question was, “Has no one condemned you?” The woman answered, “No one, Lord.” The word translated “Lord” means the one to whom a person or thing belongs. In the Roman Empire of that day, about half of all of the people were slaves who were owned by a master. These slaves used the word “lord” as a title of respect for their master. As a result, the title “Lord” with a capital L is used either for God or for the Messiah in the Bible. When we recognize Jesus as Lord, we are saying that He is the person to whom we belong. This woman recognized the compassion and acceptance of Jesus that day. As a result, she responded to that love and recognized Jesus as Lord.

We see that Jesus accepts all who come to Him in repentance and faith. In Matthew 11:28 Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” This woman had a heavy burden that day. She knew that she was guilty of adultery. She had been caught in the very act. She had been publicly humiliated in front of a large group of people. She had observed as those who had condemned her were convicted by their own consciences. Now she was standing in front of the only person that was without sin and could have cast that first stone. Instead Jesus gave this woman spiritual rest. By saying, “Neither do I condemn you,” Jesus forgave her sin. By saying, “Go and sin no more,” Jesus gave her a new life for the future. This woman left Jesus that day with a life that had been changed for eternity.

We want to show our physical and spiritual children how to show the love and compassion that Jesus showed to this woman. Many people like this woman feel that their lives have been so sinful that they could never be forgiven. Jesus still says, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” We want to help our children clearly learn to share this message from the Word of God with all those who feel that their lives are too sinful to be forgiven. Many such people are ready to see Jesus change their lives for eternity. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share the love and compassion of Jesus.

Jesus Taught that He is the Light of the World

In our last topic we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to show the love and compassion of Jesus. We saw that we can show that love by our own example as we share the love of Jesus with those who feel that their lives have been so sinful that Jesus would never forgive them. Instead we can share the fact that Jesus promises to give them spiritual rest. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus can give that spiritual rest because of the fact that He is the Light of the world.

The previous day the officers that had been sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus had returned without Jesus. John 7:46 says, “The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” The chief priests and Pharisees had mocked the officers that day. Now we see that Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees. John 8:12-13 says, “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’ The Pharisees therefore said to Him, ‘You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.’” Here we see one of the many places that Jesus says “I am.” In this case Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.”

The religious leaders were familiar with the books written by Moses. They knew that God had spoken to Moses. Exodus 3:14 says, “And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” As a result, when Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world,” the Pharisees knew that Jesus was saying that He is God because Psalm 27:1 says, “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” Jesus promised that those who followed Him would not walk in darkness. Jesus said that those who followed Him would have the Light of life to guide their lives.

The Pharisees did not want to accept the fact that Jesus is God. As a result, they challenged Him by saying, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.” Deuteronomy 17:6 says, “Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” Here the Pharisees were saying that Jesus was the only witness of Himself and therefore they said that His witness was not true. We saw in John 5 that the Jesus had given these Jewish religious leaders four witnesses of the fact that He is God. Those witnesses were John the Baptist, the works of Jesus, the witness of the Father and the witness of the Scriptures. Jesus had given those witnesses when these Jewish religious leaders had wanted to kill Him. We will see that their attitude has not changed.

Jesus went on to say in John 8:14-19, “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One

who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Where is Your Father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.’” Jesus said that He could bear witness of Himself because His witness was true. He said He knew where He came from and where He was going.

Jesus knew that He came from the Father. In fact He goes on to talk about His relationship with the Father throughout this chapter. Jesus explained the problem that the Pharisees had. He said that they judged according to the flesh. Jesus had said in John 7:24, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” The fact that they were judging according to the flesh meant that they made their decisions based on human knowledge instead of spiritual understanding. Human knowledge and its consequences are described in I Timothy 6:20-21 which says, “O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.” Here we see that human knowledge produces profane babblings, vain babblings and contradictions. We will see that is exactly what the Pharisees did in this chapter as their depended on their own knowledge.

In contrast, we see that spiritual knowledge helps us to know the will of God. Colossians 1:9-10 says, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” We want to help our children come to realize that the Lord is the source of all spiritual knowledge.

Jesus said that He did not judge anyone. In His first coming Jesus came to pay the penalty for sin so that all who come to Him can have their sins forgiven. However, when the day comes that Jesus does judge, His judgment will be true. In addition, Jesus said that He was not alone. He said that He was with the Father who has sent Him. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became 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.” Jesus came from the Father and He knew that within a few months He would be returning to the Father. However, the Father was with Him all the time that He was on the earth as well except for the time when Jesus bore our sins on the cross. Mark 15:33-34 says, “Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” During that time Jesus was separated from the Father as He bore our sins.

Jesus said that He was not the only witness because His Father who sent Him was also bearing witness of Him. However, we see that the Jewish religious leaders chose to reject the signs that were done by Jesus. Instead they asked Jesus, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus explained to the religious leaders that their real problem was unbelief. Because of their unbelief, they did not know Jesus and they did not know the Father. Jesus said that if they knew Him (placed their faith in Him) that they would also know the Father. Then they would have had spiritual understanding.

In John 8:20-24 we read, “These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come. Then Jesus said to them again, ‘I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.’ So the Jews said, “Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come’?” And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.’” Jesus taught the people in the temple but we see why the religious leaders could not lay their hands on Him. The time for Jesus to die had not yet come so the leaders could not touch Him.

Then Jesus told the religious leaders that He would soon be going away. This referred to the fact that after His death and resurrection that He would return to His Father in heaven. Jesus also said that the day would come when the religious leaders would seek Him. However, they would seek Him for the wrong reasons. They would not seek Him for spiritual life. Instead they would seek Him so that they could put Him to death. That would happen just a few months later. Jesus said that because they would seek Him for the wrong reason that they would die in their sin. Then they would never be able to go when He was going because they lacked eternal life.

Instead of understanding what Jesus meant, the Jewish religious leaders asked one another if Jesus was planning to kill Himself. The traditions of the Jews taught that a person who committed suicide would spend eternity in the worst part of hades. Because of this tradition (which is not from the Bible) the religious leaders were actually making fun of Jesus by this statement. They also failed to understand what their own judgment would be like. Revelation 20:15 says, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Jesus warned in Luke 13:27-28, “But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.”

Then Jesus explained to the religious leaders why they would experience eternal judgment. Jesus had come from God and would return to God. Jesus said the religious leaders were from beneath. Jesus said that the things that they did were for this world. Jesus said that He was not from this world. Jesus said that because they were from this world and did not know the Father that they would die in their sins. Jesus clearly defined for the Jewish religious leaders the thing that would cause them to die in their sins. The one sin that keeps people from having eternal life is the sin of unbelief. Jesus said that because of their sin of unbelief in the fact that He was God and was from the Father that they would die in their sins. Here we see a key lesson that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain. Jesus said in John 16:9 that the Holy Spirit convicts, “Of sin, because they do not believe in Me.” The one sin that keeps people from receiving eternal life is their sin of unbelief. They refuse to believe that Jesus was without sin and died to pay the penalty for their sin. We want to help our children learn to explain unbelief is the one sin that keeps people from eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to work with the Holy Spirit in evangelism.

Jesus Explained How to Be Set Free

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others that the one sin that will keep them from receiving eternal life is the sin of unbelief. That is the one sin of which the Holy Spirit convicts them and our children will work with the Holy Spirit as they learn to explain that sin clearly. In our topic today we will see that Jesus explained to the religious leaders how they could be set free from their sin of unbelief.

The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. I Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” We will see again in our topic that the religious leaders could not understand because of their lack of belief. John 8:25-27 says, “Then they said to Him, ‘Who are You?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.’ They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.” We see that the religious leaders showed this lack of spiritual understanding by the fact that they again asked Jesus who He was.

Jesus had been telling them who He was from the beginning of His public ministry. He had given them signs to show that the words that He spoke were true. The problem that the Jewish religious leaders had was the fact that they chose to reject the statement of Jesus each time He said that He came from God. Jesus had just said a few minutes earlier in John 8:15-16, “You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.” In that statement Jesus showed that the religious leaders judged Him because they were depending on their sinful nature. Then He said that He was with the Father who had sent Him. However, their unbelief was willful because Jesus had just told them the truth.

Jesus went on to say that that words that He was speaking to the world were the words that He had heard from the Father. The purpose of Jesus while He was on this earth was to carry out the will of the Father. That was why He had told the religious leaders earlier in John 5:30, “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” Jesus had said at that time that He spoke what He heard from the Father. Instead of believing Jesus, the religious leaders wanted to kill Him. Here we see that one of the results of their unbelief was the fact that they were going to put Jesus to death as a result of their unbelief. That was why they could not understand when Jesus spoke to them about the Father. They rejected both Jesus and the Father.

Jesus went on to tell the religious leaders that He always did the things that pleased the Father. John 8:28-30 says, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do

those things that please Him.’ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.” Here we see that Jesus told the religious leaders that He knew how they were going to kill Him. Jesus had earlier told Nicodemus in John 3:14, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” Jesus now told the religious leaders in advance how they would kill Him.

Jesus said that many of the Jews would know that He was the Christ after His death and resurrection. Acts 2:41 says, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” Then Acts 6:7 says, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” The religious leaders as a whole rejected Jesus but many of the common people placed their faith in Him after His death and resurrection. These people realized after His death and resurrection that the things that Jesus spoke did come from the Father and they repented of their sin of unbelief. They showed that they believed what Jesus said about the Father was true.

Jesus said that He spoke these things because His Father had instructed Him to say these things to the people. He said again that the Father was the One who had sent Him. In fact He said that the Father was with Him and that the Father had not left Him alone. The only time that the Father and the Son were ever separated was when Jesus bore our sins on the cross. That was when Jesus said in Matthew 27:46, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” Jesus also said that the things that He did were pleasing to the Father. Even though the religious leaders rejected Jesus, we see that the words of Jesus had a great impact on many of the people. In fact we see that as Jesus spoke these words about His relationship with the Father that many believed Him.

Then Jesus began to speak directly to those who believed Him. John 8:31-36 says, “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”

They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free?’” Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

We see that at a later time that some had a true belief and others had a false belief. John 12:42-43 says, “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” That is why Jesus took time to explain how those who believed in Him would show that they were true disciples. Jesus told them, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Here we see that Jesus said that a true disciple will abide in His Word. This was later illustrated in the early church. Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” True disciples will continue to study the teachings of Jesus so that they can grow in their understanding of Him and His love.

Jesus also explained one of the results of abiding in His Word. We see that those who continue in the Word of Christ are set free. The Pharisees taught that a person would be acceptable to God if that person kept the law. In contrast, Isaiah 64:6 says, “But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” That is why Paul explained in Galatians that the purpose of the law was to bring us to Christ. Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” Paul later said in Galatians 5:1, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Christ wanted those who believed in Him to be set free from their bondage of trying to keep the Law.

True disciples will have a desire to abide in the teachings of Jesus. Jesus said that the things that He taught would help true followers to know the truth. Jesus promised that it is the truth that sets a person free from the bondage to Old Testament Law because those who abide in Jesus are under a new law, the law of liberty. Galatians 5:13 explains how we put that new law into practice when that verse says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” In Christ we are able to serve one another in His love.

Those who were trying to keep the Old Testament Law because they thought that would make them acceptable to God could not understand what Jesus meant. As a result, they said, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, ‘You will be made free’?” Here we see that those who did not have a true belief in Jesus thought that because they were descendents of Abraham that they would automatically share in the promises that were given to Abraham. John 1:11-13 says, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Jesus came to the Jews but most of them did not receive Him. They needed to have a spiritual birth so that they could become the children of God.

Jesus explained this difference by comparing a slave and a son. A slave is not a permanent part of the family while the son will continue in the family forever. Jesus made it clear that those who did not have true belief were still slaves of sin and not sons of God so they would not have eternal life. In contrast, those who had true belief and chose to abide in Jesus and His Word became sons of the Father and received eternal life. This was why Jesus could tell these Jews, “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” This is also the message that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain clearly to others. Jesus died so that all those who repent of their sin of unbelief and come to Him in faith will become sons and will have eternal life. They will show that they have this life because they will take root in the love of Christ. Then they will be able to serve one another in love. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain to others how to be free indeed.

31.

Jesus Warned that the Devil was the Father of Many

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others what it means to be set free. We saw that true believers are those who receive Jesus and place their faith in Him. Such individuals are now sons of God instead of slaves of sin. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus warned the religious leaders that many of them were still serving their father, the devil.

Jesus knew that many of the Jewish leaders were depending on the fact that they were descendents of Abraham for spiritual life. In John 8:37-39 we read, "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus understood the fact that all of the Jews were physical descendents of Abraham. However, the Jewish religious leaders did not understand the fact that they had to be spiritual descendents as well as physical descendents in order to have spiritual life.

Jesus also knew the hearts of the religious leaders. Jesus told them, "You seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you." Here we see that Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders that their plan and goal was to kill Him. John 5:16 says, "For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath." Then John 5:18 says, "Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." John 7:19-20 says, "'Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?' The people answered and said, 'You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?'" The leaders denied that they wanted to kill Jesus but John 7:30 says, "Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come." We will see many more places in the book of John that the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus.

Jesus said that the real problem of the religious leaders was the fact that His Word did not have any place in them. The word translated "place" means to make room or to leave space. The word is used in Mark 2:2 where we read, "Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them." In Mark there was no room to receive the four men who carried their friend to Jesus. Here in John Jesus told the religious leaders that they had no room in their hearts to receive the Word of God. Jesus gave the parable of the sower sowing the seed. Then He explained to His disciples in Mark 4:14-15, "The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts." The religious leaders had hard hearts like the hard dirt on the roadside.

The religious leaders immediately answered, "Abraham is our father." They thought that since there were physical descendents of Abraham that they would surely have a place in heaven.

Jesus then told them that they were not spiritual children of Abraham. John 8:39-43 says, “Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father.’ Then they said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.’” In Genesis 15:6 we read, “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” Here we see that the work that Abraham did was believe God.

Jesus said the religious leaders were not spiritual children of Abraham because they did not believe God. Instead they wanted to kill Jesus. Then Jesus explained why they wanted to kill Him. They wanted to kill Him because He had told them the truth. Jesus told the religious leaders that Abraham would not have tried to kill Him. Jesus then told the religious leaders that they were doing the work of their father. The religious leaders understood that Jesus had said that God was not their father but that they were doing the works of their father. As a result, they thought that Jesus was saying that they were born of fornication or they had heard about the birth of Jesus. The word translated “fornication” means any form of sexual activity outside of marriage. Spiritual fornication would be the worship of idols. The religious leaders did not want to be accused of either physical or spiritual fornication so they said that they had one Father and that was God.

Jesus explained to them that they showed by their actions that God was not their Father. Jesus said, “If God were your Father, you would love Me.” Here we see that Jesus was speaking about issues of the heart to these religious leaders. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” The words and actions of the religious leaders showed the condition of their hearts. Their hearts were in total rebellion against both the Father and the Son. I John 4:8 says, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” They did not know God and they did not understand His character.

Jesus said again that He came from God. He did not act on the basis of His own will because Jesus always did the will of the Father. Jesus had said in John 5:30, “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” Jesus always spoke and worked in perfect agreement with the Father. He came to this earth to pay the penalty for sin because that was the plan of the Father and the Son before the creation. As a result, Jesus came to this earth because the Father sent Him to pay the penalty for our sin.

Jesus asked the religious leaders why they did not understand His speech. Then Jesus explained why they did not understand. Jesus said that the reason that they did not understand was due to the fact that they were not able to listen to His word. The word translated “to listen” means to hear so that there is understanding. Jesus said that they were not able to hear with understanding. As I Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” The religious leaders lacked spiritual discernment. Then Jesus explained why they lacked spiritual discernment.

John 8:44-47 says, “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” The religious leaders lacked spiritual discernment because the devil was the one who was their father. In addition, they carried out the desires of their father.

We see that Jesus then described two aspects of the character of the devil. First, Satan is a murderer. In John 10:10 Jesus said, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” The goal of Satan is always to destroy. He destroyed the spiritual life of Adam and Eve in the garden. As a result, Adam and Eve experienced separation from God, fear, guilt and shame within and began to blame others. Second, Satan is a liar. Satan cannot stand in the truth and he cannot speak the truth because there is no truth in him. Instead he speaks from his own resources. This verse also tells us that Satan is both a liar and the father of lies. He lied to Adam and Eve in the garden when he told Eve in Genesis 3:4, “You will not surely die.”

The religious leaders did not want to hear the truth and so they refused to believe Him. Then Jesus asked the religious leaders a question, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” John 5:18 says, “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” In that verse the Jews had accused Jesus of two sins. However, the first was breaking the traditions of the Pharisees and that is not a violation of the commandment of God. The perfect sinless life that Jesus had lived was evidence of the fact that Jesus was the Son of God and equal with the Father. As a result, the religious leaders had no evidence that would show that Jesus was guilty of any sin.

Then Jesus pointed out that they were the ones who needed to examine their own lives when He said, “And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?” Jesus pointed out the fact that those who are followers of God will hear the Word of God. The word translated “hear” means to hear so that there is understanding. The religious leaders had no understanding of the things that the Word of God taught about Jesus. Jesus made it clear that if they were true followers of God that they would understand the Word of God. The fact that they had no understanding was evidence of the fact that they did not belong to God. The very fact that they were planning to kill Jesus when He was not guilty of any sin was evidence of the fact that they were the children of Satan rather than the children of God. Their evil plans showed the condition of their hearts. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to recognize the fact that people will be controlled by what is in their hearts. If their hearts are controlled by the love of Christ, they will love others. Hearts controlled by sin will commit evil actions. May the Lord richly bless you as you help them to understand that people will be controlled by what is in their hearts.

Jesus Taught that He is the I AM

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to recognize the fact that people are controlled by what is in their hearts. An unbeliever is controlled by sin and will commit evil actions. In contrast, a heart controlled by the love of Christ will have a desire to do those things that are pleasing to God. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus taught that He is the I AM.

Jesus had told the Jewish religious leaders that they were of their father, the devil, and did his works. Instead of accepting the truth about their own lives, the religious leaders immediately condemned Jesus. John 8:48-53 says, “Then the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?’ Jesus answered, ‘I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.’ Then the Jews said to Him, ‘Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’ Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?’ In their anger the religious leaders accused Jesus of being a Samaritan and having a demon. They were trying to mock and dishonor Jesus.

Jesus answered the statement and then went on to tell the religious leaders how to have eternal life. Jesus replied that He did not have a demon. Instead Jesus said that He honored His Father. It was the religious leaders who were dishonoring Him. Then Jesus went on to explain that He did not seek His own glory. Jesus had said the previous day in John 7:18, “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.” Here Jesus said again that His desire was to honor His Father and not to seek His own glory. Jesus then went on to give a wonderful promise about all that would keep His word. He promised that such individuals would never taste death.

Since the religious leaders did not have spiritual life, they could not understand the fact that they were already spiritually dead. God told Adam in Genesis 2:16-17, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” Spiritual death is separation from God. Adam said in Genesis 3:10, “So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” Adam experienced spiritual death the moment that He ate of the fruit and so He hid himself from God. In contrast, Jesus said here that those who receive spiritual life will never experience spiritual death even though they experience physical death.

Instead of understanding, the religious leaders immediately said that they now knew that Jesus had a demon. They knew that Abraham and the prophets had died. In contrast, Jesus had just said, “If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.” Jesus had explained in John 5:24, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has ev-

erlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” Now Jesus had just repeated that same thought when He said, “If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” We see again the total lack of understanding of spiritual truth by the religious leaders because all they could think about was physical life.

Instead they reminded Jesus of the fact that Abraham and the prophets had all experienced physical death. Then they asked Jesus if He was greater than Abraham who had died. They asked if Jesus was greater than the prophets that had died. Finally that asked Jesus to explain who He thought that He was. Jesus replied to their questions by answering in John 8:54-56, “Jesus answered, ‘If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.’” Jesus said that if He chose to honor Himself that His honor would mean nothing. This is a lesson that many Christians today need to learn.

In contrast to honoring Himself, Jesus said that it was the Father who honored Him. This honor would come in words again in the response to the statement of Jesus in John 12:28 where we read that Jesus said, “Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, “I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.” The Father chose to publicly honor both Jesus and Himself before the Jews by speaking from heaven. Jesus went on to tell the religious leaders here in John 8 that their problem was the fact that they did not know the Father. They claimed that God was their Father but they did not know Him. In contrast, Jesus knew the Father and had come from Him. Jesus had earlier said to these religious leaders in John 5:37, “And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.”

Jesus went on to say that if He denied that He knew the Father that He would be a liar just like those to whom He was speaking. Jesus then explained two things about His relationship to the Father. First, Jesus said that He knew the Father. The word translated “know” means to see with the eyes, to look at or to understand. Jesus used this word when He talked about the Father in John 7:29, “But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.” Jesus knew the Father because He had come from the Father and He had been sent by the Father. Second, Jesus said that He kept the Word of the Father. The word translated “keep” to guard, to observe, to obey or to attend to carefully. John 14:15 says, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Then Jesus said again in John 15:10, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” In these verses we see that Jesus told those who loved Him to obey His commandments just as He obeyed the commandments of the Father.

Then Jesus said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” In Hebrews 11 we have the chapter that is known as the chapter of heroes of the faith from the Old Testament. In the verses on Abraham and Sarah, verse 13 says, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” Hebrews explains that Abraham and those before him had seen these promises by faith. Faith was totally lacking in

the lives of the religious leaders with whom Jesus was talking. John 8:57-59 says, “Then the Jews said to Him, “‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’ Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” These words caused the Jews to have even greater anger.

Abraham had lived and died more than 2000 years earlier. Suddenly the religious leaders had to make a choice. They had to either believe that Jesus was God or they could try to deny that He was God. It was obvious to the Jews that the physical age of Jesus was less than fifty years. At the same time they understood that Jesus had said that Abraham had seen Him. Genesis 18:22-23 says, “Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. And Abraham came near and said, “‘Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?’” In these verses we see that Abraham had talked with Jesus and asked Him to spare the city of Sodom because of the fact that Lot and his family were living in the city. As a result, Jesus had seen Abraham and Abraham had seen Jesus.

However, the next statement of Jesus was even more upsetting to the religious leaders. Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” This statement spoke of the fact that Jesus had always existed. In John 1:3 we see that Jesus was the Creator of all things when that verse said, “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” The religious leaders were familiar with the words of Exodus 3:14 which says, “And God said to Moses, “‘I AM WHO I AM.’” And He said, “‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” The Jews knew that Jesus was saying that He is the true and living God who has always existed and is the Creator of all things.

This was the very fact that the religious leaders were trying to deny. As a result, they were immediately ready to stone Jesus to death. They even picked up stones to throw at Jesus. Leviticus 24:16 says, “And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of *the LORD*, he shall be put to death.” The Jews made it very clear that they knew that Jesus was saying that He was God. They were going to stone Him for blasphemy since they were unwilling to accept His statement because they did not want to admit He was God.

The word translated hid means “to conceal or hide”. It was neither the time nor the way that Jesus would die. His hour had not yet come and Jesus had told Nicodemus that He would die by being lifted up. Jesus was able to conceal His appearance so that He could walk right through the crowd and they could not stop Him. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to use this passage to show that Jesus is God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help you children learn to show from Scripture that Jesus is God.

33.

Jesus Healed a Blind Man

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to show from the Scriptures that Jesus is God. The Scriptures speak with authority and those who hear the Word of God then have to choose whether they will accept the Word or reject the Word. We want to help our children realize that their own opinions do not carry any authority but the Word of God has authority. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus opened the eyes of a blind man and that this was done as a sign to the Jews.

Jesus was walking with the disciples. While they were walking Jesus saw a blind man. This man had been blind since His birth. John 9:1-5 says, "Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.'" Jesus must have commented that this man had been blind from birth because the disciples asked the question, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The disciples saw the physical problem of this man as a topic of conversation. Jesus saw his blindness from a much different viewpoint.

It was common among the Jews of that day to think that physical disabilities and other forms of suffering were the result of sin. As a result, that was why the disciples asked the question. Since he had been born blind the disciples had concluded that the man was either blind because of his own sin or because of some sin in the lives of the parents. Their question did not focus on the need of the man at all. Instead it was only a question about whose sin had caused the blindness. In His answer, Jesus made it clear that this blindness was not the result of sin. Instead this blindness was for the glory of God. Jesus said this blindness was so that the works of God could be revealed in Him. I Corinthians 10:31 says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Jesus wanted to show the disciples the importance of doing all things for the glory of God. This is a key lesson that we want to teach by our example.

Jesus then added, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Here we see that Jesus fully understood His purpose while He was here on this earth. He was to do the works that God had given Him to do. In the same way, each of us as Christians have been given a purpose in life and the Lord has a ministry for each of us. I Corinthians 15:58 says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Our lives will have true meaning as we carry out the work that the Lord has created us to do on this earth.

We see that the time is coming when no man can work. That is the reason why we want to carry out the work of the Lord while we have the opportunity. Galatians 5:13 says, "For you,

brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” We are to serve one another in love while we have the opportunity. Jesus said that the night is coming. Once the night comes there will be no more opportunity to do the work of the Lord on this earth.

Jesus also said that as long as He was in the world that He is the Light of the world. John 8:12 says, “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” Christ knew His purpose was to be the Light of the world. We also see that He told us as Christians to be lights in the world. Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Then Philippians 2:14-16 adds, “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.” We see that now God has called us to be lights in the world.

Jesus used the opportunity that He had to give both physical and spiritual light to the blind man. We see in these verses how Jesus gave physical light to the man. John 9:6-7 says, “When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.” Then we see in John 9:35-38 how Jesus gave spiritual light to the man. Those verses say, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’ He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’ Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him.” Jesus met His need for both physical light and spiritual light.

Jesus healed this particular blind man in a rather unusual way. We see that Jesus spit on the ground. Then Jesus mixed His spit with the dirt to make mud or clay. Then Jesus took the mud and put it on the eyes of the blind man. Then Jesus gave the man a very specific instruction. Jesus told the man to go and wash off the mud in the pool of Siloam. The meaning of the name of the pool was very appropriate because of the instruction that Jesus gave to the man. We see that Siloam means Sent. Jesus sent this man to the pool of Siloam with the instruction that he should wash off the mud in that particular pool. This was the pool from which a pitcher of water was taken for the pouring ceremony at the Feast of Tabernacles. When they brought the water through the Watergate into the temple the people would quote Isaiah 12:3 which says, “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” This man would receive the salvation that Jesus offered when Jesus talked to the man later that day.

The man was obedient to the instructions of Jesus and received physical sight. He went. He washed. He came back seeing. This man realized that his life had been changed and transformed. In that day there was no work that could be done by people with severe physical disabilities. Mark 10:46 tells us what blind Bartimaeus had to do in order to survive. That verse says, “Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.” This blind man had

probably also been begging just before Jesus came and put the mud on his eyes. We do not know how he got to the Pool of Siloam since he was blind. He may have had to ask someone to lead him to that pool. However, he managed to get there, we see that he followed the instructions of Jesus and washed the mud from his eyes. He immediately received his physical sight.

Suddenly he could see for the first time in his life. As he came back to the place where Jesus had put the mud on his eyes, he saw the buildings, the people and everything else that he passed on the way back. That must have been an amazing walk for him as he could suddenly see all of the things that he had only known in the past by feel. We also see that there was a reaction throughout the neighborhood when he returned. John 9:8-9 says, "Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, 'Is not this he who sat and begged?' Some said, 'This is he.' Others *said*, 'He is like him.' He said, 'I am *he*.'" The whole neighborhood reacted.

People are always curious when they see something unusual happen. That was what happened that day as this man came walking back. The neighbors immediately started talking among themselves. Many of the neighbors had probably known this man from the time he was born. Others had met him sometime during the time that he was growing up. As a result, the people all had the same question. They asked one another, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" This question showed that this man had survived throughout his adult life by begging. Everyone in the neighborhood knew him and knew that he had been blind. As a result, their question was whether or not this was actually the man that had begged for years in their neighborhood. The people of the neighborhood quickly formed two opinions. Some said it was the man that had been born blind. Other just thought that he looked like the man that had been born blind. This is an illustration of the fact that people are very quick to form opinions without ever trying to find out the truth. The man heard the people of the neighborhood talking and gave the answer to their questions to one another and the statement of their opinions by saying, "I am *he*." Suddenly the people of the neighborhood had to deal with the reality of the fact that a man that had been born blind could now see. His own parents were unwilling to say how their son had been healed. John 9:20-22 says, "His parents answered them and said, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself.' His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue." The neighbors now had to decide whether they were going to believe that Jesus came from the Father or whether they were going to follow the example of the parents and act out of fear.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that many people are unwilling to publicly repent of their sin of unbelief and place their faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus because of fear of people. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by example the importance of praying for those controlled by fear.

Jesus Was Recognized as a Prophet by the Man Formerly Blind

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that many people are unwilling to repent of their sin of unbelief because of their fear of other people. That is one reason why it is necessary for the Holy Spirit to convict them of the sin of unbelief and for the Father to draw them to Christ. In our topic today we will see how the Father was drawing the man that was formerly blind to Jesus.

We saw as we concluded our last topic that the man that was formerly blind told the neighbors that he was the one that was born blind. As a result, the neighbors asked a series of questions of the man. John 9:10-12 says, “Therefore they said to him, ‘How were your eyes opened?’ He answered and said, ‘A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.’ Then they said to him, ‘Where is He?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’” We see that the neighbors began by asking the question, “How were your eyes opened?” Jesus knew that the neighbors would ask this question. Perhaps that is why Jesus chose to heal the eyes of the man the way that He healed him.

We are going to see that as the man answered the questions of the neighbors and later the questions of the Pharisees that he grew in his understanding of who Jesus was. We see in his first answer that the formerly blind man just called Jesus “a Man named Jesus”. At this point the man understood very little about the One who had healed him. As a result, he first explained what Jesus did. He explained that “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes.” Jesus is a God of variety. Every blind person that Jesus healed was healed in a somewhat different way. This man had mud mixed from dust and spit put on his eyes. Jesus had used two very ordinary things mixed together to heal the man.

Then the man went on to explain what Jesus told him to do. Jesus said, “Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.” The water in the Pool of Siloam came from the spring of Gihon and the water from that spring had been used by the people of Israel for hundreds of years. Solomon was anointed as king near this spring. Later Hezekiah made a tunnel to bring this water into the city of Jerusalem. II Chronicles 32:30 says, “This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works.” Since this water had been used for hundreds of years, the neighbors knew that it was not the spit, the dust or the water that had given sight to the man. However, they could see that this man that they knew had received his sight and could see for the first time in his life.

The next question that the neighbors asked was, “Where is He?” The man could only answer “I do not know.” At this point the man had no idea what Jesus looked like because Jesus had not gone with the man when he went and washed the mud from his eyes at the Pool of Siloam. Jesus wanted this man to grow in his understanding of who Jesus was by answering the questions of the neighbors and later the Pharisees. This is a key principle to help people grow

in their understanding of Jesus. When people have to answer the questions of others, they also grow in their own understanding. That was what happened with this man.

John 9:13-16 says, “They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” Therefore some of the Pharisees said, “This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them.” The neighbors could not understand what had happened to this man so they decided to bring him to the Pharisees. Here we see that we are given some key information for what is going to happen when the Pharisees question the man. We see that it was on the Sabbath day that Jesus had healed the man. That was certain to upset the Pharisees.

The Pharisees asked the same basic question that the neighbors had asked when the neighbors brought him to the Pharisees. They immediately asked the man how he had received his sight. The formerly blind man gave the same basic answer to the Pharisees that he had given to the neighbors. He said, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” This man described what Jesus had done and also told how it had changed his life. He had been blind and now he could see. He was excited and filled with happiness because his life had been changed.

In contrast, the Pharisees were very upset. Jesus had not kept the traditions that had been set by the Pharisees. He had healed this man on the Sabbath day. As a result, they said that Jesus could not be from God. Jesus had healed a man with a withered hand in Galilee and received a similar reaction. Luke 6:7-10 says, “So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, “Arise and stand here.” And he arose and stood. Then Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?” And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.” Jesus showed by His example that the Law did not condemn the doing of good on the Sabbath.

Jesus also healed other people on the Sabbath. Each time there were Pharisees who condemned Him. One other example is in Luke 14:2-6 where we read, “And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’ But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go. Then He answered them, saying, ‘Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?’ And they could not answer Him regarding these things.” The lawyers and Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus but He showed that they would work on the Sabbath day to rescue an animal.

When the Pharisees said Jesus could not be from God, other people asked the question, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” These people recognized that a great miracle had been done. They felt that it was impossible for any person that was a sinner to do such signs. Here we see that some of the leaders realized that this was a sign from God because sinners could not heal a man that had been blind from the time that he was born. Suddenly we see that

there was a division among the leaders. Some were condemning Jesus because He did not follow their traditions. Others were saying that He had to be from God in order to do such a miracle.

As a result, they decided to ask the blind man what he thought about the One who had opened His eyes. John 9:17-18 says, “They said to the blind man again, ‘What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?’ He said, ‘He is a prophet.’ But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight.” Here we see that the leaders suddenly decided to ask the man who had been healed what he thought about the man who had healed him.

The man had not yet seen Jesus because Jesus was not there when he washed the clay from his eyes. However, he had been listening and thinking as he listened to the neighbors and the religious leaders. He was in agreement with those who said that Jesus had to be from God in order to open his eyes. As he thought about what he knew from the Word of God, he realized that the people in the various books who did such miracles had all come from God. That included individuals like Moses, Elijah and Elisha. As a result, the man said, “He is a prophet.” Every person who had done a miracle similar to opening the eyes of a blind person had been sent by God to Israel.

His answer did not please the religious leaders that wanted an excuse to condemn Jesus and put Him to death. As a result, they decided to make sure that this man was not trying to deceive them. The religious leaders contacted the parents of this man to find out if he had actually been born blind. Here we see that the religious leaders did not believe either the neighbors or the man. John 12:37-40 explains, “But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: ‘Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?’ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: ‘He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.’” The religious leaders refused to believe the signs that Jesus had given through His miracles because their hearts were controlled by unbelief.

We will see that the parents did say that this was their son. The parents also said that he had been born blind. However, they refused to answer how their son had been healed because they were controlled by fear. This gives us an example of the power of fear that the religious leaders had used to control the rest of the Jews. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand the fact that many people try to control others by fear. That is one of the many results of the original sin of Adam and Eve. Adam told God, “I was afraid and hid myself because I was naked. His life had become controlled by fear, guilt and shame. We want to help our children learn to explain that people will use these three things to try to control others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand that fear, guilt and shame are the result of sin.

Jesus Was Proclaimed as the One who Gives Sight

We saw in our last topic that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand how the sin nature affects people. We saw that the parents of the man born blind were unwilling to tell how their son had been healed as a result of their fear of the religious leaders. We will learn more about their fear in this topic.

The religious leaders questioned the parents of the man that was born blind. John 9:19-23 says, "And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." Here we see that the religious leaders wanted to make certain that the neighbors of the man were telling the truth. They showed that they did not believe either the man or the neighbors.

The question of the religious leaders actually had three questions. The first question was, "Is this your son?" The parents answered that they knew that this was their son. The second question they asked was to find out if their son had been born blind. The parents answered that he had been born blind. The third question was, "How then does he now see?" The parents actually gave several answers to this third question. The reason for the several answers was due to the fact that the parents were controlled by fear. Their first answer was, "By what means he now sees we do not know." Their second answer was, "Who opened his eyes we do not know." Third they said, "He is of age; ask him." Finally they said, "He will speak for himself." The next verse shows us that the parents actually knew the answers to these things but were controlled by fear.

The parents actually told lies because they were controlled by fear. They chose to lie about their son because they had a greater fear of the religious leaders than a godly love for their son. I John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." A worldly love is often controlled by lust. A family love causes family members to have a commitment to one another. Godly love was demonstrated by the Father when He sent Christ to this earth to pay for our sins. That same love was shown by Christ when He willingly gave His life for our sins. As a result, the characteristic of godly love is sacrifice. The parents were unwilling to tell the truth about their son because they knew that there would be sacrifice involved. The religious leaders had already agreed that anyone that confessed that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. The parents were more concerned about being a part of the synagogue than they were to tell the truth about their son. As a result they said, "He is of age; ask him."

However, we are going to see that the son had a very different attitude than the parents. John

9:24-26 says, “So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, “Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner.” He answered and said, “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.” Then they said to him again, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” Since the parents would not answer the questions of the religious leaders, they called for the man that had formerly been blind and talked directly to him.

Instead of trying to question him, the religious leaders tried to tell the man what to do. They also gave their own opinion about who Jesus was. First, they told him to give God the glory! This was exactly what the man was doing. However, the religious leaders refused to admit that Jesus was God. Jesus had violated their religious traditions and so they were determined to destroy Him. Jesus had told the religious leaders in John 8:44-46, “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?” They could not convict Jesus of sin because He had committed no sin. They would not believe Jesus because they were unwilling to face the truth about themselves.

As a result, the religious leaders went on to give their own opinion about Jesus. They said that they knew that Jesus was a sinner. When the word translated “know” is talking about human knowledge it means to see with the eyes or to know from observation. The religious leaders had never seen Jesus commit any sin. They did see Him heal people on the Sabbath and that broke their traditions. Jesus had made it very clear that it was right to do good on the Sabbath. John 5:16 says, “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.” That was the response of these same religious leaders when Jesus healed a man that had been crippled for 38 years. The religious leaders were still angry because Jesus broke their traditions.

The man who had formerly been blind quickly answered the religious leaders by saying, “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.” Here we see that the man told the Jews what he did not know and then he told them what he knew. He had not yet seen Jesus because Jesus was not there when he washed his eyes at the Pool of Siloam. Later he would learn that Jesus was the Son of God and would worship Him. John 9:38 says, “Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him.” Once the man did see Jesus he recognized Jesus as the Son of God and worshiped Him. However, that did not happen until an hour or two later.

After telling the religious leaders what he did not yet know, the man went on to tell them the thing that he knew for sure. He knew that he had been blind ever since he was born. He also knew that he could now see. Then the religious leaders asked the man two more questions. First they asked him, “What did He do to you?” Second they asked him, “How did He open your eyes?” The religious leaders showed by their questions that they still wanted to be able to condemn Jesus. We see the answer of the man in John 9:27-29 where we read, “He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?” Then they reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; *as for this fellow*, we do not

know where He is from.” Here we see that the man answered their questions by some questions of his own.

However, he first told them that he had already told them what Jesus did. Then he told them that they did not listen. The word translated “listen” means to hear, to find out, to learn or to understand. In John 8:47 Jesus had said, “He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” The reason why the religious leaders could not understand what the man had said was due to the fact that they had already chosen to reject Jesus. As a result, they could not hear with understanding when this man told them that Jesus had healed his blindness.

Then the man began to question the religious leaders. He asked them two questions. First, the man asked, “Why do you want to hear it again?” This question asked the religious leaders why they were motivated to ask him again. Second, the man asked, “Do you also want to become His disciples?” Of course we know that was certainly not the reason that they asked the man again. However, this question was a question that forced them to either accept the fact that Jesus was truly from God or else they had to show their own rejection of Jesus as God. We will see by their answer that they quickly showed that they were hypocrites and did not want to follow Jesus.

The word translated “reviled” means to speak against or to heap abuse upon a person. Peter used this word in the first phrase of I Peter 2:23 where we read, “Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.” Peter shows in this verse that these same religious leaders reviled Jesus when He was on the cross. However, Jesus did not return their verbal abuse. In fact Luke 23:34 says, “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’ And they divided His garments and cast lots.” Instead Jesus asked the Father to forgive all of those who spoke against Him or did evil things to Him that day as He hung on the cross.

The religious leaders told the man that they were disciples of Moses and not disciples of Jesus. They said that they knew that God spoke to Moses. God did speak to Moses but the religious leaders were not his disciples. In fact just a few months later they would condemn Jesus to death even though Jesus had committed no sin. This meant that they became the murderers of Jesus and violated the Law of Moses. Then they mocked Jesus as well as the man by saying, “As for this fellow, we do not know where He is from.” That statement again showed that they had chosen to reject Jesus even though the miracle that Jesus had done was a sign to them. We will see in our next topic that the opposition of the religious leaders to Jesus only caused this man to come to a better understanding of who Jesus was.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that when people have chosen to reject Jesus that we will not persuade them by debate. Instead the Lord is the only One who can change the rebellion in their hearts. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the rebellious nature of sinful men.

Jesus was Worshiped as the Son of God

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that when people are controlled by rebellion against Jesus in their hearts that we cannot persuade them by debate. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts them of their sin of unbelief and it is the Father who draws them to Christ. Our ministry is to share the Word of God in love so that the Holy Spirit and the Father can each do their part in the salvation of such rebellious individuals. In our topic today we will see that the understanding of the man born blind grew as He answered the questions of the religious leaders.

We saw that the religious leaders had said that they were disciples of Moses. However, they had shown by their unbelief that they were not true disciples. In contrast, we see that the man born blind was growing in his understanding of Jesus as he continued to talk with the religious leaders. John 9:30-34 says, “The man answered and said to them, ‘Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.’ They answered and said to him, ‘You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?’ And they cast him out.” Here we see the growing understanding of the man that had been born blind.

The word translated “marvelous thing” means that which is surprising, amazing or beyond human understanding. I Peter 2:9 says, “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” This verse shows us the fact that it is beyond our understanding that Jesus called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Matthew 21:42 says, “Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?” The fact that the builders of the temple in the time of Solomon threw away the cornerstone or most important stone in the building is beyond human understanding. The man asked the religious leaders why it was beyond their understanding that they did not realize that Jesus came from God.

Then the man explained to the religious leaders the thing they could not understand. He said that God did not hear sinners. He said that God did hear those who worshiped Him and did His will. The religious leaders did not do either of these things. They did not worship God. They did not obey God. Then the man pointed out the fact that there was no recorded history that a man born blind had received his sight. Finally, the man concluded His words by saying, “If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.” This statement caused the religious leaders to have even greater anger. As a result, they used their words to make a personal attack on the man.

The religious leaders said, “You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?” They

tried to make it sound like they were righteous and this man was a sinner. They told him that he was completely born in sins. That was true but it was also true of the religious leaders. They were just as sinful as the man who had been born blind. Then in their anger they said, “Are you teaching us?” He was actually teaching them the truth but they were unwilling to accept the truth. In their anger they did to this man the very thing that the parents had feared for themselves. They cast him out which meant that he could no longer participate in the synagogue services.

We see how Jesus responded when He heard how the religious leaders had rejected the man. John 9:35-38 says, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’ He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’ Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him.” Here we see that Jesus chose to go looking for this man so that He could offer Him the gift of salvation and the forgiveness of sins. When Jesus found the man, He asked one question, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” At this point this man was like the whitened harvest that Jesus described to His disciples in John 4:35. That verse says, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” The heart of this man was prepared and ready to repent of the sin of unbelief and place his faith in the One who was the Son of God.

The man answered Jesus with both a question and a statement. The question was, “Who is He, Lord.” The man had not seen Jesus until this moment. However, he immediately recognized the voice as the voice of the One who had placed the clay on his eyes and told him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man had already said that Jesus was a Prophet. He had grown in his understanding of the fact that Jesus had to come from God as he had been questioned by the religious leaders. As a result, he was ready to believe as soon as his question was answered. That is why his question concluded with the statement that He wanted to believe in the One who is the Son of God.

Jesus gave this man a very interesting answer when He said, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.” This man had only had his sight for an hour or two. As a result, this meant that the only time he could have seen the One who is the Son of God was during that time period. However, the second part of the answer of Jesus made it clear to the man that Jesus was the One who is the Son of God. The man suddenly realized that the One to whom he was talking was not only a Prophet but was also the Son of God. He may have suddenly realized that Jesus fulfilled the promise in Deuteronomy 18:15 which says, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.” This man heard with understanding and recognized that Jesus was the Prophet who was also the Son of God.

The response of the man was immediate. He said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.” He immediately recognized Jesus as Lord. He also told Jesus that He believed in Him. However, the man did one more thing. We see that he immediately worshiped Jesus. His words and actions immediately caused the angels of heaven to rejoice. Luke 15:10 says, “Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” This man had not been born blind because of either his sin or the sins of his parents.

Instead this man had been born blind to bring glory to God. This caused him to receive a double blessing that day. First he received physical sight. Second, he now received spiritual sight. Some the Pharisees heard what the man said.

Jesus made a very important statement which caused those Pharisees to ask a question. John 9:39-41 says, “And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.” Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.” Jesus may have been thinking of Isaiah 6:10 as he spoke these words to the man while some of the Pharisees were also listening. That verse says, “Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.” The Pharisees had been blinded by their own pride.

Jesus said in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Jesus came to seek and to save. However, most of the Pharisees and other religious leaders had chosen to reject Him because their eyes had been blinded by their sin. As a result, the message of life to others was also a message of judgment to those who rejected. John 3:36 says, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” By their rejection of the life that Jesus offered, the message of life became a message of judgment to those who did not turn to Jesus. That same thing is true today.

Some of the Pharisees heard what Jesus had said. As a result, they asked, “Are we blind also?” The verse from Isaiah quoted above showed that their problem was spiritual blindness. Spiritual blindness is the result of the sin of unbelief. John 16:9 says, “Of sin, because they do not believe in Me.” Once Adam and Eve sinned they became spiritually blind. That spiritual blindness was passed on to all of their descendents. That is why Jesus had promised in John 8:12, “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” John would later write in I John 2:11, “But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” The religious leaders were controlled by their hatred for Jesus. They were afraid that He would cause them to lose their power over the people. That was why they refused to come to the One who is the Light. That was why they remained in sin.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that Jesus is the One who can give Light to those who are still blinded by the darkness of sin. The man who had been born blind had received both physical sight and spiritual sight. John 3:21 says, “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” We want to equip our children to explain to others how to receive spiritual sight so that those who hear have the opportunity to turn from spiritual darkness to the spiritual light. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to lead others to the One who is the Light.

Jesus is the Door of the Sheepfold

In our last topic we saw that we want to equip our children to lead people to the One who is the Light. Some people are in spiritual darkness because they have heard the truth and are in open rebellion against Jesus as the religious leaders were in the time of Christ. However, many people are in spiritual darkness because they had never had the message of the Gospel clearly explained to them. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus is the One who is the door through which a person enters to have eternal life.

Throughout His ministry Jesus made it clear that He had come from the Father. However, His concern was also to help the people learn how to come to the Father. As a result, in our topic today we are going to see that Jesus explains the difference between His goal and the goal of Satan. John 10:1-3 says, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” In these verses we see that Jesus explains that there is One who leads people to life and one who leads people to death.

Jesus began by talking about the thief. The thief does not come through the door and he does not want others to come through the door. That is why the thief tries to get into the sheepfold in some other way. Jesus warned that the one who tries to get into the fold by some way other than the door is a thief and a robber. God had said through Ezekiel that the leaders of Israel were like false shepherds. God told Ezekiel in Ezekiel 34:2, “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?” Then God explained how the shepherds of Israel were like thieves and robbers. Ezekiel 34:3-4 says, “You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.” By these actions they had scattered the people.

In contrast, Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for His sheep. In Israel and the surrounding nations, all of the people in a village kept their sheep in a sheepfold and one person was hired to care for the sheep. In the morning each of the shepherds would come to the sheepfold and would call his own sheep. He would call each sheep by name. The sheep would each hear their own shepherd calling them and come to him. Then the shepherd would lead the sheep to a place where there was plenty of grass so that the sheep could eat sufficient grass. Jesus called each one of us to salvation by name.

A good friend of mine grew up herding sheep. Since most people today drive sheep, I asked him what it takes to lead sheep. He said that when a lamb is first born that the shepherd feeds the lamb, carries the lamb and play with the lamb. When that lamb grows and becomes a sheep,

then that sheep will follow the shepherd wherever he goes. Then I asked my friend what it takes to drive sheep. He replied, "A few good dogs." Jesus is the One who is the Good Shepherd. That is why John 10:4-6 says, "'And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.'" Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them." Here we see that the shepherd leads his sheep rather than driving them because these verses give us an illustration of the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus gave us a real picture of the way that He leads us once we come to Him in repentance and faith. He calls us by name. Ephesians 1:4 says, "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." We were chosen and Jesus has called us by name. In addition, I John 4:19 says, "We love Him because He first loved us." Here we see that we responded to His love for us. Then He has called us with a wonderful invitation. Matthew 11:28-30 says, "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light." It is these and many other things which Jesus did for us that give us a desire to follow Him as He goes before us. That has resulted in us getting to know His voice as we follow Him.

At the same time Jesus said that His sheep will not follow a stranger. Instead Jesus says that His sheep will flee from strangers. False religious leaders carry out their religious duties for self gain. We saw earlier in this topic that the shepherds of Israel were serving themselves and not the Lord. We see what the Lord told those unfaithful shepherds in Ezekiel 34:10 where we read, "Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them." Jesus said that those who are His true followers will recognize and avoid such leaders.

Jesus also gave the reason why those who are true followers of Him will flee from those who are strangers. Jesus said that His sheep do not know the voice of strangers. The word translated "stranger" speaks of one belonging to another or an enemy. Jesus told the Pharisees in John 8:44, "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." The Pharisees were doing the same things as the false religious leaders in the time of Ezekiel.

Jesus gave this illustration to the Jewish religious leaders. However, we see that they did not understand the things that Jesus said to them. The reason that they could not understand was due to the fact that they were not followers of God. I Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." They could not understand spiritual truth because they did not have spiritual life.

Then Jesus went on to teach some additional lessons from His illustration. John 10:7-10 says, “Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” Jesus had already said that He is the Bread of Life and the Light of the World. Now He said that He is the Door of the sheep. All those who are His sheep are His sheep because they have come in through the Door. Jesus is the only One who can offer salvation as a free gift because He is the One who made that salvation possible by paying the price for sin.

There had been many false prophets and false teachers who had come before Jesus just as there are many false teachers today. That is why Jesus had warned in Matthew 7:15, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” Then in Luke 6:26 He said, “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Jesus said that those who know the voice of the Shepherd will not hear such false prophets and teachers and will not be deceived by them. This is why it is so important for every follower of Jesus to get to know His voice by asking the Lord to give them understanding of His Word.

Jesus said that those who are true sheep enter through Him. This means that they receive Jesus by repenting of their sin of unbelief and believing that the Father raised Christ from the dead. Jesus said that all who come to Him will be saved. Jesus also promised that all who come to Him will be fed. Ezekiel spoke about the ministry of Christ when He said in Ezekiel 34:15-16, “I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord GOD. “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.” Here we see that the Lord will feed the flock as well as meet the other needs of those who follow Him.

Jesus also explained the goal of Satan by describing three things that Satan does. First, he comes to steal. The word translated “steal” means to take something away by stealth or trickery. Second, Satan came to kill. The word translated “kill” means to slay or sacrifice. Third, Satan came to destroy. The word translated “destroy” to bring to ruin, to put to death or to destroy in hell. II Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” Satan wants people to perish.

In contrast, Jesus came that we might have life. John 3:15 says that Jesus was lifted up on the cross so, “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” In fact Jesus came to give abundant life which is beyond what we can imagine because it is eternal. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain clearly to others how they can also have this abundant life by repenting of their unbelief and coming to God through Jesus because He is the Door to eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain to others how to have eternal life.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others how they can have the abundant life that Jesus offers. We saw that He is the Door to that eternal life. In our topic today we are also going to see that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep.

Jesus had given the Jews an illustration about a shepherd and sheep. In our last topic we saw that Jesus is the Door through which people enter into eternal life. In this topic we are going to see what Jesus said that He would do because He is the Good Shepherd. John 10:11-14 says, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own.” In these verses we see another of the “I AMs” in the book of John.

Jesus said in that He is the Good Shepherd. This is a clear statement that Jesus is the fulfillment of Psalm 23. That Psalm begins in Psalm 23:1, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” The word translated “good” means that which is excellent in nature, noble and praiseworthy. That word certainly describes Christ. Jesus also made it possible for us to do good works. Titus 2:14 says, “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” However, He is the One who did the work that no one else could do. He is the One who gave His life for the sheep.

In contrast, Jesus described the religious leaders of the Jews as hirelings. A “hireling” is someone who is hired to do a job but has no interest or concern for the people. Ezekiel 34:2-3 says, “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock.”’ These verses show us that the religious leaders of Israel had no concern for the people. Instead their concern was to use the people to satisfy their own desires.

In these verses we learn more characteristics of the religious leaders in the time of Jesus. The Good Shepherd protected the sheep from the wolf. In contrast, the hireling sees a wolf coming and flees because he has no concern for the sheep. Jesus and Paul both used the wolves to describe false teachers. Matthew 7:15 says, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.” Then Acts 20:29 adds, “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.” These verses point out the fact that what was true in the day of Jesus is still true today. Jesus knew that the religious leaders of Israel were very hungry wolves. Paul knew that the church would experience similar false teachers. Hirelings or religious leaders who just seek self gain have no concern to protect Christians from such false teachers.

In contrast, Jesus knows His sheep and His sheep know Him. Jesus also told the people what He was going to do because of His concern for the sheep. John 10:15-18 says, “As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” Jesus spoke about His relationship with the Father before He explained His concern for the sheep.

The Jews had been rejecting the words of Jesus every time that He spoke about His relationship to the Father. We will see that is exactly what happens again this time. Jesus had just said that He knows His sheep. Now He said that Father knows Him. The word translated “knows” means to have understanding or knowledge of. Jesus had been with the Father from the beginning. As a result of that fact and the fact that the Father and Jesus are both God, they had a perfect understanding of each other. The Father had a perfect understanding of Jesus and Jesus had a perfect understanding of the Father.

Jesus was talking to Jews. He told these Jews that He had other sheep in addition to His sheep that are Jews. The other sheep are the Gentiles who would believe and become one in the church with the Jews. Ephesians 2:11-13 says, “Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you 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. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Since most of us are Gentiles, Jesus gave us a wonderful promise when He said that He would bring these other sheep into this fold. Christ told the Jews that these other sheep would hear His voice. Jesus also said that there would be one fold and one shepherd.

Then Jesus went on to talk about His relationship with the Father. He shared with the Jews that the Father loved Him. The Father and Jesus were both going to show their love for one another. Jesus would show His love for the Father by laying down His life for the sheep. The Father would show His love for Jesus by raising Him back to life. Peter spoke of this in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:23-24 says, “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” Jesus could not be held by death because the Father raised Jesus from the dead.

Jesus also explained that no one would take His life from Him. He would lay His life down of His own will. Psalm 40:7-8 says, “Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.’” In the prayer of Jesus to the Father in the Garden the night before He was crucified, John 17:24 says, “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the

world.” Jesus chose to come to this earth to carry out the will of the Father. However, the will of the Father was also His will because we see that He told the Father that it was equally His desire to save those that the Father had given Him. Jesus had both the power to give His life and to take it again because He is truly God. At the same time He was carrying out the command of the Father.

By these statements Jesus made His relationship with the Father very clear. These statements caused division to develop among the Jews. John 10:19-21 says, “Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?” Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” Here we see that the words of Jesus forced the Jews that heard Him to make a decision. The words meant that each person had to decide for himself if he would accept or reject the words that Jesus had spoken to them.

Many of the Jews there that day decided to reject the words of Jesus. Those who chose to reject Jesus said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?” We see that a large part of the group chose to say that Jesus had a demon. The word translated “mad” means one who speaks so that he seems to not be in his right mind. By this statement they were saying that Jesus was crazy because He had a demon. This large group had already made the decision to reject Jesus. They chose to ignore the miracles that Jesus had done. They said that He was not in His right mind. The Pharisees had earlier said in Matthew 12:24 after Jesus had healed a man, “Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” Many of the Jews that heard Jesus that day made the same choice.

In contrast, there were others in the crowd who chose to think about what Jesus had said and recognize the signs that He had performed to show that He is God. These people said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” These people were willing to consider all of the evidence that Jesus had given to show that He is God. They said that the words of Jesus could not be the words of a man that had a demon. They recognized that a demon did not have the power to open the eyes of a person that had been born blind. As a result, this group of people would continue to think about the words of Jesus. Jesus had said in Luke 8:18, “Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.” This second group was giving serious thought to the things that Jesus said and did. Many in this group were probably a part of those who repented and placed their faith in Jesus either on the Day of Pentecost or in the days that followed that time.

Today we still have people like each of these two groups. Many want to deny Jesus by rejecting His words and works. However, there are also those who want to hear and learn more about Jesus. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to those who want to learn more how they can receive forgiveness of sins. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain how to receive forgiveness.

Jesus and the Father are One

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that many will deny Jesus by rejecting His words and His works. However, there are also many others who want to learn more about Jesus. We want to help our children learn to explain to such individuals how they can receive forgiveness of sins. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus said that He and the Father are One.

The Feast of Dedication is the feast that the Jews today call Hanukkah or the Feast of Lights. In 170 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes conquered the Jews. Then he desecrated the altar of God in the temple by setting up an altar for idol worship. The Jews fought against the Syrians and freed the temple from Syrian control in December of 164 B.C. even though it took them another 22 years before the nation was finally free of Syrian control. The Jews established the Feast of Lights (Hanukkah) to celebrate the cleansing and rededication of the temple. John 10:22-24 says, "Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Since it was winter, Jesus walked in the area of the temple courtyard called Solomon's Porch. This area of the temple was on the eastern side of the temple courtyard and was a covered area so that the area was protected from the weather. It was while he was walking in this area that the Jewish religious leaders came and surrounded Him and asked Him their question. Jesus had told them in John 8:42-44, "Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." It was not a case that Jesus had not told them but rather a case that they were unwilling to believe when He said that He had been sent by God.

Jesus had told the Jewish religious leaders already in John 5:37-38, "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe." They had refused to believe Him at that time which was much earlier. Jesus had asked the man born blind in John 9, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" Then John 9:37-38 says, "And Jesus said to him, 'You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.' Then he said, 'Lord, I believe!' And he worshiped Him." However, John 9:40 says, "Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, 'Are we blind also?'" These Pharisees knew that Jesus had said He is the Son of God. They just chose not to believe Him. That is why the religious leaders now said, "If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus gave the religious leaders a very clear answer again. John 10:25-26 says, "Jesus answered

them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.’” The fact that Jesus said that He is the Son of God is a clear statement of the fact that He is the Christ. That is why Jesus said that He had told them but they did not believe. Jesus made it clear that it was not that He had not told them. He had told them many times in various situations that He is the Christ, the Son of God. The problem of the Jewish religious leaders was the fact that they refused to believe.

Then Jesus gave the religious leaders another source of witness about the fact that He is God. Jesus said, “The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me.” Jesus had said much earlier in John 5:36, “But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” The religious leaders had refused to believe Jesus at that earlier time and they continued to refuse to believe Him. Jesus did not leave them in doubt. Instead the religious leaders refused to believe what Jesus said.

Jesus went on to explain why they did not believe. Jesus said, “But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.” Jesus had told the religious leaders in John 10:14, “I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.” Jesus knew His sheep. In the same way, Jesus said His sheep knew Him. The reason why the religious leaders refused to believe what Jesus said was due to the fact that they were not His sheep. Furthermore, they had no desire to be His sheep. It did not matter to them that Jesus had said that He would give His life for the sheep.

Jesus went on to explain how those who were His sheep responded to Him because He is the Good Shepherd. John 10:27-31 says, “‘My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.’ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.” Here we see that Jesus explained the relationship between Him and those who were His sheep.

First, Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice. Those who have placed their faith in Jesus recognize His voice. John 10:3 says, “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” Here we see that Jesus calls His own sheep by name. This speaks about the personal relationship that Jesus has with each person who places his or her trust in Him. Jesus calls each Christian by name because He knows each one of us personally.

Second, Jesus said that His sheep follow Him. John 10:4-5 says, “And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” I asked a shepherd what it takes to get the sheep to follow him. He said that from the time a lamb is born that if a shepherd feeds the lamb, carries the lamb plays with the lamb and spends time with the lamb that when the lamb becomes a sheep, that sheep will follow the shepherd wherever he goes. That is the kind of interest that Jesus has shown to each of us who have followed Him.

Third, Jesus said that He gives His sheep eternal life. John 3:14-15 says, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” Romans 8:1 promises, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” This means that we do not need to fear eternal judgment. In addition, Jesus also said that no one can snatch us out of His hand. I John 4:4 says, “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” Jesus is greater than Satan so we do not need to fear that Satan can snatch us out of the hand of Jesus.

In addition, we see that Jesus said that all those who place their trust in Jesus have been given to Him by the Father. Jesus told the religious leaders that His Father is greater than all. This made it very clear to the Jews that Jesus was saying again that God was His Father. The word translated “snatch” in both verses means to seize, to carry away by force or to be caught up. The word is used in John 10:12 where we read, “But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.” In this verse the word is translated “catches”. Satan has no power to take a Christian from either Jesus or the Father by force. No Christian ever needs to worry that he could lose his salvation because Satan would have to take Him away from both the Father and Jesus.

In addition, Romans 8:38-39 says, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” No created thing including the person himself can take himself away from Jesus. I Corinthians 11:30-32 says, “For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” Christians can be disciplined by the Lord even including physical death. However, this passage promises that even in the case of a Christian being chastened by the Lord with physical death that the reason is so that the person will not be condemned with the world. The religious leaders certainly understood that Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God when he said that “I and My Father are One,” because they took up stones to stone Him.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children come to a clear understanding of the fact that Satan can never take a Christian from either Jesus or the Father by force. We also want to help them understand that even when it is necessary for the Lord to discipline a Christian with physical sickness and even death that the Lord does that so that the person is preserved from eternal condemnation and judgment with the world. We see the greatness of the love of Jesus for every one of His sheep. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand these things.

Jesus was Accused of Blasphemy

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that no one including Satan can take them out of the hands of Jesus and the Father. In addition, they cannot remove themselves from those hands but they can be disciplined by the Lord with physical sickness or even death so that they will not be condemned with the world. In our topic today we are going to see that the religious leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy.

In our last topic we saw that the religious leaders were very angry when Jesus said that He and the Father are One. John 10:31-33 says, “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’ The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘for a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.’” This is the third time that the Jewish religious leaders were ready to kill Jesus. John 5:18 says, “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” Then John 8:58-59 adds, “Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’ Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” Each time Jesus made a clear claim that He is God the religious leaders were ready to kill Him.

This time as Jesus saw the stones, He asked a question, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” The word translated “good” means that which is good in its character and beneficial in its effects. Jesus had done many signs to show that He was from the Father. These miracles were very beneficial in the lives of the people who had been healed. Jesus said that these miracles had been accomplished through His Father. John 5:16-18 says, “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” One thing that the religious leaders did not want to admit was the fact that Jesus was equal with the Father. That was the cause of their anger in John 10. Jesus just asked the leaders for which of those good works they were going to stone Him. The religious leaders had to admit that they could not stone Jesus for any of the good works that He had done. As a result, they answered, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.” The Jews were forced to explain why they had picked up stones. They said that they were going to stone Jesus for blasphemy. Leviticus 24:16 says, “And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death.” The religious leader said that Jesus was committing blasphemy because He was just a man and was claiming to be God.

Jesus told the religious leaders to believe His works even if they did not believe Him. John 10:34-39 says, “Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods”’? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.” Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.” Jesus began His answer by quoting Psalm 82:6 which says, “I said, “You *are* gods, and all of you *are* children of the Most High.” In this Psalm Asaph had used the word “gods” to speak of the judges (humans) that were ruling over Israel at that time.

Jesus made it clear that God, the Father, could choose to call human beings by the title of “gods”. Due to the fact that they were sons of God carrying out the governing of the land of Israel at that time, Jesus made it clear that the religious leaders should not be offended because Jesus called Himself, the Son of God. The Word of God had come to these people that were called “gods”. Then Jesus gave a strong statement about the authority of the Word of God when he said, “And the Scripture cannot be broken.” In II Timothy 3:16-17 we read, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Scripture cannot be broken because all Scripture has been given by the very breath of God.

Jesus then said, “Do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?” Here Jesus again claimed that He came from the Father. He said that the Father had set Him apart and had sent Him into the world. However, Jesus asked how they could say that He was speaking blasphemy when the Father had also called others “gods” in the Scripture. The religious leaders had to pause for a moment before they threw any stones to think about what Jesus had just said. They had to think about the fact that Jesus had pointed out that in the Scriptures that men were called “gods”.

Then Jesus gave evidence to show that He truly was the Son of God by pointing to His works. Jesus said that if He did not do the works of God that they should not believe in Him. In contrast, if Jesus did do the works of God Jesus told them to believe the works even though they did not believe in Him. The religious leaders had just said, “For a good work we do not stone You.” As a result, they had already said that they could not deny the works (miracles) that Jesus had done. Many of these same religious leaders had to face this same problem in the early part of the book of Acts a short time later. Acts 4:16-17 says, “Saying, ‘What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.’” In both cases they could not deny the miracle but neither would they admit that the miracle was from God.

Jesus also gave the religious leaders a reason why they should believe His works. Jesus wanted the religious leaders to know and recognize that the Father was in Him and that He was in the Father. The man formerly blind had told the religious leaders in John 9:31-33, “Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears

him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.” Instead of accepting the words of the man formerly blind, they cast him out of the synagogue because of their unbelief.

The religious leaders recognized that they had to make a choice. They had to choose whether they were going to accept or reject the fact that the works of Jesus came from the Father. They quickly made their choice. They had to choose whether they were going to try and hold on to their power and control over the people or they had to choose to believe Jesus and come to Him in repentance and faith. We see that the religious leaders again tried to seize Jesus. They had made their choice that they would do their best to destroy Jesus. However, this was not the time when Jesus would pay for the sins of all mankind. That time would come a few months later. As a result, they could not destroy Jesus and He escaped out of their hand.

Jesus then chose to leave the area of Jerusalem for a time. John 10:40-42 says, “And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. Then many came to Him and said, “John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.” And many believed in Him there.” Here we see that Jesus left the city of Jerusalem and went to the other side of the Jordan River. This was the same area where John the Baptist had begun his ministry. Mark 1:4 says, “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Many people had heard John there and Matthew 3:5-6 says, “Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.” Here we see that many people in that area and even from other areas had confessed their sins and been baptized by John. These people were very glad to hear the teaching of Jesus.

Those people recognized that John had not performed signs. In addition, they recognized that everything that John had said about Jesus was true. Here we see that John had been a faithful witness as he prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. Many of these people had confessed their sins and been baptized by John. They had repented of their sin of unbelief. Now they had the opportunity to hear directly from the One about whom John had spoken. They recognized that Jesus was the Christ and that the signs that Jesus did proved that He came from God. Here we see a very different response from that of the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The result was that many people believed in Jesus in that area. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there are many people who are searching for truth. The Lord has been preparing their hearts to receive the message of the Gospel. These people will believe as our children are faithful to share the Gospel with such individuals. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand how the Lord prepares people to come to Him for salvation.

41.

Jesus Heard that Lazarus was Sick

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children come to understand that the Lord is preparing the hearts of many people to receive the message of the Gospel. The Lord has prepared such individuals so that they are ready to receive the Gospel and place their faith in Christ when the Word is shared with them. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus prepared to return to Judea.

One day a messenger came looking for Jesus. John 11:1-4 says, “Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “‘Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.’” When Jesus heard that, He said, ‘This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’” Jesus often visited the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus when He went to Jerusalem. One visit is recorded in Luke 10:38-42. Now the sisters sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick.

We read that Lazarus was the sister of the Mary that anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. That would happen a few weeks later than the event recorded in John 11. In fact it would happen just six days before the Passover as we will see in the topic on John 12:1-8. That event of the anointing of the feet of Jesus was probably well known by the early Christians so that is why it was mentioned here so that the early Christians would know which Mary is mentioned in this chapter.

Mary and her sister Martha knew that Jesus loved their brother Lazarus. As a result, they sent a messenger to Jesus to let Him know that Lazarus was sick. They knew that Jesus had healed many sick people during the previous three years and so they realized that Jesus could heal their brother also. However, the Father had a much greater plan. Jesus had said that He came to do the will of the Father. John 6:38 says, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” In these verses we are going to see how Jesus carried out the will of the Father.

First, Jesus began by saying, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” In this statement we see that Jesus stated the purpose of the sickness of Lazarus. The purpose of this sickness was to bring glory to God. We will see that Lazarus did experience temporary physical death at this time but that temporary death only lasted for four days. However, the miracle that Jesus would perform would show as no other miracle could that Jesus is God.

Second, Jesus said that this sickness would not produce permanent physical death. It was true that Lazarus would experience physical death for four days. However, Jesus knew that He was going to raise Lazarus from physical death. John 11:43-44 says, “Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And he who had died came out

bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Loose him, and let him go.'" Jesus raised Lazarus back to physical life and he lived a normal physical life for a period of time before again experiencing physical death.

Third, Jesus said that the Son of God would be glorified through the physical death and raising back to life of Lazarus. John 11:45 says, "Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him." In this verse we see one of the ways that Jesus was glorified by the fact that Lazarus was raised back to life. That miracle caused many to believe in Jesus. However, there was another way that Jesus was glorified as a result of the raising of Lazarus. John 11:49-52 says, "And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.' Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad." It was the raising of Lazarus that caused the high priest to determine that Jesus must be killed. That decision by the high priest led to the fact that Jesus died to pay the penalty for the sins of the whole world and the Father showed that He was satisfied by raising Jesus from the dead. That brought great glory to Jesus.

Jesus received the message about the sickness of Lazarus but did not go to him immediately. John 11:5-6 says, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was." Jesus had a great love for Lazarus as well as his two sisters. However, that did not cause Jesus to leave immediately for their home. Instead Jesus chose to spend two more days in the place where He was. That reason is revealed in John 11:39 where we read, "Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, 'Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.'" Jesus wanted to make certain that the smell of death would come from the tomb when the stone was removed from the entrance to the tomb. That smell of death would provide the evidence that Lazarus had died and that his body was already beginning to decay in the tomb.

In contrast, Psalm 16:10 says, "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." Peter and Paul both quoted this verse in sermons to show that the body of Jesus did not suffer corruption. Peter quoted the verse in Acts 2:27. Then Acts 2:31 says, "He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption." Peter made it clear in his sermon that the physical body of Jesus did not see corruption. In Acts 13:34-37 Paul said, "And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption." Both Peter and Paul made it clear that the physical body of Jesus did not suffer corruption.

After staying in that place for two more days, Jesus said to His disciples in John 11:7-10, "Then after this He said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to Him, 'Rabbi,

lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?’ Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.’” Once Jesus had allowed the body of Lazarus to have the smell of death by the time the stone was rolled away from the tomb, Jesus was ready to go Bethany to raise Lazarus back to life.

We saw that Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters. The town of Bethany was only about two miles from the city of Jerusalem so Jesus knew that word would quickly get to the religious leaders in Jerusalem when He raised Lazarus back to life. However, this was the opportunity to show His love to this family. Jesus knew that this would cause the religious leaders to really begin to plot His death and that was exactly what happened. We saw in the earlier part of the topic that Caiaphas said that one should die for the people. Once the religious leaders heard about Jesus raising Lazarus, John 11:53 says, “Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.” As a result, this became the event that would lead to the crucifixion of Jesus.

The disciples were concerned because they feared that Jesus would be stoned if He returned to the area around Jerusalem. However, Jesus reminded the disciples of a common saying, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” Jesus was carrying out the will of His Father and this meant that He was walking in the spiritual light. The religious leaders could do nothing to Him until the time that the Father had set for Him to die for the sins of the people of the world. Jesus had to finish His other ministry first.

The night before Jesus was crucified Jesus prayed to the Father in the garden. John 17:4 says, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” Jesus had finished the work that the Father had for Him to do before He went to the cross. As a result, Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to pay the penalty for our sins. That was why another part of the prayer of Jesus is mentioned in Luke 22:42-44 where we read, “saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’” Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Jesus continued to do the will of the Father even as He prepared for His death. The Father chose to send an angel to be with Him during that time because the Father understood the agony that Jesus experienced as He prepared to carry out the will of the Father.

Jesus was not afraid to go to Bethany because He knew that He was carrying out the will of the Father. He would carry out the will of the Father and complete His work before He went to the cross. In the same way we want to show our physical and spiritual children that we do not need to be fearful in our own lives as we carry out the will of the Father. The Lord will give us His strength in every situation when we are walking in fellowship with Him moment by moment. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children what it means to be led by the Spirit moment by moment.

Jesus Told the Disciples that Lazarus had Died

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the love that Jesus had for Lazarus. Jesus chose to show His love for Lazarus by going to the town of Bethany even though He knew that the religious leaders in nearby Jerusalem wanted to kill Him. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus told His disciples that Lazarus had already died before they even left to go to Bethany.

Jesus was always concerned about doing the will of the Father. That is why He had told the disciples that they were going to Judea again. The disciples reminded Jesus that the Jews in Jerusalem wanted to kill Him. Jesus then explained why they were going to return to Judea. John 11:11-13 says, “These things He said, and after that He said to them, ‘Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.’ Then His disciples said, ‘Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.’ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.” Here we see that Jesus told them why He was going to Judea in a way that they did not understand.

The reason that the disciples did not understand was due to the fact that Jesus was actually teaching the disciples how to describe the death of a believer in Jesus. Jesus said, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.” We will see later that Jesus had to tell them that Lazarus had physically died. However, the death of a Christian is called sleep several places in the New Testament because we go to sleep here on earth and immediately wake up in the presence of the Lord in heaven. One illustration of this use of sleep is in I Thessalonians 4:13-14 where we read, “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” In these verses we see that we have a different sorrow than those who have no hope because we know that Christians who have died (sleep) are with Jesus and will come with Him when He returns.

Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus was sleeping but that He was going to wake him up. The disciples thought that it was good that Lazarus was sleeping because they thought that meant that the health of Lazarus was improving. The disciples did not understand that Jesus was saying that Lazarus had experienced physical death because they had to learn that this was a new way to speak about the death of the followers of Jesus. As a result, Jesus had to explain exactly what He meant to the disciples.

We read in John 11:14-16, “Then Jesus said to them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.’ Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with Him.’” Here we see that Jesus had to explain clearly what He meant. Suddenly the disciples realized that Lazarus was no longer living. They realized that Jesus had made the choice to stay where He was for two days even though He knew what had happened to Lazarus. That probably caused them to be very confused for a moment as they had seen Jesus show love

to many sick people by healing them. In fact Jesus had healed a boy without even going to where the boy was located. Jesus told a nobleman in John 4:50, “Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your son lives.’ So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way.” That boy was healed the same hour. As a result, the disciples may have wondered why Jesus did not heal Lazarus in the same way since he loved Lazarus.

That Jesus said something even more surprising when He said, “And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.” However, the next statement of Jesus probably caused even more confusion to the disciples as Jesus finished His statement by saying, “That you may believe.” Here we see the real purpose for the physical death of Lazarus. John 20:30-31 says, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” We see that Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead as a sign to the disciples. Jesus knew that this particular miracle would do more than any other miracle to cause the disciples to believe and to understand the fact that Jesus has all authority over all things.

Thomas heard the words of Jesus and immediately spoke to the rest of the disciples. He realized that the Jews wanted to kill Jesus and that could happen if they went to Bethany as that town is very close to Jerusalem. However, the words of Thomas show the commitment that Thomas had to Jesus. His words, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him,” showed that Thomas realized that there would be a great risk to all of them. His words showed that he was willing to die with Jesus if that was necessary. In future years nearly all of the disciples did die for their faith in Jesus. Thomas shows us that he realized that death could be the cost that they would pay for being disciples of Jesus.

We see that the disciples did travel to Bethany with Jesus. It was only a few weeks later that Peter made a similar statement about his willingness to die for Jesus as the disciples ate the Passover with Jesus the night before He was crucified. Luke 22:31-34 says, “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.’ But he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.’ Then He said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.’” Peter did fulfill the words of Jesus that night and deny that he knew Jesus three times.

However, once the Holy Spirit came to empower the disciples we see that he became a bold witness even when he faced these same religious leaders that condemned Jesus to death. Acts 4:5-6 says, “And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.” Acts 4:8-10 then says, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.” Finally Acts 4:13 says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and

perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” We see that the words of Thomas gave all the disciples an example to follow.

Jesus and the disciples traveled together to the city of Bethany. Here we see that Jesus wanted to comfort the sisters in their time of sorrow. However, we will see that Jesus planned to do much more than just provide comfort. John 11:17-19 says, “So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.” When Jesus and the disciples arrived at the town of Bethany they were told that Lazarus had died and been buried four days earlier. This meant that his body had already started to decay and the smell of death would certainly be smelled if the rock was removed from the tomb.

Jesus and the disciples received the information about the death and burial of Lazarus even before they got to the home of Mary and Martha. John 11:20 says, “Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.” Here we see that someone hurried ahead of Jesus and the disciples and told Martha that Jesus was coming. We will see what Martha did in our next topic.

Many Jews that lived in the city of Jerusalem knew Lazarus and his sisters. Since Jerusalem was only two miles from Bethany, many of these Jews had come to Bethany to comfort Mary and Martha after the death of their brother. Many of these Jews from Jerusalem were still at the home of Mary and Martha comforting the sisters as they grieved the loss of their brother. The fact that many Jews knew this family and came to comfort the sisters shows that this family was a well known family. These people wanted to comfort the sisters in their sorrow.

However, the Lord also had a much greater plan for these people who came to give comfort to Mary and Martha. John 11:45 says, “Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.” Here we see that the miracle that Jesus would do when He raised Lazarus from the dead caused many of these Jews from Jerusalem to believe in Jesus. They came to give comfort to Mary and Martha but also were led to place their faith in Jesus as a result of seeing the fact that Jesus showed that He was from God by raising Lazarus from the dead.

We saw earlier in this topic that the signs that are written in the book of John were written for a purpose. That purpose was to cause many people to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. We also saw that the Word of God promised that all those who do believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God will see that their belief results in their having life in His name. That promise is still true today. Any person who will place their belief in the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that God raised Jesus from the dead will also receive eternal life. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to share that message regularly with other so that many other people living today will also have the opportunity to receive eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to share the message that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus Told Martha Lazarus Would Rise Again

We saw in our last topic that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. We also saw that the book of John records the miracles that it does to show that fact. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus promised Martha that her brother would rise again.

Jesus came to Bethany after he heard about the sickness of Lazarus and knew that he had died. John 11:20-22 says, “Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. Now Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.’” Here we see that Martha hurried to meet Jesus even before he arrived at their house. In contrast, Mary just stayed at the house. This shows that Martha was very anxious to tell Jesus what had happened to her brother.

Martha used the very same words to talk about her brother Lazarus that her sister used a little while later as she began to talk to Jesus. In John 11:32 we read, “Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’” Here we see that both sisters said exactly the same words. Both women showed that they knew that Jesus would have healed their brother if Jesus would have been there at the time. However, we also see another important lesson from their words. Many people want to talk about the one who has died and want someone to listen. Both Martha and Mary knew that Jesus would listen to them. Many people are uncomfortable when a person tries to talk about the one who has died and immediately want to change the subject.

However, we also see that there was a great difference in the responses of the sisters. Martha showed that she had confidence that Jesus could turn even this time of sorrow into a time from which good would come. In contrast, we see that Mary was much more focused on her present grief. Christ understood the needs that both women had and served them by showing His love. Luke 10:39-40 shows how different these women were what those verses say, “And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.’” On that earlier visit Mary just wanted to learn from Jesus while Martha wanted to serve Jesus.

Martha said, “But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” Here we see that Martha expected Jesus to pray and knew that God would turn this death into a time when their needs would be met. She understood that Jesus was the Son of God and that He could pray to the Father and the Father could bring something good even out of a very sad event in the life of Martha and her sister. We also see that Martha had a hope for the future. John 11:23-27 says, “Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’”

Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may

die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?' She said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'" These verses show what gave Martha hope.

Jesus told Martha that her brother would rise again. Martha said that she knew what Jesus said was true. She knew that there would be a resurrection in the future and that Lazarus would be raised back to life at that time. Martha had the same understanding that Job and many others in the Old Testament had shown. Job said in Job 19:25-27, "For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me!" Job was confident that He would physically see His Redeemer in a future day. Martha had this same confidence.

Then Jesus told Martha that He is the "I AM" as He gave His fifth "I AM" in the book of John. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Here Jesus stated that He is the One who has had the power to raise the dead in the past, the present and the future. He is also the One who gives everlasting life. Daniel 12:2 says, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt." Some will be raised to everlasting life and others will be raised to everlasting judgment.

Jesus then said that He is the One who gives life to those who believe in Him. In these statements Jesus made it clear that there is both physical life and spiritual life. A person who has both physical and spiritual life may experience physical death but He can look forward to the fact that He will live forever. Each person who believes in Jesus and receives Him becomes a child of God. John 1:12-13 says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Jesus said that those who believe in Him will live because they receive spiritual life at the moment of salvation.

Then Christ explained further, "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." Here we see that each person that has a true belief in Jesus will never experience death. That is due to the fact that each person who believes is given spiritual life. II Corinthians 5:6-8 says, "So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." Every person who believes in Jesus and receive Him can be confident that he or she will never die. Instead at the moment our body experiences physical death our soul and spirit are immediately present with the Lord. Jesus asked Martha if she believed that.

Martha did not fully understand and so she answered, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." Here we see that Martha expressed the fact that she believed that Jesus is the Christ. She also said that she believed that He is the Son of God. John 20:30-31 says, "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." Martha could know that she personally had eternal life because of what she said that day. That could

give her great hope and peace even at a time when her brother had just died because she knew that he had that same belief and that even though he had experienced physical death that they both had eternal life. That is why I Thessalonians 4:13 says, “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.” Martha had physical sorrow but Jesus reminded her that she also had that confident hope.

We see that once Martha was reminded of the confident hope that we have because of the resurrection that she went to call her sister. John 11:28-30 says, “And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, ‘The Teacher has come and is calling for you.’ As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him.” Martha was encouraged just to see Jesus and she knew that would also be an encouragement to Mary. As a result, she quickly returned to their home and called Mary aside so that she could tell her privately that Jesus had arrived and was now near the edge of their town.

Martha had an important message for Mary. Martha said, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” The word translated “Teacher” means one teaches the things of God. When this word was used to speak of Jesus it was usually translated Master. John 13:13-14 says, “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” In these verses we see that the word is twice translated Teacher. Martha let Mary know that Jesus had come to their town. However, she also said that Jesus was calling for Mary.

Mary immediately left their home and quickly hurried to the place where Jesus was. Here we see that Mary was also anxious to see Jesus and talk to Him. She had a great love for Jesus. One of the times that Jesus had stopped at their home Luke 10:39 says, “And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.” Just a few weeks after the visit of Jesus mentioned here in the book of John we read in John 12:3, “Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.” The value of the oil of spikenard that Mary poured on the feet of Jesus had the value of a year’s wages.

Jesus was still outside of the town when Mary reached Him. This was probably due to the fact that other people had seen Jesus talking with Martha and had also started talking with Him because Jesus was still at the same place where Martha had met Him. These people had probably followed Martha when she left her home and started talking to Jesus when Martha went to get Mary. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the reminder to Martha that she would see her brother at the time of the resurrection was a great encouragement to her. May the Lord bless you richly as you help your children learn that this same message will comfort many Christians.

Jesus Told Mary Lazarus Would Rise Again

In our last topic we saw that Jesus took time to tell Martha that He is the resurrection and the life and that this message caused Martha to be encouraged because it reminded her that she would see her brother again. In our topic today we are going to see that Mary said the same thing that Martha had said when she first saw Jesus. However, Jesus knew that she needed to be ministered to in a different way than He had ministered to Martha.

We saw in our last topic that Martha had told Mary privately that Jesus had arrived at their town. Mary then left the home and went quickly to the place where Martha had met Jesus. John 11:31-32 says, “Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, ‘She is going to the tomb to weep there.’ Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’” Here we see that the Jews at the home of Mary quickly followed her when she left the home.

However, the Jews did not know what Martha had told Mary because she had told her privately that Jesus had come. As a result, they did not know why Mary had suddenly got up and left. They had come to comfort Mary and were concerned when she quickly left the home without explaining where she was going. This group of comforters may have included some professional mourners as the Jewish custom was to have three or more mourners including at least two flute players and a wailing woman. These people followed Mary because they assumed that she was going to the tomb to weep and they wanted to be with her to comfort her.

Mary quickly hurried to the place where Martha had met Jesus because she also wanted to see Him. When she came to the place where Jesus was she fell at His feet. Then she said exactly the same thing that Martha had said to Jesus a short time before. She said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” Mary also recognized that Jesus had the power to heal and knew that He would have healed Lazarus if He had arrived before the death of Lazarus. Jesus also saw that the large group of comforters was following Mary as she came to Him.

The word translated “comforters” means to speak words to encourage or console and is used four times in the New Testament. It is used in verses 19 and 31 in this chapter and then twice in the book of I Thessalonians. I Thessalonians 2:11 says, “You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” Here we see that Paul, Silas and Timothy encouraged the new Christians in Thessalonica just as a father encourages his children. Then I Thessalonians 5:14 says, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.” First, in this verse we see that we are to encourage those who are easily discouraged.

John 11:33-36 says, “Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to Him, ‘Lord, come and see.’ Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, ‘See how He loved him!’” Jesus saw the sorrow and grief of Mary and the many friends that were following her. We see the response of Jesus to this grief and sorrow. Jesus did three things. First we see that He groaned in the spirit. The word translated “groaned” comes from the word meaning to “to snort with anger”. In the spirit Jesus groaned as He saw the consequences of original sin in the sorrow that sin and death brings.

Second, we see that Jesus was troubled. The word translated “troubled” means to agitate, to cause a person to be anxious or distressed or to take away calmness of mind. This word was used of Jesus in John 13:21 where we read, “When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’” Here we see that Jesus was troubled in spirit because He knew that Judas was going to betray Him because the heart of Judas was controlled by sin. However, Jesus then told the rest of the disciples in John 14:1, “Let not your heart be troubled...” Then John 14:27 says, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Sin and the consequences of sin troubled Jesus but Jesus wanted His disciples to experience inner peace because He would defeat sin at the cross.

Third, we see that Jesus wept. Romans 12:15 says, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” Jesus saw Mary and the people who came with her all weeping. Jesus asked where the body of Lazarus had been laid. They just said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus wept with those who wept as they walked together to the tomb where the body of Lazarus had been placed. Jesus showed His love by weeping with them in their sorrow. Matthew 9:36 says, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” Jesus had this same compassion as He saw Mary and the friends of Lazarus as they mourned the death of Lazarus.

The Jews who were with Mary saw the tears of Jesus as He wept. Their response was, “See how He loved him!” The fact that Jesus showed His love for Lazarus and his sisters was recognized by the people who were with Mary. That was why the people spoke of the great love that Jesus had for Lazarus. This is an important lesson for every Christian to learn. If we are controlled by the love of Jesus, others will also recognize that love. That is why Jesus gave the new commandment in John 13:34-35 where we read, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” These people saw the love of Jesus and people today will also see our love when we show the love of Jesus to those who are hurting.

That genuine love will be the result of getting to really know God. I John 4:7-8 says, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” The new Christians in the city of Thessalonica had learned to love. I Thessalonians 4:9 says, “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.” Here we see that those who get to know God are taught by God to love one

another. We see how God teaches us to love in Romans 5:5 which says, “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” We see that the love of God is poured out in our hearts as we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit moment by moment. As we yield to the Holy Spirit a greater percentage of the time, the world around us will also see the love of God flowing from our lives.

Some of the Jews with Jesus and Mary did not really notice how much Jesus loved Lazarus. As a result, they had a question that they asked one another. John 11:37-38 says, “And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?” Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.” These people knew about the miracle that Jesus had done when He healed the man that was born blind a few weeks earlier. They realized that miracle had been a great miracle especially because of the fact that the man had been born blind.

As a result, this group of people asked the question, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?” Here we see that they recognized that Jesus could probably have kept Lazarus from dying. However, they had no thought of the possibility that Jesus could also raise the dead. Jesus had earlier told Martha in John 11:25, “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” Martha had understood that Jesus would raise Lazarus in the future resurrection and that had comforted her. However, we are going to see that Jesus could also choose to raise a person back to physical life. This group of friends was going to have the opportunity to see Jesus do just that a few minutes later.

Jesus, Mary and the group of comforters following them continued on their way until they came to the tomb where Lazarus had been buried. Jesus again groaned as He saw the consequences of original sin and how that affects people especially in times of sorrow and death. The tomb where Lazarus was buried was actually a cave. A few weeks later Jesus Himself would be buried in a similar tomb. Since the tomb was a cave, it was common to roll a stone against the mouth of the cave so that wild animals could not enter the tomb and destroy the body. The stone also helped to prevent the odor that was present as a body decayed to escape from the tomb. We see that such a stone had been placed against the opening into this cave. We will see what happened in our next topic.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the greatness of the love and compassion that Jesus showed as He walked with Mary and those who followed to the cave where the body of Lazarus had been placed. We want to show our children by our example that we also want to show the love of Jesus to those who are in sorrow especially the sorrow of the death of a family member. As we minister to others in sorrow, our children will see how they can also comfort others. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to comfort others in their sorrow.

Jesus Raised Lazarus from the Dead

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to show love to those who are in sorrow especially when there has been a death in the family. We saw that the people noticed that Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters because of the fact that Jesus wept with Mary. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus took away that sorrow by raising Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus with Mary, Martha and a large group of other Jews who had come to comfort the sisters. John 11:39-40 says, “Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” Here we are told what Jesus said as soon as they arrived at the tomb. He just told the people to take away the stone from the tomb. That sounded like an easy request since there were a large group of people there.

However, Martha immediately spoke. She explained why it would not be a good idea to remove the stone. The words of Martha show that she was a very practical woman who thought about the consequences of choices that people made. Martha just said, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.” She knew that Jesus was Lord and she had told Jesus a short time earlier that she believed that her brother would be raised in the resurrection at the last day. Those words had been an encouragement to her in this time of sorrow for her brother. That is why she was now able to speak about the practical result of removing the stone. She said that if the stone was removed that there would be a terrible odor if the stone was removed because her brother had already been dead for four days.

Jesus also knew that there would be that terrible smell of death because of the fact that the body of Lazarus had already begun to decay. However, Jesus knew that the smell would soon disappear. He also knew that the terrible smell was proof of the fact that Lazarus had been dead for four days. Jesus reminded Martha and all of the others who had followed them of some of the words that He had spoken to Martha when she first met Jesus as He approached the town of Bethany. One of the things that Jesus had said to her was, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”

In I Corinthians 10:31 we read, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” In this verse we see that the Lord wants us to do everything in a way that will bring glory to God. Christ wanted to teach that important lesson to His disciples and other followers like Martha and Mary. That is why Jesus said that if Martha would believe that she would see the glory of God. The word translated “would see” means to look at or behold. This word is used in Luke 21:27 where we read, “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” In this verse Jesus said that the whole world would see Him when He returned to the earth at the end of the tribulation. Jesus said that Martha would see the glory of God if she believed. We will see that what Jesus would do just a few minutes later would cause Martha to see with her own eyes the glory of God.

As a result, John 11:41-43 says, “Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.” Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” Here we see that the stone was removed from the entrance to the tomb where the body of Lazarus had been placed. The moment had arrived for Martha to see the glory of God as she saw what Jesus would do as a sign for His disciples.

Since the purpose of this miracle was to be a sign to the disciples and the others who saw or would later hear about this miracle, Jesus first gave a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father for what the Father would do to show that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus began this prayer by saying, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.” Jesus often spoke of His relationship to the Father and this was one of the things that upset those who rejected the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. An illustration of this rejection is given in John 10:30-31 where we read, “I and My Father are one.” Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.” Jesus wanted it clearly demonstrate that this miracle happened because of His relationship to the Father.

Jesus knew that the Father always heard Him. However, Jesus also knew that many of the people that were standing there that day did not truly believe in their hearts that Jesus is the Son of God. As a result, these words of thanks to the Father for what He was going to do were important to help the people that were standing there that day to come to a true belief of the fact that the Father had sent Him. John 20:30-31 explains, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Jesus wanted the people that day to believe in Him and receive Him so that they could have eternal life. He also wants all that read these words to also believe and receive Him so they can have eternal life.

After thanking the Father for what He was going to do, Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.” There was a very important reason why Jesus used the name of Lazarus as He gave this command. Earlier Jesus had said in John 5:26-29, “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” This was not the time for all the people that were in the graves to hear Jesus and come forth as He exercised this authority. That time is still future. However, it was time for Lazarus to come forth and be raised back to the physical life which he had before he died four days earlier.

We go on to see the result of the authority of Jesus as He cried with a loud voice to Lazarus. John 11:44-46 says, “And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.” Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.” When Jesus

said, Lazarus, come forth, at that instant the smell of death disappeared and Lazarus came walking out of the tomb.

However, the body of Lazarus including his arms and his legs were wrapped with graveclothes. His face was wrapped with a separate cloth because that was the normal way of the Jews to bury a body. He was unable to remove these graveclothes because he was on the inside of them. Jesus had performed the miracle that no one else could do. Then Jesus gave a command to Martha, Mary and the other people that were there. By doing this Jesus gave the people there that day the opportunity to participate. Jesus just told the people, "Loose him, and let him go." The people followed the instruction of Jesus and set Lazarus free from the graveclothes. We see that this miracle produced two very different results in the lives of the people that saw Lazarus come out of the tomb.

First, we see that many of the Jews that had come to comfort Mary believed in Jesus because of this miracle which Jesus had just done. As we saw earlier in this topic, the purpose of the signs that are written in the book of John was to help all who read this Scripture in the future also believe. Many people believed in Jesus that day because they saw this miracle. Jesus had earlier given a promise in John 5:24 which says, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." Those who believed that the Father sent Jesus received everlasting life. They no longer had to fear eternal judgment. Instead they had passed from death unto life.

In contrast, we see a very different response from the second group of people that were there that day. John 11:46 says, "But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did." This group of people saw the very same miracle. They knew that the smell of death had disappeared as soon as Jesus spoke the words, "Lazarus, come forth." However, they did not believe. Instead they went to tell the Pharisees what Jesus had just done. We will also see in the next topic that the chief priests and Pharisees gathered a council and made an important decision that day. John 11:53 says, "Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death." This is a reminder that every person must make a choice.

Each individual also has to make the choice whether to believe in Jesus or to reject Jesus. Those who believe in Him, His death, and His resurrection, and receive Him will receive the gift of eternal life. Those who choose not to believe in Jesus and His death and resurrection will experience the eternal judgment promised in John 5:28-29 quoted earlier in this topic. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain clearly from the Word of God this choice that every person faces. As they share the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will convict of sin, righteousness and judgment, the Father will draw and the Son will seek and save. Those who make the choice to believe and receive Jesus are given eternal life and no longer face judgment. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to clearly explain to others how to receive eternal life.

Jesus Knew the Religious Leaders were Plotting His Death

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain the Word of God to others so that the Holy Spirit can convict, the Father can draw and the Son can seek and save. Then each person is able to make his or her own choice whether to believe or to reject that message. In our topic today we are going to see that most of the Jewish religious leaders chose to reject the fact that Jesus is God.

We concluded our last topic by seeing that some of the Jews who saw Lazarus raised from the dead went to tell the Pharisees. John 11:47-48 says, “Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.” The chief priests were Sadducees. Normally the Pharisees and Sadducees were against each other. However, both groups saw Jesus as a threat to their power. As a result, we see that the chief priests and the Pharisees are now joining together to destroy Jesus.

The Jewish religious leaders had to admit one thing as they talked together. They said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.” Here we see that they had to admit that Jesus had performed many miracles as signs. Jesus had just shown His power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead after he had been dead for four days. The religious leaders had been able to control the people for many years because they maintained their religious and political power by cooperating with the Romans in order to keep their control over the people. That was why they asked, “What shall we do?” Their power and control were much more important to them than obedience to God.

The religious leaders realized that if Jesus continued to perform other signs that soon all of the people would believe Jesus and recognize Him as the Messiah promised in the Word of God. The religious leaders mentioned two things that they feared. First, they were afraid the Romans might take away their place or position of power over the people. Second, they feared that the Romans might just completely destroy their nation. Either way the religious leaders recognized that they would lose their power over the people. The Pharisees had earlier shown their own pride and their contempt for the people. John 7:47-49 said to the officers, “Then the Pharisees answered them, “Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” The chief priests and Pharisees had sent these officers to arrest Jesus because of their fear of losing their power.

We then see what the high priest said. John 11:49-54 says, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’ Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the

Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.” Here we see that the high priest spoke and said what they should do to protect their power.

The word translated “expedient” means to bring together, to be profitable or to be for our benefit. Caiaphas used this word to tell the religious leaders that it would be for their benefit to kill Jesus so that they would not lose their power and positions and so that the Romans would not decide to destroy the Jewish nation. Here we see that the only thought of Caiaphas and the other religious leaders was to maintain their power over the people by putting Jesus to death.

However, God had a much greater purpose for causing Caiaphas to speak those particular words. Here we see that God could even speak through a very ungodly high priest to tell what Jesus was actually going to do. II Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” It was the plan of the Father to have Jesus who had never committed any sin to become sin for us. In that way the Father could place the righteousness of Jesus on us so that we could become righteous in the sight of God. Peter further explained this in I Peter 2:24 where we read, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” Jesus took our sins on Himself. That made it possible for the power of sin over our lives to be put to death. That is why we are now able to make the choice to live for righteousness because we have been healed from the eternal consequences of sin.

We see that the prophecy of Caiaphas was not limited to fact that Jesus would die for the Jews. John explained clearly that this was also a prophecy that was good news for the Gentiles. This prophecy did not just apply to the nation of Israel or just to the Jews. In this prophecy Caiaphas also prophesied “that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.” Jesus had earlier said in John 10:16, “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.” The other sheep mentioned in this verse includes all of the Gentiles that would later place their faith in Jesus.

This promise also explains that Jesus, “would gather together in one the children of God.” Ephesians 2:13-16 says, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” Here we see that God caused the high priest to even prophesy that Jesus would bring both Jews and Gentiles together and make us one in the church.

The fact that the Jewish religious leaders had determined that Jesus should be put to death meant that it was necessary for Jesus to leave the area near Jerusalem so that they would not be able to put Jesus to death until the time planned before the world was ever created. As a result, we see that Jesus left the area of Jerusalem and went to a city called Ephraim. This city was

near the wilderness and so this moved Jesus far enough from the city of Jerusalem that the chief priests and Pharisees could not carry out their plan to kill Jesus until the time that had been determined by the Lord. Jesus spent the next few weeks in that area teaching His disciples before the time of the Passover when Jesus would return to Jerusalem to pay the penalty for our sins and the sins of the whole world.

John 11:55-57 says, “And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?” Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.” Meanwhile, we are given a summary of the things that were happening in Jerusalem during the time that Jesus was with His disciples in the city of Ephraim.

It was getting close to the time of the Passover and so the Jews living in the country areas made the trip from their home areas to the city of Jerusalem so that they could purify themselves before the Passover. Two Passovers earlier John 2:13 says, “Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” Here we see that as the Passover got close that the Jews from other areas would travel to Jerusalem early so that they could purify themselves in preparation for the Passover. They would do this purification after they arrived at the city of Jerusalem. Then John 18:28 says, “Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.” Here we see that the Jews were very careful to purify themselves so that they could eat the Passover.

Since the people did not find Jesus in the temple, they began to ask among themselves if Jesus would even come to the Passover. The people had heard that the religious leaders wanted to put Jesus to death. We also see the group that wanted to put Jesus to death. Most of the chief priests were also Sadducees. Normally the Pharisees and the Sadducees were in opposition to each other. The Pharisees focused on keeping both the Old Testament Law and also their traditions that they had added to the Law. In contrast, the Sadducees denied miracles, spirits and many other things that are taught in the Old Testament. However, we see that both groups wanted to seize Jesus because of the fact that both groups were afraid that they would lose their power if Jesus continued to gain in popularity. Both groups were showing that their hearts were filled with unbelief.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that many people today are like the Pharisees and the Sadducees. John 3:20 says, “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” The religious leaders knew that Jesus was teaching the truth. However, they did not like the truth because the truth exposed the fact that their thoughts and actions were evil. We want to help our children understand that those who are doing evil do not like the truth because the truth will expose their deeds. That is the reason why those who are doing evil oppose the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand why many religious people oppose Jesus.

Jesus was Anointed by Mary

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why many religious people reject Jesus. They reject Him because they know that Jesus and the Word of God expose their sinful actions and they are not ready to repent of their sin. In contrast, in our topic today we are going to learn about one who had a great love for Jesus and showed that love by her actions.

We see that the time had come for Jesus to pay the penalty for the sins of the world. John 12:1-3 says, “Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.” Bethany was just a few minutes walk from Jerusalem. As a result, His arrival in this town six days before the Passover shows that the time that the Trinity planned before the foundation of the world for Jesus to die had come.

Jesus and His disciples arrived at the town of Bethany and they came to the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. It was only a few weeks earlier that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Jesus and His disciples had eaten meals at this home on earlier trips to Jerusalem. Luke 10:40-41 tells what Martha said and did on one such visit. Those verses say, “But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.’ And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.’” Here we see that Martha was again the one that was serving the dinner to Jesus and His disciples.

In contrast we see that Mary had done something very different on that previous visit. Luke 10:39, and 42 say, “And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word...But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” In this verse we see that Mary had chosen to just sit and listen to Jesus teach and Jesus said that privilege should not be taken from her. We see that Mary also did something very different on this visit. Mary chose to show her love for Jesus by anointing the feet of Jesus with a very expensive perfume.

We read that Mary took a pound (about 12 ounces by our modern measurements) of oil of spikenard and anointed the feet of Jesus. Spikenard came from the head or spike of a plant that was grown in the country of India. This spike produced a juice that gave a very wonderful smell. However, this ointment had to be brought from India to the land of Israel. As a result, this was very expensive oil and the amount that Mary poured on the feet of Jesus was worth more than a year’s wages. Then we read that after pouring this ointment on the feet of Jesus that she wiped His feet with her hair. This was an act of great love. We see that the fragrant smell of this very expensive oil filled the entire house with the wonderful smell.

This great act of love by Mary caused a reaction by one of the disciples. John 12:4-7 says, “But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.” We see that Judas was the disciple that reacted. Then we are told that Judas was the disciple who later betrayed Him

Judas made it sound like he had a great concern for the poor. A denarius was the main silver coin of the Roman Empire and was the amount of wages for a full day of work. Matthew 20:2 says, “Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.” In this passage we see that the worker had agreed to work a twelve hour day for this wage. Since this oil was worth three hundred denarii it was more than a laborer made in a year of work so Judas knew that it was worth a large amount. Judas suggested that the size of the value could have been a great help to the poor.

However, it was not his concern for the poor that caused Judas to say what he did. We see that Judas was actually a thief. Jesus had given him the responsibility to carry the money box and the money that was in it. The disciples realized later that Judas used to take part of the money that was put in the money box for himself. This leads us to ask the question, “Why would Jesus appoint Judas the one who was to be responsible for the money when Jesus knew that he was stealing part of the money? Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

Jesus knew throughout His ministry that Judas had an evil heart. John 6:70-71 says, “Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?’ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.” Jesus knew the condition of the heart of Judas but Jesus wanted Judas to know the condition of his own heart. That was why Jesus gave Judas the responsibility to carry the money box. In this way Jesus provided Judas with a reminder of the condition of his heart every time that he stole money from the money box. Jesus recognized that it was more important for Judas to know the condition of his heart than it was for Jesus to make sure that none of the money was stolen. Each time Judas took some of the money for himself he was reminded of the condition of his sinful heart.

Jesus just told Judas to stop speaking against Mary. This Jesus added, “She has kept this for the day of My burial.” Matthew and Mark wrote in greater detail the words that Jesus spoke about Mary. Mark 14:6-9 says, “But Jesus said, “Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.” Mary may have had the best understanding of any of the followers of Jesus of His statements about His coming death. Jesus said that she had come before the time of His burial to anoint Him for that burial.

Jesus reminded Judas and the other disciples that there was always an opportunity for them to help the poor but that He would not always be there for Mary to show her love for Jesus. The other disciples did have a great concern for the poor and continued to have that attitude throughout their ministry. Galatians 2:9-10 says, “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. *They desired* only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.” Their concern was shown more than twenty years later when they encouraged Paul and Barnabas to have this same concern for the poor.

Meanwhile, the religious leaders saw that their power was slipping away. John 12:9-11 says, “Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.” Word quickly spread among the Jews in Jerusalem that Jesus was at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus which was just a few minutes walk from the city of Jerusalem. .

As a result, many Jews came to visit the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. They actually came for two reasons. These Jews wanted to see Jesus. However, they also wanted to see Lazarus since they had heard earlier that Lazarus had been raised from the dead and many people probably saw this as a good opportunity to see a person that had been raised from the dead now that he had been alive from the dead for several weeks. Those two things together caused a great many Jews to walk from Jerusalem to Bethany so that they could see both Jesus and Lazarus.

However, the chief priests had a very different reaction when they heard that Jesus was at the home of Lazarus and many people were going to see them. The chief priests saw that many of the Jews had believed in Jesus because of the fact that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. As a result, the chief priests began to plot to put Lazarus to death also. Here we see the results of their fear of the loss of control over the people. The chief priests and Pharisees had been plotting the death of Jesus from the day that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Now they added Lazarus to those that they were willing to kill in order to maintain their control over the people. Here we see the evilness of the heart when people are controlled by sin. These men who were supposed to be religious leaders were ready to kill innocent people in order to maintain their power and control over the other people.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand both the love of Mary for Jesus and also the hatred of those who felt like they were losing their power and control. This is why it is important to help our children understand the nature of sinful man. It is also the reason why we want to help them see how their lives are changed when they allow the love of Christ to take control of their hearts. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children grow in their understanding of both.

Jesus Entered the City of Jerusalem

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand both the evil in the heart of those who are still under the control of sin and the love that develops in such a life when that person allows the love of Christ to take control of his or her heart. In our topic today we are going to see that many of the followers of Jesus showed their love when Jesus publicly offered Himself as the King of the Jews.

The day following the dinner at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, we read that Jesus made a very public entrance into the city of Jerusalem. John 12:12-16 says, “The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!’ Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: ‘Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt.’ His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.” Here we see that Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah.

During the time of the Passover, as many as 500,000 Jews would come from other areas to the city of Jerusalem for the Passover. A sizeable group of these people came from the area of Galilee where they had seen Jesus do many miracles. These visitors to the city of Jerusalem would usually gather in the temple courtyard during the time of the various feasts. Word quickly spread through this great crowd of people that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. Many people took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Jesus. There were and still are many date palm trees around the city of Jerusalem so it was easy for the people to find many palm branches.

When the people met Jesus they began to shout and cry out, “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ The King of Israel!” The word “Hosanna!” came from the Hebrew and means “give salvation now”. Psalm 118:26 says, “Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.” We see that statement was included as part of the words that the people were shouting. During the various Jewish feasts the choir in the temple at Jerusalem would sing Psalms 113-118. Jewish writers on the Psalms wrote that Psalm 118 was speaking about the Messiah. The King of Israel was also a title that the Jews gave to the Messiah. As a result, as these people met Jesus and shouted out these words they were recognizing Him as the Messiah.

Jesus had chosen to ride into Jerusalem on a young donkey. Zechariah 9:9 says, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Matthew quoted from this verse as he wrote about the disciples that Jesus sent to get the donkey. Matthew 21:4-5 says, “All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken

by the prophet, saying: “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.’” Here we see that it was the plan of Jesus to offer Himself to the Jews as the promised Messiah. The common people recognized the offer that Jesus made.

We see that the disciples did not understand what was happening at that time. It was only after Jesus was glorified that the disciples remembered that these things were written about Him. The night of the resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples. Luke 24:44-45 says, “Then He said to them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” On the night of the resurrection Jesus taught them what the Old Testament taught about His death and resurrection. He gave them understanding so that they could understand the Old Testament Scriptures. The disciples then fully understood that Jesus was the Messiah.

John 12:17-19 says, “Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ‘You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!’” The people who were with Jesus when Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb gave witness of that fact to the common people. That is why the common people recognized Jesus as the Messiah. That was why the common people had come to meet Jesus with the palm branches. The disciples had been with Jesus in Ephraim after Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb. They did not know what the people who had been at the tomb that day were telling the other Jews as the Jews came to Jerusalem for the Passover. That was why the disciples did not understand until after the resurrection.

In contrast, the Pharisees had heard all of the people talking about Jesus calling Lazarus out of the tomb. They heard that the people recognized this as a sign that Jesus was the Messiah. They now heard the crowd of people shouting as they escorted Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. They saw that many people had gone to meet Jesus because of the fact that Jesus had called Lazarus from the grave. The Pharisees heard the words that the people were shouting and knew that the words came from Psalm 118 which was recognized as a Psalm about the coming Messiah. This caused the Pharisees to start talking among themselves as they saw and heard the common people escorting Jesus into the city of Jerusalem.

The Pharisees realized that their efforts to prevent the common people from following Jesus were not working. They suddenly recognized that their efforts had been useless. That was why the Pharisees said, “Look, the world has gone after Him!” The Pharisees realized that the number of people following Jesus was continuing to increase and that soon their control over the people would be gone. Jesus had read Isaiah 61:1-2a early in His ministry in the synagogue where He grew up in Nazareth. Luke 4:18-19 says, “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” Then Luke 4:21 says, “And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’”

Jesus came to give spiritual sight to the spiritually blind and set free those who were captives of dead religion. Many common people were now beginning to see the results of the words of Jesus in their own lives as they received spiritual understanding and were set free from their dependence on the traditions of the religious leaders.

However, we also see that it was more than just the common Jews who wanted to have their spiritual eyes opened and be set free from the bondage of religion. John 12:20-22 says, “Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.” These Greeks were probably Gentile proselytes to Judaism. As proselytes to Judaism they had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. They had probably heard the Jews talking about the fact that Jesus had called Lazarus out of the tomb a few weeks earlier. They had observed this great crowd shouting as they escorted Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. As a result, they also wanted to see Jesus.

The Greeks saw that Philip was one of the disciples of Jesus and so they went and told him that they would like to see Jesus. Philip did not know quite what to do and so he went and told Andrew. We see that Andrew did know what to do. Andrew is only mentioned three times in the book of John. John 1:40-42a says, “One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus...” In John 6:8-9 Andrew brought a young boy with a lunch to Jesus. Now here he knows what to do and brings these Greeks to see Jesus. We also want to show our children how to help others meet Jesus.

Here we see that Jesus was showing in advance that many Gentile proselytes would turn to Him as the Gospel spread to the Gentile world. Acts 11:20-21 says, “But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” Acts 13:42-44 says, “So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.” Acts 17:4 points out the same thing when that verse says, “And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.”

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the power of the Gospel to change the lives of both Jews and Gentiles. More people are willing to learn about Jesus than there are people willing to share that message with them. That is one reason why it is important to show your children how to talk about Jesus to others. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share Jesus with others.

Jesus said that the Hour had Come for Him to Die

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to share about Jesus with all who are willing to hear. We saw that there were many common people and even Gentiles who wanted to get to know more about Jesus at the very time that the religious leaders were plotting to kill Jesus. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus said that the time had come for Him to die.

The Jewish religious leaders had not been able to kill Jesus even though they were plotting His death. The time of Jesus death had been determined before God ever created the earth. Now John 12:23-26 says, “But Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.’” The members of the Trinity had planned the exact moment that Jesus would die.

Before this Jesus had said that His hour was future. Jesus told Mary in John 2:4, “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’” Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4:21, “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.’” Then John 7:30 says, “Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.” Then John 8:20 adds, “These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.” Here we see that Jesus now says, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.” The time for the death, resurrection and return of Jesus to heaven had arrived.

Jesus went on to illustrate what would be accomplished by Him being glorified. He used as an illustration the planting of a seed of grain. A seed of grain is by itself until it is placed in the ground. Once that grain is placed in the ground it dies. However, when a seed dies to produce a new plant, it produces a wonderful harvest. Jesus described such a harvest when He said in Mark 4:20, “But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.” The seed dies but it produces a great harvest. Jesus was going to die and rise again to new life. Here He said that His death and resurrection was going to produce a great harvest. Every person who becomes a Christian is a part of that harvest.

Jesus also explained the choice that every person would face as a result of the fact that the time of His death had arrived. The person who loves his life in this world will one day lose that life. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” In contrast, those who place their faith in Jesus may lose their life in this world. Jesus told the disciples in John 15:20,

“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.” Then II Timothy 3:12 says, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” All true Christians can expect opposition and persecution. However, we can look forward to eternal life.

Jesus said that those who serve Him are to follow Him. In fact those who make true decisions for Jesus will follow Him and serve Him because true believers are motivated by the love of Christ. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” The new life of liberty that we have in Jesus gives us the power to use that liberty to serve one another in love. Jesus said that where He is we will be also. This means that we can look forward to eternal life in the presence of Jesus. We are also promised that all those who serve Jesus will be honored by the Father.

Then Jesus asked the Father to honor His name. This provided the disciples with an immediate example of the way that all those who serve Jesus will be honored. John 12:27-28 says, “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, ‘I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.’” As Jesus thought about the fact that His hour had come He said that His soul was troubled. Jesus was going to bear our sin and die in our place for our sin so that we could receive His righteousness. I Peter. 2:22-24 describes what Jesus did as He bore our sins when those verses say, “‘Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; who *Himself* bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” Jesus was troubled as He prepared to take the wrath of God against sin for us and in our place.

However, Jesus was not going to try and avoid this hour. Instead Jesus said that this was the purpose why He had come to the earth. Hebrews 10:5-7 says, “Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.’ Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.’” Jesus came to do the will of the Father by paying the penalty for all mankind. He did this so that we could receive eternal life as a free gift.

Then Jesus asked the Father to glorify Your name. Here we see that Jesus wanted all glory to go to the Father. This was something that Jesus had earlier said. John 8:29 says, “And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.” The desire of Jesus was to please the Father at all times. We see that the Father spoke from heaven just as He had done two earlier times. In Mark 1:11 the Father spoke from heaven at the time that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and said, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Then the Father also spoke from heaven at the time that Jesus was transfigured on a mountain in Mark 9:7 when the Father said, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” Here in John 12:28 the Father said, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

This time the Father glorified His own name in response to the request of Jesus and promised that He would glorify it again.

Then John 12:29-33 says, “Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to Him.’ Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.” This He said, signifying by what death He would die.” The people came to various conclusions about what had just happened. Some thought that they had just heard the thunder. Others thought that an angel had spoken to Jesus. However, Jesus explained that what happened had not been for His personal benefit. Instead the Father had spoken from heaven for the benefit of the people.

Then Jesus went on to explain what was going to happen in the next few days. First, Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world.” Those who were there that day did not understand what Jesus meant. Jesus was going to bear the sins of the world and satisfy the requirement that sin must be judged. I John 2:2 says, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word “propitiation” means that which satisfies. The payment of Jesus for sin was sufficient for the sins of every person in the world. That payment was finished when Jesus said on the cross, “It is finished”, in John 19:30.

Second Jesus said, “Now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” By this Jesus meant that what was going to happen would cause Satan to be defeated. When Jesus died, Satan thought, “I won.” When Jesus rose from the dead, Satan knew, “I have been defeated.” The Holy Spirit convicts and convinces the unbeliever of three things. The third is listed in John 16:11 where we read, “Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” Satan knows that He has been judged and that the sentence will soon be carried out when he will experience eternal judgment.

Third Jesus said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.” Jesus here explained that He would die by crucifixion on the cross. Jesus had told Nicodemus in John 3:14-15, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus knew exactly how He was going to die and here He spoke in advance of that death so that after His death and resurrection His disciples and others could know that Jesus knew how He would pay for the sins of the world.

Jesus also said that His death would draw all *peoples* to Himself. Revelation 5:9 says, “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children fully understand that Jesus died for people from every tribe and tongue on the earth. We want to help them learn to explain to others that Jesus died for all people so that eternal life is available for all. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand this truth.

Jesus saw that Many Wanted the Praise of Men

We saw in our last topic that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. We also saw that it is His plan to save people of every tribe, tongue, people and nation. However, in this topic we will see that many people in the time of Jesus rejected the eternal life for which Jesus would die because they wanted the praise of men.

In our last topic we saw that Jesus would be lifted up from the earth. In this topic we see that the people questioned what Jesus had said. John 12:34-36 says, “The people answered Him, ‘We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how *can* You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.’ These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.” We see that the people did not understand what the Old Testament teaches so they asked Jesus two questions.

The people introduced their questions by saying that they had heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. Two Old Testament verses that are often quoted at Christmas are Isaiah 9:6-7 which say, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *His* government and peace *there will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” In these verses we see that they were right that the Christ (Messiah) would live forever. However, what they did not understand was that His eternal life would include His death and resurrection.

Their first question was, “How *can* You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? This question shows that the people had no understanding that the Messiah would die on a cross. They also lacked understanding of the fact that the Old Testament talked frequently about the sufferings, death and resurrection of the Christ. Isaiah 53:7-8 says, “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.”

Their second question was, “Who is this Son of Man?” Jesus had told the Jews in Jerusalem in John 5:26-27, “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.” Back on that day the Jews had wanted to kill Jesus because they said He had broken the Sabbath and also made Himself equal with God in verse 18. Now they wanted to know who

this Son of Man was. Jesus used this question for one more opportunity before His crucifixion to publicly offer the Jews the opportunity to believe in the Son of Man. He told the people that they only had the light a little longer and to believe in the light and become sons of light before the darkness overtook them. He warned that those walking in darkness do not know where they are going. After speaking these things Jesus departed from the crowd and was hidden from them.

We see the response of most of the people in John 12:37 and the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah in verses 38-41. John 12:37-41 says, "But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him." Jesus had done many signs to prove that He is both the Son of Man and the Son of God.

However, we see that in spite of the signs that Jesus had done that the people and especially the rulers did not believe in Jesus even though one very recent sign was the raising of Lazarus from the dead after he had been dead for four days. The people did not realize that they were fulfilling the prophecy that had been spoken by Isaiah. As we saw above, chapter 53 of Isaiah prophesied the rejection and death of the Christ (Messiah). This first quote by Isaiah comes from Isaiah 53:1 where we read, "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" Jesus was not accepted as the Christ by most of the Jews and especially not by the religious leaders of the Jews.

As John wrote this book, he also explained why the Jews could not believe because of another prophecy given by Isaiah. Isaiah was given this prophecy when he saw the glory of God and responded to the call of the Lord in Isaiah 6:8 which says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here *am* I! Send me." God told Isaiah that because of the unbelief of the people of Judah that He had blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts. God said that condition of unbelief by most of the Jews would last until He had completed His judgment against them. Only after that judgment was complete would God heal the Jews.

God told Isaiah that He would bring healing to the Jews after that time of blinding was over. The Lord later used Paul to write about the time when that blindness would be healed. Romans 11:25-27 says, "For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.'" We see that the day will come in the future when the Jews of that day will recognize that Jesus is the Christ for whom they have been waiting. That healing of the Jews as a whole is described in Romans 11:32-33 where we read, "For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!" Both Jews and Gentiles can look forward to that future day when God will show His mercy to both the Jews and Gentiles.

However, in this chapter of John we see that many of the Jewish leaders did believe Jesus but they chose not to recognize Him as the Lord and Master of their lives. John 12:42-43 says, “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Many of the Jewish rulers did believe that Jesus was from God.

However, their belief did not result in true faith. II Corinthians 7:9-10 explains the difference between true repentance and false repentance when those verses say, “Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” Here we see that people can be sorry for their sins and even believe but that does not mean that it will always lead them to true faith. Many people are sorry for their sins or sorry that they got caught. Most such people never come to true repentance and faith. We see that the sorrow of the world leads to death. That describes the beliefs of the rulers of the Jews in these verses.

In contrast, true repentance and faith results in belief that leads to eternal life. We see in the book of Acts that there was a large number in Jerusalem that did come to true faith after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Acts 2:37-39 says, “Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” We see that 3,000 responded in true repentance and faith that day and many more in the following days.

We also see the reason why many did not confess Jesus before His death and resurrection. One reason was their fear of the Pharisees. John 9:34 explains why many rulers had a fear of the Pharisees. That verse says, “They answered and said to him, “You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?” And they cast him out.” The man born blind had been expelled from the synagogue because he recognized Jesus as Lord. However, these verses give the main reason why many did not confess Jesus. John 12:43 says, “For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” This verse shows that they were more eager to please men than to please God.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that people will resist coming to Jesus as Lord and Savior as long as such individuals seek the praise of men rather than God. That is why the Holy Spirit must convict, the Father must draw and then those who respond will do so because Jesus came to seek and save. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to work with the Trinity in evangelism.

Jesus Offered the People the Opportunity to Choose Life

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children come to understand why many people are not yet ready to come to Jesus in repentance and faith even though they have come to recognize that Jesus is God and offers eternal life to all who will come to Him in repentance and faith. In our topic today we are going to see that just before the time of His sufferings, death and resurrection Jesus gave one final opportunity for people to choose eternal life.

Jesus knew that many of the people that were listening to Him did believe that He was God but were more interested in the praise of men than the praise of God. As a result, that was why Jesus gave a final public invitation before His death and resurrection. John 13:44-45 says, “Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.” Jesus began this final invitation by making it very clear that those who chose to truly believe in Him did so because they believed in the One that had sent Him.

Jesus began this final invitation by explaining what it meant to believe in Him. Jesus said that those who believed in Him actually believed in the one who sent Him. At several other times Jesus had said that the Father had sent Him and that He and the Father are One. John 4:34 says, “Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” Then John 5:37 adds, “And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.” Then in John 10:30 Jesus said, “I and My Father are one.” As a result, this statement made it clear that to believe the Son is also to believe the Father.

Jesus then said, “He who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.” Jesus explained this statement in more detail to the disciples at the Last Supper after Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” John 14:9-11 says, “Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.’” In these verses we see that Jesus told Philip that since he had seen Jesus that he had also seen the Father.

Then Jesus explained that He had come into the world to be a light. As a result, all those who believe in Him will not abide in darkness. Jesus had told the Pharisees earlier in John 8:12, “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” Because Jesus is the Light, if we walk in fellowship with Him, we will walk in the Light. I John 1:5-7 says, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice

the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Jesus went on to say that those who reject Him will be judged by the Word. John 12:47-48 says, “And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” Jesus said that He would not be the judge of those who heard His words and did not believe in Him. Jesus then explained why He had come into the world. We see that Jesus said that He came into the world to save the world. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:17, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Then Jesus had said just a short time earlier on His way to Jerusalem in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Jesus was going to make that salvation possible by His payment for the sins of the world. In I Peter 2:24 we read, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” Then I John 2:2 says, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The blood of Jesus was sufficient to pay for the sins of every person in the world. However, each person must personally believe Jesus and receive Him in order to have his or her sins forgiven. John 1:12 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” Jesus promised to make all who received Him the children of God.

In contrast, we see that Jesus gave a warning to all those who choose to reject Him and do not receive His words. Jesus warned that there is a judgment day coming. Jesus said that He will not be the judge at that day either. Instead each person will be judged by the words that Jesus has spoken. Those who believe in Jesus and receive Him and His words can have peace as they think of the coming judgment because of the many promises that Jesus gave with His words. One such statement is John 5:24 which says, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” In this verse we are given three promises. We have been given eternal life. We will not come into judgment. We have been passed from death into life.

However, the words of Jesus will be the things that will judge at the last day all those who failed to receive the words of Jesus and believe in Him. John 3:18 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” This verse says that those who have not believed are condemned already. Later Jesus told a larger group of Pharisees in John 8:24, “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.” This verse warns of the consequences of the failure to believe His words. All who fail to believe those words will die in their sins.

As a final part of this last invitation to believe before His death, Jesus reminded the people of the source of His authority. John 12:49-50 says, “For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.” Although we know that the Father and Jesus are equal, we see that Jesus again reminded the people that He always spoke under the authority and leadership of the Father.

Jesus said that the Father gave Him a command about what He should speak. The word translated “command” means that which is prescribed to a person because of the office or position that the person holds. Jesus showed that He recognized the leadership of the Father in the Trinity. John 10:18 says, “No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” Jesus chose to lay down His life by paying the penalty for our sin because Jesus wanted to obey the Father. In this verse Jesus made it clear that the message that He had spoken throughout His ministry on the earth was in agreement with the will of the Father.

Jesus said that the command that the Father had given Him was everlasting life. Jesus said as He prayed to the Father in John 17:3-4, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” Everything that Jesus spoke was to help people know the love of the Father and Jesus. In John 10:18 Jesus said, “No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.” The love of Jesus for the Father and for us caused Him to lay down His life by dying to make it possible for us to have everlasting life and to know the love of the Father for us.

Just a day or two later Jesus gave the disciples and all Christians a commandment to help us also become participants in making that love known to the world. John 13:34-35 says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Here we see that we show that love by following the example of Jesus and loving one another as He has loved us. In Ephesians 4:15-16 we read, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Here we see that we are to show His love by speaking His Word. In that way we also follow the example of Jesus.

We want to show our physical and spiritual children by our example how to do the will of God by speaking the Word of God to others and showing that love by our actions. As our children hear us speak the Word and show that love, they will also learn to do the same in their lives so that even more will hear how to have everlasting life. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share the message of everlasting life.

Jesus Washed the Feet of the Disciples

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to speak the Word of God to others with love so that others also will have the opportunity to know how to know the love of God and receive everlasting life. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus also gave us an example of how to love one another by learning to follow by His example as He washed the feet of the disciples.

In John 13:1 we read, “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to die. Jesus knew that in less than 24 hours His body would be taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb. One third of the book of John (7 chapters) covers that 24 hour period. We see that Jesus gave some of His most important teachings to His disciples during the first part of that time as chapters 13 through 16 cover His time with the disciples in the Upper Room and on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane where He would pray to the Father. Then chapter 17 is His prayer to the Father.

The Jews observed the Passover Feast every year to remember how the death angel had passed over the people of Israel when the death angel went through the land of Egypt. In I Corinthians 5:7 we read, “Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” In this verse we see that Jesus was sacrificed for our sins so that we also could have life instead of death. As a result, the hour had come for Jesus to die to pay the penalty for our sins. Jesus knew that His future time with the disciples on this earth would be very limited because He was going to depart from this world to return to the Father.

However, Jesus was going to make good use of these last hours with the disciples as He prepared them for the future. We see that Jesus loved His disciples to the end. The word translated “end” means the termination or the time when something ceases to be. Jesus knew that before this night was over He would be arrested and taken for trial. The next morning He would be crucified. Because of His love for the disciples, Jesus spent these last hours ministering to them.

The disciples had no idea what was going to happen that night. In fact Luke 22:24 tells us, “Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.” The following verses in Luke 22 tell us that Jesus also taught them about serving one another that night. However, Jesus did more than just talk. Jesus also gave them an example of service to one another. John 13:2-5 says, “And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with

the towel with which He was girded.” Jesus had given the disciples plenty of time to wash the feet of one another but they were too busy talking about who would be the greatest to even think of serving one another.

The meal was over and their feet were unwashed. Usually foot washing was done by a servant as soon as people came into the house but there was no servant and none of the disciples were ready to humble themselves and wash the feet of one another. Meanwhile all that Judas was thinking about was his plan to betray Jesus just a few hours later. Jesus knew that humility was one very important lesson that the disciples needed to learn before He returned to the Father. He also wanted to teach them by example the importance of the daily cleansing of sin. As a result, Jesus got up from supper and laid aside His outer robe. Jesus then took a towel and attached it to Himself. Next Jesus took a basin and filled it with water.

Then Jesus began to go around the table and wash the feet of the disciples. After He had washed the feet of a disciple, He would wipe those feet with the towel. It was a common practice for a slave to wash the feet of the people when they came into a house because the roads in Israel were dusty and dirty. In Luke we see that this discussion about who would be greatest came just after Jesus had broken the bread and passed the cup around after the supper. Since the supper had ended, Jesus probably began to wash the feet while the disciples were talking about who would be the greatest. Suddenly the actions of Jesus caused the room to be filled with silence as Jesus moved from disciple to disciple.

We read what happened when Jesus came to Peter. John 13:6-11 tells us what happened at that moment, “Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.’ Peter said to Him, ‘You shall never wash my feet!’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.’ Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!’ Jesus said to him, ‘He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.’ For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, ‘You are not all clean.’” This would become an event that Peter would never forget.

Jesus was dealing with the pride of Peter and the other disciples as He washed their feet. They were learning by example from Jesus that their question should not be about who would be the greatest. Instead their attitude was to be one of humility. Peter was probably very embarrassed by the fact that Jesus was about to wash his feet and that is why he said, “You shall never wash my feet!” Later Peter was probably thinking about this event as He wrote I Peter 5:5-7, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” Peter had learned the hard way that God resists the proud because of the embarrassment that he felt that night.

However, Jesus also had other very important lessons that He wanted to teach the disciples that night. Jesus had just said to Peter, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.” That is why Jesus answered, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with

Me.” Peter showed His complete lack of understanding by then saying, “Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!” We see that Peter had changed his thinking very quickly when He heard the words of Jesus. Suddenly He was now ready for a complete bath if that was what was needed to have a part with Jesus. Here we see that Peter had no ability to understand a spiritual truth on His own. That spiritual truth had to be explained to him by Jesus. That same thing is true for us and that is why Jesus would say a little later that evening in John 14:16-17, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”

In I Corinthians 2:9 we read, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” In this verse we see that spiritual understanding cannot come from the things that we see, the things that we hear or the things that we develop from our own thoughts. Instead spiritual understanding must be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 2:10 says, “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” That is why Jesus went on to explain the spiritual truth that Peter could not understand on his own.

We see that Jesus went on to explain to Peter why he needed his feet washed. Jesus said those who are bathed only need to wash their feet. I John 1:7-9 says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” At the moment of salvation all of our sins, past, present and future, are washed away and blotted out. That brings us into relationship with God and we become clean and become His children. However, we still continue to sin day by day as we go through life. Those sins hinder our fellowship with Christ. We need that daily cleansing to restore our fellowship with Christ. That cleansing happens as we confess our sins.

Jesus also needed to explain one more lesson because none of the disciples knew that Judas would betray Him. However, they would suddenly see that happen later that evening. That is why Jesus told the disciples that not all of them were clean. Judas had pretended to be a follower of Jesus and deceived all of the other disciples. In the same way we may have some people who profess to be Christians but have never received Him. That is why II Corinthians 13:5 says, “Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.” At times we need to say that same thing to others.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the need for daily cleansing in their own lives. This is the key for them in really getting to know Jesus because that is what makes it possible for them to enjoy fellowship with the Lord moment by moment. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to develop a growing fellowship with the Lord.

Jesus Explained why He Washed the Feet of the Disciples

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to develop a growing fellowship with the Lord. We saw that is why it is so important to help them understand the importance of confession of sins so that they experience daily cleansing in their lives. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus explained to His disciples why He had washed their feet.

We saw in our last topic that Jesus explained to Peter why it was necessary to experience daily cleansing from sins. Then Jesus finished washing the feet of the disciples. John 13:12-14 says, "So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." Here we see that after Jesus had finished washing the feet of the disciples that He then sat down again and began to explain to the disciples why they ought to wash the feet of one another.

He began that explanation by asking the question, "Do you know what I have done to you?" Jesus had said in verse seven, "Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." Jesus knew that the disciples did not realize that He was trying to teach them a much greater lesson than just the need to wash the feet of one another. That is why He had told them while He was washing their feet that they did not understand at that time but they would be given understanding at a later time. We are going to see by the answer that Jesus gave that He wanted the disciples to understand why they did what they did. That was the reason why Jesus began with this question after He was again seated with them.

Jesus then said, "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am." Jesus had spent more than three years teaching these men the things of God. That teaching had changed and transformed their lives. In just a few weeks Jesus would go back to heaven and they would be left on earth to teach what they had learned to others. Even the religious leaders that would condemn Jesus to death before daylight the next morning were forced to admit that Jesus had transformed the lives of the disciples. Those leaders that condemned Jesus heard Peter and John speak in Acts 4 and Acts 4:13 says, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." The religious leaders could not deny that Jesus had transformed the lives of the disciples.

In addition, the disciples also called Jesus, Lord. Their use of this title for Jesus was a result of their recognition that He is God. In Matthew 16:16 Peter had said, "Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The disciples realized that Jesus is God and yet He had just washed their feet. Jesus then said to them, "If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." The word

translated “ought” means to be in debt or to owe money. The word is used twice in Matthew 18:28 where we read, “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’” As God, Jesus had given the disciples and all future disciples a pattern to follow.

Jesus was going to serve each one of us in love that next day as He took our sins on Himself as He hung on the cross. He paid the full penalty for our sins. As a result, Jesus said that we also have a debt. We see here that we have a debt to serve one another in love because Jesus has served each of us in love by paying the full penalty for our sins. This can include the actual washing of the feet of one another but it also includes much more. The disciples had been disputing about which of them would be the greatest. Luke 22:24-27 says, “Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.” Here Jesus made it very clear that they and we are to serve one another with an attitude of humility and humble service.

That is why Jesus went on to say in John 13:15-17, “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” Here we see that Jesus makes a clear distinction between just knowing something and actually doing that thing. The word translated “know” in verse 17 means to see with the eyes or to understand with the mind. In contrast, the word translated “do” means to take action to do what you know is right. John 15:14 says, “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” Jesus gave us an example of how to serve one another with humble service so that we can take action and regularly serve one another with that same humble service.

Jesus then gave two illustrations. If we are unwilling to serve one another with a humble attitude, Jesus said that we would actually be like a servant who thinks that he is greater than his master. In a different context earlier Jesus had used two words for servant. Mark 10:43-45 says, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” If a person wants to be great, Jesus said he is to be like a hired servant. If he wants to be even greater or first, he is to be a slave to all. The word translated “servant” here in John is the word that is translated slave. Therefore to be unwilling to serve one another with a humble attitude is to be like a slave who thinks that he is greater than his master.

The second illustration that Jesus used is a messenger who is sent with a message that thinks that he is greater than the one who asked him to carry the message. John the Baptist clearly understood that he was just a voice or a messenger sent ahead of Jesus to prepare the way for Jesus. That is why he said in John 1:22-23, “Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we

may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD,"" as the prophet Isaiah said." Jesus also called us to be His messengers to deliver His message. Acts 1:8 says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Jesus told the disciples that they and we would be blessed if we have the attitude of a slave or a messenger as we learn to serve one another in love.

However, Jesus knew that there was one disciple who did not have that attitude and would never have that attitude. Jesus went on to say in John 13:18-20, "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He*. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me." By these words Jesus was telling Judas that He knew exactly what Judas was going to do later that evening. Judas was going to lift up his heel against Jesus by betraying Him to the Jewish religious leaders.

Jesus also explained to the other disciples why He told them these things in advance. Jesus did not want the disciples to misunderstand and think that He was talking about all of them. Christ had chosen the other eleven to carry on His ministry when He returned to heaven. John 15:16 says, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you." Jesus spoke these words to the other disciples later that evening when Judas was no longer with them.

Jesus went on to explain that the one who would betray Him would fulfill a prophecy that was written in the Old Testament. Psalm 41:9 says, "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up *his* heel against me." Judas had walked with Christ and they had eaten many meals together. Judas even knew how to act just like the other disciples so that even the other disciples did not suspect that He would betray Jesus. However, Jesus knew that Judas would lift up His heel against Jesus because of the fact that Jesus knows the hearts and was not deceived.

Jesus also explained why He had let the disciples know in advance. Jesus did that so that they would believe in Him. Then he told the disciples that those who received the disciples would also receive Jesus. Jesus went on to explain that those who received Him would also receive the Father who sent Him. Jesus wanted the disciples to understand that if people rejected them that they did not need to feel personal rejection because they were actually rejecting Jesus. In contrast, those who listened to them would be open to receive the message that Jesus is God and receive both the Father and the Son. In the same way we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that those who listen to the message about His death and resurrection will often be ready to receive Jesus once they get their questions answered. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand this important lesson.

Jesus Explained that one would Betray Him

In our last topic we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that those who are open to listen to their message about the death and resurrection of Jesus will often come to a true faith in Christ. We also saw that Jesus warned that one of the disciples would betray Him. In our topic today we are going to see why that disciple would betray Him.

Jesus had told the disciples that one of them would lift up his hand against Jesus. We see that Jesus now explained that statement more fully. John 13:21-22 says, “When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’ Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.” Jesus was troubled in spirit as He told the disciples that one of them would betray Him. The word translated “troubled” means to take away calmness of mind or to cause a person to become restless. Jesus used this same word when He said in John 12:27, “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.” In John 12 Jesus was troubled because He was going to be separated from the Father as He was on the cross. Here we see that Jesus was troubled because Judas would betray Him.

Jesus loved Judas. Just after Judas gave the kiss of betrayal Jesus said in Matthew 26:50, “But Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, why have you come?’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.” Jesus called Judas a friend even at the very moment that Judas was betraying Him. Jesus could not experience calmness of spirit when He knew that one who had heard the truth so many times was still continuing to reject that truth and choose instead to betray Jesus. That is why Jesus went on to explain that one of the disciples would betray Him.

The disciples all looked at each other and were very perplexed as they thought about what Jesus had just said. They wondered who could do such a thing. Mark 14:18-19 gives greater detail when those verses say, “Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.’ And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, ‘Is it I?’ And another said, ‘Is it I?’” Here we see that none of the disciples even suspected Judas. Instead they all wondered if they could be the one that would do such a thing. This shows us that Jesus had treated Judas with the same love and respect that He had shown to each of the other disciples even though Jesus knew the entire time that Judas followed Him that Judas would betray Him.

Then Jesus was asked by the disciples who would betray Him. John 13:23-26 says, “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ Jesus answered, ‘It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.’ And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.” John, the brother of James and the writer of the book of John, was next to Jesus. We see that John described himself as the disciple that Jesus loved. John mentioned two other times that he was the disciple Jesus loved.

John 19:26-27 says, “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.” Then John 21:20 says, “Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, ‘Lord, who is the one who betrays You?’” However, John 13:34 says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” From this statement by Jesus we know that He loved all of the disciples. That might cause us to question why John called himself the disciple whom Jesus loved three times.

John knew his own sinfulness. When John first followed Jesus he was a man with much prejudice that caused him to react with great anger. Those two characteristics both showed themselves in Luke 9:54 where we read, “And when His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’” Here we see that John and his brother, James, were ready to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritan village that did not allow Jesus and His disciples to stay in their village that night. We see that Jesus rebuked that attitude. Luke 9:55-56 says, “But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.’ And they went to another village.”

However, by the end of his life John had become known as the disciple of love. We want to help our children understand how that change happened. John explained how this change happened in I John 4:17-19 where we read, “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” John saw the perfect love of Jesus for him in spite of his prejudice and great anger. John saw that perfect love of Jesus for him and responded to that love by learning to love others. As a result, He had no fear of future judgment. John had seen that love grow to maturity in the lives of the other disciples with the exception of Judas.

Peter had also responded to that love so it was probably hard for the disciples to imagine that any of the disciples could betray Jesus. As a result, Peter motioned to John to ask Jesus who would betray Jesus. John then asked the question, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus explained how the one who would betray him would be known. However, we will see that the disciples did not understand at that time and so did not understand until Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss later that evening. Jesus said that He would give a piece of bread after He had dipped it to the disciple who would betray Him. Then Jesus took a piece of bread, dipped it and gave it to Judas Iscariot. The other disciples did not understand at that moment but Judas was forced to recognize that Jesus knew.

John 13:27-30 says, “Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly.’ But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, ‘Buy those

things we need for the feast,' or that he should give something to the poor. Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night." We saw that John knew that He and the other disciples were loved by Jesus and the other disciples had all responded to that love by learning to love. In contrast, Judas had not responded to that love because of the greed that controlled his heart.

Judas had shown this greed when Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume although the other disciples did not recognize his love of money at that time. John 12:4-6 says, "But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, who would betray Him, said, 'Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it." The New Testament gives two negative roots and shows the results of each. In Hebrews 12:15-16 we read, "Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright." A root of bitterness caused Esau to sell his spiritual leadership in the family for a bowl of stew.

In I Timothy 6:9-10 we read, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Here we see that Judas had a root of the love of money that destroyed him and caused him to choose eternal judgment. Jesus loved Judas with the same love that He loved the other disciples. However, Judas chose to reject that love and sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver because of his love of money.

In the Gospels Jesus healed many people that were demon possessed. In contrast, Judas became possessed by Satan, the prince of demons. Once Judas took the piece of bread Satan entered into him. Jesus knew exactly what happened and just told Judas, "What you do, do quickly." The other disciples had no idea what Jesus was talking about when He spoke to Judas. They all thought that Jesus had complete trust in Judas because he carried the money box. We see that Jesus allowed Judas to know his own heart because for the entire time that he followed Jesus he was stealing money from the money box. That is why the disciples just thought that Judas was either going to buy some food for the feast or he was going to give something to the poor.

Judas then went out immediately. We see that a very important statement is made. The verse says that it was night when Judas went out. Judas went out into the physical darkness. However, there was a much greater darkness in his heart because his heart was filled with spiritual darkness. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that all those who reject Jesus are walking in that same spiritual darkness. They do not know where they are going because spiritual darkness has blinded their eyes. We want to show our children how to introduce people to Jesus who is the Light. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to lead people to that Light.

Jesus Gave the New Commandment

In our last topic we saw that we want to demonstrate and show our physical and spiritual children how to lead people to Jesus, the One who is the Light of the world. We saw that Judas made the choice to remain in spiritual darkness rather than respond to the love that Jesus had for him. In our topic today we are going to see that Jesus gave a new commandment for all Christians.

Once Judas had left Jesus and the other disciples Jesus immediately began to give the rest of the disciples a summary of the most important lessons that they needed to hear from Jesus before His death, resurrection and return to heaven. John 13:31-33 says, “So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you.” We see that Jesus began to share with the other disciples those lessons as soon as Judas had left and gone out into the darkness.

The next day Jesus was going to go to the cross. God would cover the earth with darkness for three hours because Jesus and the Father would experience separation as Jesus bore our sins on the cross. However, at the end of that time, Jesus cried with a loud voice, “It is finished.” As a result, we see in these three verses that Jesus looked beyond the time of His suffering to the time when He would be glorified by the Father after He had paid the penalty for sin. The word translated “glorified” means to praise, to honor or to cause the worth of a person to be recognized. Jesus would be glorified by the Father. At the same time the Father is also glorified in the Son. Later that evening in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed to the Father and said in John 17:1, “Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.’”

Then John 17:4 tells how Jesus had glorified the Father on earth. That verse says, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” Jesus had honored the Father throughout His public ministry on the earth. He had also finished the work of training the disciples to carry on His work on the earth. John 17:5 goes on to say, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” Here we see that Jesus was going to return to heaven where He would have the glory that He had from the time before the world was ever created.

Christ would also be seated at the right hand of the Father because Hebrews 12:2 says, “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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” We do see that Jesus stood up to welcome Stephen home as Acts 7:56 says, “And said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’” Jesus will one day receive even greater glory because Philippians 2:9-11 says, “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of

Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This will bring glory to both the Father and the Son.

Jesus told the disciples that He would be leaving them in a little while and that they could not go with Him. The disciples had been able to see the love of Jesus for them. Since Jesus would soon be leaving, the time had come for the disciples and all Christians to learn to show that same love to one another. That is why Jesus now gave the disciples a new commandment. John 13:34-35 says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” This command is new because Matthew 22:37-40 says, “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Jesus said that these two summarize the entire Old Testament. We see that the New Commandment that Jesus gave for all Christians summarizes the entire New Testament.

In this command we are told to love one another as Jesus has loved us. The disciples had seen the love of Jesus for them throughout His ministry. The next day they would see the greatest example of that love as Jesus gave His life to pay the penalty for our sins. Putting these commands together we see that we are to love God with our whole heart, soul and mind, we are to love our neighbor (all non-Christians) as we love ourselves. However, we are to love one another (other Christians) as Christ has loved us.

Since Jesus is no longer on this earth where the world can see Him, this new command tells us that the way that the world will recognize the love of Jesus is by seeing Christians show that same love to one another. We are only able to show that love when we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit so that the love of Christ is able to flow through our lives to those around us. That is why Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?” At any moment that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit the power of the Holy Spirit is working in us and the love of Christ is flowing through us because nothing can separate us from that love. Romans 8:37-39 says, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

However Jesus went on to warn Peter that love could not flow through him when he was depending on His own strength. John 13:36-38 says, “Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, where are You going?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.’” Peter wanted to know where Jesus was going. Jesus told Peter that Peter could not follow Him now.

However, Jesus also said that Peter would later follow Him. John 21:18-19 says, “‘Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’” Peter did not understand that Jesus would be condemned to death that very night. He also did not understand that he would later be put to death as the Roman emperor tried to stop the spread of Christianity.

Peter said that he would lay down his life for the sake of Jesus. In fact John 18:10-11 shows that Peter did try to protect Jesus. Those verses say, “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?’” Since Peter was acting in his own strength instead of under the guidance of Jesus, all he did was make himself open to the charge of attempted murder. However, Jesus showed His love to Peter by destroying the evidence so that no charges could be made against him. Luke 22:50-51 says, “And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, ‘Permit even this.’” And He touched his ear and healed him.” Here we see that Jesus destroyed the evidence by healing the ear of the man.

Peter chose to deal with those who came to arrest Jesus in a human way instead of seeking the guidance of Jesus. Jesus would tell the disciples on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane in John 15:5, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” Jesus also had to tell the disciples in Luke 24:49, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” The disciples had to learn to depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit instead of human thinking. Jesus also told the disciples that night in John 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” In the same way we also need the guidance of the Holy Spirit rather than our own thoughts because we can do nothing in our own strength. In fact we will fail just as Peter did that night.

Jesus told Peter that Peter would not lay down his life for the sake of Jesus. Instead Jesus said that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed early the next morning. One of the most important lessons that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand is the fact that we will act from human thoughts if we are not led by the Holy Spirit. That is why it is very important to help our children learn to be led by the Holy Spirit instead of human thinking and reasoning. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example how to be led by the Holy Spirit.