

INTRO 1

Review of what we have learned so far

Let's summarize where we are in our learning. In the first theme, *The Fall of Man*, we learned that God's purpose in creating Adam and Eve was to create men and women in the image of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Lord did not create angels in His image, He created man in His image. He created man to be His own possession, man who would be holy as he was holy, who would be obedient and faithful as was the Son, and whose spirit would reflect the glory of His Spirit.

The first commandment

And the first commandment given mankind, the first commandment given Adam and Eve, was what? To be fruitful and multiply. (Genesis 1:28) The Lord's purpose in creation was for the first man, Adam, to bring forth a crop of children, sons and daughters in the image of His Son, His only begotten Son, Yeshua, the Lord Jesus Christ. And these children in faith and obedience would love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, thus giving glory to God Almighty. The Kingdom of God, on earth, would be formed from these holy children.

The Fall

But then we learned that our foreparents, Adam and Eve, transgressed the Lord's commandment to not eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And in that calamitous event, known as "the fall," man's nature was permanently altered, it became perverse, vile and filthy. The spirit of man, from which his desires and thoughts come, was corrupted with the spirit of the devil. Evil personified became intertwined and permanent in the heart of Adam and all mankind that would come from Adam's seed.

The Dilemma

The Lord loved what he had created, in His image, but abhorred, hated what man had become. Man, and all generations of mankind thereafter were declared unclean. All men were now called "children of the devil." (1 John 3:10, Matthew 13:38, John 8:44) For their spirit was born of evil.

Death and curses were proclaimed upon man and his children, upon you and me, for generation upon generation. For the Lord had said, the soul that sinneth shall surely perish. Mankind was condemned, and the only song we would hear, is "Woe, woe, I am undone for I am unclean."

INTRO 2

Love not the world

Then we learned in the next theme, *The World at Enmity with God*, that the great antagonist of the Lord, his ancient enemy, Satan, had set up an unseen kingdom on earth, Babylon. The father of man's evil nature, the god of sinners, had cast a net over every soul, world system and nation that keeps all in bondage and darkness. His purpose is to drag every man, made in the image of God, into eternal death, misery and destruction.

Man's sin nature

All that is in the world, the desires of man's sin nature, is only evil in the eyes of the Lord. It is unclean, leprous to the touch. And why is all that is in the world evil? Because not one world system, not one nation, not one leader, not one individual could say everything they do is according to the will and desires of God Almighty. Thus anything that man does, which does not arise from the will of God, is sin. (Romans 14:23, Hebrews 11:6). All in the world would hate the light of God, for it reveals that the deeds of men were evil. The world would hate Jesus Christ.

Guilty by the Law

Therefore, the situation looked bleak for human kind. Born into sin, kept in sin, and ruled by the god of sinners, the devil. The only future for every man, woman and child was eternal damnation by the Law of God. For the Law had declared all guilty of sin, unclean and unfit to exist in the Kingdom of the Holy One.

INTRO 3

God's So Great Salvation

Yet all was not lost. For the Lord so loved man, that he provided a way of escape, a way of pardon from the sentence of death and eternal damnation. In the third theme, *God's So Great Salvation*, we learned that a covenant between God the Father, and God the Son would allow the Lord to justify the wicked. The Lord Jesus Christ would pay a ransom to redeem the lives of God's chosen, those who would repent and live for God. Christ would be a propitiation, a sacrifice to bear the cup of God's wrath, meant for you and me. And by this act of love, the Lord would save His people from the penalty of sin. And God the Father would finally have a people; holy, blameless and all his own.

The redeemed

The redeemed of God, by necessity would have to be born again. Though treated as innocent, based on the redemption bought by the Lord, man still had a problem. His nature was evil. Thus, the Spirit of the Lord would regenerate, make anew, the repentant heart. A supernatural act of God would occur. The redeemed would now have a new desire and strength in Christ to love the Lord, and live a life holy unto God, free from the dominion of sin.

A supernatural act

The redeemed would have a new spirit, a new heart that was able to fulfill his great commandment, to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And the evidence that one was truly born again, and loved the Lord, was that he would love his brothers and sisters in Christ, love his neighbors and love his enemies. He would not love as the world loves, or humans love, but would love with the heart of Christ. A self-sacrificing, humbling love whose forever purpose is to please the Father and to do as He commands.

INTRO 4

The Biblical Christian Life

Thus, we are now at the fourth theme, *The Biblical Christian Life*. In this class we explore the call on the life of God's people, the born again Christian, those who have the indwelling Spirit of Christ. We answer the questions, "What is God's expectation of his people," "How are we to experience the Lord's promise of joy in Christ," "What is God's purpose for my life," "How do I know I am abiding in the will of God," "How do I know I am a faithful servant, pleasing to the Lord," "How can I glorify the Lord," "How do I grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ," "How can I experience the refreshing presence of the Holy Spirit," "What does it mean to walk in the Spirit," "What does it mean to be sanctified," and "How can I obtain the full blessings of God in my life?"

LESSON 1

What the Biblical Christian life is not

First, let us state what the biblical Christian life is not. As we study the Scriptures, we can say with confidence the normal Christian life is not typified by things of the flesh. It is not defined by what you drink or don't drink, whether you smoke or don't smoke, whether you have pre-marital sex or not, whether you attend church or don't attend, whether you participate in religious activities or not.

It is not defined by how kind you are, nor how generous and charitable one is. It is not defined, necessarily, by one's participation in missions, church activities, Christian youth camps or activity in various ministries.

While the aforementioned things may have merit in themselves, all these things can be done by the unconverted, professors of faith who have never been born again, and have not the Son. For many of these people will hear the Lord say, on the Day of Judgment, "I never knew you," "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41)

God's purpose for man

To define and understand the biblical or normal Christian life, we have to go back to the Lord's purpose in salvation. His purpose was to set apart a people for Himself, cleansed from sin, who would be like Him, like Christ. And these holy children would be commanded to be fruitful and to bring forth more fruit in the Kingdom of God. This fruit would be the righteousness, love, faith and holiness of Christ that sprouted from the souls of those that repented unto the Lord. Thus, the Lord God would have a kingdom of holy children, in the image of Jesus Christ, who would love Him, serve Him and glorify His precious name.

The Cross

And to accomplish this purpose, the Lord Jesus Christ by what he did at the Cross, would give birth to the holy kingdom. Each person who believed on the Lord Jesus would be saved from the penalty of sin, and then freed from the dominion of sin by the perfecting work of the Holy Spirit. These born unto God, would be commanded to be fruitful. The same commandment the Lord first gave Adam and Eve.

The biblical Christian life, also referred to as the normal Christian life, therefore, is defined and described in the Scriptures as a life that bears fruit for God.

LESSON 2

Fruit – is the righteousness of Christ

When the scriptures refer to fruit in a believer, most often it refers to the righteousness of Christ. The image of Christ, the Spirit of Christ in the believer which glorifies the Lord God. When one bears much fruit it signifies the fullness of Christ in the believer, the overflowing fruit of the Spirit in the believer. However, a harvest of fruit in this context also describes the planting or spreading of seeds of righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, the Word of God, that brings other people to grow, flower and bear fruit to God's glory.

John 12:24

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

The Lord's sacrifice on Calvary brought forth the first fruit in God's plan, then the fruit of the apostles grew. And from these first converts, more fruit would be produced at Pentecost (Acts 2). Crops would grow unceasingly as fruit produced in turn caused more harvest and more crops for the Kingdom of God, more souls that would become holy sons and daughters of the Most High, born again in the image of Christ Jesus.

Growth of an apple tree

To understand this concept of fruit and harvest, and God's purpose for each believer, we can learn from nature. The Lord uses the imagery of a vine and branches grafted into the vine (Christ) that produce fruit. (John 15) He also uses the imagery of seeds being sowed. Seeds sown in “good soil” produce fruit and a great harvest of crops. Let me put all these parables together by describing what actually happens in the growth of an apple tree. This is vital to understand, as you will see.

LESSON 3

Pollination

I did some research on the internet and here is what I found. An apple tree first produces flowers, called blossoms. These blossoms must be fertilized in a process called pollination, before the apple tree can produce apples. When the flowers are pollinated, the apples begin to grow, and eventually the flower petals fall off giving way to the apple in its place.

Most apple trees cannot pollinate themselves. They have to be pollinated by other trees. How this works is insects, or the wind, take pollen from the male part of a flower on one apple tree and pass it on to the female part of a flower on another apple tree.

Pollen

Pollen is a powdery substance from the part of the flower which contains male sperm cells. When it is placed on the female part of a flower (called the stigma) on another tree, the flower becomes pollinated. It becomes pregnant. The pollinated flowers of the apple tree will now start to form fruit.

Growing new trees

Farmers discovered, thousands of years ago, however, that growing new apple trees from the seeds of existing apples was a problem in that they did not breed true. The seeds planted did not produce the same type or quality of fruit from which the seeds came. Therefore, in 3,000 or 4,000 B.C. (Before Christ) historians say people discovered grafting. This greatly facilitated the spread of fruit orchards and the improvement of varieties of fruit.

LESSON 4

Grafting

Grafting involves cutting a branch from the tree which produces the fruit one desires, and making a matching cut on the rootstock, the main part of another tree, and then binding or taping the branch into the rootstock. No one knows how ancient people discovered this. But when the branch and the rootstock healed together, and became one, the grafted tree branch produced the fruit and quality the farmer desired. Therefore, to grow new crops, farmers today, and for the last 6,000 years, do not plant apple seeds, but take branches from apple trees and graft them into other compatible trees, to produce fruit.

Now hold this concept of grafting in your mind for a moment, we will come back to it.

LESSON 5

The parable of the sower

In Mark chapter 4, Luke chapter 8 and Matthew chapter 13, we read the parable of the sower. The Lord tells us that the Word of God is seed. Those able to receive the seed, and accept it as truth, sprout, they shoot forth a stem or bud as in a small plant. However, some of these sprouts will quickly wither and die before they reach any significant growth, because they have no root. Other plants will die because they are choked from thorns and thistles which prevent them from growing. However, a third sprout will grow healthy and produce not just fruit from their own tree, but a crop of up to 100x what was sown.

All three types of plants, which represent groups of people, heard the Word of God and accepted it as truth. They believed that Jehovah, the God of Israel is the only true God and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This belief is described as a seed that sprouts, in the person, from hearing and accepting as truth the Word of God.

In Luke 8:13 it says the first group received the word with joy and believed for a while. Then the second group also believed, somewhat longer than the first group, but eventually they also died and “brought no fruit to perfection.” (Luke 8:14)

What the parable of the sower is telling us, is that the Word of God will produce belief in the Gospel. However, that belief does not develop into faith in all people. And without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). The people whose belief in the Word never developed into faith in Christ, are described as plants that eventually die. And plants that produce no fruit are gathered as dry branches for the fire. (John 15:6)

LESSON 6

Grafted in Christ

Then in John 15:1-6, the Lord gives us more insight into how the third group, or plant, produced fruit. He says a believer in the Word (called a branch) can only produce fruit when they are grafted into him, the true vine. And the Father is the husbandman, the farmer, that grafts branches into Christ.

So, this third group of hearers, after receiving the Word sprouted stems and buds, just like the first two groups. In Romans 11:17, these believers are called “wild olive shoots.” However, God the Father then took this third group, took their stems which had grown tall, and then grafted them into the body of Christ. And only after being grafted into the vine, which is Christ, could they could bear fruit, per John 15:4.

Good soil

Why did this third plant, or group of hearers, grow tall enough for the Lord to then graft them into Christ? Why didn't they wither and die like the first two groups of hearers? The scriptures in the parable of the sower state that this plant had “good soil.” In Matthew 13:23 it says good soil is the “one who hears the word and understands it.” In Mark 4:20 it describes good soil as they that “hear the word and accept it.” In Luke 8:15 its good soil “are those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, cling to it, and by persevering produce a crop.”

Perseverance in this verse means one who is steadfast, patient and who does not stray from the pursuit and seeking of the Lord.

What word did these believers “hear and accept?” It was the message preached by Christ and every apostle: repent and be saved.

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47).

The good soil are those people who heard the Word – and then did what the Word commanded - they repented unto God as Lord and Master with a broken heart. It was these that the Lord grafted into Christ Jesus. The others who heard the Word, received it with joy, but did nothing with that knowledge. There was good news about heaven and a savior. Who wouldn't receive that news with joy. But their hearts were far from the Lord, they worshiped him with their lips, and but they never repented unto God. (Matthew 15:8) And therefore, when persecution came they were quick to abandon Christ out of fear. When the temptation of riches and the cares of this world came calling, they were quick to dismiss the demands of God.

LESSON 7

The True Vine

Then the Lord tells us in John 15:2 that there would be branches grafted in him that would produce no fruit, they are dead branches. What are we to make of this in relation to the parable of the sower in Mark 4:13-20? This is my interpretation.

In John 15:1-6 we learn that the Word of God produces a fourth type of plant, hearers of the Word who also accepted it as truth. These did not fall away quickly from the Word as did the first group, that withered in the heat of persecution. And they did not fall away because of temptation, worries or love of the world, as did the second group. This fourth group of people looked just like the third group and their stems grew tall. However, they did not bear fruit as did the third group. The question is why?

The fourth plant

This fourth group sprouted stems and buds and grew just like the third group. They became church members, religious followers and professors of faith in Christ. These would call Christ, "Lord, Lord." In Matthew 7:22 we read that some would become preachers and many would do Christian work and even drive out demons from the possessed.

Then in Matthew 7:24-27 the Lord tells us why this fourth group of hearers, that were in the body of Christ, never produced fruit: they heard His words but never did them, they never repented unto God. (James 1:22)

How did they get grafted in?

The question now is, if the Father grafted the third group into Christ, the group that produced fruit, who grafted in these believers of the Word, that produced no fruit?

The answer, according to Matthew 24:24-30, is these believers were grafted into the body of Christ by the devil. They were placed within the church of Christ by the enemy of God. However, the graft, we will learn, never actually attached these folks to the body of Christ. It was a graft in name only. They were wrapped around the true vine, which is Christ, but never placed into the vine, which only the Lord God can do.

The danger of dead branches

Why did the devil graft these branches into the church of Christ? In nature, dead or diseased branches, in a fruit tree, can prevent the tree from bearing much fruit. In some cases fungus can spread throughout the tree, from the branch, and kill the tree. Therefore, the enemy of God purposed to graft branches into the body of Christ, branches that looked just like the branches grafted in by God, with the ultimate purpose of corrupting God's church. All through the Old Testament and New Testament we read of false teachers, preachers, prophets, pastors and wise men who come into the body as "wolves in sheep's clothing." (Matthew 7:15, 24:11, 24:24, Jeremiah 23:16, Ezekiel 22:27, 2 Corinthians 11:13, Philippians 3:17-19)

Now let's understand why they bore no fruit and why Christ called them "law breakers." (Matthew 7:23)

LESSON 8

Graft failure

In nature, most fruit trees are propagated by grafting as we have already described. Sometimes the graft union fails, resulting in the main stem breaking off, poor growth or death of the top part of the plant.

The graft union sometimes ceases to function at a later period, possibly some years after planting. In some cases, the graft union does not display any obvious external symptoms of a problem being present; they look just like the healthy branches. This was the case with the branches in Christ that bore fruit and the other branches that produced no fruit, they looked the same.

However, on closer examination, in a graft failure the rootstock and branch can be seen to have become partly or completely separated.

Graft failure in apple trees can be caused by factors that include poor formation of the graft union. In other words, the tissue of the rootstock and the branch never join, they never become one. The nourishment of the rootstock never flows to the branch. They remain separated, and as a result the branch never grows, never bears fruit, and therefore the farmer cuts off the dead branch.

I never knew you

The Lord tells us about this spiritual graft failure in Matthew 7:15-23. In verse 7:19 the Lord says trees that do not bear good fruit are cut down and thrown into the fire. Then in verse 7:23, he tells the people who were cut down, "I never knew you."

The Greek definition for the word "knew" (ginosko) used in Matthew verse 7:23 implies intimacy as in sexual intimacy. What the Lord is telling these that never bore fruit, that called Him Lord, that were cut off, is that His Spirit and their spirit never joined in union. The Apostle Paul brings home this point in Ephesians 5:31-32, when he says Christ and His church are one, just as a man is joined to his wife are united and become one.

Now the question is why was there a graft failure? Why did these people, who joined the church of Christ, never bond and become one with Christ? Why were they cut off, as dead branches?

Lawbreakers

The Lord tells us why when He calls them "lawbreakers," or "workers of iniquity" in Matthew 7:23. These folks worshipped the Lord either out of obligation, tradition, fear of hell, because of a desire for religion, blessings, or a perception that it was the right thing to do. Yet not one person the Lord told "I never knew you," could say they had a desire for Him, that they loved Him. Not one could say they worshipped Him because they wanted to please God, had a desire to know him, a desire to obey him, or a desire to serve Him.

Not one had repented, not one was ever convicted of sin and not one turned to the Lord and gave him their heart. They knew the Lord intellectually as savior, according to the Word, but did not know Him intimately as Master, Father, Husband and Lord of their lives. Even though they attended church, they were still children of the devil.

LESSON 9

A brother

To illustrate this point, let me tell you a true story. A brother told us his testimony in a men's ministry meeting I was attending. The brother had been a lifelong alcoholic, had lost his marriage and was estranged from his six children who were now adults.

In his own words, he said one day he came to know the Lord as savior. And after that time, for the next ten years, he prayed for the Lord to take away his addiction to alcohol. But his prayers were never answered. Then one day his alcoholism got so bad, he was committed to a sanitarium, a hospital with a padded room, so he could not harm himself while in his drunken stupor.

The sanitarium

He was so depressed and felt so lost at that moment, that he cried out to the Lord to take his life. And then he fell to the floor. Before his head hit the padded floor, his addiction was gone. What happened? Again, in his own words, he said on that day he came to know God Almighty as Lord and Master of his life. You see, I don't believe this man was ever saved for all those years. Even though he professed to accept Christ as savior. He was not saved until he gave up his self-will, his desire to go his own way, and gave his heart to God in that hospital room. He finally reached the end of his rope, and the Lord was his only hope.

Ten years before, he wanted the Lord to solve his problems, to save him from his addiction. But yet, he wanted to retain his will and desire to be in control of his life. This man, I believe, had never repented unto God. Until his will, the will of Adam, the will of the sinner, is voluntarily given up on the altar of sacrifice, the Cross, to be crucified, the Lord cannot and will not come into your heart. He who has the Son has life. He who does not have the Son is dead already.

The Lord's Spirit

The Lord will never put his Spirit into you, a branch, unless you have a repentant heart. He will never infuse life from the true vine, Christ, into a branch that has not repented unto God. This infusion of his Spirit is the process of regeneration, the new birth. The thing that happens when a man becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. And what is repentance? It is, in its simplest definition, when a person changes his mind and direction in life from "let my will be done," to "dear Lord let thy will be done." There is no bargaining, no exceptions, no partial repentance. Everything is given up and your life has become a living sacrifice offered to the Lord Jehovah God.

Repent

Dear friend, if you are a branch in the body of Christ, but are unsure if you have been born of the Father, pray dear friend. Get on your knees, on your face, and pray, plead for mercy, ask the Lord to convict you of your sin, ask the Lord to break your spirit, and ask the Lord for His Spirit, for it is His pleasure and will to do so. Amen.

LESSON 10

In Christ

In nature when a branch is successfully grafted into a rootstock it bears the fruit or flower of the branch. For example, if you graft a white rose branch into the rootstock of a red rose bush, the branch will grow white roses while the other flowers, on the other branches, are red.

In the Kingdom of God, the reverse happens. In Christ, when a believer is grafted into his body and Spirit, it bears His fruit, the fruit of the rootstock. This is the difference between the apple tree and Christ. However, just as in nature, the grafted branch and the rootstock must join their tissue, they must become one for the graft to take and for the branch to bear fruit. The branch that does not have a successful union with the rootstock bears no fruit, it has become a dead branch and is cut off by the husbandman (farmer who cultivates his crops).

This union, or joining of man and God is a supernatural act, as we have already discussed. The Spirit of God comes into the believer (John 14:23) and our spirit is joined with the Spirit of Christ, seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father, in the heavenly realm. (Ephesians 2:6)

My witness

Before we go further, let me say I was once one of those plants that heard the Word of God, received it with joy, but my plant never grew, it withered, it was dead. If you asked me if I was a Christian and a believer in God and Jesus Christ, I would say yes. This is what I was brought up to believe was truth, and I never found reason to believe otherwise.

Yet, I was never grafted into the body of Christ like the third group, I never attended church or considered myself religious or called Christ Lord. I was in the first and second group of believers who heard the Word but whose plant had no root, was choked off by my ungodly lifestyle and never grew.

I lived a life of debauchery and lawlessness, yet I called myself Christian. I never read the Bible, knew little of God's Word, yet accepted it as truth, while heading on a path to eternal damnation.

It was only by the grace and mercy of the Living God, that many years later I would seek the Lord. And on August 23, 2007, at 2:00AM I met God Almighty, I slumped to the floor in tears, overwhelmed, beyond words, and was forever changed. Praise the Lord, my Savior, my Father and friend.

LESSON 11

Bear much fruit

Now this branch that bears fruit, the righteousness of Christ, can also bear "much fruit." It can bear "much fruit" in two ways. In the first way, the husbandman prunes the branch.

In nature, the object in pruning fruit trees is to force the tree into investing more of its energy into producing lots of big juicy fruits instead of lots of woody growth such as new twigs. Pruning fruit trees removes (cuts) existing wood and sometimes leaves from the tree. With fewer woody growth options left after a thorough pruning, the tree's other alternative is to invest more energy in producing fruit.

The husbandman

In the Gospel, God the Father prunes branches in Christ to produce more fruit by several ways. He can take away things and people in your life, to make you more dependent on Him, thus building the strength of your faith.

He will discipline you, when you sin, to keep you from sinning again. He can take away your desire for things in the world, that defile, to keep you holy.

And when you identify with Christ, in death to self, burial and resurrection, he can remove besetting sins, and personality unbecoming of a Christian.

Sometimes pruning is painful, as it was for Abraham when the Lord commanded him to sacrifice Isaac in a test of Abraham's faith, or when Daniel was cast into the lion's den. Therefore, the Lord can allow us to travail in difficult situations, to teach us faith, and to have us grow in revelation and love of God.

Refiners fire

In the scriptures, pruning is also described as the Lord acting as a refiner. In Daniel 11:35 the Lord tells us that some saints will suffer persecution in order that they be refined and purified. In other words, that their faith may grow and be an example to others.

In Malachi 3:3 the Lord is described as "a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD." What we learn from these scriptures is that the Lord prunes or refines the saint in order that they grow in faith and righteousness – which is fruit to God.

LESSON 12

Sanctification

This pruning of the saint, we just described, is the process of sanctification in Christ. The process of growing in holiness. How does this occur? We bore initial fruit when we were grafted into Christ in the new birth. When the graft took, the imputed righteousness of Christ flowed through us, the indwelling Spirit was the first fruit offering to the Lord. Therefore, every branch in Christ bears fruit.

However, to grow more fruit, (faith, holiness, righteousness, love of Christ) there was something we had to do. We were told to renew our minds, (Ephesians 4:23), to abide in Christ (John 15), to put away the old self (Colossians 3), to take up our cross daily, (Matthew 16:24) and we were warned to not love the world (1 John 2:15).

Holiness

To bear more fruit, to grow into the fullness of Christ, the saint would have to reckon, consider, see in his mind, understand himself to be crucified with Christ, buried with Christ and resurrected with Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father. He has to know it, see it, accept, want it, understand it, pray for a revelation and then live it. God has already done the work, the provision for holiness is there, we must now take hold of it.

As he would now go forward in life, identified with Christ, the Spirit of God could flow unhindered from the vine into the branch. The saint would gain the strength and power of the Holy Spirit to overcome besetting sins, resist the devil, resist the world, and to love as Christ loved. This is the process of holiness, being set apart for God's use and purposes; a holy vessel sacred to the Lord Almighty.

Sanctification a work of God

We must emphasize, the process of sanctification, the process of bearing fruit, of growing in faith, righteousness, the love of Christ and holiness, is a work of God, not something we do. For nothing that proceeds from human effort can please the Lord. Nothing. However, we can impede or grieve the Spirit of the Lord, who is conforming us to the image of Christ, when we do not abide in Christ, do not renew our minds, or choose to love the world. (Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19)

LESSON 13

Flow of power and nutrients

When the nutrients flow fully from the rootstock into the grafted branch, unhindered, the branch can grow much fruit. The first fruit one bears, as we have already stated, is the imputed righteousness of Christ. God sees the blessed as righteous, just, blameless, innocent and good. This is the first fruit the Christian bears. Every genuine Christian bears this fruit.

Much fruit

Then as the Christian grows into the fullness of Christ, through the identification and knowledge of Christ, he will be pruned and broken by God, so he bears more fruit. This brokenness, this humbling and crushing of the nodes and diseased areas of our old self, is pleasing to the Lord. It yields a greater revelation of God, love and faith in the believer, which brings forth more praise to the Father. We see more of the fruit of the Spirit in ourselves: love, kindness, patience, longsuffering. In other words, the nature of Christ becomes more evident in the person bearing much fruit.

David as an example

An illustration of a believer pruned by God, a life that produced much fruit, is David. David was anointed, chosen by God at an early age to be king of Israel. And when he was anointed, the scriptures say the Spirit of the Lord "came powerfully" upon David (1 Samuel 16:13). Yet, throughout His life David was chastened by God. He traveled in difficult situations, faced multiple battles, and knew personal loss.

However, by the end of his life, much fruit was produced in David, the author of many chapters in the Book of Psalms. Scriptures which have blessed, comforted and strengthened faith in millions upon millions of God's people. In other words, the Lord used David **as an apple blossom, to fertilize the field and thus bring forth a great crop in His Kingdom.**

LESSON 14

A crop

We said there were two ways a branch can bear much fruit. First, the Lord God prunes the believer to bear more fruit on his branch, causing him to grow into the fullness of Christ. Think of an apple branch with many apples on it.

The other way a believer bears much fruit is when he, like an apple blossom, pollinates other trees, causing their branches to bear fruit.

The scriptures in Luke 8:8 state a saint can produce a crop of fruit that is up to one hundred-fold. In other words, one branch can yield a crop of 100 other tree branches that bear fruit. How does this happen?

When the believer blooms like an apple blossom, through the power of the indwelling Spirit, he spreads the Word and the love of God abroad. And in some blossoms, like the Apostle Paul, many plants of God will be pollinated, producing a mighty harvest for the Lord.

Go and bear fruit

Whether it be through preaching, giving a testimony, intercessory prayer, ministry, evangelism, or witnessing Christ to others in a life wholly submitted to God, every Christian is called to sow the seeds of the Lord. This is likened to the process of pollination in the apple orchard. Other plants cannot produce fruit by themselves. They must receive the pollen of other flowers. Thus, the scriptures state, (Romans 10:15, Isaiah 52:7) "How beautiful are the feet of those proclaiming good news of good things!" How beautiful are your feet, dear brother, dear sister, when you proclaim Christ.

The Christian Life

God's purpose as a husbandman, a farmer that cultivates and cares for crops, is to cause you to bear fruit. Every true born again Christian will bear fruit. It is a work of God, the result of being grafted into Christ. There is a power, the power of the Holy Spirit that is indwelling in every saint, ready to produce fruit. This is the key to living the Christian life. And to release His power in your life we must first grow in the knowledge and understanding of what God has done and already provided.

LESSON 15

Analogy of inheritance

Let me use an analogy. If a person has a rich relative that has passed, and left him a fortune as an inheritance, but he does not know it, he can live life as a poor man. Debt collectors can pursue and harass him, he can live a difficult life, all because he had no knowledge of his inheritance and what was already his to grasp and use.

First step

The first step in living the biblical Christian life is to grow in the knowledge and understanding of what God has done, to know and fully grasp your inheritance in Christ and what the Lord has provided.

A son of God

You are a son or daughter of the living God, the most powerful being one can imagine. Reckon yourself as a son, act like a son, with fear and trembling. You represent God Almighty in a foreign land. His signatory ring is on your hand, his crown is on your head, know this and start acting like you are, who you are.

You sit in Christ, at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Act like a son or daughter of God with reverence, humility and the awesomeness of the position. He has adopted you and is not ashamed to call you son, daughter and brother, sister of Christ Jesus.

Revelation

This revelation and reckoning of who I am in Christ Jesus, a son of the living God has caused me to become quiet, humbled, without word, as I am overwhelmed with this revelation. My head is swirling with the magnificent implications of my position, my stature in the universe. My feet tremble as I step forward. My father is holy, clean, pure, perfect, without blemish. And all in his household must be as him. Clean, pure, without blemish and blame. I walk in fear of God and I tremble, knowing I am walking in the presence of my Father. I did nothing to be worthy of such honor. Praise God for what he has done.

LESSON 16

Give thanks

Then he has said give thanks in all situations; in harvest, in famine, in good times, in bad times, in sickness and in health, in persecution and in celebration. You're a son and daughter of the Almighty, He who has called you to bear fruit in this world, and neither trial nor tribulation can keep the will of God from taking place. Give thanks in all things for this is the will of God in your life.

Be content

And be content in all circumstances for the Lord provides. In Hebrews 13:5 the scriptures tell us to "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

All things happen for good

Then in Romans 8:28 we read, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." What does this verse mean? We have already established that every saint is called to bear fruit. This is the purpose in our lives, to bear fruit and our calling, to multiply. Therefore, whether we understand or not the circumstance we find ourselves in, as a son or daughter of God, know that all things happen for good, in order that you bear fruit and that the will of God be carried through. Therefore, give thanks in all situations, in famine and in harvest.

Acknowledge Him in all your ways

The Lord has said, acknowledge him in all your ways and he will order your footsteps. (Proverbs 3) The right paths you should choose, the things you must decide, he will guide you when you have broken before him. Part of bearing much fruit is to allow the fullness of the Spirit to overtake us, to overwhelm us.

The Lord will not override your will. Breaking before the Lord is a surrendering of your will. Let not my will be done, but thy will, dear Father. (Matthew 6:10) This is a prayer I prayed almost every day for a year. Asking the Lord to break me, and guide me.

Place your spirit on the altar of sacrifice, break before God so His Spirit can overcome you. In all things give him reign and rule. And then he will guide your footsteps, according to his will and purposes, not according to your will, desires and plans.

Touch not the unclean thing

Your father is holy, clean and pure. And he commanded you to be holy as he is holy. Touch not the unclean thing. In the New Testament, this has become, "love not the world or anything that is in the world." For all that is in the world, the desires, systems, materialism and temptations is unclean. Touching the unclean thing, can draw the saint into sin, and make him unclean. While our Lord is there to intercede on our behalf when we do sin, we can avoid the separation sin creates when we love not the things in the world.

LESSON 17

Abide in me

The Lord states in John 15:4, that to bear much fruit we must remain in him (abide). He has said that if we remain in his love, we can ask anything of the Father, in His (Christ) name, and the Father will give it to us. Why? Because it glorifies God every time we bear fruit, (faith, love, righteousness and holiness of Christ) proving ourselves to be a reflection of Christ, a reflection of His love. (John 15:7-8) Now, what does it mean to "abide in Christ?"

The best illustration of this concept, of remaining or abiding in Christ, is the story in Matthew 14:28. In this story the Lord is walking on water and Peter steps out of the boat, in the midst of a storm, and also begins to walk on water. Let's consider this marvelous incident in detail, for in it is the key to a living the biblical Christian life and experiencing the power and blessings of the Holy Spirit.

Walking on water

First, Peter asks the Lord to command him. Peter does not attempt the impossible, he does not pursue the desire in his heart, his aspirations, or his wishes and hopes without hearing a commandment from God. Peter asks to know the will of God and asks the Lord to confirm it.

"And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Matthew 14:28. The Lord then responds with a commandment. "Come." Thus, hearing the Word of God, confirming it to be from Christ, Peter steps out of the boat in obedience.

Let's repeat these steps. (1) Peter first asked to know God's will, and then (2) confirmed the Word was of God and then (3) he responded in obedience.

In its simplest form, this is the definition of faith. A "knowing" imparted by God and a response to that knowing. An obedient action in line with the knowledge the Lord has given you.

The miraculous

Then the miraculous occurs, Peter is walking on water. In obedience, he follows the commandment of God, to "come," and the blessing of the Lord is instantly upon him. Peter's eye was on Christ the whole time. He looked at the Lord, focused on Him, not the water, and proceeded to follow and obey His Word. And God's power and blessing was all about Peter.

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

The power of the Lord was on Peter as he went to Jesus. Never in all of scriptures do we see the power of the Lord come upon those who seek their own desires. It only happens in obedience to God's will.

In obedience to the Lord's commandment, Holy Ghost power came upon Peter which enabled him to follow the Lord's command to "come." However, the power did not remain, something happened which caused the power of the Spirit to be lifted from Peter.

Peter began to sink

"But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid. And beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Matthew 14:30

For a moment, Peter took his eyes off the Lord. He looked at the world. Fear set in, as he saw the storm, strong winds and waves crashing about. He took his eyes off the Lord, allowed fear to come into his heart and he sank into the water. What happened to this man of God?

LESSON 18

Faith and the Spirit

Before we answer that question, let's define what it means to have faith and to walk in the Spirit and how a believer can experience the power of God to move mountains. In the history of the church and God's people, from the days of Moses wielding the rod to part the Red Sea, to Joshua commanding the Lord to stop the sun, to modern day men of God like George Mueller, who prayed to the Lord to lift the fog on the seas and recorded thousands of miracles in his diary, and from the days of the Apostles whose very shadow could heal men, we can learn of how faith and the indwelling Spirit works in the believer to do the will of God.

The Holy Spirit gives power, supernatural power, to enable the believer, who is in obedience, to carry out the Word, the will, and commands of the Lord.

Faith is a knowing of something about the nature of God, a knowing of something about the will of God, and a knowing about something about the commands of God, that the Lord has given the believer. Every

believer is given a different measure of faith. This means the Lord gives a greater or lesser knowledge about himself or his will to believers, according to his purposes.

But then there is something else. The Lord then gives the believer the “persuasion” to act on this knowledge or “knowing.” Together, the knowing and the persuasion to act on this knowing, comprise faith. Again, faith is something the Lord gives believers, it is not something a person conjures up, or can get by trying harder or reading more, or by just believing. God gives this faith to believers in different amounts. So, a man like Billy Graham was given the faith to travel and preach the Gospel to all the world. While someone else was given the faith to have Bible study, in their home, to minister to their family.

Faith is always based on the Word, that which God has said - which always glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. When we act on our faith, or rather are obedient to the faith God has given us, the Holy Spirit can release His power in our lives to enable us to accomplish the will of God.

This is what happened to Peter when he first stepped out of the boat. He had enough faith to know that he could step out of the boat and would not sink, (the Lord gave him this inner knowing) and when he acted on that faith, by stepping out, the Holy Ghost power came upon him to enable him to do what the Lord had commanded – which was to walk towards him, on the sea.

We could then say, at that moment, Peter was walking in the Spirit. He was going forward in faith, according to the Word from God, he was obedient to Christ, and thus was imbued, or filled with Holy Ghost power to do God’s will – to come to Christ.

LESSON 19

As Peter was responding, in faith to the Word from our Lord Jesus, he was in the midst of a storm. And then something happened. He stopped walking towards the Lord. He stopped acting in obedience to the command to “come.” He took his eyes off the Lord and looked at the winds and raging waves that were about him.

Once fear of the storm and circumstances gripped him, Peter forgot who had commanded him. He forgot that God himself, He who controls the seas and can protect from the storm, had commanded Peter. He abandoned his faith, for only a few seconds, and the results were almost disastrous. He sank into the sea.

The Lord would then tell Peter he had little faith, and ask why did he doubt. This is a most important statement by our Lord because earlier in Matthew 8:26, before this incident, the same apostles were in a boat, in a storm with the Lord. Then the Lord rebuked the wind and the seas and everything became perfectly calm. Peter was witness to this show of power and therefore knew the Lord had all control over the winds and the seas.

Yet, at this moment, as described in Matthew 14:30, he did not act on the knowledge already given to him – that the Lord could control the winds and seas and therefore, he was in no danger. If he acted in faith, on this knowledge, he would have had no fear, and would’ve continued to walk towards Christ. Peter began to walk in faith, when he stepped out of the boat, but then stopped walking in faith, when he looked at the storm and froze in fear.

This is a great teaching moment for the Christian and an example to what happens to many of us. We begin in faith, but allow trials, tribulations, and circumstances to cause us to doubt the fact that God is control of all things. And therefore, we allow fear or doubt to creep into our lives and we stop walking in obedience to God's Word. We try to take matters into our own hands.

LESSON 20

Storms and waves

Once he took his eyes off the Lord, Peter placed his eyes on the world. This is such a crucial principle, dear friend, I encourage you to meditate on it. When the Christian takes his eyes off Christ, when he places his faith, his belief, his understanding, in what his eyes, senses, and mind can see, hear, read, touch and comprehend, he opens himself to be overtaken by the devil.

Obedience is replaced with fear, panic, unbelief, unholy desires – all which hinder the believer from walking in obedience to God's Word – and acting on the faith, the knowing, the Lord has already given him.

He fails to abide in Christ. He has stepped out of the lane, so to speak, of God's Word. And he has stepped back into the world of Satan and human understanding.

Fail to abide

When Peter sank into the sea, it was a metaphor for what happens to the Christian when he takes his eyes and faith off Christ, even for a moment. The Lord God on Calvary's hill, took away the penalty of sin, and by His Spirit removed the dominion of sin in the life of the believer.

But when we cease to remain focused on Christ, the Word of God that became flesh, every day and every minute, and look to the world, the devil and his demons are there to cause havoc and grief.

To remain or abide in Christ means to keep your eyes on Christ, at all times. Look not to the left, nor to the right, though you walk through the valley of death, and your enemies are all about (Psalm 23).

Choice of the will

Abide in me Christ says – it is a choice of the will. "If you abide in me" (John 15:7) you will bear much fruit. It doesn't happen automatically, we must do something to remain in Christ.

Abide in me

I believe that "if you abide in me" can be interpreted as "if you keep faith in me." (John 15:4) Faith and belief to do what he has already commanded, according to your knowledge of his will. Peter had stopped walking towards Christ and froze in fear. And when he did that, the Holy Spirit could no longer empower him, he was no longer cloaked in power, and therefore he sank.

The Lord asked, upon his return to earth will he find faith – amongst his believers, his people. (Luke 18:1-8) In other words, have you done, lived, acted on all those things you know to be the will of God? Have you obeyed his commandments and lived according to the understanding and knowledge he has

already given you concerning his will? “Be ye therefore ready” (Luke 12:40) the Lord warns His disciples. Do the things He has said, now, for you know not the hour of His coming. Have you kept your eye on him, or looked at the storms and temptations in the world and sank into fear and unbelief? Or worse, have you allowed the world into your heart?

LESSON 21

What causes us to stray from Christ?

In 2 Corinthians 11:3 the Apostle Paul tells us that Christians can fail to abide in Christ. “I am afraid, however, that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may be led astray from your simple and pure devotion to Christ.”

In Ephesians 4:14, the Apostle tells us the immature in Christ can be “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.” The Apostle warns the believers again in 2 Corinthians 11:4 and Galatians 1:6. He tells of false apostles that would come to seduce the people away from the teaching of Christ. They would distort the Gospel of Christ.

Another gospel

Thus, today, we hear about prosperity gospels being preached, universal religion being advocated. We hear the love of God being preached but no mention of the holiness of God, or repentance. Politics is preached from the pulpit, leading to division in the body of Christ. And churches are trying to make members in their image, the image of men, not the image of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, whether it be celebrities, denominations, preachers, religious books or anything that comes under the guise of Christianity, if it does not line up with the Word of Christ, the character of Christ, the love of God and the holiness of God, run from it. It is of the devil. And the devil's objective is to pull you into error and ruin.

John 15:10

“If you keep his commandments you will remain in his love.” (John 15:10) This is a message to believers. It belies the fact that all of us are subject, at some point in our walk of faith, to get off course, to stray, to succumb to temptations, greed, pride, neglect, fear, apathy, worries and the cares of this world.

Thus, the Lord tells us to remain in Him, in his teachings, in his commandments as the only way to bear fruit for God. Do not abide in religion, a preacher, or a Sunday School teacher; abide only in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

LESSON 22

Loving as Christ loves

What are the Lord's greatest commandments? First, to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, then to love one another in Christ, to love your neighbor, and to love your enemies. And in doing this, in walking this way, in love, through the Spirit, power will come upon you to carry out the will of God. Not to love as the world loves, or humans love, but as Christ loved. And to love as Christ, requires the power of the Holy Ghost in us.

John 15:16

In John 15:16 the Lord states, "I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that (*in order that*) the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name."

What does this verse mean? As you go in life, and bring forth, or are bringing forth fruit, the Father will give to you whatever you ask, that enables you to bear fruit. For this is our calling as priests unto God, that we bear fruit for the Kingdom of God.

Fruit in ourselves through abiding in Christ and His word in us. And as Christ grows in us, unhindered, the power of the Holy Ghost enables us to sow seeds that bear fruit in others. Fruit that would remain, true conversions, not false professors of faith that will be burned in the fire to come.

We are laborers in the Kingdom of God, made to do good works, the works of Christ which bear fruit to God's glory. (Matthew 20:1, 9:37). Whether we are called ministers, priests, servants, laborers, or children of the Most High, all terms the Scriptures use to refer to the saints, every Christian is called to be a worker in God's Kingdom, in the sowing and harvesting of fruit for God.

This was the commandment given Adam, to be fruitful and multiply – to produce children for the Lord God. And this is the purpose for every believer in the Kingdom of God.

But let me stop and make an important distinction between the works of God, what we are called to do, and charitable works that any man can do, which feed the hungry and aid the poor.

The works of God, or works of Christ always have the purpose of bringing glory to the Lord God. They always have the purpose of producing fruit in the believer, the elect, those chosen by the Lord to be sons and daughters.

Yes, we must be kind and giving to our neighbors, but as a child of the Lord, as a laborer in the Kingdom, we will be judged by our faith in Christ and our actions to fulfill the will of God – that which bear fruit for His Kingdom. For everything else, and everyone else, will pass away.

LESSON 23

Works of a genuine Christian

The "works" of a Christian, therefore, that is distinguished from the "works of the non-Christian," no matter how charitable and grand, is that the works of the Christian bear fruit that REMAIN and thus glorify the Lord Almighty. This fruit is the righteousness of Christ in the heart of the converted.

False fruit

However, be wise dear friend, to discern when Christian labor comes from the human mind, rather than the persuasion of God the Father. Let me illustrate with a story. I don't remember the source but I take it to be true. There was a brother, a genuine Christian, who built over 100 church buildings in Africa. He thought he was doing the Lord's work. However, later, he got a feeling that something wasn't right. When he went around to those church buildings, he found they were largely abandoned, never used. He then ended up tearing down those buildings.

You see he came up with the idea of constructing buildings because he thought it was the right thing to do, the idea arose from his own mind, not by command of God. Therefore, his works bore no fruit for the Lord. He just got praise from men, for doing a "great job." The Word of God tells us the church of Christ is not in a building, but in the hearts of His people. It was human understanding that believed if a building was constructed, somehow the people would come.

Only trees planted by God will bear fruit

When the Lord told us to "Go and bear fruit," in John 15:6, He also told us in Matthew 15:13 that trees not planted by His Father would be cut down. Again, the Lord says in Isaiah 60:21 that only the branches of his planting, "the work of His hands" will bring him glory. What does this mean? God must direct us to the people, the good soil, the situations, the flowers that we will pollinate. Why?

God's elect

The Lord knows which people are "good soil," who will hear the Word, understand it, and bear fruit. Many if not most people in the world, based on the parable of the sower, who hear the Word of God will not bear fruit. Sadly, this is true. Only God knows which people are His, those chosen before the foundation of the world. Therefore, the hallmark of a Christian walking in the Spirit, under the will and control of God, is that when he sows seeds, fruit will be produced, a harvest for the Lord (John 15:16).

LESSON 24

How do you know when and where to go?

When I was first converted, and met the Living God, I was on fire and wanted to give my testimony wherever and whenever I could. I thought the Lord was going to use me mightily. However, there came a point when the Lord led me to realize I had to first grow in the knowledge and fullness of Christ. I was still serving Him by maturing in Christ even though I was not on the mission field.

And now more fruit is being produced for His glory. But one thing he made very clear to me, I was to begin sowing the seed of Christ at home. Holding Bible study for my children and wife on a regular basis.

The Burden of Christ

But it wasn't only growing in the knowledge of Christ, I was also growing in the fullness of Christ. Let me explain. I remember the night, so distinctly, when the burden of Christ came upon my heart. I burst into tears, clutching my sides, as I wept for people I knew were perishing. I cried out to the Lord to have

mercy on these I knew. "Mercy Lord, Mercy Lord," I cried out. Then I began praying intensely for them. The Lord had placed the burden of Christ upon me, a passion for the lost.

Love for the Brethren

Then I remember the day a warmth and tenderness entered my heart for my brothers in Christ. Brothers I had never met or known. As I read the stories of brothers as far away as China, and as I met folks born by God, I felt a warmth for them, a warmth I had never experienced before. Again, this was a work of the Spirit of the Lord, growing me into Christ. Then, soon after, the Lord placed me in situations where I could serve as a witness for him. Places and circumstances I never predicted or imagined.

Growing into the fullness of Christ

Dear friend it is the Lord that is the husbandman. The farmer that cultivates His plants so they bear much fruit. If you abide in Christ, the Lord God will place the burden of Christ for the lost on your heart. He will infuse you with the love of Christ for your brothers and sisters. He will break your spirit so that you willingly say, "Father, not my will, but thy will be done," even unto death. This is growing into the fullness of Christ.

Anguish in my soul

How do you know when an idea for ministry is from God and not your own imagination? You will know when an activity or ministry comes from God when he places a burden on your heart and anguish in your soul. You cannot escape it, you cannot ignore it. Praise Almighty God, for what he has done, he is magnificent, kind hearted, truthful and faithful. *Halleluiah to my God, my friend my Father, Praise your precious name dear Lord. I love you, Father, for what you have done.*

LESSON 25

Psalm 23 – The Lord is my Shepherd

When we dig deep into Psalm 23, we can truly understand the simplicity and magnificence of the Lord's command to "abide in him" and "remain in his love."

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

A shepherd is a guide, one who leads his flock. The Lord commands us to follow him, listen not to the voices in the world, or voices in our head, but listen to Him. As we follow and remain in Him, we shall lack for nothing.

He leads me in paths of righteousness, for his name's sake

The Lord will order your footsteps, according to his will, for His glory. For we are all called to bear fruit, and fruit is the righteousness, love and faith of Christ. Our paths are only made straight, we are guided where to go, when we keep our eyes on Christ, in obedience to what he has already commanded.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil

The world we live in is a valley of death, it is the land of sinners, the devil and demons. Yet, when we remain in Christ, our God says have no fear, for He is with us until the end. When you fail to abide in

Christ, and abandon your faith, even for a minute, you will walk onto the path of the unclean. Those things in the valley of death that are waiting to bring ruin on the wayward traveler (1 Peter 5:8).

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows

Dear friend, you are a son or daughter of God, blessed are you oh saint of the Most High. Meditate on this, and the great riches God Almighty has given you in Christ Jesus. Carry yourself, each day, each minute with the attitude of honoring God in all you do, in striving to please the Lord in all intent, and loving your brothers and sisters, loving your neighbors and loving your enemies. In this, is your Father well pleased.

I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever

Dear friend, do you realize, that today, your spirit is already with Christ, seated at the right hand of the Father? (Ephesians 2:6) Have you reckoned yourself, understood, accepted, seen in the eye of your mind that you are a priest of God? And in that position, he has given you access to great power, the power of His Spirit, to do His will. To go, and bear much fruit.

LESSON 26

Put away the old self

Do away with gossip, and politics. Abandon prejudice in all its forms, allow God to be the shepherd in your life, seek not to do thy will but pray that his will be done. Reckon yourself crucified with Christ Jesus and eliminate bitterness, hate, anger, fear and sin from your life. Be holy as your Father is holy. Touch not the unclean thing. For in this, He is well pleased.

All through the New Testament believers are warned to put away the things of the old self, to touch not the unclean things in the world. Why? Because when our beliefs, understandings, hopes, fears and actions are based on what our eyes can see, we fail to abide in Christ and we subject ourselves to sin and ruin.

Proverbs 3:21-26

The Lord God tells us this very principle in Proverbs 3:21-26

“My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, [*Christ is wisdom do not let him out of your sight*] preserve sound judgment and discretion; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck.”

“Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.”

“Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the LORD will be at your side and will keep your foot from being snared.”

LESSON 27

Go and bear much fruit

Not only has the Lord commanded us to bear much fruit, he has said “Go” and bear fruit (John 15:16). This going is not only as a son of God, but also as a priest of God. (Revelation 1:6, Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:5-9) As the Lord Jesus was our High Priest, reconciling sinners to God, we are also to be a priest unto the Father, imitating the works of our brother and Lord Jesus Christ.

A priest is defined in Hebrew, in the Old Testament, as one who makes sacrifices. In the Book of Leviticus, it describes the role of the priest in taking the animal or grain offering from the people and placing it on the altar, within the tabernacle, and then burning the offering to create an aroma pleasing to God. Only the priest was allowed to place sacrifices on the altar.

In the Greek, in the New Testament, a priest is defined as one who ministers or serves the Lord. Therefore, a priest unto God, the one born of Jesus Christ, is one in service to the Lord, who serves Him and one who also presents himself as a living sacrifice. And what is this living sacrifice? It is fruit: the likeness of Jesus Christ in the life, personality and deeds of the believer, given over to God’s glory.

LESSON 28

The works of a priest

It is in doing the works of a priest, like our Lord and Savior, in which the scriptures describe the greatest blessings and joy that a believer can experience while on earth (Isaiah 58). It is here where we produce the greatest fruit, 100 fold crops, and glory to God Almighty.

Be imitators of God – Ephesians 5:1

When we grow into the position of being a priest of the Lord, it is the fullness of Jesus Christ on display, it is the bearing of much fruit, it is the highest glory we can give the Lord, it is the way to experience the power and miracle of God, it is the way to experience the refreshing of the Holy Spirit and joy unlike anything you have known.

And every believer, every saint, is called, is destined, has the purpose - the only purpose - in his Christian life, to be a priest unto the Most High. (Revelation 1:6, Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 61:6) What does being a priest of the Lord look like?

1 Peter 4:11

The Apostle Peter gives us a concise description of a priest of the Lord in 1 Peter 4:11. “If anyone speaks, he should speak as one conveying the words of God. If anyone serves, he should serve with the strength God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.”

LESSON 29

Elder Brother

We have our elder brother, Christ Jesus as an example of a priest of God. He was kind, tender-hearted, merciful, forgiving and walked in love. He gave himself up as an offering and sacrifice that was pleasing to the Father (Ephesians 5:2). Therefore, we are also to offer the Father spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5, Hebrews 13:15, Romans 12:1) pleasing to the Father.

Priest of God

The Lord was in constant prayer to the Father. He interceded for the lost, in prayer, deeds and in love. He gave constant praise and thanks to the Almighty. He only did the things that pleased the Lord. He was obedient to the Word and commandments of God.

Isaiah 58

One of your assignments is to read the *Judgment Throne of Christ*, which you can download in the Books section of the Study Guide. In the book, I review the seven works of a priest of God, works that every believer is called to perform, according to the measure of faith the Lord has given him. I encourage you to read the book when you can.

True worship

In Isaiah 58 the Lord says he does not regard fasting or rituals and ceremony as worship, which the Israelites were prone to do. The worship he desired, was for the saint to do the works of Christ and bear fruit.

And in doing these works, Isaiah tells us of the magnificence, blessings, and rewards the Lord will bestow. Listen to the blessings the Lord will give the believer, the one who does the works of Christ and bears fruit: (Isaiah 58:8)

“Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,

and your healing shall spring up speedily;

your righteousness shall go before you;

the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;

you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’

If you take away the yoke from your midst,

the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

if you pour yourself out for the hungry

and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,

The Biblical Christian Life Class Transcript

then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday.

And the LORD will guide you continually
and satisfy your desire in scorched places
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters do not fail.

And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to dwell in.

“If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,
from doing your pleasure on my holy day,
and call the Sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the LORD honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;
then you shall take delight in the LORD,
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Trials and tribulations

These blessings do not mean we will live our life, in Christ, without problems or even sufferings. But it does mean that in times of difficulty the Lord will comfort us, and give us a peace the world does not know. And at all times, in every circumstance, we must praise him and give thanks, for we will see His face soon.

Amen

Summary

Let's summarize the biblical Christian Life:

1. The Lord's purpose in salvation is to set apart a people for himself that are holy and blameless by saving them from their sins (Matthew 1:21). A people that would be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, that would be sanctified, fruitful and would multiply.
2. Every born again Christian is grafted into the body of Christ, by God, and bears fruit, the imputed righteousness of Christ
3. God is glorified when the saint bears more fruit
4. The saint bears more fruit, on his branch, which is a metaphor for his life, when he grows in the knowledge and fullness of Christ
5. This is the process of sanctification, of growing in holiness and likeness of Christ. God is the husbandman. The Lord prunes the believer, cutting off deadwood in our personality, self-will, and life, so the believer grows more like Christ in love, faith and righteousness— and thus bears more fruit

END OF CLASS

To continue in the summary:

6. We can only bear more fruit when we abide or remain in Christ. A branch cannot bear fruit when it is separated from the vine. (John 15:4) To remain in Christ is to keep your eyes on him, to obey His Word, to allow him to be your shepherd, and to not let the worries, fears and cares of life lead you away from Him - into unbelief and diminished faith. When you stray, you take actions, become anxious and fearful, based on your own understanding, that eventually leads to dismay.
7. You can bear much fruit when you fulfill the purpose and calling for every believer - to be a priest unto the Most High. This fulfills the Lord's command to Go, be fruitful, and multiply.
8. By doing the works of Christ, as a priest of God, we sow the righteousness of Christ, a Holy seed, into others. Thus, we produce a great crop and much fruit for the Lord. We pull His people out of the world of darkness and into God's light and Kingdom
9. The greatest blessings a believer can attain comes when he does the works of Christ. In doing the works of Christ, we can ask the Father for anything and he will do it, for in this he is glorified.
10. It is the Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Spirit, which works in us to achieve God's purpose and produce fruit. Nothing we do out of our own human effort or ingenuity can please God.

You are now ready for the fifth class, Taking Authority. In this class you will learn how to wield the staff of God, to gain victory over the enemy, and how to pull your brothers and sisters out of darkness and into the light.

Amen.

Scripture References

Colossians 3:12-15

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive any complaint you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which is the bond of perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, for to this you were called as members of one body. And be thankful.”

1 Thessalonians 5:12

But we ask you, brothers, to acknowledge those who work diligently among you, who preside over you in the Lord and give you instruction. In love, hold them in highest regard because of their work. Live in peace with one another.

And we urge you, brothers, to admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with everyone.

Make sure that no one repays evil for evil. Always pursue what is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice at all times. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in every circumstance, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

Do not extinguish the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt, but test all things. Hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

James 1:22

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

Luke 6:46

Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' but not do what I say?

Romans 2:13

For it is not the hearers of the Law who are righteous before God, but it is the doers of the Law who will be declared righteous.

James 2:14

What is the profit, my brothers, if anyone says to have faith, but has no works? Is the faith able to save him?

Psalms 91:7

Though a thousand fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, the pestilence will not reach you.

Philippians 4:11-13

“Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every

circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

Psalm 37:25

“I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.”

1 John 2:24

“Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.”

John 14:23

Jesus replied, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make Our home with him.” Abiding in Christ is obeying His Word. When you abide in Him, God can order your footsteps, and the Holy Spirit can work in you unhindered.

1 John 3:24

Whoever keeps His commandments remains in God, and God in him. And by this we know that He remains in us: by the Spirit He has given us.

2 John 1:9

Anyone who runs ahead without remaining in the teaching of Christ does not have God. Whoever remains in His teaching has both the Father and the Son.

John 14:21

Whoever has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him.”

1 John 2:5-6

“But if anyone keeps His word, the love of God has been truly perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him: Whoever claims to abide in Him must walk as Jesus walked.”

John 15:12

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Philippians 1:9-12

“And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ**, to the glory and praise of God.”

James 3:17

“But the wisdom from above is indeed first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and of good fruits, impartial, sincere. And **the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those making peace.**”

Colossians 1:9-10

“Because of this also, we from the day we heard, do not cease praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding to walk worthily of the

Lord: pleasing in all, **bringing forth fruit in every good work**, and growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might, unto all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, the One having qualified you for the share of the inheritance of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Daniel 12:3

“And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

Deuteronomy 13:4

“Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.”

Deuteronomy 5:33

“Walk in obedience to all that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.”

Isaiah 55:10

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.”

1 Peter 2:11

“Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from the desires of the flesh, which war against your soul.”

Romans 13:14

Instead, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

Ephesians 4:24

“and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance as our way of life.

2 Corinthians 5:7

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 4:18

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (Christ)

Hebrews 11:27

By faith Moses left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw Him who is invisible.

Colossians 1:15

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Commentary

Matthew Henry

(1:1-9) All Christians are by baptism dedicated and devoted to Christ, and are under strict obligations to be holy

Worries and cares

Worry not about what you will wear or eat. Worry not about the cares of life. (Matthew 6:25-33) Your Father knows you need these things. Remain in Christ, focus on the purpose for which God has called you, to bear fruit. And all these other things will be provided in your life.

Fear not the world

Fear no evil. You are a son of the Almighty, and nothing can touch you that he does not permit. All power is in His hands, all strength is in His word. To remain in Christ, to remain in his love, is to stay in obedience to His word, that which he has commanded. Look not at the world, as others see the world. Fear not the things, events, war, or crises in the world, for the Lord has already said these will happen. The Lord says remain in me and he will give us his joy, joy that comes from the love of the Father. The joy of Christ he will give to us, in our hearts, if we remain in him.

Prayers

Prayer in the mission field

Father give me the strength to love them (the lost). Let me not see their imperfections or their sins, but let me see them as thou see them. In need of loving kindness and mercy. Give me the strength dear Lord to love them, as thou loves them. To your glory may I be true. Praise God.

Prayer for focus

Give me the strength Dear Lord to focus on your desires and your purpose. Give me the heart and strength to not look at my circumstances or the storm swirling about. But in all things let me see God.

Prayer for sight

Dear Father, I pray thee to give me sight. Let me not see as the world sees. Let me see the souls in need of your mercy and kindness. Let me not see danger and woe, but your power and glory revealed. Let me not see famine and lack, but a cup to be filled with your mercy and kindness.

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