

CLASSROOM IN A BOOK DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

BOOK 6

THE DISCIPLES' BOSS

— A NEW LOOK AT THE GOSPEL OF JOHN —



JUSTIFICATION

By Faith
in Christ



SANCTIFICATION

By the Spirit
Day by Day



GLORIFICATION

The Hope
of Eternity



BY

WILLIAM E. VINSON, JR., PhD



4Disciples.org

EXALT. EQUIP. ENGAGE. ENCOURAGE.

CLASSROOM IN A BOOK DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

Book 6

THE DISCIPLES' BOSS: A New Look at the Gospel of John

**By:
William E. Vinson, Jr.**

**Published by
William E. Vinson, Jr.
Nashville, TN**

**© 2007 by William E. Vinson, Jr.
All rights reserved**

Revised 2014

Preface

THE CLASSROOM IN A BOOK DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

The *Classroom in a Book Discipleship Series* is a unique approach to education. The author has over forty years of experience in classroom and Internet teaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Seminary Extension, and 4Disciples. The teachings covered Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, Church History, Hermeneutics, Christian Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Evangelism, and Biblical Backgrounds. In other words, the teacher was a generalist in the world of specialization.

ORGANIZATION OF BOOK

God providentially sent two people into the classrooms that have made this series possible. One student brought in some audio recording gear into the seminary classrooms and recorded everything said by teacher and students. The other person, Helen Agnew, transcribed the tapes into weekly sessions. Finally, Helen put all the weeks together for a course into a book, which became the nucleus for a formal book. Next came the editing phases in which sentence construction and thought flow were improved in order to facilitate the reader's comprehension.

The book is a semester-long class. Each week's lesson became a chapter that went through several iterations of the editing process. Also, Helen provided computer drawings of the theological charts and models used by the teacher. These models

were inserted into the book at the appropriate places.

INFORMAL WRITING STYLE

You should be aware that the chosen style of communication in this series of books is much more informal than the typical. I have worked to retain the folksy way of expression that I use in the classroom and pulpits.

BENEFITS

Discipleship has been declared by many to be the greatest need in Southern Baptist life today. Churches have bused in some of their leaders to take my classes. They wanted discipleship training for their lay leaders so that they could be more effective in their ministries. Armed with this new discipleship training, the lay ministers and bivocational ministers are fulfilling their calls and impacting the Kingdom of God in very positive ways. Pastors are benefiting two ways. First is that they are able to gain seminary training without the huge costs of time and money. Second, lay ministers get the training needed to enable them to help their pastors minister effectively.

For you, the busy Christian of today, this series is a rare opportunity to actually participate in seminary studies to learn from the teacher and your peers in high impact and focused studies that are not available in any other books.

Table of Contents

Preface -----	ii
Table of Contents -----	iii
Introduction-----	1
Chapter 1 Introduction, Origin, Background Structure And Prologue -----	4
Chapter 2 John The Baptist Introduces Jesus-----	26
Chapter 3 O.T. Fulfilled, Plus Beyond Judaism-----	46
Chapter 4 Lame Man, Sabbath, Materialism, Feast Of Tabernacles, and Character Of Jesus -----	67
Chapter 5 The Blind Man and the Kinds Of Shepherds-----	97
Chapter 6 The Supreme Sacrifice of the <i>Kenosis</i> -----	116
Chapter 7 The Resurrected Christ -----	138
Conclusion-----	155
Appendices -----	158
Answers to Chapter Questions-----	160
Glossary-----	164
Certificate In Discipleship Studies -----	165

INTRODUCTION

Today, we have a crisis in understanding what true discipleship is. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ, one must first deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Jesus. That definition was given by Jesus Himself.¹ However, this definition of discipleship has been forsaken in today's churches.

The Lord's definition has been replaced by institutionalism. Institutionalism is a snare from which few Christians ever escape. The Lord's saints who get caught in this snare spend their resources in supporting the institution. Thinking that they are serving the Lord, they give their time, money, labor, devotion, and witness to the institutional church. If we are to become disciples, the Lord wants our sacrifices redirected to Him. When our sacrifices are given to Him, then He can use them for His ministry as He sees fit. That desire is expressed at the close of His definition of discipleship when He says: "**and follow Me.**"

Why is our country going to hell? It is because we people who are called by His Name cannot humble ourselves, pray, seek His Face, and turn from our wicked ways" (2 Chronicles 7:14). This conclusion cannot be debated because God said it. He said further along this line that if His people did those 4 things, He would hear from heaven, forgive our sins, and heal our land.

Who can deny that our land is sick? This sickness has been discussed at length in prior books in this series. However, institutionalism does not consider the sickness of the land. The myopia inherent in institutionalism limits our vision to just our own conformation to the demands of our local churches.

Institutionalism bars God's slaves from following the Lord Himself. Yes, the "institution" (whether it is a church, denomination,

program, group, charismatic leader, an idea, or any other thing) robs God of His resources.

Instead of **humbling** ourselves, those of us caught in the snare of institutionalism are prideful. We brag about our churches, our pastors, and our programs. Our witness is of our churches, not of our Lord. We sacrifice to our churches, not to our Lord. We get the applause of our church members for proving our fidelity to our common institution by our offerings and blind dedication.

Pride for the institution also motivates the ministers in its grip to turn a blind eye to sins of the congregations. Divorce is rampant, even outnumbering (in some polls) its occurrences outside of Christendom. Abortion and homosexuality are increasing in the institution. The majority of institutional ministers know that these practices of divorce, abortion, and homosexuality are sinful. However, these same ministers will not sound out the warnings to their congregants about political candidates who approve of these sins because they fear losing the nickels and noses. The loss of nickels will come via losing their tax exemption which they will enjoy only so long as they shut up about sin when it comes to politics. The loss of noses will come when their warning against sin will offend those who are steeped in those sins.

The institutionalist might say that if there is one thing that is not wrong with his church, it is **prayer**. The problem with the prayer of institutionalism is that an institution cannot pray because it is inanimate. Its members, however, can pray, but the verdict from God about prayer is that the prayers of the righteous man availeth much. However because the institution is full of sin-laden members who have replaced their devotion to God with their devotion to the institution, they are in the throes of idolatry. God says that service to

¹ Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:23.

people, not to an institution, is service to Him. Thus the prayers of idolatrous Christians availeth little.

The institutionalist might say that we **seek God's Face** in our glorious worship services. However, to come into the presence of our King while caught in the deception of institutionalism, even while not knowing of our need to repent, is not something that God respects. Those caught in the snare of this deception think that because you faithfully go to church and tithe, you are something special. This perception is a repeat of the problem addressed by Jeremiah's Temple Sermon. Jeremiah addressed the entire nation of Judah about its idolizing of the Temple of the Lord. The exact parallel is seen today in the institutionalism of the local church.

Lastly, the institutionalist might defend "**his institution**" as do nearly all the students that I teach by saying: "Those **other churches** do not preach the Gospel, they preach a watered down Gospel. They ordain homosexuals. They ordain women. They allow all manner of sins. They They They **But my church** does not do those things. My church is a really good church involved in the *Missio Dei*. Our pastor practices the *kenosis* and is teaching all of us to do the same thing, etc., etc." It is always the other churches, the other pastors, the other Christians, never my church, pastor, or me.

All sins, no matter how small they may be considered to be, separate us from our fellowship with God. Adam and Eve, because of sin, lost their honor of walking with God. What was so terribly wicked about eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil? For one thing it was prohibited by God, and this alone makes it terribly wicked to eat of it. Also, it was the second occurrence of the upside down *kenosis*, with the first occurring in the angelic realm, by Satan himself.²

Idolatry has been condemned in writing by God Himself. Anyone practicing it is practicing wickedness. There will be many who read this and begin to defend their idolatry as did the citizens of Judah when Jeremiah warned them against making an idol of God's Temple. So, beware! You are being called to confess your sins to the Lord. Once clean, you are called to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Jesus.

Jesus is your all-in-all. He alone is Lord. He is whom you are to worship. The temple of the Lord is your body in which you are to sacrifice your will on the altar of discipleship. Your sacrifices are to be to Him personally. Sanctification is a cross of sacrifice for you to carry all the way to your death for Him just as He did for you. You are to follow Jesus personally. ***He must be able to spend you as one of His resources in the way that He alone sees fit.*** Anything that gets between you and His ability to do exactly that is to be denied.

When teaching this Gospel of John, I was struck by the incredible amount of evidence which Jesus provides for us to know that He is the God-Man, the only begotten Son of God, and is absolutely worthy of being our Boss. I am using the term Boss in order to drive home the forgotten meaning of the term Lord. We have used the term Lord so much that it has lost its meaning about His being not only our Savior but also our Master, our Lord, our God, our King.

The kings of ancient times were feared and respected so much so that one could not approach them without being summoned. To do so could likely cost you your life. In the book of Esther, the king's wife took her life in her own hands when she approached the king without being summoned. However, she took the risk in order to save the lives of her people.

King Jesus deserves much more fear and respect than an earthly king because He is God. He will judge our every thought, word, and action. As a result of His judgment,

² Isaiah 14:12-15.

Christians will receive eternal rewards or loss of rewards. However, contrary to the earthly kings, our King loves us more than life itself. Thus we have an open door policy with our King. However, that open door does not invite frivolous approaches. Please understand that to treat Him and His Words without the respect that He deserves is tantamount to disrespect.

I have seen many people, including myself, give much respect to our bosses at work. We do not act frivolously around them, and we do not speak flippantly to them. We approach them with fear and respect. How much more should we fear and respect the One Who has power over our jobs on earth and also in Heaven, much less over our very lives (both temporal and eternal)? “Worthy is the Lamb” is a scriptural refrain which is stated in the last book of the Bible. Jesus is Lord. He is my Lord, and He is your Lord. As Lord, Jesus is the Disciples’ Boss.

I must warn you: if Jesus is your Boss, and He is also your Judge, then it behooves you to **turn from your wicked ways** and obey Him in all things. Every commandment issued by your Boss to you in writing is especially

pertinent to your outcome in the future judgment of your works. Imagine receiving a work list from your boss at work from which you choose which items you will do and not do. Would that boss be pleased?

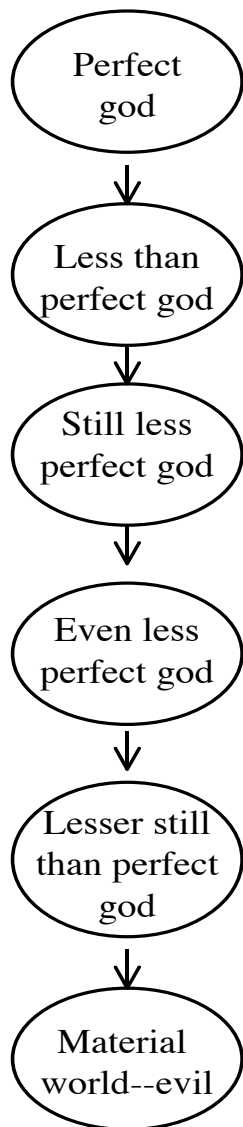
Please remember that sin has two sides to it. First, come the sins of commission. Second, are the sins of omission. If the Boss says that we are not to do something, then we should not do it. However, if He says that we are to do something, then we should, by all means, do it. We cannot shape His Words to our desires and do only that. No! We must turn from our wicked ways and shape our behavior to His Words, regardless of our desires. Why? Because He is the disciples’ Boss.

This Gospel of John which we are going to study presents Jesus as the Divine and Human Messiah. It will show that He has power over nature, over death, over disease, over religious rules, **and over us**. Our Lord has the power of God, and He is willing to use that power in the affairs of mankind. Because He alone is the eternal Lord, we should relate to Him as a slave relates to his Master. This Jesus, Who is portrayed in John’s Gospel, is our Boss.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION, ORIGIN, BACKGROUND STRUCTURE AND PROLOGUE

The world that John was in when he wrote his Gospel was hindered by two problems.



GNOSTICISM
Chart 1.1

First was the Jewish background with its monotheism and legalism. Thus, the understanding of the basics of Christianity's salvation by Grace through faith and its free walk under the Spirit's control was contradictory to the legalism of Judaism. Also, Judaism's monotheism presented a reluctance to admit the deity of Jesus.

Secondly, and hugely important, was Hellenism. During the Greek Empire, its culture called Hellenism and its teachings of *Gnosticism* was spread throughout the Holy Land. *Gnostic* influences caused great perversion in Christian doctrine.

GNOSTICISM

The *Gnostics* held that only spirit was good. In their world, all matter was evil. Thus the world was evil and

could not have been created by a good God. For their doctrine of creation, they worked out a scheme in which there was a series of gods of deteriorating levels of good. In this scheme, out of the existence of a perfect god

came another less perfect god, and out of that god came another. After going down several layers of gods (called *aeons*), there came an *aeon* that had degenerated sufficiently enough that he could create this world and all its evil material (see chart 1.1).

For the *Gnostics*, this evil world had evil people walking around in it because they were material also. The evilness is not derived from function or behavior. The evilness is an ontological evil, and *that* means then that by nature, by definition of our actual beings, we would be evil. Flesh and blood human beings would be considered to be evil. Because you are flesh and blood, you would be considered evil, not because of what you do or how you behave but because matter is evil.

Gnosticism Emphasizes Knowledge

The *Gnostic solution* to the human problem of evil because of our flesh and blood existence was to get people out of this flesh, out of this material level that people are in, and get them back into the spiritual realm. The *Gnostic's* pathway for achieving the spiritual realm was through knowledge, and that is why they are called *Gnostics* (*gnosis* means knowledge).

The *Gnostics* had a system of knowledge whereby you went up a notch toward perfection through knowledge, and through additional knowledge you kept going up. With each evolution of this increased knowledge, you would ascend further along the way to the heavens. So knowledge is the essence of salvation in *Gnosticism*.

Modern Gnosticism

Today there is a modern-day movement of which you need to be aware. It portrays knowledge as the answer for all behavioral

problems. As we go through this book, we are going to be talking a lot about knowledge and how salvific knowledge is. But knowledge alone is not salvific. Knowledge alone condemns. You must understand that knowledge has to be received *and applied* in order for it to change your life. It has to be assimilated into your being. It cannot be just a head knowledge. It has to be believed, and that is why the Lord talked about salvation by grace through faith. Faith is more than just a simple knowledge. Salvation is not by grace through knowledge. It is by grace through faith. Certainly, the *Gnostics* would disagree with that requirement of Christian faith.

There seems to be much emphasis today on the value of knowledge. When there is crime, what is the pervasive answer for that crime? Education! By implementing that solution, we just put the criminals in a school and make smart criminals. Every problem that comes along today follows that paradigm. When we have a problem in schools, counselors become the answer to our handling of the problem. The counselors tell the students all manner of new emotional stuff. What then do you have after emotional counseling? You will have the same problems or even worse because now the counselees think that some of the problems are solved because they “feel better.” Behavioral problems are never solved until there is a change in the heart which results in **new behavior**.

We have some serious things to consider in our study of John. *Gnosticism*, the Greek philosophy and one of the factors to be considered, had invaded Palestine, and John encountered it when trying to grow the infant church.

The *Gnostics* are the ones who say, “The real and the good are up there in the spiritual realm. Down here in our physical realm is evil. Salvation for *Gnostics* is to get out of this mess down here and get up there.”

One method of getting “up there” was to castigate your body. In order to get out of this body, just bring death upon yourself. However, you must get the knowledge before you die because death without that knowledge will not advance you up the chain. Instead of going up, you would go down without the proper knowledge. Thus sufficient knowledge is needed before the body is punished to the point of death so that your spirit can go up a notch.

The License Which Comes from Gnosticism

There was another outcome of *Gnosticism* which carries over to today. In that outcome, the person says, “Okay, this body is evil. It is my soul inside that is good. The soul is the spirit part of me. Therefore, I am two separate entities, and what I do in this body does not touch my soul because it is a separate entity. So I can do anything I want to do.” That, then, is a license for sin that comes out of this *Gnostic* movement.

We have that problem with us today. We receive the new birth by grace through faith, and then we have inside of us a brand new and sparkling clean soul that is immune to past, present, and future sins. All of the sin and the evil things that are done by Christians do not touch their souls because they are saved. They are taught that God is swooning over them and that they are going to have the same mansion and crowns as everyone else because their souls are perfectly clean.

There is license today in the church. The same principle is facing us, you see, that was facing John except his problem was named *Gnosticism*. Our problem has the same symptoms, but it is not called *Gnosticism*. It is called normal. I call today’s problem modern-day *Gnosticism* because knowledge becomes the solution for every problem. Many people say that *Gnosticism* ended in the third century. I still see it. It may not have the exact same name, and it does not have the levels of gods/aeons, but it still has the same

outcomes, the same behavior modes, the same separation between soul and body, and the same solution—knowledge. It plays a part all through history, and it comes out in the church age as a modern theology in counterfeit Christianity.

This pervasive Greek philosophy is what John was up against. The entire world during John's time was Greek speaking. Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire had propagated both the Greek language and the Greek philosophy when it conquered the Middle Eastern world. This is the world that John inherits.

This is the world right here that you students have inherited. You have problems just as John had problems. There are some very close similarities between the two worlds. It is helpful for us to know something of the philosophies that opposed John because they show us how to combat the philosophies that are opposing us.

The apostolic church was facing *Gnosticism* on one side and Judaism on the other side.

JUDAISM AND *DOCETICISM*

Judaism is resistant to Jesus as the Messiah. How can you grow a church if the Messiah has not yet come?

We have in Judaism the idea that God is in heaven, and nothing but mortal man was on earth. This idea would move the Jews to conclude that Jesus was nothing more than a man. The Jews could hold that He may have been a prophet or whatever, but He could not have been the Son of God. He was not the Messiah.

Here is the other side of the coin. *Gnosticism* is on one side, and Judaistic philosophy is on the other. As over against all matter being evil, creation down here on earth is considered to be good by the Jews. In Judaistic philosophy, God uses all matter on

earth to advance His spirit realm in Heaven. They thought that if we pray to God above, and if Jesus on earth prayed to God above, then Jesus is not God. Given the parameters of matter on earth and spirit above, then their logic would say that Jesus is good but not God.

There was a debate that came up in the early church that said, "If Jesus is God, and He prayed to God in heaven, then we have two gods." This conclusion gives Christianity a serious problem. The *Shemah*, Israel's creed, declares emphatically that there is one God, not two gods. God is One. The Jews believe that tenet thoroughly—there is only one God.

Imagine this scenario: The Christians were saying that Jesus is God. Well, that defies the basic understanding of the Jews about who God is. For them, God is above in heaven.

In *Gnosticism* a whole pile of gods stacked as high as you can see are on the *Gnostic* side of the ledger, and then on the Jewish side you have just one God. He is way up there in heaven. You cannot see Him, and you need prophets to tell you about Him. You cannot talk to Him. Next, you have in the middle of this chaos John and the Christians who are trying to establish the gospel message. As a result you have this problem in the church of one god versus two gods. On the one side you have a group that says that Jesus is God, but He really did not have a body because God is Spirit. Jesus, as a human, was just an illusion, a fantasy. This group of "Christians" is called *Docetics*. A *Docetic* is a person who is denying the humanity of Christ. There have been pictures drawn, and I have seen one, of Jesus walking on the seashore and not leaving footprints. This is a *Docetic* representation, you see, and it is denying that Jesus came in the flesh. In 1 John the Scripture says that he who says that Jesus came in the flesh is the one who is of

God. In this passage, John is arguing against *Gnosticism*.

1 John

4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God:
Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus
Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

JOHN WAS FIGHTING FALSEHOODS ON TWO FRONTS

The *Gnostic* Christians were claiming that all flesh-and-blood men were evil. For them, if Jesus was perfect, then He was not in the flesh. Fighting against that *Gnosticism*, John speaks about handling Jesus, seeing Him, talking with Him, things that prove that He was actually a flesh and blood Man.

When John dealt with knowledge and faith, he was still fighting against the *Gnostics*.

John will also turn right around and answer the Jews on the other side of the coin who claimed that Jesus was not God because there was only one God, i.e. the Father in heaven. Against this group, John showed that Jesus created the world and that He is the light and life of man. You can see how John is caught in between these two opposing elements, and he must do battle with both sides.

We, too, are caught in these same kinds of opposing issues. We have the hedonistic world today with the very same *Gnostic* license. In Christian Hedonism, “feelings” govern behavior. If it feels good, do it. *Gnosticism* spurs licentiousness and Hedonism in this world. Both originate from the idea that the deeds of the body do not affect the soul.

For John, one front contained the influence toward licentiousness that he had to do battle with. Another front contained the denial that Jesus was a man. Another front was the Jewish dilemma that if Jesus was God, then Christianity had two gods and was incompatible with Judaism’s one-god declara-

tion (*Shema*). Another front was the legalistic dimension of Judaism.

We have the same battlefronts facing us: licentiousness, knowledge as the cure all, the problem of the Trinity resulting from the *Docetic* type of Christianity, a lack of worship of Jesus as God, our savior who paid for our sins, and a legalistic emphasis which resulted from the Ebionitic brand of early Christianity.

JUDAISM AND EBIONITES

Under *Gnostic* influence, some Jews believed that Jesus was a Spirit Man if He was in fact God. On the other side of the Jewish dilemma, the Jews say: “No, Jesus is not God, He is just a man.” Thus these Jews emphasized the humanity of Jesus. The Ebionitic Christians espoused the idea that Jesus was merely a man, maybe a great man, a great prophet, and all of that, but not God.

All of these terms that I am using, *Docetics*, *Ebionites*, and *Gnostics*, you will see from now on in your studies here in the seminary. These terms express the two sides of Christology. The *Ebionites* would be the kind of people that would say, “You cannot pray to Jesus.” You hear this today. In many churches you may start praying, “Dear Jesus” in your prayer, and people will say, “You cannot do that. You shouldn’t pray to Jesus. You must pray to the Father only.” Those people have *Ebionitic* tendencies, in them. For them, Jesus is less than God; He was the God-Man, but he was more man than God. This branch of Jewish influence on Christianity came to be called *Ebionite*.

Over against the *Ebionitic* influence, the *Gnostic* influence on Christianity came to be called *Docetic*. For *Docetics*, the emphasis was on the Spiritual Jesus because matter was evil. Jesus could not have had a material body and be God at the same time for *Gnosticism’s Docetic* Christians.

These two opposing ideologies had invaded the early church. John was faced with

that kind of dilution to the Truth. Well what do we have? We also have a worldly situation that is in the church. When you see what John was dealing with, you will see that we have similar problems. Learn John and see how he dealt with this problem because he has the answer from God for us.

God spoke to John's world through John. God is speaking now to our world. We, then, need to hear this Word, learn this Word, be made wise by this Word, and then proclaim this Word because it is as applicable today as it was way back then in history. God's Word is right now. John's world is right now. Our situation may not have the same names anymore, but it has the very same kinds of characteristics. We need to stand up and be counted on this.

SPECIAL WORDS IN THE GOSPELS

The following chart 1.2 shows the usage of certain words in the various gospels. We have special words in John, you see, that have to do with knowledge, and when you compare the Gospels, look at how they shake down.

Consider the words **believe** and **know**. Look at the number of occurrences in John and then look at the smaller numbers in the

other Gospels. Because John is dealing with *Gnosticism*, these two words become very important. There will also be many other words in John's Gospel that are going to have similar meaning. These words will connect with the *Gnostics*. John uses these words because he must do battle with the enemies at hand. These *Gnostics* are driving him crazy, and you will see in every book that John has written, except the Book of Revelation, that John has made a special point of dealing with words connecting with knowledge and also dealing with touching and handling and seeing the Lord and also the human characteristics of Jesus, like His having feelings. He is trying to show that Jesus is the God-Man, not a Spirit as the *Gnostic* Christians believe. Thus to the *Gnostics*, John proposes that they confess that Jesus came in the "flesh." Among John's choice of words, life and light are expressly philosophical terms in Greek philosophy. Other heavily used words are true, truth, and witness which all correlate with knowledge.

When you are looking at the word "kingdom," remember that it correlates to action. So, "Kingdom-of-God" theologians tend to gravitate to the Social-Gospel. That likely would mean for them, then, that rather than

JOHN'S SPECIAL WORDS

	John	Matthew	Mark	Luke
believe	98	11	14	9
to know	57	20	13	28
life	35	7	4	5
light	32	7	1	10
love, to love	57	14	7	16
true, truth	46	2	4	4
witness, to witness	47	4	6	5
World	78	8	2	3
kingdom	5	57	20	46
Emphasis	Know	Do	Do	Do

Chart 1.2

salvation by faith, salvation would come via good works. It is a social kind of Gospel in which salvation is to elevate a group, e.g. the poor, or women. John's emphasis, however, is not doing meritorious works in order to gain salvation.

I tend to emphasize "doing" in my teachings to today's Christians because it is a huge weakness in the current church. The doctrine of sanctification has largely been traded for compartmentalization today. However, I have to shift gears when we come to John. John is the theologian of the Gospels. When you start emphasizing knowledge, then you are talking about theology. The Book of John, of all of the Gospels, is clearly the more theological kind of construct as over against Matthew, for example, whose book is more action oriented.

Joe: Do you think possibly that because John dealt with knowledge, God narrowed His choice down to him to do the Book of Revelation?

V: Ooooh. That is good because the word revelation speaks of knowledge! I do not know, but it is worth thinking about.

I used my know and do categories of Christian piety here to contrast Matthew's Gospel, which has more of an emphasis on doing, with the Book of John, which has more of an emphasis on knowing through discernment gained through right behavior. It stands to reason that since *Gnosis* stands for knowledge, John's Gospel would focus on that issue. To be sure, he will be dealing with what he is facing, rather than trying to clone his people to his own piety.

We, too, need to deal with what we are facing. John's piety is love and feeling, but he readily addresses the *Gnostic* perverted emphasis on "knowing." Do not adopt the monastic approach where you go into seclusion and keep yourself away from the world. No, we need to penetrate the world, and take

the Gospel with us just like John did. He took it right into the heart of enemy territory. The Gospel message is the kind of knowledge that John was using as over against some other kinds of knowledge, i.e. *gnosis*.

HOBBS' OUTLINE BASED ON SIGNS

Hobbs' outline is attached as an appendix. In his outline, Hobbs approaches the Gospel of John as a book of signs.¹ So Hobbs comes at his understanding by interpreting the meaning of each sign.

Signs are to convey information. When you are driving down the road and see a road sign, it tells you the speed limit, or that a curve is coming, or to slow down. It gives you information on how to conduct your vehicle. The book of signs, then, is another concept of that same understanding. It gives you information about the Lord's providence in history. So these signs are patterned in such a way that you can look at the sign and garner information about God's road of life out of that sign just as you can look at a sign when you are driving and know something about the road ahead. A sign points to knowledge. It is a vehicle of knowledge. Hobbs comes at his interpretation of John's Gospel by using signs as vehicles of knowledge about Jesus.

AN OUTLINE WHICH EMPHASIZES PROCESS

Appendix 2 is an outline that, rather than using signs as the hermeneutic, focuses on historical process. It moves through history step-by-step beginning with the Lord's coming to the earth and the peoples' receiving Him gladly. Then Jesus begins to make certain demands. After giving out some knowledge, He starts issuing certain demands in regard to that knowledge.

¹ John's last book, Revelation, was certainly a book of signs because God declares it in the first chapter.

Then in the second part of the Gospel, some resistance to the Lord's demands begins to arise. In summary, we start off with the reception of the Revealer, and part of it is joyful, you see. Thus there is the ready reception of the Messiah as long as He provided benefits for the people and did not require anything of them. Following this ready reception, we have a section on the resistance to the Messiah. The resistance is going to come against His authority when He starts talking about Himself as being the Bread of Life, the Water of Life, the Judge of Life, the Light of Life, the Shepherd of Life. These claims are going to be resisted. The people are not going to like His Words that contradicted their beliefs of a political Messiah. When He starts talking about His being the Bread of Life, all but His closest disciples are going to leave. All of the multitudes are going to walk away. He will look at the twelve and say, "Are you going away, too? They huddle up and discuss it, and then they say, "Where are we going to go?" They cannot figure out where to go. The Lord is standing there, and Peter says, "We have no where else to go. You are the only One Who has the Words of Life."

So, you see, He puts it to them by asking them whether or not they are going to leave. We have to make those same kinds of decisions because there is that ready reception by us of the benefits of justification, but then there are the demands of sanctification that follow. You can take the gospel out into the world, and there can be a ready reception of its benefits. However, if you preach it long enough, there will be resistance to well up against its demands.²

The Lord Himself preached, and the resistance welled up and swelled to the point of rejection. You will be rejected too, but you have to do your ministry just like He had to

do it, just like the apostles had to do it. Every saint must do the ministry to the point of suffering rejection or even death.

In the passages describing His passion in the last part of the book, He prepares His disciples for His death before He dies. Afterwards, we have the final revelation of Jesus, in His resurrection. The disciples saw Him first as a human being. Then they see Him as the risen Lord of the universe. They have fellowship with Him, and he commissions them.

You have to see both sides of Christ in order to see the whole revelation. His deity and His humanity are what we are looking at.

This business about first accepting, then resisting, and then rejecting connects with the parable about soils in which the seeds are sown. The stony ground receives the seed readily, they take root and pop right up, but then they wither because their roots are too shallow. This is the same kind of principle that is being expressed in this outline. The world received the Master Seed and He began to blossom with the potential of bearing fruit, and all the people just hung around Him. The multitudes came to Him to receive blessings. Then there was the resistance, the hardness of the soil, the shallowness of the root, the withering, and eventually the death.

This same principle is at work in the world. This world cannot receive to the point of being all good ground. Little patches of good ground all around must be found. It is your job to sow that seed out there just like it was John's job to sow that seed out there. However, please realize that this same principle will reoccur no matter where you go. The seed that you sow still has this potential of withering and dying because the world even rejected the Master Seed.

² I have experienced many times the resistance to the definition of discipleship as the *kenotic* sacrificial life.

PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The purpose of the book is shown in John 10:10.

John

10:10 . . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly.

Also in John 20:30-31, there is an expression of believing in Jesus. This expression has to do now with the kinds of terminology that we have come to expect from both a *Gnostic* and Jewish world.

John

20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

This expression here in verse 31 about believing uses terminology that we have been dealing with in chart 1.2 above. Thus believing unto salvation plays a significant part in the purpose of the book.

AUTHOR OF THE BOOK OF JOHN

Internal Evidence

Who is the author of the book of John? The Apostle John, of course, is the author. However we need to look at the significance of the words “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” These words are going to play a part in determining the internal evidence for the Apostle John being the author of the Gospel of John. This internal evidence is found in John 19:26, John 13:23, and John 21:20, 24.

John

19:26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Early tradition identifies this disciple whom Jesus loved as John.

John

21:20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

John

21:24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

In this passage John is the same disciple that Jesus loved and who wrote these things. He is the disciple who follows after Jesus with Peter when Jesus was arrested.

John

13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

This is another indication that the John whom Jesus loved was one of the twelve, and tradition has it that the Apostle John was the one that was leaning upon the Lord's bosom.

External Evidence

There is also external evidence that John wrote this book. The external evidence is given to us by Polycarp and Irenaeus.

Polycarp was a disciple of John. John was a first generation disciple of Jesus, and Polycarp, as a disciple of John, was a second-generation disciple of Jesus. Then Polycarp had a disciple, and that third-generation disciple was Irenaeus. Thus, we have three generations: the Apostle John, Polycarp, and Irenaeus attesting to the Apostle John as the author.

I told the Hebrews class, when dealing with Christology and the work of Christ, a story that also applies to you. This story will help you to stand up tall for the Lord. It goes like this: Irenaeus says that the victory that Jesus won can be won by you as well. Jesus won His victory in submission. When the

devil came to our Lord Jesus and said, “I am going to bring all the powers of darkness against you, and I am going to defeat you and bury you.” The Lord replied to him, “You can bring all the power there is under your control against me, and I am going to defeat you, not by might, but by simply submitting my will to the Father.”

That concept of submission will preach because it follows the *kenosis* which is based on submitting your will to the Lord. Divine power gained through submission will stand you in good stead because you are facing powers that are much bigger than you. If you are not presently facing larger than life problems, it is just a matter of time before you will. You are going to face some things that you cannot handle.

I do not care how little power that you have; you can defeat everything that is marshaled against you simply by yielding to God. If you yield your spirit, your will, your life to God, it will be God Who faces those problems.

POLYCARP

Polycarp was the disciple of John during John’s long stay in Ephesus before his exile to the Isle of Patmos. Resistance to John’s preaching grew. Then this resistance turned into rejection, and some of the saints began to be killed. John was exiled to die alone on the Isle of Patmos. But while John was on the island, he received the revelation of Jesus, and he wrote the book of Revelation which we have now.

Polycarp, who was born in Ephesus, and who was tutored at the feet of John, learned well, and then he moved to Smyrna. He became the bishop of Smyrna.

Irenaeus was born in Smyrna and was in turn tutored at the feet of Polycarp. Irenaeus who became the bishop of Lyon also had a rich heritage. We now have a concept of knowledge coming from Irenaeus. This

proper concept of knowledge originated in John and was passed through Polycarp to Irenaeus. We are the ultimate beneficiaries because we now have the concepts of “know” and “believe” in our systematic theology. These very words that we were looking at, you see, came down to us from John who was fighting against the *Gnostics*. Now we too have a rich heritage that came through these disciples.

Polycarp’s Church in the Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation is another book of the Bible by John that he writes from the Isle of Patmos. In the early part of Revelation, there are seven letters that were written to seven churches. These churches are named in the book. The very first church that John writes to is the one from which he left when he was exiled to the Isle of Patmos. That church is the church at Ephesus.

In that first letter to the church at Ephesus, John talks about the things that he preached. One of those words was used heavily in the Book of John. That word is “love,” the identifying characteristic of his own piety.

Certainly, Ephesian Christians had heard it firsthand. Ephesus had much emphasis and time given to them by one of the original twelve disciples, and what do they do? They are indicted in the Book of Revelation for failing in this very issue. So, John is writing back to his people, the ones he had to leave, with a letter, and he is hitting right where they are weak. Since he has already taught them extensively, they should not be weak at this point about love.

The second church is Smyrna, Polycarp’s church. When Polycarp goes to Smyrna, it is just like another John going over there, and Polycarp is going to pick up right where John left off. He is going to drop the hammer on those folks by talking about the persecution for followers of Jesus. Anyone who follows the Lord will be rejected by the world just like

our Lord was rejected. He demonstrates that lesson with his own martyrdom. He teaches and warns his people of the same things that John had done.

Class, we need to multiply. You need to get as many people as possible out there who will be getting those messages even further out. You give the message, and you put it in the hands of a faithful man, you expect that faithful man to take that message on to the next man. If all disciples just horde that message, then we have the death of Christianity with the next generation. Multiplication is the idea. I am not going through all of the letters here, but I want you to see that these two letters to these two churches in the Book of Revelation are to face the main issues in John's church and Polycarp's church.

Now let us take a look at Polycarp because I want you to see what your heritage is. There are many people who have not heard about the death of Polycarp, but I want

you to hear it. The Martyrdom of Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna in AD 155, was recorded by the church of Smyrna (see Chart 1.3).

Christians in the article are called atheists because they would not adopt the polytheism of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire would adopt the gods of any nation they conquered. They just kept adding gods until they ended up with a whole plethora of gods. When the Christians declared that they were not going to worship all of Rome's gods, they were branded atheists.

The catholic church mentioned in this article is the whole universal church. The word "catholic" comes from the Greek words *kata hole* (according to the whole). Catholic at this time was not a proper name. When the Roman Catholic Church was born in 451AD, then the word catholic took on its present meaning.

MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP

The Bishop of Smyrna

A.D. 155.

Written by the church at Smyrna

This passage is paraphrased from an article in the book, "Documents of the Christian Church, edited by Henry Bettenson, 2nd edition: "The Martyrdom of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, 155," pp. 9-12."

During the festival of Caesar, the scheduled entertainment was for Christians to fight wild beasts. When the Christians died so nobly because they feared God more than the beasts, the crowd began to chant: "Away with the atheists" and then later: "Go get Polycarp."

When Polycarp first heard that the crowds wanted him to face the beasts for their entertainment, he was not afraid and wanted to remain in the city. However, his followers prevailed on him to withdraw to a small estate not far from the city. While at prayer he fell into a trance three days before his arrest and saw his pillow on fire. And he declared that it was his destiny to be burned alive.

When the police tortured some of his friends, they revealed where Polycarp was, and he was quickly apprehended. The police marveled at his age and constancy and why there was so much ado about this old man.

Polycarp asked for and received permission to pray before the police took him. In that prayer he prayed for all Christians in the whole catholic church. The sheriff tried to persuade Polycarp to say: "Lord Caesar" and to offer incense to him. Polycarp rejected and was led into the stadium where the crowd noise was so great that no one could be heard.

As he was entering the stadium, a voice from heaven said, “Be strong, Polycarp and play the man.” Though no one could see the speaker, the voice was heard by the Christians who were there. Feeling sorry for him, the Proconsul tried to persuade Polycarp to save himself by swearing to Caesar and saying, “Away with the atheists.” Then Polycarp looked at the unruly crowd, and looking up to heaven, he groaned and said, “Away with the atheists.” But the Proconsul told him that if he would curse the Christ, he would be released. To this Polycarp said, “I have served Him 86 years, and he has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my king who saved me?”

When the Proconsul persisted, Polycarp said, “Hear me plainly. I am a Christian. If you want to learn of Christ, give me time and I will teach you.” Then the Proconsul asked him to persuade the people. Polycarp replied that he deemed the Proconsul worthy of discourse because Christians are to render honor to authorities and the powers ordained of God. But said that this mob was not worthy of his defending himself to them.

When the Proconsul threatened to throw Polycarp to the wild beasts, he responded: “Send for them. For repentance from better to worse is not a change permitted to us, but to change from cruelty to righteousness is a noble thing.” Next the Proconsul threatened to burn him alive. To which Polycarp responded: “Thou threatenest the fire that burns for an hour and in a little while is quenched; for thou knowest not of the fire of the judgment to come, and the fire of eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly. But why delayest thou? Bring what thou wilt.”

Then the mob began to command that Polycarp be burned alive. When about to be nailed to the stake Polycarp asked that he be free to stand in the fire by the grace of God without being secured. As he stood there, the flames billowed out around him but would not touch him. Thus the executioners had to spear him to death. However, the whole crowd could not but marvel at the difference between the believers and the unbelievers.

Chart 1.3

That example of courage is our heritage. Polycarp was John’s disciple. Timothy and Titus were Paul’s disciples in the same way that Polycarp was John’s disciple. Polycarp carried this Book of John to Smyrna, and he preached and taught at Smyrna what John did in Ephesus (good example of multiplication).

Smyrna was one of the two churches not condemned in the book of Revelation. Philadelphia was the other. Each of the other five was condemned in some area. Polycarp did his work. He died a gallant death in Smyrna before the mob, and the people could see the difference between believers and unbelievers. That is what we are to do as well. We are to live and die in such a way that people can see the difference between us and unbelievers.

We are going to take this Gospel of John into our being; we are going to live this Gospel; we are going to teach this Gospel; we

are going to preach this Gospel. We are going to live our lives so that people can see that there is a difference between us and the unbelievers. So when you come into this class, you are going to get loaded up with some responsibility. You will not be able to plead ignorance in the judgment. When God calls you to account, you must give an account for the Book of John. Polycarp gave a wonderful account. Let us be counted faithful as well.

THE FIRST 18 VERSES OF JOHN

John

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

1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

I want to talk to you a minute about the “Word” because John starts right there with a connection to knowledge, i.e. the Word, and this is high on his agenda. You need to see two things about Word.

1. This Word has the same ontology (the same makeup) as God. You can know something about God via His Word. Just as you can know something about a liar via his word, you can know something about God via His Word. A lie is different from the truth in the same way as the devil is different from God.

When God speaks, it is absolute truth which is coming out of His Substance and Character. The Word, then, is God. But yet there is enough distinction between the two that you can identify the Word as over against the Speaker, the Word as over against the Father. When we have Jesus coming down, assuming manhood on earth, He is the Utterance of God.

In Genesis God spoke everything into existence. He said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.³ “Let there be man,” and there was man.⁴ So He spoke all of creation into existence. But now the light and the man and the earth and the sea and the fish and all of those things of creation are not the same thing as the Word. You see, you have the Father speaking, and thus there is the Word. The Word causes the creation to exist. The Father and the Word are one because the Word comes out of the Father. The Word has the same essence as the Father; He has the same characteristics. The Word is an issuing out of, like water coming out of a spring.

³ Genesis 1:3.

⁴ Genesis 1:26.

God and the Word have a oneness, but the “result of the words of creation” which is the creation itself is not the same thing as God. Please note that the Word is the same as God, but it is distinct enough that we can distinguish the speaker from the spoken.

2. One of the cults, either the Jehovah’s Witnesses or the Mormons, says that where the Scripture says that the Word was God, it really says that the Word was “a” god. They base that conclusion on the Scripture having an inarticulate word for God.

Against that conclusion, please consider that “articulate” means to put the article “the” in front of the word God. It would not be good if it said “and the Word was with God and the Word was the God” because then you would be removing the distinction between the Father and His Son. So the Scripture has an inarticulate God, and the “a” is omitted. Our Scripture does not say that the Word was a god; it says very clearly that the “Word was God.” And that is an inarticulate expression of God. Thus, I conclude that their argument is fallacious.

John

1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Jesus is God-Man and He is the Word. In Jesus is life and light.

John

1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

When God speaks His Word, there is a penetration of God into the situation. Jesus is the Word, and He is spoken into the situation. He brings life and light into the situation, and the situation is darkness. We need to learn something about this. If you want to get some light into this dark world, you do it the same way, and it has been done the same way for generations. It began with Jesus coming into

the world to bring light into the darkness. You are going to follow the same model. Jesus preaches into the darkness. You preach into the darkness; you preach God's Word. Jesus is God's Word; He is the source of life and light, and if you want to get light into the darkness, you preach Jesus, the Word and Light. If you want to get life into the dead, you preach Jesus, the Word and Life. The same principle used by God to bring life and light into the dark world is to be used by us today. John the Baptist followed this same pattern:

John

1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name [was] John.

1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all [men] through him might believe.

1:8 He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light.

John the Baptist's Pattern for Witness

1. He was sent from God. John 1:6
2. His purpose is to witness. John 1:7
3. He is a witness of the light. John 1:7
4. He is an agency of belief. John 1:7
5. He does not point to himself. John 1:8.

Please note in verse seven, "That all men through him might believe." You see, John the Baptist is an agency of belief. Verse 8 says that "He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light." The Baptist preached Jesus. Through that preaching, the light of the Word entered the world.

Notice also that the author of John's Gospel similarly never comes right out and says, "The disciple John" or "I am the disciple John, and I wrote this book." Instead, he uses third person: "The disciple whom Jesus loved." So John is like John the Baptist. They both point away from themselves by pointing to the Lord.

John

1:9 [That] was the true Light, which

lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

I want to point out to you that in verse 9 it says that He brings this light into the world and lights every man. Every man! That is kind of shocking. Think about that. But verse 10 says that "the world knew him not." My question for you to ponder is: "Is there a difference between being enlightened and knowing?" There is apparently a significant difference here, and that should tell you preachers that when you are preaching, and you are hammering away, and you know that your people have to be getting the message, then they may be getting the message, but they may not be receiving or knowing it like verses 9 and 10 are describing, i.e. how the world did not know Jesus.

"They 'knew' Him not." They can see Him, they think they know Him, they are nodding, yes, yes, preach on, but they do not know Him. And as our outline shows that when He came, He came into the world, and the world readily accepted Him—yes, the crowds swarmed around him, literally thousands, at a time, and that was just counting the men in the crowds. We are talking about huge gatherings. They believed Him to be the great Messiah. They gathered around and followed Him from town to town, readily accepting and receiving Him. But then, where were they when decisions started getting hard? They were not anywhere to be found. Then when He was rejected altogether, His former multitudes of followers turned their backs.

Where were the twelve? Where are you? We are coming into some times when Antichrist is going to ascend the throne, and you are going to be just like Polycarp. It is going to be soon. You are going to have to do just like Polycarp did. When they say to you, "All you have to do to live is take this mark, just

say that Antichrist is Lord, and just renounce your faith in Christ.” No, my brethren, you must stand strong like Polycarp and say, “In case anybody misunderstood, let me make this real clear. Be it known by everyone that I am a Christian.” This scenario is coming, and it is close at hand. There is going to be another and final rejection of the light by the world.

Class, you are going to start or continue preaching, and your light is going to be going forth and shining into the darkness, but you are going to be rejected by the powers just like Christ was. He brought light into the darkness but the people loved darkness because their ways were evil, and they killed Him. They killed our forefathers, and they are going to kill you. You must start bracing up, getting tough, because it is coming. If you do not believe it, go to the Book of Revelation and read that the number of martyrs is uncountable, like the sands of the sea. The method of execution is going to be decapitation. It tells you that the martyrs were decapitated. It is coming. It is at the door. The time for working in the daylight is drawing to a close. The dark is coming.

Ted: Where verse 9 says that every man that cometh into the world receives light, it points back to the same thing that Romans does when it says that no man has an excuse.

V: That is good, Ted, because Jesus is the Word, and the creation was established through the Word that was spoken: “Let there be . . .” is how God spoke the Word that brought creation into being. That means to me that creation points to God and His Word. Since you can see something of God through creation, we are without excuse. Nobody will be able to say, “I did not believe because I did not know there was a God.” You simply know that God is by looking at His creation. God declares this in Romans 1. Therefore, nobody can escape judgment by saying that they did not know there is a God.

Ted: If we had had darkness and never saw the light, God would have had a poor reason for condemning anybody.

V: Right. And light came through the Word of God first, the physical light in the creation and second, the spiritual light in the incarnation. Because of the first, there is no man who did not receive the light. No man escapes because all men are experiencing creation. Creation had to come from somewhere. So men, in their hearts, become fools when they say it could not have come from God because there is no God: *They claim that it just kind of popped up: “Yeah, that is what it did. It just popped up, or it just big banged into being. Or, there was a giant ocean somewhere, and a thing crawled out of it, and it grew and multiplied and here we are.” “Where did the ocean come from?” “I do not know, it just popped up.”* When I witness to some of these people, I am amazed at how pathetic their views are. God says that they are fools.

Coming Versus Receiving

John

1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

I want to focus your attention on another rhetorical question. Is there a difference between His coming and His being received?

There is quite a difference here between light and knowing—He lighteth every man but the world knew Him not. So in spite of the light, they did not know Him. They might have known “about” Him, but they did not know Him.

Likewise, He came, and they did not receive Him. So, coming and receiving are two different things as well. He even came to His own, to the Jews, and the Jews rejected Him. They have been preaching Him for all these years, He comes and fulfills all prophecy, and they say, “Get away from us; we are expecting a political messiah.”

What do we do when He comes for revival? We are liable to say: “This suffering

in the *kenosis* is not what we had in mind. We were comfortable in our traditions. We are just going to stay here and do our own religious thing. Get away from us: we were expecting a Santa Claus Messiah.”

The Process of Becoming

John

1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:

You need to see something here. “Received” is an aorist verb which means it is punctiliar in action, or an event in the past. “But as many as received Him,” is instantaneous reception. He knocks on the door of your heart, you swing it open, He comes in, you have received Him. It is an event, but afterwards comes a process. He gives you the authority. Power in verse 12 is not *dunamis* which is explosive power. It is *exousia* which is authoritative power. He gives you the authority to begin a process, and the process is to become the sons of God.

This is a very interesting concept here. The beginning is the event in which you receive Him, and then there begins a linear process of becoming sons of God. You say, “Well, I have been born again so I am already a son of God. Yeahhh, you are a baby son of God, but there is also a “process of becoming” involved. We call it a growth process toward all that you are going to be. You are not there yet. You have some growing and maturing to do, some becoming to do.

Let me show you how becoming works. It works both in ontology, and it works in function, the two classifications of reality.

Ontology is your personhood, your essence, your being. So when you are born again, you are a little bitty baby, a little bit like that described in the illustration (chart 1.4). That little infant lying down is what you are when you get born, but when you grow up

to where Polycarp was, you are this great big guy wielding the Sword of the Lord, you see. Now you did not get born as that big guy, you got born as an infant. You had to grow into that big guy. It is the same way with function. What do you do as a baby? You suck a bottle, and the book of Hebrews talks about that.⁵ However, you grow up to start wielding a sword, putting on the armor of God, fighting battles, representing God, and having victory over Satan.

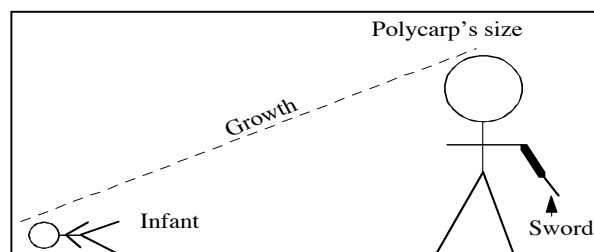


Chart 1.4

All Christians are to grow from infancy into mature warriors with the Sword of God in your hand. As a warrior, you are doing some real work out there in the world. As you grow and become sons of God, you become like Jesus.

Jesus was born as a baby who grew and worked and marched into maturity until He came to the end. At His ending point in maturity, He could sacrifice Himself and die that death that was so wonderful for me and for you but yet so terrible.

You are to do the same thing as Jesus did. You are instantaneously born again to be like Jesus as a baby, a little spiritual baby. You grow from a little baby, you mature and begin to eat meat instead of just suck on a bottle, and then you go from being just a baby that somebody else has to care for and cater to, to becoming somebody that can minister and help others and lift others up and care for them. You then grow into a warrior and actually begin to fight the spiritual battles.

⁵ Hebrews 5:12-14.

The process can be perverted like that of the people in the wilderness who ended up wandering around in a circle. God told them to go into the Promised Land and take the land that God promised to give to them. They sent a scouting party into the land, and they came back and said, "We cannot do this. There are giants there. We cannot go in there." Then God so much as implied, "I tell you what: you either go in there and take it as my gift to you, or you just walk in circles right here in the wilderness until you die." They all got together and decided, "We will take the circles."

Can you believe that decision by God's people? It is hard to believe that decision when you look at this story from a distance, but we do the same thing. Please notice that what follows is sarcasm: We just run in circles, and we ask each other, "How long are you going to live like that?" And we say, "I do not know; I am just walking in my circles. What are you doing?" "I too am walking in my circles over here. How is your circle?" "Oh, it is a good circle. Are you going in to fight the monsters?" "No, no, I am not going to fight any monsters. I am just going to walk in circles." Pretty soon we see that one of our church members died, and we just celebrate what a great Christian he was because he walked in a circle all of his life. He did not get out of his circle. We look up to him, and we say, "Now, here is how you walk through life. Walk in this circle here where this great saint walked. There is his good circle right there where that famous Christian walked. See the footprints right there? Walk that beaten path." So we walk in that useless circle too. We do not learn anything.

Yes, we do the same thing, but we are supposed to grow from being a baby sucking on a bottle, past walking in circles, to this warrior who is going straight ahead and meeting Satan on his turf, penetrating hell, and rescuing the perishing. That is what

John, Polycarp, and Irenaeus did. We are to do the same thing.

There is the progressive concept contained in this word "become." So in contrast with the aorist, "received Him," which is instantaneous, there is a progressive growth to maturity. On the one hand, you receive Him. Bang! You are born again; that is it; it is over; you cannot do it twice. That reception is the instantaneous birth of this little baby Christian (chart 1.4).

But on the other hand, you are supposed to "become" the sons of God. As an infant, you are already a son of God, but this growth process into mighty warriors is what He is talking about when He speaks of becoming.

John

1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

So you become a child, a newborn child of God the instant you receive Him. In Him is life and light. When I receive Him into my heart, I get life and I get light. I am supposed to be smarter when I get saved than I was before. Now I am not talking about math smart (as in academics), but I certainly ought to know the difference between running in circles and penetrating Satan's turf to glorify the Lord in battle.

However, you can quench your light. When you receive the light of life into your heart, you are given understanding. The first understanding that you are given is to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Jesus. When following right behind Him, I go wherever He goes. If I keep on right behind Him, the light of my understanding will blossom and my wisdom will increase.

Apostasy and Repentance

Now let us just say that I go into apostasy. Apostasy is from *apostasis*. *Apo* is from; *stasis* is standing; it means to stand away from Jesus. Now in apostasy, my following

changes. I stand away from Him when He takes a step. I am then one step into apostasy. It is a little darker where I am standing now than it is right behind Him. Let us just say that I have this on-going sin in my life, and I just *apo-stasis* right over here in order to retain my sin. It is a good bit darker for me than it would have been right there close behind Him.

Let us just say that I am being deceived by Satan, and I trip and stumble and fall over here away from Jesus. Uh oh, I need somebody to preach a sermon and give light to me because I am standing out of the way, and I do not have inherent light sufficient for me to understand. I need the light that you have in your sermon to enlighten me, and I need to not only have that light, but I need to believe it, because there is a difference between light and belief?

So it is possible to hear the preaching without repenting from your sin. Many of you have been preaching and preaching and preaching, and there has been no change. It is because your light is not being believed and understood and received.

If I am a well-intentioned Christian, and I am truly soft and malleable and easy, then I can hear. Oh! I am penetrated to the heart. Oh, where am I? And where is He? Then I turn around and step back over here to where I was when I was close to Him. Then if I hear another sermon that exposes another sin, Ohhh, I repent and get real close again. I hang onto Him. He goes, I go; He goes, I go. We go this way, and then we go that way. Then something tempting comes by and gets my attention. Sin occurs when I let go and step over here away from the Lord and towards the temptation.

We repeat the process of hearing the call to repentance and turning from sin, you see. This is the scenario that we are up against in our lives of growing into warriors. We must be able to listen to the Word of God, not only

get that light, but to know it. Know Him. That means that we are to know it like John is talking about knowing—know it all the way into the will of your soul. Then your behavior will reflect what you assimilate as your knowledge. I believe that I need to get right next to the Lord in order to have full understanding. I am not a fool. Apostasy is sin that produces spiritual dullness that contains characteristics similar to insanity.

Let us say that I give you two choices, choice A and choice B. Choice A ($2 + 2$ is 5) is something that is wrong, and choice B ($2 + 2$ is 4) is something that is right. If you choose deliberately to believe that choice A is the right way for you, then there is an illness in you, a break in your rational process because you are intentionally choosing the wrong way. You see how irrational that is? To intentionally believe a lie is irrational.

However, you can be deceived into believing a lie, and that deception is how Satan works. What he does is convince you that this one thing is wrong, and that this other thing is right because if you are not insane, you will believe only what you think is truth. What Satan does is trick you into thinking the truth is false and the false is true. When he deceives you, guess what? You cannot know that you are deceived because to know that you are deceived means that you are not deceived. To intentionally believe a lie is insanity.

Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. He brings to you knowledge, but it is a false knowledge. Many times it takes the form of a cliché. If we can just hear a thing said enough times to the point it becomes a cliché, then he has you right where he wants you because you are no longer thinking. As soon as you hear a cliché, your mind goes into neutral. You do not have to think about it. You just believe it because you take it as automatic truth. Bang! No need to think.

A theologian, however, is going to ask these kinds of questions: Is there a difference between being in the light and knowing Him? Is there a difference between His coming and His being received? Is there a difference in verse 13 of being born of blood and born of God? Is there a difference between being born of the flesh and being born of God? Is there difference between being born by the will of man and being born of God? Your Bible puts these phrases in juxtaposition in order to show significant differences. We need not to be deceived. However, to shed ourselves of deceptions, we must study to show ourselves approved. That is what you are doing right now.

Bargaining with God

I heard a story that just happened recently to a man who thought he was dying. He had the symptoms of this terrible disease, and they indicated that he was dying. He came to a Christian counselor and asked for prayer: "If God will just deliver me from this disease, I will straighten up my life and go to church." The counselor asked him, "What is keeping you from receiving Christ?" He agreed that receiving Christ was for him. He dove in and received Christ and began to live differently.

Then the symptoms of the disease went away. They might have been false symptoms, or he may have been healed. I do not know which. But the symptoms went away, and the man came back to his normal self at which time he no longer needed Christ. He discarded his Christianity and returned to his bad behavior. He did not do a thing that he promised.

This kind of birth is not being born of God, this is born by the will of man. This is the third part down here in verse 13, you see. It is not the new birth. It is a pretended new birth. We have people like that all around who merely go through the motions. They even pray to God, and they weep, "Oh, I repent, I am a terrible sinner, ohhh," and they

do all that showy stuff, and it is as false as it can be. That is the will of man. You could ask that type of "Christian" what his desires are? First thing out of his mouth would be to have a good life, to have health, to have this and to have that. He is putting his will over God. He is becoming god. For him, God is nothing more than a magic wand for healing, and He is going to appease God with his "heart-felt repentance adorned with the proper tears and groveling" in order to be sure he gets his healing.

This example story demonstrates "by the will of man" that this verse is talking about here. There is much of this falseness within Christian circles today.

Then there is the will of the flesh. That phrase means to use human ability to achieve divine results. That would be like working your way into righteousness or achieving your own righteousness.

Of course, "not of blood" means not of a natural birth. We have many people in this first category who are "Christians of blood." I had a very interesting debate with a theology professor who just came back from Scotland. He was talking about all the saved, wonderful saints in Scotland. He came out and said that they are not like us because they do not get reborn. He explained that where we have this event of the new birth, they instead grew/oozed into salvation. They just kind of became nice church people, and then they went to the seminary, and then they wrote their theology books. I said, "Now hold it. You are telling us that these people are saved, and they were not born again?" His response was that Scottish Christians are not like us. They do not have what we have here in our salvation experience. He thinks that they just came along in a Christian home, and they kind of grew into Christianity. I said, "No, you cannot grow into it. You must be born into it, i.e. born again."

That kind of birth into a Christian home is this false kind where it is of blood. That concept is a physical concept of Christianity in which your environment makes you a Christian, your parentage makes you a Christian, your nation makes you a Christian, your going to church and being in seminary and studying all these books and stuff make you a Christian. That false concept is what God is talking about here in this verse. However, He puts over against that falsehood this event: "But as many as received him," POW! That is how you receive him. You do not kind of ooze into the new birth, and He does not kind of ooze into you. It is like that (snap of the fingers). It is an event, and it is over with, and it is behind you. Then you start a long journey, a process of growth. You do not do the process first and just kind of be a Christian without a beginning point.

Certainly, you can be a pretender, but that is not this kind of new birth by God that is spoken of in verse 13. The Bible declares that a lost person must be born again in order to be saved. Not going through the new birth must mean that you either were never saved or never lost. Since all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God, then my conclusion is that oozers were never saved.

John

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

I am not going to try to expand on this verse, but I do want to ask a thought question on it. What is glory? They beheld His glory, and we are going to behold His glory, and the question that I ponder and start meditating on is about that glory part.

John

1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Here, He came after John, but He was before John. This phraseology points to the eternal aspect. Also please note how John is being consistent in pointing away from himself.

Law Versus Grace

John

1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

There is a distinction between verse 16 and 17.

John

1:17 For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

I will try to describe my understanding of this distinction: Let us just say that this book (a textbook) in my hand is the Law, and Moses gave the Law by handing it to you, and you receive it. Since he handed it to you, now you have it. So Moses is instrumental in the transmission of the Law, but the Law did not come out of him.

But when it comes to the source of grace, it came out of Jesus' fullness. The "of" in "of His fulness" is the Greek word *ek*; it means "out of." Thus grace came out of His fullness. Jesus is full of grace. How much grace? Immeasurable grace has no end to it. The grace, then, that we receive came out of the source of grace. You receive it from the ever-flowing well—from Jesus. It is not like the Law which was handed to you by Moses because it did not come out of Moses. The Law came out of God through Moses and finally to us. Grace came out of Jesus to us, and you received it from out of His fullness.

But there is still the issue of instrumentality, and it says in verse 17, "For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." So then Jesus is both the instrument of delivery and also the source of grace. Although Moses was not the source of Law he was the instrument of Law. You

receive the Law through the instrumentality of Moses; we receive the grace through the instrumentality of Jesus, but at the same time the source of grace is out of the fullness of Jesus whereas the source of Law is not Moses. There is a difference here.

Exegesis of the Father

John

1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [him].

Many of you here in seminary for the long haul will hear the Word *exegesis*. Many of you will have to do an *exegesis* where you *exegete* a passage of Scripture. What this word means is derived from the following: “*Ex*” is out of, and that is the same word that God used for source of grace, *ek*. The spelling from *ek* to *ex* occurs when used as a prefix for pronunciation purposes. *Egete*, the rest of the word, means to dig. Thus to *exegete* a passage is “to dig the meaning out of it.”

The idea of doing an *exegesis* of a verse or passage or book or whatever is like digging a treasure out of the ground. You get a shovel, and you dig, chop, and dig some more. As you dig the treasure out, you look at what you dig out. You find a precious stone, and you lift it up and say, “Look at what I found here! This gem came out of that hole in the earth.” That is to *exegete* the plot of ground.

To *exegete* a passage of Scripture is to look in it and dig out the nugget and say, “Hey! Look at what I found.” A good *exegete* becomes a preacher. He says, “Hey, look what I found. I will describe it to you. I found it right there!” That is proclamation of the treasure that is in God’s Word. You dig it out (*exegete* it). This is the word that he uses right here that is translated “declared.”

When I came to seminary, they started talking about *exegesis*. I would have to do an

exegesis. I was scared to death. I had never heard of an *exegesis*. I thought maybe it was going to be a tumbling exercise. It sounded like I would have to turn about 40 flips and land on my head or something. I heard that mysterious word over and over again: “*Exegesis*.”

I finally learned how to do an *exegesis* and actually did many of them. Now, I find that the Word is right here in verse 18: “He is in the bosom of the Father, and He hath *exegeted* him.” Jesus *exegeted* the Father, and we are to *exegete* Jesus.

Have you heard of *eisegesis* which is just the opposite of *exegesis*? *Eis* means into and *egesis* means to dig. Thus it means to dig into. In *eisegesis*, we find our treasures by other means than digging them out of the Scriptures. We put our treasures into our pockets for safe keeping, you see. Our treasures are our favorite things, our clichés, many traditions, many pet things, and some sins that we really want to hold on to. So you have your pockets full of this stuff. Basically, that stuff somewhat defines who you are. You have all your beliefs in there in your pocket. Then you come to the Bible, and you say, “Yeah, I must study the Bible.” When you look in the Bible, you reach into the Scripture with a pet thing in your hand and pull it out again. Then you say, “Oh, look what I have found in this verse.” You repeat that action with another pet thing, and you say, “Look here, I have found this nugget too. I am right, I have been doing this right all the time. I am right on God’s path.” And then you accidentally reach a little further and pull out a nugget that you did not put there in the first place. It says, “You should not be doing what you are doing. “Hmmm. Well, this could not mean what it says because I know that what I have been doing is correct. I must figure out how to harmonize the passages.” After looking even further with your pet things in your hands, you exclaim: “Yeah,

here it is. I found it. It really means that I should continue to do my pet things.”

And so we come up with all manner of rational devices to get our favorite stuff into the Bible. Instead of digging our information out of the Bible, we put it in. That is called *eisegesis* when we put our message into the Bible. After we plant our pet thing in the Bible, then we can get our shovels and dig it out again. You lift it up and say, “Looky there! I knew it was in there. I have been doing my Christianity right the whole time because the Bible affirms it.”

We have other devices to distort the Scriptures. One such device is the cultural screen. If we can show that a commandment in the New Testament is the same as cultural requirements in the New Testament times, then guess what! We can claim that the commandment is culturally determined. That means then that if you have a culture back here that says that women cannot teach men, and the Bible says the same thing then that commandment is culturally based. Now if our current culture says that it is good for women to teach men, then guess what God’s Word on the subject says? God’s Word would continue to agree with culture and declare that women should now teach men.

Through *eisegesis*, you then twist and turn and make Scripture say what you want it to say. Jesus did not do that. Jesus *exegeted* the Father, and you are to *exegete* the Lord. The Lord is the Word incarnate, this written Word (holding up the Bible) agrees perfectly with Jesus Christ. This Word also agrees perfectly with the Father. This Word is worthy of your *exegetical* labor to get your understanding and meaning from it rather than bringing your baggage to it.

Exegesis is what Jesus did here in this verse. The meaning of the word *exegesis* is as clear as a bell. I did not even know that *exegesis* was a word in the Bible. But here it is in John 1:18. He hath *exegeted* Him.

There it is, a Greek word which is in the *aorist* tense. *Aorist* tense means it is an event in the past. In the Jesus event, He has *exegeted* the Father. What you see when you see Jesus is who the Father is. That is why He says, “When you have seen me, you have seen the Father”⁶ because He *exegeted* Him.

If you preach true to the Word, you will *exegete* Jesus, you will *exegete* the Father, you will *exegete* the Word and bring your meaning from out of its purity. You will not preach all the baggage that you want to hang on to and use to manipulate God’s flock in order to make them serve your interests. No! that is not allowed. The saints are to serve God’s interests. You become the pointer. Point to the Lord—“there He is! Follow Him.” How they follow Him is between them and God, but you point to Jesus. You *exegete* Jesus.

Your job is to get the people to grab hold of the Lord, and if you get them to grab hold of the Lord, He is going to say, “Well done thou good and faithful servant” to you who point to Jesus and instruct His saints to grab hold of Him. If you gather God’s sheep to yourself, hold them, and tell them, “Do not do all that out there, you just stay right here and do this little bit right here in our church,” you will not get the “well done” from the One Who died for those sheep.

Many pastors begin to hold onto the sheep, but it is wrong. What they are doing is holding God’s sheep and using them for their own empire. They are hogging and pulling the sheep away from their Lord, and I call that scattering the sheep. Many pastors think scattering the sheep is when the sheep get away from the pastor. But if they are going to follow the Lord, guess what? They are going

⁶ John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou [then], Shew us the Father?

to get away from that pastor, but they will come back to hear the *exegesis* of Jesus.

Chapter Questions

1. Who is the author of the book of John?
2. Who is Polycarp?
3. Why were the early Christians called atheists?
4. How is John the Baptist a pattern for witness?

Chapter 2

JOHN THE BAPTIST INTRODUCES JESUS

In the last chapter we talked about Jesus *exegeting* the Father in verse 18 where it says that He hath declared Him. We talked a little bit about what the word *exegesis* means.

Now we are shifting gears, and we are moving forward from the basic introduction.

**THE PREACHING OF JOHN
THE BAPTIST**

Now let's explore the prophet John the Baptist.

John

1:19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

1:20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

1:21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

1:22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

1:23 He said, I [am] the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

1:24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

1:25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

1:26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

1:27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

1:28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

I want you to get a feel for what it would be like to be John the Baptist. He appears on the scene and is going about preaching,

“Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” Through his preaching, there are people who are coming, repenting, and being baptized.

John's message about repenting is pointing to the Kingdom of God as the reason for repentance. The message of repentance means to acknowledge your sin and change your ways. John is talking about sin because when the Pharisees come and gather around, he asks them plainly why they came? He further tells them that unless they repent of their sin and bring fruit, i.e. new behavior as proof of repentance, their coming was useless. So John is asking for a radical change of life, the admission of sin and guilt, and then a change of behavior that reflects that confession.

John appears on the stage of history dressed in animal skins, and he eats wild locusts and honey. So he is a strange person to say the least. When he starts preaching, people begin to respond to his message and be baptized. There is a great clamor around him.

John is a person who draws much attention from the Pharisees and the scribes of the Judaistic system. The religious leaders want to know who this guy is who just appeared out of nowhere.

Imagine that you are John the Baptist

Given this scenario, I want you to assume John's role. All right, now you are this strange prophet. Please think as if you are the guy. Here you have been out in the wilderness, and you have been living your life as an unknown person. Then you come on the scene because God has told you to preach, and somehow you have gotten enough courage to go out and preach this radical message. All this clamor surrounds you, and the people gather around you. You are not backing up one bit. Your message is solid. It

stands firm. It is consistent. You are demanding repentance even whenever the high religious people come up and start to watch you. They are exhibiting skepticism and criticism. They are gathering around and whispering to each other, “Look at this guy. Who is he? By what right or authority does he accuse us?” You have enough backbone to holler over there to them, “Why did you snakes come up here?”

It is hard to imagine this scenario is it not? John the Baptist was a real man, a real, live person about whom we are talking, and you need to be able to get into his shoes because God has calls on your life to do things that may be not all that unlike those in this scenario. Here is this guy who is going to be declared by Jesus as greater than any man ever been born of woman. You might think that nothing is better than to have the Lord say that of you. You might think, “I would like to be out there on the front lines, and have the Lord say that about me.” But, John the Baptist does not live very long after this. Those antagonistic people are going to cut his head off, put it on a platter, and serve it up to someone who was offended by his preaching.

What was his prior life? He did not have much of a prior life to speak of. He lived in the wilderness. Nobody knew who he was. He showed up on the scene at this precise moment, just before Jesus showed up on the scene. He was probably around 30 years old, and he lives to be probably 31 years of age. His whole basic message is: “Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” He starts baptizing people who come to repent, and then says to them, “Bring forth fruit meet for repentance.”¹ He does not have a great donation coming in. He has zero support. He is eating wild locusts and honey. His clothing is not very popular. You wonder, “Where does he sleep? What does he do besides just getting up in the morning, starting to preach,

and then going to find a place to lie down at night?” These descriptions are of the kind of man that we are looking at here. I think that it is a pretty strong man at whom we are looking.

A. W. Tozier’s Description of John the Baptist

I do not know if you know A. W. Tozier but he has written some good stuff. Here is the gist of one of his tracts.

How do you suppose today’s Church would deal with John the Baptist if he came on our scene? John the Baptist would never fit into our religious scene. His clothes were offensive. His words were offensive. He preached about sin.

John could do things that our generation has forgotten how to do. John had the ability to live and meditate alone and silently. He had been alone with God, and the people came to hear this man who had been with God and had a message from God.

Today, our citizens must fill the silence with noise. They are mostly listening to music. We have lost this ability to go alone and meditate silently with God. We can no longer attend that special school with God.

John had courage. He called the religious leaders of his day a brood of vipers. He did not accommodate man’s religious traditions. Today’s preachers, however, are so busy trying to build our nickels and noses that we will not countenance any friction or risk offending our tithing sinners. Where are today’s prophets? I think that God is still seeking men and women who will tell it like it is in God’s Word and then live it. We need these kinds of Christians now!!! If there is ever a time for the remnant to step up and call the church to repentance, it is now because the Kingdom of God is at hand.²

Tozier wrote another tract entitled “The Confessions of a Minor Prophet,” which has a special place in my heart. This tract expresses Tozier’s own heart as one of God’s minor

¹ Matthew 3:1-8

² I do not remember where I got this excerpt, but I am sure it was from one of Tozier’s tracts.

prophets. Tozier has an understanding of the prophetic mission, and it is a good but extremely difficult mission. Therefore his word picture of John the Baptist is, in my opinion, really quite good.³

Many Jews Are Repenting

The Jews now have come to investigate John the Baptist. He is preaching, many people are getting baptized, he is gaining a large following, and many more people are clamoring after John. The people are having that fresh encounter with God because of their repentance. The repentance and baptism is turning into a zeal.

You have now, in this historical scenario, many Jews who are coming, repenting, and demonstrating new zeal. These actions are creating questions in the minds of the leaders of Judaism. They send some men, some leaders from the temple, to investigate John. They are basically asking, “Who are you? Are you the Christ?” John responds, “No, not the Christ.” “Are you Isaiah?” “No, I am not Isaiah.” “Are you that prophet?” These questions demonstrate the religious leaders’ lack of understanding because that prophet to whom they are referring is that perfect prophet, the Messiah Jesus Who is prophesied of in Deuteronomy 18:15.

Deuteronomy

18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

Jesus is that prophet. When they asked John whether he was the Christ to which he declared that he was not, they should have known better than to come back and ask, “Are you that prophet?” That clearly indicates that they did not understand their own Scriptures. It was the Mosaic Law that prophesied of that prophet. Since they were the “experts” con-

cerning the Mosaic Law, then they should have caught this correlation.

They asked if John were Elijah. To which he denied. Then they asked, “Who are you if you are not any of these people?” John’s answer is: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘make straight the way of the Lord’⁴ as said the prophet Isaiah.”⁵ Those who were sent were Pharisees, and they asked him again about being Elijah or the prophet, and he denied it again.

Isaiah

40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD . . .

This verse clearly declares that the voice that is crying in the wilderness is not that of the Lord.

Isaiah

40:3 . . . prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see [it] together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it].

This passage tells of a prophet who is announcing the arrival of the Lord. The arrival of the Lord is for the purpose of straightening out all of the wrongs and problems in mankind. The low spots and the high spots are going to be leveled. The crooked spots are going to be made straight in God’s arriving Kingdom. God is announcing that man will have a part in all of this and that the glory of the Lord is going to be revealed.

So John the Baptist is identifying himself as the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness. By his identifying himself in this manner, he is announcing the Lord Jesus Christ as

³ Ibid.

⁴ Isaiah 40:3.

⁵ John 1:23

the Messiah, the Christ Who is coming on the scene.

John

1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

1:30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

1:31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

1:32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

1:33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

1:34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

How John the Baptist Identifies and Describes Jesus as the Christ.

1. He calls Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away sin. V. 29.
2. Jesus is higher than John the Baptist and also pre-existent. V. 30.
3. The Baptist baptizes in order to point out Christ to Israel. V. 31.
4. The Baptist witnessed the dove descending and abiding on Christ. V. 32.
5. God said that the Holy Spirit would identify the One who baptizes in the Spirit. V. 33.

Here is a thought question: How does baptism in water point to the Christ?

Tim: It identifies you to the world as one who belongs to Christ.

V: Okay, so that would identify the baptized person with Christ. Okay, let us add to that. How does it accomplish that?

Mary: We are buried with Christ and risen to live anew. Is that what you mean?

V: That is part of what I mean.

Significance of John's Sermon

Okay, now go back to John the Baptist. He is baptizing people. How does John's baptism point to Christ? See it is a little tricky now because today, you are baptized after the Lord's resurrection. In this Scripture, baptism is prior to His resurrection. How does that baptism point to Christ? I ask because it says that it does so in this Scripture that we are studying.

Steve: Jesus made the connection by having John the Baptist baptize Him. When it was done before Christ's baptism, it was done as signification of a future event.

V: Okay. That is good, but there is more.

Jack: Does it have something to do with the Spirit descending? When Jesus was baptized, an actual dove came down upon Him.

V: That is right, but it identifies the Christ only to the Baptist. How does John's baptism point out Christ to the people?

Let us go back. You are John the Baptist. You are standing out by the River Jordan, here comes a group of people. You say, "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." Somebody comes up to you and says "I repent. I have been cheating people out of their tax money. I repent and I will quit cheating." As a result, you baptize that person. How does that . . .?

Jack: It is a cleansing of sin. Purging.

V: As a baptism of repentance, it is "signifying" a purging that can happen only in the Kingdom of God. But how does it point to Jesus?

Jill: They are doing it strictly by faith. They are basically going on what John the Baptist said, i.e. that the Kingdom of God is at hand. They are doing it without seeing Christ, they are accepting that idea that the Kingdom of God is arriving.

V: That is right on target, Jill. This is really significant here. Here is John the Baptist out here standing on the edge of the river preaching repentance. The people look at him and say, "Look at this crazy man dressed in furs." Then John starts hollering out to them, "Repent! for the Kingdom of God is at hand." All of a sudden these people start repenting. They are standing in the traditions of Judaism that worships God and talks much about sin. The Book of Law deals heavily with sin. God says: "Be ye holy even as I am holy."⁶ It is talking about living right and reflecting the Lord. The spectator is a worshiper of God, a person who identifies with God through his personhood, through his worship, and through his behavior, but he has not been consistently behaving properly.

John is preaching about repentance. He is not a Pharisee. He is not one of the guys that came out of the temple. He is not one of the religious honchos demanding sacrifices. He just comes along and starts preaching, "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." What is the significance? Is the significance only at the point of repentance, or is there something else. Is he pointing at anything?

Sybil: Would it be that John is leading people to Christ through their active repentance and baptism?

V: Okay, and that is a pointing, but he has not said Christ yet. He is talking about the Kingdom of God. So there is a radical change being pointed out. He has said, "Folks, the road that you are on is fixing to take a radical change. Do you want to repent, get right with God, and make that radical change? If you do, I am pointing to the Kingdom of God. It is at hand. What are you going to do with it? What are you going to do

with the sin that you have that will separate you from the Kingdom of God which is at the very door of history?" We are talking about an effective sermon! These people started repenting, and they started coming down into the water and being baptized, and we are not even dealing with a man in an official position here. We are dealing with a wild man who came out of the desert. He is saying, "Repent," and just with the saying of that word, these people are getting stabbed in the heart. Then he says, "The Kingdom of God is at hand."⁷ The reaction is: "Oh, my, I must go down into the water and answer the invitation."

Today, you see, we need to be able to see the significance of that sermon, and it is basically, "Turn from your sins, and turn to God." It is demanding a radical change. We are coming to the end of a road here that ends at the edge of the water.

When the honchos gather to hear him, he calls them a brood of vipers. You can imagine what the people who report to that brood are saying. "He called my rabbi a viper!" But then they still go to John and get baptized by him right in front of their rabbis.

I want you to see what is happening here in John's preaching. You can read over this passage, whiz on through it, declare it to be good, see that he is baptizing, notice that many are repenting, and see that people started going to the Lord. It is not like that! This historical event is radical! **What you have when you preach the Word of God is radical power. When John identifies with Isaiah 40:3, he is in yoke with God Himself.**

⁶ Leviticus 11:44 For I [am] the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I [am] holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

⁷ The Kingdom of God is to be ruled by Jesus the King of kings. Jesus is being introduced as the King in that Kingdom of God that was at hand. The Name Jesus would be associated with the Kingdom of God in those days immediately following John's sermons. John makes that association by designating Jesus as the Lamb of God, and thus as the source of forgiveness of the sin being repented of.

As God's prophet, he goes to the people and starts announcing that they have sin, they are on the wrong path, and they must make a radical change. They are being told to turn from their wicked ways for the Kingdom of God is at hand. People are starting to turn. They are confessing their sins. They are coming out to hear God's prophet. They are looking for the new path being announced: "Let us get on that path leading to the Kingdom of God."

We still have a little bit more to be done by John in order to point the people to the Christ, to the Lamb of God Who is the One Who takes away the people's sins. For those people who got that baptism, water baptism, the baptism of repentance, something has to be done with their sins. If baptism alone could wash away the sins, then Christ would not need to be sacrificed. But it does not work like that. There must be a sacrificial Lamb, but the Lamb has yet to be pointed out.

Steve: Many people to whom I have witnessed claim to have been baptized. They do not know whether they are going to heaven, but they do know that they have been baptized.

V: Yes, we hear this all of the time. They think there is something magical about baptism, but there is not.

Now in verse 29 (I am backing up a little bit), he says:

The Lamb of God

John

1:29 . . . Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

So here, when the Lord comes on the scene, all this preaching about repenting for the Kingdom of God is at hand has been going on for a good amount of time. However, when the Lord Himself comes on the scene, John points him out, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." These words link Jesus to the peo-

ple's repentance as the One Who takes away their sins. John the Baptist is making a positive link of repentance, the Kingdom of God, Jesus as the Lamb of God, and the removal of sin. Without this linkage of Judaism and Christianity via Jesus, there is no removal of the people's sin. All these people who are being baptized are now seeing the efficaciousness of their repentance being linked to God's sacrifice. Jesus, as the Lamb of God, provides that final part of the puzzle that needs to be in place to make their repentance efficacious.

John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God. He knows absolutely who Jesus is because in another of the gospels, he baptized Jesus Himself, and when Jesus came up out of the water, the Spirit of God landed upon Him like a dove and abode upon Him. That event, which was witnessed by John the Baptist, identified Jesus as the Lamb of God because God the Father told John that upon Whomever you see the Spirit landing and abiding, He is the One Who will baptize with the Spirit. God had given an unmistakably authenticating sign to John that would identify Jesus as the Christ.

John correctly made the linkage of the Person Who would baptize with the Spirit as being the same Person Who would be the Lamb of God's sacrifice. He understood that Judaism was phasing to Christianity in Jesus. Jesus was to fulfill Judaism via sacrifice of life and establish Christianity via resurrection. Where John's water baptism symbolized repentance, New Testament water baptism symbolizes both repentance (death) and resurrection (new life). Additionally, under the New Testament, there is the actual baptism in the Spirit by the Lord which is the spiritual new-birth into the Kingdom of God which occurs prior to the symbolic act of Christian water-baptism.

John's Gospel contains many signs. Signs are used to convey information from God and

to authenticate men from God. Signs and wonders follow *true disciples* of the Lord God. They will pop up *whenever needed*, not to bring glory to the disciple at all, but to authenticate him as one on mission from God. This is what is happening right here in John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus, i.e. the Spirit, in the form of a dove, authenticates this Man as the Lamb of God, as the One Who will be sacrificed for our sins and Who will baptize with the Spirit.

We Must Decrease and He Must Increase

John

1:35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

1:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

1:37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

1:38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

1:39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

You need to see here what kind of witnessing John is doing. John is standing with two of his disciples. These disciples are people who are getting pretty tight with John. They are not just some guys standing there that have just come on the scene. We are talking about the Baptist and a couple of men who are identifying with him, with his mission, and with his purpose. I would think that out of that kind of relationship comes some pretty significant dialogue. However, when the Lord comes walking by, John says to these two men standing with him, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The result of that witness is that these two men standing with the Baptist immediately peel off and follow the One that John had pointed out as the Lamb that will pay for the sins that they had repented of.

Class, that *kenotic* example by the Baptist is what we are supposed to do as well. We can get mighty lonely by doing ministry the right way—selflessly. We are not to hold the disciples to ourselves, to use them for our own purposes, or use them for our own pride, to use them to build our own church, or to manipulate in any way. ***Our charge is to get those disciples, all of the Lord's disciples, to follow the Lord.***

John does not fail! He points his disciples to the Lord, and the two walk away from John and follow Jesus. They have not locked in on who the Lamb of God is yet because they ask Him, "Where do you live?" The Lord very graciously said, "Come and see." What the Lord wants to do is bring them closer, establish a more extensive relationship with them, and teach them something. Jesus is going to teach them enough for them to become His disciples.

Those disciples asked a very strange kind of question, "Where do you live?" What would you say if you were out on the street, and you are witnessing, and some people asked you where you live? You can hardly imagine that question being asked in that scenario, but those disciples of John asked that question. However, out of that question, the Lord brings them close to Him and to salvation. In fact, a whole slug of folks are going to get saved out of that question because the Lord used it to bring events, knowledge, people, and Himself together.

That example of turning questions into opportunities is what we are supposed to follow. We might hear some strange questions out there, but we can turn those questions to the Lord's advantage. Do what He did, and say, "gather around because I have something important to tell you about where I am going to live." That answer would be to use the question to turn to a subject that is somewhat related, i.e. talking about where you will live in eternity and stair stepping

toward a Gospel presentation. Anyway the Master did it superbly and gave us a good example. He says, "Come and see," and they did, they dwelt with Him that day.

John

1:40 One of the two which heard John [speak], and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

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

1:42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

Now Andrew, who was one of the two disciples of John, has come to a solid conclusion. He has followed the Lord and spent that night with Him. He has listened to the Lord, he has heard his mentor, John the Baptist, say that this Man is the Lamb of God. Now he has established a little bit of a relationship with Jesus, and when he gets up the next day, he is determined to get his brother to meet this Man. He tears out after Peter and tells him that he has found the Christ, the Messiah. Andrew is a person who is convinced in his mind of who Jesus is. He brings Peter to Jesus and introduces him. Christ then changes Peter's name from Simon to Cephas, a stone.

The same thing happens to another set of brothers.

John

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

1:44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

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

It is significant that Philip has identified Jesus as "that prophet," the one that the Pharisees and others kept asking John the Baptist whether or not he was that prophet who is prophesied in the Law.⁸ That prophecy is the one being identified by Philip when he said to Nathaniel, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets did write." So Philip is identifying straight up and down that Jesus is that prophet.

Do you not find it interesting that the Pharisees knew so little about that prophet that they confused him with John the Baptist? They did not know that the Christ and that prophet are the same person. The Pharisees did not know their own Scriptures good enough to know about whom they are talking, but here we have positive indication that Philip clearly knows about whom the Scriptures are referring. So Philip, a common person, has a discerning mind of the Old Testament Scriptures that the expert Pharisees and scribes did not have.

John

1:46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? . . .

Nathanael is not being cruel. He is just asking how can a good person, i.e. that prophet, come out of Nazareth? Philip did not waste any time on debate. He just responded, "Come and see." I think that is a pretty good answer because everybody who comes to Jesus and sees will experience an eye-opening encounter if they have an open mind. If they receive any understanding, something will happen. So Philip is saying to a skeptic, "Come and see."

John

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

1:48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called

⁸ Deuteronomy 18:15, 18.

thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

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

1:50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

1:51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

There is an interesting statement in verse 47 about Nathaniel's being somebody who has no guile. "No guile" is a kind of innocence, a naïveté; it is a person who has an extensive openness. What you see is what you get with a person who has no guile. A person with guile, on the other hand, is a person who has a hidden agenda, and he is manipulating you towards that agenda. What is in the agenda? He keeps it hidden. There is duplicity in that person. He is acting in a way not for your best interest, but for his own. He wants to work his agenda through you.⁹

Another word you can use for guile is deception. The devil is the deceiver, and he works through deception. Class, you are all victims of deception. All of us have been and are being deceived in some way. Jesus is the only exception. There is not a soul walking around on this planet today that is not deceived in some way. Deception, by its very nature, means that you cannot know where you are deceived because once you know where you are deceived you are no longer deceived. What we all have need of is the removing of our deceptions.

There are areas in which you are deceived, but I am not deceived. There are areas in which I am deceived, but you are not deceived. In our gatherings in which we dia-

logue and read the Word and hear expositions of the Word, and hear the ancient traditions of the church, we use all of these things to check and measure our beliefs. We examine our beliefs, and when something begins not to measure up, then we begin to look at that in light of all that is around us, and we have to make some decisions.

Some decisions are made based on what it is that our flesh wants. If your flesh wants the man-made traditions, then it becomes easy to agree with them. If the Word repels your flesh, it will be easy for you to say, "That understanding is wrong. Here is what I believe." If an expedient idea strokes your flesh a little bit better than the Word of God, then you will tend to say, "This idea that 'feels good' is what I am going to hold to."

Watch out for what your flesh is telling you. Be careful because you can be self-deceived. Hunger for material things, lust, desire for ease, pandering to your feelings, and self indulgence will drag you right into an area which is wrong.

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR DISCIPLES

The Lord wants you to follow Him—to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Him.¹⁰ Each one of those three actions, which are required for discipleship, means that you do not get to do what you want to do. To deny yourself means that you give up your own desires: "Yeah, I want this, I want that, I want to do all of these wonderful things." You get none of that.

The next step is to pick up your cross. This action means that you have got to go to your own death. You must crucify yourself. You must take up that cross and say, "Okay, my flesh (old sin nature) must die here and now." Crucifixion is a recurring thing that

⁹ Eros is the kind of love that this kind of person has for others.

¹⁰ Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, and Luke 9:23.

must be done every time your sin nature revives.

The next step is to follow Jesus. You must go His way. Now all others in the church may be going their own way, which is easy. You cannot go with them. They are having fun. You cannot go with them. You must go this hard way, the way of labor and sacrifice and loneliness—the way of John the Baptist and Jesus.

When you are going the way of the Lord, watch out for temptation. You cannot help looking around and becoming tempted to join the crowd that says, “God does not want His children to suffer.” You will begin to think that surely God is a loving God and does not want His children to suffer (*please note that I am describing a temptation that I personally have fought*). Why can’t I enjoy life without all the problems and sacrifice? I must have read the Bible wrong about the *kenosis*. I want to go the way everybody else is going.”

Please see that these temptations will pull you over onto the wrong path because of the hunger of your flesh. The desires of your heart will begin to draw you in a way that is contrary to the Word of God. The beginning of your deceptions is when you allow your lust, self indulgence, and gravitations to what *feels* good to play a part in guiding you on your path.

Henry: God said, “I AM God, and I change not.”¹¹ So if anyone is going to change, it has to be me. So when I allow God to be my Lord, He gives me the power to change . . . see I could not do it without His power. When I committed to denying myself, taking up my cross, and following Him, then my desires changed from going with the self-indulgent crowd. I wanted to go God’s way. Then I wanted to spend time with other saints and in the Bible. Old friends have asked me

why I go to church? My answer is that there has been a change in me. I have been born again, and I want to fellowship with my new friends. I want to learn about my Lord so that I can do the things that please Him. I think that the change brought about by the new birth is where many people are fooled. The common misconception is that it has become acceptable to be born again with no accompanying change of life style.

V: Christians have two natures. One nature is the holy nature in which the total reason for being, the desires of the heart, the hunger in the soul is to follow Jesus. That is only one nature. There is another nature ever present in the Christian, and it has to be crucified. When it is not crucified, it will rise up and capture your will. Perhaps an inappropriate word will come out of your mouth, and you will wonder, “Where did that come from?” It came from that sin nature that is always there. It walks with you the rest of the way through life. You must deal with it.

That sin nature is the nature that Satan works through because when you are in the flesh, you will think and act like a fleshly person. A fleshly person will be tempted to do something dazzling with his spiritual gifts like Satan tempted Jesus: “Why don’t you just sail off the pinnacle here? God will not let you even bruise your heel. The angels will catch you.”¹² Friends, a carnal saint may likely say yes to that temptation: “The Lord will catch me if I jump. When people see what I did, it will bring glory to the Lord. What they will see is what He has done through me, one of the least of the saints.” Actually, they are seeking to bring glory to themselves.

Beth: I saw some snake handlers in a church on TV. They were dancing around to some hypnotic chanting before the congregation with snakes, caressing them and kissing

¹¹ Malachi 3:6 For I [am] the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

¹² Matthew 4:5-11; Luke 4:9-11.

them. I think that practice is to tempt the Lord.

V: Temptation will come to your flesh. I do not care who you are; you are deceived in something. That acknowledgement of being deceived is a hard thing to stomach. It means that I am deceived. It means that you are deceived. What we need to do is hunt down that deception, and get it out of our lives. That need for purging deceptions is another reason why you study the Scriptures, dialogue with the saints, and listen to sermons. By listening to someone who has studied a passage extensively, you can hear the Word expounded. You are checking your beliefs against every word that comes from the pulpit.

Sometimes, you are sitting there in the congregation and thinking that you are all right. Then the sermon starts, and you hear the first contradicting point. Then another point comes, and you become aware of a possible error in your belief system. You begin wrestling with the contradictions, and that is how you get deception out of your life.

Then, of course, there is going to be someone else who is going to give words that counter that sermon. Soon after you walk out of the door, somebody will say, "Do not believe all that stuff literally." In effect, they will be saying, "Do not believe all that hard stuff. God does not want you to suffer. Come on over here and have fun."

Beth: You are only human.

V: Yes, Beth, that statement is a common excuse for self-indulgence. It leads straight to the idea that God expects you to have all these good things. He wants all His children to have all this good stuff (sarcasm). All manner of enticements will come at you.

Nathaniel (John 1:50) is told that because the Lord said that He could see him under the fig tree before Philip got there to him, he believed. The fact that the Lord could see

him without being present, is a sign to Nathaniel that this Person has power that is unexplainable unless He be the Christ, the Son of God. So he confesses that, based on the ability for Jesus not to be near him but yet to see him under the fig tree, He is the Son of God. But now the Lord says that Nathaniel has not seen anything yet: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."¹³ He is identifying Himself as Jacob's ladder.¹⁴ This Person is that link between heaven and earth, between God and man. The Person is Jesus. Jesus is both God and Man at the same time in His Person. His God-Man Personhood also identifies His Mission of linking God and man which He accomplishes later in His Works.

Jesus is God, and He is Man. In the definition then, of the Personhood of Jesus Himself, He links heaven and earth. He links God and man. He is the Ladder upon which you will climb to ascend into heaven (I am not implying climbing as a works, but as a symbol of relationship achieved in Jesus as the means of salvation). He is the Ladder upon which heaven will descend to man and man will ascend to heaven. In His Person He is defining who He is and what He does. Right here, He is identifying Himself as Jacob's Ladder.

Jacob, you remember, had the dream in which there was a ladder that was on earth and extended into heaven. He saw the angels going up and down between earth and heaven on this ladder. Here is the Lord making a positive identification of Himself as that Ladder upon which all linkage between heaven and earth is made.

¹³ John 1:51.

¹⁴ Genesis 28:12

RAY'S TESTIMONY

We have a special person in this class, and I am going to ask him to give his testimony. Raymond is his name. Class, I want you to know that each of you is here by divine appointment, and he too is here by divine appointment. We are together not by accident. God has brought us together as a special gathering. In that context of being here by God's appointment, I want you to meet one of your classmates whose being here has more than a simple significance.

Ray: (Ray's talk could hardly be understood. It was very slow and slurred.) Good evening, everybody. Sharing my testimony is something I love doing because God has been so good to me.

I grew up out of the church. My family and I never went to church, and so this experience of mine happened for a reason.

From the time I was eleven until I was seventeen, I was bound up with drugs, alcohol, lying, stealing, and fighting—a totally ungodly lifestyle. When I was sixteen I left home because I did not like being told what to do. I never knew my biological daddy. See my dad is the one I live with right now. I moved here from Houston to live with him and go to seminary. The reason he is my dad is because he gets onto me when I need it, and he provides for me when I need it. He is there for me, and he is my dad.

When I ran away, I was living on the streets. I was gang banging and doing all the worldly stuff. By the time I was seventeen my life took a sudden turn. On January 1, 1990, at 3 a.m. in the morning, I was driving around in a stolen car, me and my "friends." We were throwing firecrackers at houses, and I was driving, and I was drunk. The spirit of alcohol makes you think: "Okay world! Come on! Take your best shot!!!!" Well, you see, that was me on that early dark morning.

Then another group of three toughs pulled in front of me. So I stopped the car, and I got out. I set up to fight all three of them. The fight did not last long because I was hit on the head with a baseball bat and knocked unconscious. The two people who were with me took me to the place where I was staying, and they laid me in my

roommate's bed because I had no bed. I slept wherever.

I laid there in bed for 18 hours and bled internally in my head. Eighteen hours later, about 9 p.m. January 1, 1990, I was life-flighted to Hermann Hospital in Houston, Texas, where I was DOA. Class, I was dead! After 30 minutes of trying to get a heartbeat, the doctor gave up: "He is gone, Sorry, I cannot do any more." I laid there for two more hours. On the way to the morgue, my finger twitched a tiny little twitch. The orderly saw it, and he rushed me back to the emergency room.

They opened up my head and took all of the blood out. That surgery, however, put me in a coma. The doctor said that I would spend the rest of my life in that state of coma.

On the 35th day of my coma, my dad and my mom and a preacher prayed. My dad said that they wrote all of the names of those praying on a piece of paper. My dad then put the paper on my bed to symbolize their prayers. Through the power of prayer, God woke me up an hour later. My friends, raising me from the dead and awakening me from the coma are of the grace of God. I am testifying to God's unmerited favor that He showed to a wretch like me who cursed His name, someone who had wasted. . . .

God said, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.¹⁵ That is why I thank the Lord that every one of you is here. See, God is going to feed us so that we can go out and feed the world. The Word of God says, "Whom shall I send?" Isaiah said, "Send me."¹⁶ He had a willing heart, and I pray that all of us have willing hearts. I know that if you are here, you probably have that willing heart. Lord, send me. That is my testimony.

V: When Ray told me about his death and resurrection, I thought, "Man! his being here is a real miracle, and I have responsibility in

¹⁵ Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

¹⁶ Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here [am] I; send me.

the ongoing miracle.” God has entrusted Ray to my/our care.

I met with Ray’s new father and discerned that God has sent Ray to this class. His dad said that Scripture was healing his son, and he wanted Ray to be immersed in Scripture.

Anyway Ray has been entrusted to me. I do not want to fail him. I take this charge seriously. The context of how I am going to meet this assignment from God is through this class, and you are part of it. This class and your being in it is no accident. That means we are partners in a team that is ministering to a man on a comeback. He has been re-enlivened physically, and he has been reborn spiritually. He can hardly read or talk or even walk, as you have seen for yourselves already. He is getting his speech patterns back, he is getting his reading patterns back, he is getting his motor skills back. He is like a new person that has just been born. He is relearning everything.

What I discovered in his first visit with me was that he had spent his bed-ridden time in memorizing Scripture. His dad discovered that there is something healing about memorizing Scripture. He is getting, perhaps for the first time in his life, the ability to think clearly, to articulate something that is meaningful. God’s Word is all that he is thinking and speaking now when he is home.

So class, what we are going to do now is slowly move him into academia. He has to learn how to write again so that he can take notes. We are here as first-hand witnesses of somebody that God has a special mission for because He raised him from the dead—an obvious sign from God. This is a neat challenge, and we are getting to meet it right here. God has chosen us to raise Ray. Ray, I am glad to have you in this class.

I saw him out in the hall before class, and he said, “This is a blessing. This is a blessing!” So this opportunity for another life

is the blessing that he is talking about. Maybe, we all ought to die—die to self. That is what the Lord meant when He said, “Deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Me.”

Ray: Galatians 2:20 describes my new life: “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

JOHN 2: THE FIRST MIRACLE

I want to hear from you a little bit on this miracle.

John

2:1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

2:2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

2:3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

2:4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

2:5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do [it].

2:6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

2:7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

2:8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare [it].

2:9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

2:10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: [but] thou hast kept the good wine until now.

2:11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

In the situation described here, there is an opportunity for God to manifest who Jesus is. The mother who is part of this scenario brings a natural need to the Lord. She declares that they have run out of wine. He says something like, “Why are you telling this to me? This is not what I do. It is not my time to demonstrate any kind of miracle or anything like that.” That reply did not stop her. As soon as He had responded, she said to the servants, “Whatever He says to do, do it.” That is pretty good advice. We ought to take that advice and run with it.

So He says, “Fill up these empty water pots with water.” They hopped to it and filled those pots. He says, “Now dip some of that water out and take it to the governor of this banquet.” They dipped the water out of the pot. They had just put the water in there, and now they are dipping the water back out of the pots. When the governor tastes it, it is exquisite wine! The miracle is obvious to the servants because they had just filled the pots with water with their own hands.

Here is an obvious miracle, but it is demonstrated to just a select few—His disciples and the servants and His mother. These servants obediently dip the water out. Sure enough they had put the water in those pots. But they dip it out. They take it as commanded to the governor, and they start serving it as if it were wine, and behold, it is wine!

The ruler did not know where this wine came from, and he is saying, “How come you held the best for last? You are supposed to bring the best up at the beginning.”

The ruler did not know where the wine came from or what had happened. But the servants who brought it up there, who filled up the water pots, who dipped out the water,

they knew! They are thinking, “Man! look at this! What manner of man is this?” The attention of those who had witnessed the miracle is going to be turned back to the Lord, not to the wine, but to the source of the wine, not to the blessing, but to the source of blessing, back to the question of who is this who turns water into wine?

It says in verse 11, “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.” The results are that His disciples believed on Him. **That belief was the primary purpose of miracles in the Lord’s earliest ministry.** The miracles manifested Who this Jesus was. When the signs and wonders followed the apostles and disciples, they were to manifest who they were. They had been sent from God, and the miracles were God’s authentication.

What I want you to write down now is that the word for miracle is *semeion*, and what this word means is “sign.” That is why this book of John and our outlines that we have looked at said something about signs. We will deal with sign #1, sign #2, and sign #3, etc. This first miracle concerning the water being turned into wine is sign #1. This first sign yields information.

SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

What are three examples of witnessing in chapter one?

1. John the Baptist points out Christ to two of his disciples. John 1:35-37.
2. Andrew introduces Peter to Jesus. John 1:40-42.
3. Philip introduces Nathaniel to Jesus. John 1:43-51.

The first week of Jesus’ ministry is jam packed with wonderful events. Describe each day of that first week of Jesus’ ministry.

Day:

1. John the Baptist renounces claim to messiahship. John 1:19-28.

2. John the Baptist points to Jesus as the Messiah. John 1:29-34.
3. The first disciples are pointed to Jesus. John 1:35-39.
4. Peter is led to Jesus. John 1:40-42.
5. Nathaniel is led to Jesus. John 1:43-51.
6. Nothing.
7. Sign #1, water to wine. John 2:1-11.

SIGN #1: WATER TO WINE

(Student Discussion)

There is much information in this sign, and we need to examine the information that is being conveyed. If you saw this miracle first hand, you would surely ponder its meaning.

When the word, *semeion*, is used for miracles, it has to do with signifying something. The words *signs* and *wonders* say something. They mean more than some supernatural shows of power. A sign signifies something. It gives you information from God. We need to ponder what this sign signified.

What Is the Signification of Sign #1?

Ted: It let the observers know that He had a supernatural power, that He was not just merely born of man, but, as He had claimed, He came from God.

V: Supernatural power means that Jesus is not just another ordinary man. He had to have come from the source of that power—from God.

Ted: He also strengthened the disciples' faith in Who He was through this miracle.

V: Amen. Very well done, Ted, because verse 11 then points to the results of this sign. Certainly, there are supposed to be results from these signs, not just an observation and titillation, but something is supposed to happen in the observer himself.

Was faith involved here?

Steve: Yes, Mary believed that He could turn the water to wine. She would have

questioned why He refused to do something so innocent and helpful when He could have.

V: She believed it so much that she told the servants to just do whatever He tells you to do. That means she believed totally in His ability to do this supernatural thing.

Tim: That would go back to her pondering all the sayings that she had kept all these years in her heart.

V: Yes, by pondering many things about Jesus, she was doing what we are supposed to do. We are supposed to ponder these things as well. Then if you are pondering these things when the opportunity arises, it will immediately point you to the Lord. You are going to immediately link up all these ponderings, and conclude that Jesus is Lord over everything, including the mundane!

Tim: The Spirit spoke to my heart whenever we were going through verse 5 of Chapter 2. It said, "His mother said unto the servants, 'Whatsoever He says unto you, do it.'" You know that if that instruction would be ever present in our minds, our faiths would be increased as well. A scripture that comes to mind, for example, is that Jesus said, "Go to the ends of the earth and preach the gospel."¹⁷ If we would just apply that one commandment, our faith would grow. And of course, we must start right here with our preaching and go out in concentric circles.

Wanda: We usually take the miracles at face value, but there is a message within the miracle when it is seen as a sign.

V: Yes. They are always wonders *and signs*.

Carl: The first miracle took place at a wedding feast. That event could symbolize Jesus' coming back to claim His bride.

Homer: Talking about a message within the miracle, my commentary's explanation

¹⁷ Acts 13:47.

was just way over my head. He claimed that the guest's having no wine meant that they have no salvation. The commentator said that we should look at this miracle as a prelude to Jesus' mission in His ministry. I would never have thought about that idea if I had not read it in the commentary. Even though there are many messages here that we cannot comprehend with mere human understanding, the Lord has given us the ability to understand that which is beyond human understanding. To me grasping these things is awesome, because I probably have read through this passage quite a number of times, and I would never have pulled either that sign or that message about salvation out of there. But through the knowledge that should come through signs, I get it now.

V: Class, understand first that this miracle is a sign, and a sign is a message couched within the power of God. We are supposed to ponder this sign. Everything about this sign is to be considered. Meditate on the sign. The wedding feast, salvation, Gospel-wine, Spirit, and re-creation connections are signified in the miracle.

When an ordinary something is made into an extraordinary something, that exemplifies what is happening to us. All of this re-creation idea coincides and correlates right down the line with Jesus' mission, with who He is, and with what He is doing. For Him to do other than what He is and what He is about would be hypocrisy. That is the part we specialize in. Right? (sarcasm) But there is no hypocrisy in the Lord. What He does is who He is. What He does, as signs, is pointing to Who He is and what His ultimate mission is. That wedding concept is His ultimate mission.

Joe: I think, too, the experience of the miracle was given to the disciples who believed in Jesus more so than others. The Lord let them know, "I am proving to you that I AM who I say I AM."

Observers of Sign #1

V: That is good, Joe. The signs that the Lord is working today are rarely observed as signs. They are most likely seen as natural phenomena. We must be willing to see them as signs and wonders.¹⁸

Those servants were very privileged to be allowed to see this miracle. The governor of the feast drinks the wine and declares it to be the best part. He did not get to see anything. But those servants got to see the whole deal because they were partners in the event. That means that if you are a servant, you get to see some things that other people will not see.¹⁹

Jack: The servants put the water in and then drew it out, and as they were walking across to the governor of the feast, they knew that they had drawn out water. The realization must have hit them hard about what had taken place, when the governor declared that it was the best wine.

V: Surely, it staggered the servants. Imagine it. Here you are pouring the water in there because she told you to obey Jesus. You wonder, "What are we doing this for?" But, that is what He commanded. Then He says, "Now take a dipper full to the governor of the feast." You think, "Man, that governor is going to be very angry over this prank. So you hesitantly dip out a dipper full, and you take it over to the governor. He tastes it and declares it to be the best wine, and he calls the guy who is getting married, and he says, "Hey! Why did you wait until the end to give us the best wine? It is normally brought up at the beginning, but you have waited until the

¹⁸ When everybody can see the sign, then it is, by definition, general revelation. However, just because observation of the sign is available to all, it is not necessarily significant to every observer, e.g. the creation is explained away by atheists.

¹⁹ Only a select group sees special revelation, e.g. the Scriptures are seen only by those who have them and are willing to read them.

end.” These servants are standing there thinking, “What have we just witnessed?”

Mary: It seems strange to me that Jesus would choose to show Himself to the servants and not to the . . .

V: . . . not to the governor! There is something special about being a servant. You get to see things that other people do not see.

Betty: I think also that it signifies that life in Christ is the best life. You will have life and have it more abundantly. The wine was the best they had ever had because it came from Christ.

V: That is good, Betty! The salvation that we experience up front in our justification and sanctification is good, but we will get the best at glorification.

Pete: Everybody at this wedding got to see the results of the miracle. The servants saw its source. Those who did not see the source experienced the joy of the results. Parallel to this joy, I see how joyous it is going to be when we are united as the bride in our wedding, with Christ.

Tim: Also, there is how Jesus cares for human needs.

V: Yes, there is certainly that linking to basic human issues that is happening in this miracle. Some think that the mundane affairs of man are not important. No, they are very important, but the supernatural affairs are more important. God sent His only Son to bring these two spheres together. Right here in this miracle, He is demonstrating a meeting of human need from the divine context of His total mission.

Bob: The six clay stone pots correlates with how man is created on the sixth day. We are clay from the earth that is turned into flesh. These six water pots made from clay were for the Jewish purification practices. There were six of them setting there empty and representing the emptiness of man. Man

can do his best to clean and purify himself, but only Jesus can bring out of us the pure rich wine, or the fruit of the vine which would represent John 14. We are the branches of the vine that bears the fruit.

V: That is very good, Bob.

Oscar: I’ve got my sermon for Sunday!

Relevance of Sign #1

V: What else can we get from this sign?²⁰

Sybil: Running out of wine discloses the inadequacy of Judaism to give salvation through religion.

V: That is right. Following upon the inadequacy of Judaism that was being preached by John the Baptist, he also announced the coming of the Kingdom of God. The Old Testament which describes God’s religion is in its essence good. What was lacking was the people’s doing it right and reading it right. Otherwise, it would have pointed them to Christ. Instead, they took their religion as an end rather than as a means to an end. They were focused on religion, rather than on God. John the Baptist was coming to say, “Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” John dropped the hammer on Judaism as the ultimate goal and pointed to the coming of God’s Kingdom.

The Lord also comes along, and does the exact same thing. That is why the sign is in the same context. The sign and all its meanings correlate with His ultimate mission. All of the signs must point to His ultimate mission, otherwise our interpretation would be out of context with who He is in His function. Unlike us, His function corresponds exactly to His personhood, Who He is. What He does is Who He is. Who He is determines

²⁰ **Warning:** what we are doing is only legitimate in interpreting “signs.” It is not legitimate to “spiritualize” plain straight forward texts of regular narrative. Regular narrative means what it says and says what it means.

what He does. It is supposed to be like that for us as well. But we tend to defy who we are by losing sight of the spiritual and majoring on the carnal. We tend to indulge the self rather than sacrifice the self, and climb up to self rule instead of go down as a servant. But the Lord did what He is, and is what He did. His ontology and function are a perfect match in Him, and we are supposed to strive for that same kind of match.

Sam: Many times we portray ourselves to be other than who we are to begin with. In the world, we tend to want to put on a front.

V: That is right. Putting on a front is called guile. That is what the devil does. He puts on a disguise. He wears a mask and comes to you as an angel of light. When we put on a mask, we don a hiding place so that we can work an agenda that is different from who we are. We are saints. We must act like saints.

Mary: In Genesis 3, the serpent came to tempt Adam and Eve with God's Word, but he did not come to them to tell them the truth.

V: That is right. This use of God's Word is called guile. Jesus has no guile, and it even testified, in this gospel, that Nathaniel had no guile. That is quite a significant statement.

Descriptions of the Servants

Now let me ask you to focus on these servants. Tell me what this sign signifies about these servants?

Tim: They were obedient without question.

V: That is good. Obedient without question. The mother tells them to do whatever He says. They are not to wrestle around with His commands, debate them, or wonder if there is a better way of solving this problem. Just do what He says.

Pete: They presented the wine to the governor and did not say a word or even indicate that it was water.

V: They are compliant, not interjecting their opinions, nor defensive. They were just doing what they were told to do.

For Whom Is the Sign?

Who do the servants serve? They are the servants of the master of the place, not the Lord's servants. But the mother tells them to obey Jesus and do whatever He says. This is good. But let us explore further. Is the sign for everybody?

Jack: Must be, it is written in the Word of God.

V: The Word of God is special revelation, not general revelation. Only those who read the Word of God will observe its content.

Oscar: Whoever is willing to read the Word can be just like the servants. They saw the miracles and they believed. If the governor had seen that miracle, he might have thought that he could make a ton of money by using the Lord's Power. But when the disciples saw it, they believed in His Lordship. They saw what Jesus was showing of Himself, i.e. His Power.

Henry: The servants knew that if they were to pour cleansing water into the pots and then take some of it to their master who was expecting wine, he would be very angry. So I think that when Jesus told them to put water in those pots, there was something unnatural but mysteriously holy in that act. There is something of the Spirit somehow for the servants in that . . .

V: . . . obedience. They obeyed Jesus. They were not His servants. They were somebody else's servants. This is a very important lesson. In this scene the servants are showing us how to do double duty, i.e. to blend in our Christian life within our secular environment. They are simultaneously obeying the ruler of the feast and Jesus, Who is a guest. They are working spiritual obedience into their secular responsibilities.

This is also important: who sees the miracle? Of course, the disciples and the mother see it. But please note, however, that the servants also see the miracle. You too can see the miracles today.²¹ But first, you must be a servant. If you are the servant of the living God, you get to see the miracles of God. If you are not seeing the signs, you need to get with obediently serving Him.

Now I will tell you something else here that is very important. Jesus did not speak the water into the pots. He had some plain ordinary men fill up those pots with water. That means that He uses His servants' work and labor in His miracles. The use of servants in the miracle foreshadows how He would be doing miracles after His ascension into heaven.

There is some real significance in the servants' part in the working of this miracle. We do not know their names, but we do know the disciples' names. But Jesus chose to use those servants. God chose to use some nameless men who were present as lowly servants, and they participated in the very first miracle. When the mother instructs them to do whatever He says, they simply do it. They had enough commitment to those instructions that they did it, even when it looked like foolishness. They could have backed out anywhere along the way and said that this filling the pots with water is not solving the problem of their being out of wine. To take these instructions from the guest means that you must be committed to the plan, whether or not it appeared foolish. I wonder if I would have had that level of commitment? I would be thinking that I could see putting the water in the pots. I could see getting the water all the way up to the brim. But to dip it out and take it to the main man, that would be hard to do.

²¹ Signs correlate to the triangle of piety, e.g. if you do what the Lord commands, you will be given more knowledge and understanding.

Joe: What authority did Mary have over these servants?

V: That is a good point, Joe. She believed totally that Jesus could solve the problem. It was in the authority of her belief in Him that she issued the command. That is why a pastor must be absolutely sure that his beliefs are correct for his flock.

Jill: They are the ruler's servants, but yet here comes Mary. She was not even of that household. So saying that these servants were willing to be servants of those who were not even of the household speaks to their willing subordination. They were the servants of all. They were willing to be servants of anyone.

V: That is a very good observation, Jill. We are to do likewise.

Joe: So servant hood is to be without respect of person.

V: Ooh, that is good, Joe. That is how we should be—servants to all, not just to honchos. Then it is not a question of, "You are not my boss. I am not going to do this work for you." Thus the servant attitude of serving all people gets you close to the Lord in order to see His miracles and even to participate in them. Isn't that good?

Jill: There is a Scripture that says that in order to be great in the Kingdom of God, you must be a servant of all.²²

V: Ooh good. That Scripture is portrayed right here in this scene. These guys obeyed and participated in this work of God without questioning whether these people giving out the commands have enough rank to order them around? Instead of questioning whether or not those people belonged in this ceremony or whether they were a part of this family or how they can tell them what to do, they displayed that wonderful servant attitude that we all need to have as well.

²² Mark 9:35.

Mary: Self-denial?

V: Yes, self-denial, the first requirement of discipleship, like being able to lower yourself to wash the feet of others.

Beth: He could have done the whole thing, and everybody would just be standing around idle.

Joe: He wanted them to take part in the miracle.

V: Yes, the Lord works through His yokemates.

Now there is one other statement in here that said something about the fact that these pots were designated for the cleansing ritual of the Jews. He is making a statement here about the cleansing ritual of the Jews. It is coming to an end.

Significance of the Wine

I want you to focus on the wine. I think that the wine represents the Spirit's involvement in the Gospel. There is a turning away from water cleansing to Spirit cleansing. That move is what John the Baptist was saying when he declared that he baptized in water,

but one was coming who baptizes in the Spirit.

Tim: There are many people baptized who believe that baptism is their salvation.

V: Yes, many practice baptismal regeneration and think that it is the final sanctifying act of salvation. Baptism was never efficacious for salvation. It was always significant though. Water baptism is significant in that it points to death to the old life and resurrection to the new life in Jesus. The baptism of John the Baptist was also significant. It was a sign that pointed to the requirement of repentance for the arriving Kingdom of God on earth. The significance of a miracle-sign is God's message to us, not the sign itself.

Baptism under the Gospel today is a sign that identifies us with Christ through obedience. You are saying publicly, "Mark me as belonging to Christ in both His death and also His resurrection."²³

²³. There is going to come another sign in the near future that is going to mark people as belonging to Antichrist.

Chapter Questions

1. How does John the Baptist identify and describe Jesus as the Christ?
2. For what are signs as used in the book of John?
3. Describe the first week of Jesus' ministry.
4. What are three examples of witnessing in Chapter One?
5. What was Sign #1?

Chapter 3

O.T. FULFILLED, PLUS BEYOND JUDAISM

JOHN 2:
CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

John

2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

2:14 And found in the Temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

2:15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the Temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

2:17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

2:21 But he spake of the Temple of his body.

2:22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

2:23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast [day], many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

2:24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all [men],

2:25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

V: Is there a difference between keeping the peace and making peace? If so, what kind of difference would there be?

Tim: If you keep the peace, you will not have trouble. If you make the peace, it is to eliminate trouble.

V: Okay. What would you say that the Lord is doing here when He makes that scourge and uses it to clean out the Temple? Is He making peace or keeping peace? If He is making peace, where is the peace?

Mary: He is making peace with God.

V: Good, Mary. Okay, what would He have done if He were going to keep the peace?

Steve: He would have left the money-changers alone.

V: Yes. So the Lord is righting the order of things. However, change is going to disrupt some things, but the purpose of the change is peace with God, not a human peace. He is trying to help them come to a point where they would achieve peace with God. Vertical peace with God will create some disruption of horizontal traditions which, in turn, will result in horizontal conflict. ***For us ministers, the vertical peace is primary, and horizontal peace is secondary.***

In this passage, the Lord is cleansing the Temple. He is trying to bring peace between man and God. In order to achieve that peace, there must be change in man. Change in man is oftentimes accompanied by conflict over that change.

House of Merchandise

What do you think He means here when He says that they had made His Father's house into a house of merchandise?

Ted: A store in which the goal was to profit from selling animals to be used for sacrifice.

V: Okay. Is it wrong for them to sell the doves and the animals for sacrifice?

Carl: They should have been doing it outside the Temple rather than inside.

Homer: I think that the selling of sacrificial animals in the Temple made it convenient for the worshippers.

Jill: Perhaps, this would compare to today when people come to church and they think that because they tithe that is all they must do? Show up, get counted, do their tithe and go back to their normal life. They have not changed. Nothing is happening in their lives.

V: Okay, Jill, you are speaking of the holiness of the worshippers.

Jill: God expects us to be holy people who are dedicated to Him.

V: Yes. Holiness means that we must be *cleansed of sin and set aside for God's sole use*.

I want us to think hard on this issue of sales here, because if we miss it, if we go by this too fast, we are going to miss an extremely important lesson.

Purpose, is the primary problem. The key word here is merchandising. Please see that God's house, the Temple, is a holy place that is clean and set aside for God's sole use. If merchandising by men intrudes into God's exclusive "use" of the Temple, then the Temple is no longer holy. A house of merchandise is not a house of worship and prayer. Its holy purpose has been changed to a secular purpose.

Now it is possible, you see, to do some things that are untraditional in the holy place if those untraditional things are holy. The main issue is not merely location. Instead, the supreme issue is making something unholy. It would be like healing on the Sabbath. It would be considered work, but God would consider it to be holy work, which would be appropriate to be done on the Sabbath, the holy day—which now is every day.

Jesus is not condemning the action of merchandizing. He is condemning making the Father's house into a house of merchandise rather than a holy house for worship and prayer.

Next, the people asked, "What sign are you going to give us that can tell us that you have the authority to do this kind of stuff?" He answered, "Tear this Temple down, and I will raise it in three days." Then God's Word declares that He was talking about His body. Therefore the Temple (the actual dwelling place of the living God) is the Lord's Holy Body. Your body is God's Holy Temple now because it too is the dwelling place of the living God.

Let us say that you have a holy body, i.e. your body is clean and dedicated to God's use in His holy purpose. If you desecrate that body by dedicating it to something else, you are doing the same thing as the merchandizers. You see then, how you can make an unholy use of your body by throwing your whole life, your whole everything, into a secular venture which is not God-centered. In themselves, these kinds of secular ventures are not evil. However, when you use your body for purposes other than the Lord's purposes, then you are making your body (the Temple of God) into an unholy body. You are making God's House into a house of merchandise.

This kind of unholiness found in our misuse of our bodies is why we get the whippings (scourgings) that we get. Every once in a

while, He makes a scourge and wears me out because I have made my body into a house of merchandise.

Merchandizing of souls is mentioned in the book of Revelation.

Revelation

18:11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.

18:12 The **merchandise** of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

18:13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, **and slaves, and souls of men.**

Those last words there are very significant here. False religion deals with the merchandising in the souls of men.

If you participate in a lifetime of effort in which you are trying to build yourself a career, then you have lost sight of your purpose in God's plan. He is supposed to be using you for your whole life. Your whole life is owed to Him. You are a slave of God, and you are to dedicate yourself to being a slave of God. You are to become a holy person without vacillating back and forth from our "normalcy" (seeking the American dream) to holiness and back to "normalcy." It is to be a total walk in holiness. If you do not grab hold of this understanding and apply it, then you are guilty of the same thing as the money-changers who sat in the Temple in their ignorance-driven, self-evaluated "innocence."

The moneychangers were actually approved as holy by the religious authorities and by religious tradition. They were supposed to be there. They had more right to be there than the Gentiles did. They were doing

exactly what they were supposed to do under the authority of a religion that had run amuck.

If you do not get hold of yourself, and manage your life, and walk the walk of a holy person, a disciple, you will be doing the same thing as the moneychangers. Those money-changers did not know that they were wrong. They had been told that they were right. You "normal" people do not know you are wrong because you have been told that you are right.

The religious authorities have solved the problem of how the people are going to sacrifice when they enter the Temple. By authorizing the merchants' sales in the temple, they think that they are pleasing God with this merchandizing service. Can you see that they are sitting there in their self-perceived innocence because of their *ignorance*? The Lord, however, evaluates not from that same kind of mindset where the high priest says that this merchandizing is right and holy. He evaluates from God's perspective.

Perhaps, we are just like the money-changers sitting here doing our assigned things. We are in the church, and we are doing everything just like the religious authorities tell us to do. We have the authorities above us telling us what is acceptable and based on how we have always done things. Then we compartmentalize: we build a career, we worship, we devote our lives to our career and then worship at the assigned times established by the religious authorities instead of integrating our lives so that our whole walk, career and everything is holy, i.e. used by Jesus, our Boss, for His own purposes.

Mary: It is a desensitizing process.

V: Yes, the moneychangers were just sitting there totally desensitized. Then the Lord built a scourge, started whipping them, and threw their tables of merchandise over.

That cleansing is what is going to happen to us when we know the truth but don't do it.

I feel the scourge, and I pray that you do as well because it is critical that we be holy people—clean and totally dedicated to the Lord's use. You have been bought and paid for. You are a slave. Jesus is your owner, and He can use you however He wants to. That means that you ought to be dedicated to His service. If you are dedicated to His service, you will seek to integrate all of your life so that it is a continuous walk with the Lord. It is not to be compartmentalized, but it is to be a total integration so that you are no longer a hypocrite who is living for self. You are to be a slave following the Lord. Your career is the Lord's possession. Your family is the Lord's possession. Your money is the Lord's possession. Your reputation is the Lord's possession. He can spend you and all that is in your life however He wants to. He wants to use you in His Own special way because the Lord, your boss, owns not only you but also everything that is "yours."

You have the opportunity right now to get out from under all of the bondages of traditional religion and be free to be a real, holy person. Freedom is only found in our being slaves to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are going to visit the idea of Christian freedom again at another time, but right now stop and tell Him that you want to be free **(pause)**.

Zeal of Thine House

We have looked at the purpose of the personal Temple. Now I want to look back over at the zeal of "thine house hath eaten me up."¹ For this understanding, we are going to refer to Jeremiah's Temple Sermon.

Jeremiah

7:4 Trust ye not in lying words, saying,
The Temple of the LORD, The Temple of
the LORD, The Temple of the LORD,
[are] these.

Jeremiah is confronting the people who are worshipping in the Temple and bringing

them to an understanding that the Temple is nothing but a holy **place**. It is the **God** of the place Whom we are supposed to worship.

The prophets and priests were trying to add weight to their lying words, and they would say something to enhance their credibility. They would baptize it, so to speak. They would baptize their sermons by framing them within the readily perceived holiness of the Temple of the Lord. If the speaker desired to manipulate someone, then he would mention the Temple of the Lord in his sermon. This would give great leverage to his sermon. The weight of his false ideas was increased by the weight of the popular esteem for the Temple. That extra weight lent the idea some reality, credibility, or "holy weight." The prophets and priests were doing this kind of manipulation. What Jeremiah was doing was confronting the people who were putting faith in the Temple instead of putting their faith in God.

Zeal for the Temple

Now let us come back to John. The Lord, in the same context as that of Jeremiah's Temple Sermon, walks into the Temple and says, "The zeal of thine house has eaten me up!" He is saying, "Where are My people's zeal? How come My people's zeal is not for My Father? How come My people's zeal is for this place with all these moneychangers, man-made traditions, and unholy peripheral things?" Here comes the Son of God into God's Temple, and God's ministers do not even know Who God's Son is. They certainly do not want Him there, and they question His authority by asking for a sign—by what authority are You turning over these tables and things?

This is God that we are talking about walking into the Temple and being questioned. He says, "Your zeal for My house has eaten Me up! It is consuming Me. Where is your zeal?" Their zeal is misplaced, you see, by being placed in the Temple and its rituals.

¹ John 2:17.

Even though the Temple is a holy thing, our zeal must be placed 100% in the Lord. Even a holy thing becomes unholy if it pulls your faith, pulls your devotion, diverts your purpose from God's holy purpose for you. When God's human resources get used up by a thing, or devoted to a thing, even towards a holy thing, it will be galling to God. The words, "It is eating me up," mean that His body is being consumed by spending its gifts, time, devotion, and material resources in areas that He did not assign and therefore does not approve. He is trying to say here, "Quit looking at the things, look at God. Worship God, put your zeal in God." All things are but means to an end, and that end is holiness, i.e. to be used by God in His Own special purpose. Class, this is critical for you to understand!

John's Gospel takes issue concerning the direction of the devotion of His people. They are religious, they are zealots, and they are of the same caliber as those to whom Jeremiah preached. Back in Jeremiah's times, they were just as zealous as this group depicted here in John. Where Jeremiah's people put their faith in the Temple itself, the people of the Lord's time have put their faith in religious practices in the Temple.

Even though God sent a prophet to preach and call the people of Judah to repentance, nothing changed in their behavior. Jeremiah preached the greatest sermon in the Old Testament that I have ever read—the Temple sermon. Even though He did that, nothing changed. What would it take today to change? Jesus preached directly and reinforced His sermons with His actions to cleanse the Temple and rebuke the moneychangers. Even His sermons did not change the religious leaders from their idolatry. His disciples composed of just a few regular people followed Him, but the great bulk of His people including the religious leaders rejected Him. What would it take to change the idolatry of our self-rule today?

Profaning the Holy

Betty: I got a packet the other day from church that contained a brochure that is real slick. It has people playing golf and tennis. I really do not see anything wrong with playing golf and tennis. But, you know, the brochure is strictly a secular marketing piece, and it says, "Come to our church. We will not make you feel guilty."

Wanda: I see many churches really getting involved in programs just trying to get people in the door, and I think we are losing sight of why we are trying to get them in the door. Just gathering them into a particular location is not the goal that the Lord has established.

Oscar: We are trying to compete with the entertainment industry by using people-pleasing techniques in order to get them into our congregations. Instead of winning people to Christ and equipping them for following Him as their Lord into ministry, our goals are morphing into enticing the people to join a particular institutional church. Ministry is no longer done by every Christian. Now the professional minister does the ministry, and the people pay to get it done to or for them.

Homer: Jeremiah 7:5 says, "I will be merciful only if you stop your wicked thoughts and deeds and are fair to others."² The Lord wants His slaves to act holy. That promised mercy from the Lord even goes back to fulfilling the requirements for the healing-of-the land promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

V: It is easy to get off path, you see, if the church is not devoted to the worship of God and prayer to Him, and that alone. Perverted holiness is the trap in the church of today. Any element that has crept into the church that detracts from the worship of the Person

² (KJV) Jeremiah 7:5 For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;

of God needs to be turned over and scourged. That is what Jesus would do.

I want you to see how extremely deceptive this kind of unholiness is. Please try to just get into the shoes of the moneychangers. They are sitting in there performing a service for people in agony because they have sin to deal with. They must sacrifice for it. They must have some cleansing relief. They come in, and they buy a dove, and they sacrifice a dove. Their burdens are lifted. They feel so much better because they have done the religious thing that is prescribed by the accepted religious structures. What is wrong with that? The moneychangers are performing a great ministry in their minds and in the minds of the entire religious establishment by meeting needs. You see how it just takes a little bit to move something off path, and the next thing you know is that it is so wrong (unholy) that the Lord will make a scourge and drive us out of there.

But to the merchants at that time, it was so acceptable and so right because religious leaders endorsed it. If it is you, and you are performing a service like this, you will probably believe that you are ministering to the people by assisting them in their sacrifices and worship. You see how close to home this problem can get? It just takes a smidgen to be off. The deception (financial profit and convenience) is there to lure us off path, and thus to become unholy.

Henry: The churches today, though, say through implication, "Bring me your tithes, and we will hire someone to do the ministry." No behavioral change is necessary for the worshiper.

V: It takes just a teeny smidgen to be off, and it is tough to find those smidgens in our current environment when repentance from sin is no longer preached. Like the church just mentioned which promises not to make you feel guilty, many churches (dare I say most churches) never really address real sin in

our neglect of so great a salvation that is found in our neglect of sanctification. Instead, they preach Jesus is your victory. You can bask in your victory over sin, life's troubles, and self-acceptance by just your attendance and tithing. The proof of victory is pastoral acceptance of your neglect of sanctification.

Sybil: During one of the classes that I recently took, you had a diagram in which the church started in one direction and moved just a little bit off, and. . . .

V: That was church history (see chart 3.1)

Sybil: You go just a little bit further, and you deviate just a little bit more. Pretty soon you will have made a "U" turn. You never even notice it because the changes are so subtle.

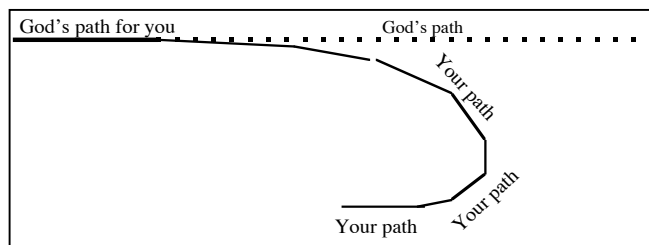


Chart 3.1

V: And you will never even know it unless some meddling preacher comes along and declares that the worship of the local church is idolatry. It is the frog in the pot of water scenario. If you drop him in the hot water, he would jump right out, but if you set him in cool water and warm it up gently, pretty soon he dies because he never detects the point where the heat crossed into danger. We are just like that frog. **Therefore, we must measure everything against God's Word. We cannot measure against tradition.** We cannot let our minds shut down because of clichés. Clichés will kill you because they automatically carry the weight of historical standing. It is an automatic shut-down in your mind. You just think, "Yeah, that is right." Once that conclusion reaches

your mind, you will not be able to think on that issue. Your mind will extrapolate behavior that is congruent with the assumed truth.

False Belief

We see in verse 23 about the believing which occurred because they saw the miracles. The Lord, in verse 24, did not commit Himself unto them because He knew those people. What we have in this passage is something like the “Rice-Christian” phenomenon that happened in China. I forget the name of the missionary, but he went to China and began to give out rice. The deal was that if he gave out rice, they had to listen to his preaching. He gave out rice and gave out rice and his church just grew and grew and grew until it was one of the biggest and fastest growing churches in the world. Then he ran out of rice, and everyone disappeared. No one was left in the church to worship. That has been called the Rice-Christian syndrome. I think that the Lord considered these people to be of the same stripe as the Rice-Christians, and that is why He did not commit Himself unto them. He looked at them, and they believed when they saw His miracles, but He did not commit Himself unto them because He knew the selfish motivations of all men. They believed that Jesus worked the miracles that they saw, but their belief was supported entirely by the miracles, not by Who Jesus was. Like the Rice-Christians, when the miracles stopped, their belief would stop.

JOHN 3A: NICODEMUS

John

3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God. for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him,

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and [of] the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

3:9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

3:10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

3:11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

3:12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you [of] heavenly things?

3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, [even] the Son of man which is in heaven.

3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.

3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned. but he that believeth not is

condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Nicodemus Concludes that Jesus Is of God on the Basis of the Miracles

Nicodemus makes a significant statement right at the beginning: “No man can do these miracles except that God be with Him.” I want you to see something here. What you and I, in our environment today, have to put our faith in is not new miracles, not new proofs. ***We have to put our faith in God based solely on His Word.*** If you should put your faith in miracles, you will be deceivable.

The false prophet in the Book of Revelation is going to deceive many people with his miracles. Remember the Exodus when Pharaoh’s magicians performed miracles. If you should take this approach that Nicodemus took, you could be deceived by the false prophet when he arrives on the scene.

When Nicodemus observed the miracles, he immediately concluded that the miracle worker must be of God. His reasoning was that how could someone do these supernatural miracles unless the one doing them be of God. Do not start that kind of thinking process because the thing that God wants you to believe is His Word. Even though an angel should come to you and tell you the opposite of God’s Written Word, you must hold fast to the Word of God.

In New Age humanism there is much miraculous stuff going on, *i.e.* levitation, extra-body visitation, and things of that sort.

If you followed Nicodemus’ pattern, then what would happen to you if all of a sudden you saw a miracle that was done by a cult member? You would say, “That is God working through His minister,” and you would be wrong. You would be deceived and running off with all the masses.

You must be a stabilizing influence, somebody to say, “Stop, do not run off into hysteria.” Gather around the Word. This Word of God is the Rock Foundation. It will not change. You must stay with the Word, and if anything, even if someone should call down fire out of heaven, is in contradiction with God’s Word, the one calling fire down from heaven is a deceiver and very likely himself deceived.

Hear me on this miracle business because we are going to go through some severe testing, and these testings are going to have some miracles in them! Scripture says that in the end-times there are going to be miracles performed by both the false prophet and by Antichrist. I want to caution you not to presume that on the basis of the miraculous, it is of God.

In this particular case of the miraculous establishment of the New Covenant, however, Nicodemus is right on the money. His conclusion is what is purposed by the Gospel of John. This Gospel is presenting Jesus on the stage of history as God’s Son, a full member of the Trinity, Who is on a divine mission to save people from eternal death by purchasing for us eternal life and life more abundant. He is God, and He is being introduced to us as our Savior, our Lord, our Master, our God.

You stay true to the Word of God even if an angel contradicts it. The angel is accursed if he contradicts the Word of God. That is what God said through Paul: If an angel comes and says that the Doctrine of Salvation is other than by grace through faith, let him be

accursed.³ I repeat. Do not buy into the idea that miracles prove divinity. Stand on the Word, locked down tight. You stand there in the face of all manner of miraculous evidence to the contrary. ***You stand on the Word of God!***

Did Nicodemus see the Kingdom of God? How many vote “yes”? How many vote “no?”

Carl: I voted no because in my reading of Tasker,⁴ I gathered that there was never another statement in the Scriptures about Nicodemus at all.

Pete: There is another statement. Nicodemus was one of the ones who helped bury Christ.

Wanda. After that there is no other recollection of him ever coming to Christ. That will be one of those answers we will get when we get to heaven, I guess.

V: But a very good clue is present. Nicodemus came to the conclusion through these miracles that only someone of God could do them. Then the Lord said to him, “Verily, verily I say unto thee except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” He did not even talk about the miracles. He was talking about being born again in order to see the Kingdom of God.

According to this passage, being born again, rather than seeing a miracle, was the gateway to seeing the Kingdom of God. Then Nicodemus said something about entering the womb again which shows his lack of understanding. So it is obvious that he has not been born again. Then the Lord answered again, “Verily, verily I say unto you, unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.”

One thing we can know for sure is that Nicodemus, at this point in time, had not seen the Kingdom of God, and had not entered the Kingdom of God because he had not met these qualifications. You must get born twice to see or enter the Kingdom of God. That had not happened.

Here we have a situation in which the man is looking at the miracles, and the Lord is trying to point him to the Kingdom of God. The miracles are pointing to the obvious fact that Jesus is of God, but faith must go beyond the rational conclusion that is limited to the physical world. They point to the spiritual world. Like the Lord’s purpose for the miracles with Nicodemus, we too are supposed to be looking at, entering, and working in the Kingdom of God.

Let me tell you something extremely important: when you start looking at the Kingdom of God, you ***will see the kenosis***, you will see people sacrificing, you will see people diminishing so that Jesus will increase, and you will see the small things because they correlate exactly to the Word of God. If you associate only the great things of grandeur with the Kingdom of God, you are not going to see that Kingdom. You may even be in the Kingdom, and not even be able to work in it any longer. It is critical then that we observe that the Kingdom of God is not just of the great and glorious. It has to do with sweat, blood, and tears. It has to do with carrying heavy loads. It has to do with God accomplishing His purposes through the weak and lowly. The Kingdom of God is like the innocent faith of children.⁵

The Spirit Is Like the Wind

John

3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it

³ Galatians 1:8-9.

⁴ Tasker’s commentary on John was the textbook for this class.

⁵ Luke 18:16.

goeth. so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Verse 8 is very convicting. Sometimes we get so caught up in tradition and the expectations of others that we become so predictable that a watch can be set by our behavior. You can predict what some people are going to do because that is what they have always done. The Holy Spirit does whatever God wants to do, and the one who is born of the Spirit is supposed to be under the Lordship of the Spirit of Christ. That means then that you ought to be under His dominion and doing when, where, and what He wants to do.

According to this verse, we should be unpredictable. He says, "You cannot even tell where the wind is blowing, where it comes from or where it goes." All you can do is hear it and feel it, but you cannot tell where it is coming from or where it is headed. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit!

This verse brings me under conviction because I tend to be predictable. If we are led by the Spirit, we will be going when and where the Spirit wants to use us. We will not be going on our self-determined pathways.

What is the condemnation described by Jesus in the Nicodemus encounter? John 3:19-20.

John

3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

1. The light came into the world.
2. Men loved darkness and hated light.
3. Their deeds were evil.
4. They do not come to the light.
5. They do not accept correction.

The converse to the above scripture reads:

John

3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

The holy man wants to manifest works that are commensurate with his confession. He does not hide in the dark so that his works cannot be reprov'd. He does not do the secret sins.

JOHN 3B: JOHN THE BAPTIST

John

3:22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there. and they came, and were baptized.

3:24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

3:25 Then there arose a question between [some] of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

3:26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all [men] come to him.

3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

3:28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

3:29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom. but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

3:30 He must increase, but I [must] decrease.

The Growth of a Career as Described by John the Baptist

The disciple's career is one of decreasing so that Jesus may increase (John 3:30). This describes the *kenosis*. The requirements for

discipleship define the career as one of self-denial and cross-bearing fellowship.

John the Baptist is an intriguing person. His whole life is strange indeed. It is almost like he did not have a life in comparison to what we have. John's life-goal was to preach repentance in order to prepare for Jesus' coming. He sacrificed everything to relentlessly pursue that goal.

I want you to see what a holy man is like. I want this image of a holy man to be burned into your mind forever. John the Baptist was a holy man who was totally dedicated to Jesus in his whole purpose of life. His whole methodology, everything about his being, i.e. where he slept at night, what he said in the daytime, where he went, and the friends that he made were defined by his purpose in life. All of these characteristics and actions pointed to the Lord Jesus. They were dedicated totally to the Lord Jesus because he himself was dedicated totally to the Lord Jesus. His purpose and everything about him was to do nothing but to bring a pointing, a word, a witness to the Lord Jesus. And his career was to decrease in order that the Lord would increase. I marvel at this dedication by John of his whole life to his holy purpose.

We have talked about how he just showed up on the scene and started preaching. People gathered and responded to his preaching. This picture is of a holy man. God brings that conviction unto repentance through that holy man, and the prophet's message is given him from God. There is a great, growing anticipation and excitement among the throngs being baptized. Through all of the repentance and baptizing, the people are saying, "I am sick of my sin. I am ready to throw in with God."

Just when the drawing of men to John's sermons reached its peak, there came a diminishing of the preacher. All of a sudden his disciples were walking away from him to follow the Lord (John 1:37). Instead of groaning and saying, "My disciples are

leaving, and all that I have built, all this that I have put my life into, is now just shrinking and going away," John actually promoted this result.

Can you see how he is sacrificial and how he pointed to the Lord? The verse (1:37) clearly shows that two of John's disciples who were with John left him in order to follow the Lord. In the midst of all the people coming to John to be baptized, he said, "I told you that I am not the Christ. He must increase, and I must decrease." Please see the *kenosis* in that scenario. That same kind of decreasing so that the Lord can increase is what we also are supposed to be doing. Everything that we have is supposed to be devoted to the Lord. We must decrease, we must be sacrificial, we must be like John the Baptist with our total devotion and all of our energy devoted to the advancement of Jesus Christ, and Him alone because He is Lord; i.e. our Boss, our Master, our God. That purpose is why you are alive. Every breath of air that you take is for that purpose. He owns us.

I marvel at John the Baptist. I think that this guy did his ministry to perfection. Certainly he struggled, he had the doubts when the despair of an impending execution landed on him. Every one of us is going to be wracked with doubts as well when despair lands on us. John bravely faced his imminent death even with despair and doubts invading his mind. The Lord pointed to the Word of God for John to gain his strength.

What are you going to have in those times when despair and doubt begin to take a toll on you? You cannot point to an emotional feel-good, because that will not work. The Word is what you must grab hold of. Let me tell you that holding onto the Word is not going to make the pain go away, and you are not going to say, "Isn't this fun? Getting killed is such great fun." The Word of God is not going to do all those funny things, but it will hold you in the fire. It will make you walk through the

hard times. It will make you face your death with your head up with pride in the Lord for the honor of being able to make the ultimate sacrifice, to be counted worthy.

This kind of sacrifice is what we are looking at here with John the Baptist and his preaching this sermon here. It is just outstanding. John the Baptist, after talking about repentance and the Kingdom of God, talked about the Lord.

Jesus Is Boss (Lord) of the Universe

John

3:31 He that cometh from above is above all. he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. he that cometh from heaven is above all.

3:32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

3:33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

3:34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God. for God giveth not the Spirit by measure [unto him].

3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

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

This passage declares that Jesus is the Lord of the universe. John the Baptist could have begun to question what was happening to him when he saw all of his disciples going over to Jesus. John's influence was decreasing because it too was shifting to Jesus. John could have felt sorry for himself and tried to entice them back. He could have questioned whether or not he should do something to stop the hemorrhaging: "Maybe we need to do some choirs, special music, or something. Perhaps we could add music and some other exciting things to our baptizing service. Maybe we could make our services seeker-sensitive or something like that to get them in

here." John did not even entertain those kinds of thoughts like we do.

All that John the Baptist did was say that Jesus must increase while he himself must decrease. He spoke about the glorious Jesus, not about himself. He acknowledged the fact that he must be sacrificed for the King. He must give his life for the King. Then when he started talking about any element of praise or exaltation, it was not of himself but of the One who is the Lord of the universe. This devotion by John is admirable. I cannot help but marvel at John the Baptist's selflessness.

Can you live the life of sacrifice?

In order to be a disciple of Jesus, one must first deny himself. The *kenosis* is essential for holiness. Self-sacrificial decreasing of the Christian in order for the increasing of Jesus Christ is the pattern for Christianity. John the Baptist devoted his entire life to this pattern. Will you do the same? Stop right now and talk to Jesus (pause).

JOHN 4A: WOMAN AT THE WELL

John

4:1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

4:2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

4:3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

4:4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

4:5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with [his] journey, sat thus on the well. [and] it was about the sixth hour.

4:7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

4:8 (For his disciples were gone away

unto the city to buy meat.)

4:9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

4:11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. from whence then hast thou that living water?

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

4:13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.

4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

4:15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

4:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

4:17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband.

4:18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. in that saidst thou truly.

4:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

4:20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

4:22 Ye worship ye know not what. we know what

4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship

the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

4:24 God [is] a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.

4:25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

4:26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am [he].

Now that statement in verse 26 is a straight open claim by Jesus right there to be the Messiah, the Christ. There is no dancing around in this claim.

John

4:27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman. yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

4:28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

4:29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

4:30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

4:31 In the mean while . . .

When Was the Woman Saved?

I am going to stop right here for some discussion. However, I will pick back up here and talk about the rest of the passage later. But what I want to ask you now is when was this woman saved?

Jack: That very minute she came to the truth about her husband. She had no husband.

Beth: I think it was when she asked for the water.

Wanda: There are other instances when people come to Jesus, and He answers: "By your faith are you saved."⁶ At that moment of asking for the water, she showed her faith,

⁶ Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:

and when you ask Him in faith, salvation happens right then.

Oscar: On the other hand, in some of the reading, it said that at the time she asked for the water, she was thinking about eternal water because she would never have to thirst again as we thirst from a dry mouth. I agree with what Jack said over here about when she was actually saved or could have been saved was when she told the truth.

Jill: I think it was when Jesus told her Who He was, and she realized Who He was.

Ted: Is it possible that she was saved a long time ago because she believed that the Messiah was already coming? She just was not sure that this was He. If it is by faith, she already had faith that He was coming, and she was already worshipping on the mountain. Is it possible that, by her faith sometime before then, she was already saved? However, she just now in this encounter came to grips with the idea that *this man* is the Messiah.

V: So, Ted, it would be like the Old Testament saint kind of faith in the coming Messiah. That is a very good point, a very, very good point, Ted.

Wanda: When a person is saved, there should be a drastic change in life, a complete turnaround from where you were going. Her living the way the Bible describes it tells me that there is no trace of Jesus in her life. I know that there is no perfect person. We all sin even after we are saved, but I just do not see that change.

Beth: When she took the step to go tell others, she had accepted Christ at that point. She would not have wanted to enthusiastically tell them the Messiah is here if she had not really believed. So somewhere in that process she became one of His disciples. She had to have faith at that point.

V: Where I personally come down at was when He said, "I am the Christ." I think right

there those words did the convicting. The asking for the water was preparatory. I think that when she dialogued with Him and told the truth that she knew there was something different about Him. She was being open with Him, and then He said, "I am He." He made a very open claim, and she left her water pot there and went to the town to tell the people.

I think the leaving of the water pot was evidence of her change. She was in on something that was more important than anything that she had ever encountered before. She had come there many times probably to dip that water, fill up the pot, and carry it back to do her cooking or whatever she normally did. But this time she met somebody. Something was radically different, and she turned with a new purpose. The first thing that she did was leave her old purpose and turn to a new purpose, i.e. to go to town and start witnessing.

I think also that it is very, very possible that Ted hit on something important here. His point is about the Old Testament faith of looking toward the cross. That is how Abraham took the promise, and believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. If this woman had believed the promise of the Messiah, the coming of the Messiah, then she would have been like the Old Testament saints, except for one thing. The Messiah was no longer a Person Who was to come. He had come. Faith in a coming Messiah was no longer efficacious because at this point and beyond, saving faith had to be in a specific person—the Man Jesus Christ. However, her kind of Old Testament faith would have made her a perfect candidate to come to the baptism of John the Baptist, if he had been preaching in Samaria.

At the incarnation of Jesus, salvation changed from faith in a coming Messiah to faith in Jesus as the incarnate Messiah. Prior to Jesus, God was counting the saints as righteous because they believed in His

Promises. But after God's Promises had occurred in His only begotten Son, saving belief had to be in that Son, Jesus. There is no other name whereby we can be saved.⁷

The kinds of people, you see, who were coming to John the Baptist were those who knew they had sin in their lives, and they needed to get it clean. That was the baptism of repentance. That is what John the Baptist did. It was for people who were just like this woman right here. However she was a Samaritan, and he was preaching in Judea rather than in Samaria.

Bottom line is that we have our opinions of when the woman was saved, but of course, we cannot know. We will eventually find out, but we do not know right now. However, the time of salvation is a worthy discussion because we need to begin to talk more theology.

Worship in Spirit And Truth

Now we come back to the Spirit and Truth verse. Neither where you worship nor the material elements in your worship have any bearing on validity of worship. I almost want to say that the place of worship should be holy, but even worship in Spirit and in Truth can be done in an unholy place. In fact the saints who will be martyred by Antichrist will be worshipping in unholy places as they are dragged off to the chopping block. Our worship must be in Spirit and in Truth to be valid.

Worship must first be spiritual. If it is contingent upon ceremony or on location or geography or time or any other thing, you see, it is not acceptable to the Lord. Spiritual worship should be done on a 24/7 basis. Guidance from God comes in spiritual worship. Thus holy behavior and ministry come directly out of spiritual worship.

Corporate worship depends on time and place even when it is spiritual because the

saints must be at the same place at the same time for corporate worship. The exception for time and place is now being made via the electronic capabilities of telephone, TV, Internet, DVD, CD, etc. Another way that place can be eliminated is to worship at an agreed hour, which brings to mind a way to eliminate place as a barrier to corporate worship. One can worship without regard to either time or place via recordings, like tape recordings of a corporate worship service. There are many ways to include shut-ins, elderly, prisoners, and ill people in the corporate worship. The issue, though, is spiritual. Just because one gets goose bumps and the pitter-patter of an accelerated heartbeat, it does not indicate spiritual worship. Spiritual worship is when you meet with God, and you experience the filthiness of your life that lacks total dedication. Out of this kind of worship you will experience either a change in your life or conviction for your lack of change.

Not only does worship have to be of the spirit, but it also has to be of the truth. In order for it to be of the truth means that it has to be done by the true you. A façade is not acceptable. Approaching worship while wearing a mask in order to impress your neighbor is not acceptable to the Lord. If you should be performing in order to stay with the traditions or in order to enhance your image, your worship will be rejected. Worship must be the true *you*, from your heart. It has to be in truth by worshipping the One True and living God. Do not fall into the trap of worshipping the Temple, the church, religion, or even some other peripheral thing in the trappings of religion. Some people even worship their worship. Remember that God is not impressed with sacrifices unless they are based on obedience. Thus, true worship always produces obedience to God. Holiness is when you allow yourself to be ***cleansed and set aside for God's exclusive use***. Thus holiness produces worship, and worship

⁷ 1 John. 3:23.

cycles around to produce holiness which, in turn, produces more worship.

Here is an open claim by Jesus that He is the Messiah, and there can be no dispute to its meaning. Then she goes and witnesses, and she says, “Come and see somebody that told me everything that I did. Could this man be the Christ?”⁸ They come to see for themselves. Before they come, we have the disciples coming back in verse 31.

JOHN 4B: HIDDEN MEAT TO EAT

John

4:31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

4:32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

4:33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him [ought] to eat?

4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Meat is for the warrior, the mature person who is being used as a slave by the Lord, a person who is just like John the Baptist. Where meat is “doing” the Word of God, milk is “learning” the Word of God. You need to see the difference because there are many Christians today that think that meat is learning the hard things of the Word of God rather than doing the Word of God. Even doing the simple things is meat. Meat is not learning, but it includes learning because you have to know something to apply it. Meat is the doing of the Word of God. We need to look at Hebrews 5:11-14:

Hebrews

5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [be] the first principles of the

oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

5:13 For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful in the word of righteousness. for he is a babe.

5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

We could go on in this wonderful passage in Hebrews, but I am going to stop right there. You need to see that there is much to be received that is hinging on our doing the Word of God. If we know the Word, and do not do it, to us that is sin.⁹ So just to know the Word can bring you into a diminished stature. Your spiritual growth will be stunted, and you will become disabled. I am not talking about physical bodies, but I am talking about your spiritual capabilities.

Dear reader, please know that if you know the Word, it can be harmful to you if you choose not to do the Word. When we begin to memorize Scripture and to hear the good sermons and go to Sunday school and teach the Word, we come under the judgment of that Word. It is imperative that we **apply all of the known Word** into our own lives. If you do not apply that Word in your own life, you fall under the judgment of that Word because to know the truth and not do it makes that non application the sin of disobedience.

Learning the Word without applying it becomes detrimental to you because sin will incapacitate you spiritually. Even though you have grown to human maturity with a concurrent spiritual maturity, your beginning not to apply the truth that you know will reduce you into a spiritual dwarf because atrophy will begin to set in. Your spiritual (faith) muscle will begin to shrivel, and you will become a little old tiny babe. And the person who does not do the Word has to learn it over and over, and when you get through all the years when

⁸ John 4:29.

⁹ James 4:17

you should be teaching the Word of God, guess what? You will still have to learn it over and over. That is why we have these people in our churches who have to learn the same things over and over again. They also have to be baptized over and over again. They have to run to the same seminars over and over again. When they leave that seminar, their learning will be soon gone if they do not apply it, and their disobedience will harden even more in their lives. ***A major problem plaguing us is the lack of ability to implement the Word, i.e. to become doers of the Word.***¹⁰

The problem with the saints being addressed in the book of Hebrews is that they only did part of the Word. The ministry that those Hebrews did was that they ministered to the insiders, but they forgot to minister to the outsiders.

What about our church members who do not even minister to the insiders, much less the outsiders? They just learn the Word and learn the Word and learn the Word, and memorize the Word. They can even quote the Scriptures. They are under judgment of every word and truth that they have ever learned. Beware, my dear saint, learning the Word is hazardous to your health when it is not applied.

Pete: Just as a quick testimony from an automotive mechanic, I have to go to school for various repairs. If I do what I was schooled on within the next few days, it gets firmly planted in my mind, and I could do it

from then on. But then when that particular job does not come in for several months, I would have to go back to my books and dig and study and re-do through trial and error because I could not remember it. My ability was gained by having done what I had learned.

V: You are really talking about a technique for remembering a mechanical process. In the secular world, doing it sealed it.

However, what I am talking about here is supernatural, not mere memory. It includes memory, but it is an actual eating of spiritual meat. You will grow and become spiritually strong by doing it. You become through the doing of the Word more like the Word incarnate, Jesus. Jesus did what He was and was what He did. His behavior and ontology were perfectly integrated. The doing of what you are learning is extremely important.

You can know the Word, but that does not mean that you have assimilated it. You do not assimilate it until you do it. When you are doing it, then that is who you are. You are not what you know. You are what you both know ***and do***. You must do the Word of God or else you do not grow. Without doing the Word of God, you do not have the meat of God, you do not become a spiritual warrior, you become a babe stuck on milk, and your growth is stunted forever unless you commit to doing the Word of God. Whenever you open up the Bible to preach a sermon, please make sure you are doing that sermon in your own life. When you are preparing a sermon, you must be working it out in your own life. When issues from the Scriptures jump into your mind, be introspective. Do not be thinking only about the congregation. Think also about who you are, what your commitment is, what your responsibility is, and then line up under the Word of God. Get that judgment out on the table, surrender to it, and then go preach it. Then you will be able to preach

¹⁰ James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

1:24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth [therein], he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

from the overflow with a passion that cannot be constrained.

Concerning this idea of eating the meat from God, Jesus said unto them, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work.”¹¹ I believe that there is a spiritual meat that is available to you, and it is found only in the doing of what you know. But there is a spiritual poison available to you too, and that is the “not doing” of what you know.

Jerry: I have been saved about fifteen years, and I was taught in church and Sunday School for six months after I was saved. I was doing nothing except just going to church and Sunday school. Then we got a new young pastor, and he immediately ran me through the Survival Kit. During this study, I took the Word of God extremely seriously. I mean every week I did what it said, and for those twelve weeks I grew tremendously just by doing the Word of God. Before you knew it, when the pastor was not there during the week, I was there doing his job of visiting and witnessing. You are right about doing the Word. God has blessed me very much in my doing it. I have so much more understanding of what Jesus taught.

V: And that doing of the Word is the meat. It is not that we give up milk because the precious milk is good, but we do not want to give up the meat for a total milk diet. The meat of doing the Word must follow after the milk of knowing the Word.

JOHN 4C: THE HARVEST

John

4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and [then] cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

4:36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages,

and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

4:37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

4:38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour, other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

4:39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

Let me stop here and ask you: is the woman a sower or a reaper? And why?

Carl: She left the well, left her water pot, went into the city, and sowed seeds.

Beth: She told the others. So she was sowing seeds out there. They had to come to Him in order to be reaped themselves, so she sowed.

V: Okay, now when you win somebody to the Lord, what do you do? You get that person, together with the Lord, and you say to the person, “Here is the Savior.” What did she do? She went back into town and told the people, “Hey, ya’ll, He’s over here at the well. Come over here to see Him.” Who had done the sowing?

Bob: Hadn’t the fathers done the sowing?

V: Good answer! The fathers had done the sowing because she already knew about the Messiah before she actually met Him. That is an important factor here. All the work that the forefathers had been doing was a tremendous work because she was ready. In fact, the Lord looked up and said the whole city is ready. Then she went to the city to draw the people to the Lord. I think that she is a reaper because the fields were white unto harvest, and she goes into the fields (into the city) and does what we do. She rounds up the people who are ready and gets them joined to the Lord. They get saved.

¹¹ John 4:34.

Henry: She might be a sower and a reaper because you reap what you sow.

V: Okay. Now where would she be the sower?

Oscar: The sowing had already been done in their lives by the fathers.

Ted: The seeds had already been sowed before she ever went there. So she is reaping the harvest.

V: Yes. She was reaping the harvest from the seeds that had been sowed by the forefathers. And she herself was so ripe that as soon as Jesus said that He was the Messiah, she immediately left her water pot, and ptoom (sound effects) went to town and got the people and brought them back. Reaping is dependent on sowing; both are required of us—sow and reap!

JOHN 4D: THE TESTIMONY OF THE SAMARITANS

John

4:40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them, and he abode there two days.

4:41 And many more believed because of his own word;

4:42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard [him] ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

4:43 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

4:44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

4:45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast, for they also went unto the feast.

You need to see in verse 42 that there is a testimony by the Samaritans that Jesus is the

Savior of the world, the Christ. The Samaritans did good. If you could just go preach to a group like this group of Samaritans here, you could really have a revival. That place was white unto harvest.

However, when Jesus goes into Galilee, He declares that the prophet has no honor in his own country.¹² But yet the Galileans received Him gladly. However, the reason for their easy reception is superficial stuff.

Betty: Miracles!

V: Yes, miracles! They would like to see some more miracles and have all the benefits of them.

JOHN 4E: NOBLEMAN'S SON

John

4:46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

4:47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

4:48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

4:49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

4:50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

4:51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told [him], saying, Thy son liveth.

4:52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

4:53 So the father knew that [it was] at

¹² Matthew 13:57 And they were offended in him: But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth, and himself believed, and his whole house.

4:54 This [is] again the second miracle [that] Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

The healing of the nobleman's son is the second miracle. Notice that this miracle happened in the same place as the first miracle, Cana of Galilee. The scene there in Cana is that the Lord is there, and a nobleman comes to Him, and asks Him to come and heal his son. The Lord says something about belief in verse 48: "Then said Jesus unto him, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.'" Please notice that word "believe" in verse 48 and again in verse 50 where it says, "Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." Then in verse 53 the word "believe" occurs again. Tell me the difference in those three "believes."

Tim: In verse 48 they believed by seeing. Verse 50 they believed the Word that Jesus had spoken. In verse 53 they believed what Jesus said.

Joe: The third one confirmed the second one.

V: Is there a difference in the first and the second?

Sybil: Yes.

Pete: The difference between the first, second, and third one is that the nobleman had heard about the miracles, but when Jesus spoke the words, he knew that those words were powerful enough to accomplish the miraculous healing. When he got home, he heard that his belief was not in vain. The miracle had happened just as the Lord had said. That is when he knew that Jesus was who He said He was. He believed in Him.

Wanda. The first one was sort of a challenge when Christ said, "Unless you see it, you will not believe it."

V: Yes, I think so too.

Mary: I think the third one was a confirmation. The time of the healing corresponded exactly with the Lord's pronouncement even though they were in two separate places. When Jesus said the words it took place at exactly the same time. Then the people took the evidence to heart and believed IN Jesus. It was basically a confirmation of who Jesus is, and they all got saved right there.

Tim: The third one went back to depending on sight though. He saw that his son had already been healed. He got the opportunity to depend on his sight again. The second one was really the faith one.

Steve: That one in verse 48 was somewhat humbling. Verse 50 was more of an actual faith. Faith is all it could be because there was no proof available. Verse 53 was without a doubt because the proof was visible. The whole household believed it then.

Wanda. I think verse 50 was when the man believed what Jesus did, and verse 53 he believed who He was.

V: Yes, I think there is a transition that is happening. The first one is based on the testimony of the world about the miracles, and he needed some help for his son. It did not matter to him who the miracle worker was. Then the miracle worker said, "Go, for your son is healed, go your way." He believed the words, so the man felt that the son was healed, and he was going to head on back home to see it. He is met on the way home, and there is the testimony that the son is healed. He links the testimony of the son being healed to the words that were spoken by this man. That linkage was done according to the time of day. What time did the son get healed? It was the same time that the Lord said the words. The linkage connected in his

mind. No longer was he considering whether this Person was a miracle worker and could do this healing on the basis of working miracles. No longer was he accepting the Man's word and stepping out on that. The new issue is, "Who is this Man?" This belief is beyond believing that He can heal, beyond believing His words, but believing Who He is. There is a transition in this belief pattern, and I want you to see the progression here.

What is the progression of faith in the healing of the nobleman's son?

The four I am going to give you are very crude and simple statements from the various verses. I think that this passage is worthy of a lot more study than I am going to give you. You ought to do some significant study on those three beliefs. What are the contexts of each one of those beliefs, what is being believed, and what is the transition that is going on?

1. The nobleman sought help. John 4:47
2. He believed the words. John 4:50
3. He believed in Jesus. John 4:53
4. His household believed in Jesus. Jn 4:53

The first belief is involuntary because it has been proven by a preponderance of evidence that Jesus can heal. It is much like the knowledge of facts. The second belief is voluntary. The man chooses to believe the

Words of Jesus. The third belief is the kind of belief that is expressed in John 3:16.

There is a progression of faith being defined, and my condensed demonstration or explanation of it is really too crude. It does not describe everything that is in here. You need to study this passage on your own at a much deeper level so you can preach it.

Belief and faith are critical areas not only in John but also in the Old Testament. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him as righteousness. This nobleman believed Jesus. He believed him when Jesus said, "Go thy way." So there is something in all of that which needs to be accounted for. Believing the words is significant, but there was something else being implied here because the Lord said, "Unless you see a miracle, you will not believe." That means then, that this man could not believe. Even though he believed the words, he had not believed all the way yet. Once he had seen the miracle, he believed just like the Lord said, "When you see the miracle, you will believe." That is what happened. There is a progression there. Certainly there is something special in believing the words. There is something there though, beyond believing the words. I leave it to you to wrestle that out. I believe that this issue is something that will haunt you for a long time. At least, I hope it does.

Chapter Questions

1. Explain the difference between "making the peace" and "keeping the peace?"
2. What is a "rice" Christian?
3. What is the condemnation described by Jesus in the Nicodemus encounter (John 3:19-20)?
4. What is the growth of a career as described by John the Baptist?
5. What is the "milk" of the Word, and what is the "meat" of the Word.
6. What is the second miracle?
7. What is the progression of faith in the healing of the nobleman's son?

Chapter 4

LAME MAN, SABBATH, MATERIALISM, FEAST OF TABERNACLES, AND CHARACTER OF JESUS

JOHN 5

HEALING OF THE LAME MAN

Chart 4.1 lists the signs including the very next one which is sign #3 from John 5.

SUMMARY OF THE SIGNS in the Book of John	
SIGN	SIGNIFICANT IDEA
1. Changing water to wine	Servants take part
2. Healing the nobleman's son	Faith for healing
3. Healing the lame man	Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

Chart 4.1

The scenario is that the lame man is by the pool, and every time the water is troubled, the first one into the water after the troubling is healed. The Lord comes along, and he sees this man who has been there for 38 years trying to get into the water and cannot get in before someone gets in ahead of him. The Lord asks him a question: "Wilt thou be made whole?" The man answers, and his answer comes from his own context, from his own understanding, and that is that "I have no one to put me in the pool when the water is troubled. While I am coming to the water, another always steps in before me." The Lord says to him, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." Immediately the man was made whole, and he took up his bed and walked.

The healing occurred on the Sabbath day. The Jews observe this guy walking along carrying his bed, and they point out that it is unlawful to work on the Sabbath. And he responds that the person who made him whole told him to do so. When they asked him who told him to do that. He did not know who it was that healed him. However, the Lord later

on meets this guy again in the temple and says to him, "Behold thou art made whole; sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee." At this point, the healed man goes immediately to the Jews, and tells them that it was Jesus who had made him whole.

John

5:16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

This is a strange situation where the Lord did everything right, was merciful, took great mercy upon this man, healed him, and then this phenomenon of persecution here begins to happen. Early in this course, we talked about the rejection. At the beginning of the Lord's coming, there was a ready acceptance of Him, and we are going to see some glimpses of continuation of that kind of acceptance. But now all of a sudden we are having this strange thing happen here about persecution.

What is the two-fold issue of healing the lame man?

1. It is Sabbath breaking.
 - a. The Sabbath is made for man, not vice versa. Mark 2:27.
 - b. The priests and Levites performed ministry on the Sabbath, why not Jesus?
 - c. Ceremonial acts were done on the Sabbath, why not acts of mercy?
 - d. Beasts were protected with provisions, why not man? Luke 14:5 and 13:15.
 - e. Refraining from doing good is the same as doing evil. Mark 3:4.

2. The Son of God.
 - a. Since the Father works, then Jesus would work. John 5:17.
 - b. Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath. Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5.

JOHN 5:33-47 WITNESSES TO JESUS

What is the four-fold witness to Jesus?

1. John the Baptist. John 5:33.
2. Jesus' Works. John 5:36.
3. The Father. John 5:37.
4. Scripture. John 5:39.

These four witnesses to the Lord are very clear witnesses. They point to Him, address Him, validate Him, predict Him, and describe everything about Him.

Now, verses 41 to 44 describe the problem with receiving honor from other men.

John

5:41 I receive not honour from men.

5:42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

5:43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

5:44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that [cometh] from God only?

Horizontal honor entrenches the religious leaders in their high positions and refusal to acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah.

Honor from men is the enemy of the *kenosis*. Jesus declares that He refuses to receive honor from men. Furthermore, He tells us that we cannot believe when we “receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that comes from God only.”

The *kenosis* that is required of us is in Philippians 2. Chart 4.2 describes the *kenosis* as a pathway that goes down, hits the bottom and comes back up after death.

Philippians

2:5 Let this mind be in you . . .

The *kenosis* is the mind that the Lord has, and He wants it to be in us. This is the kind of mind we are supposed to have.

Philippians

2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

You can see where the “equal with God” is on the chart. It is at the starting point on chart 4.2.

Philippians

2:7 But made himself of no reputation, . .

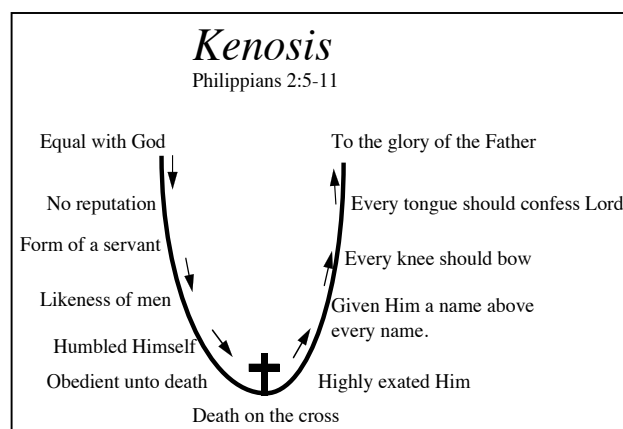


Chart 4.2

That means He emptied Himself right there of His reputation. “No reputation” is on the chart (see chart 4.2).

Philippians

2:6 . . . and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;

2:11 And [that] every tongue should con-

fess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is a life-style pattern here, and it is a pattern that was used by Jesus Himself. God says here in His Word that He wants me to have this same kind of mind. He wants you to have this same kind of mind. This is the kind of mind that the Lord had when He left His home, His Own place of honor, where He was equal with God. He took a downward path, a path in which He emptied Himself, and became a servant, and was humbled, and obedient, even going down to the death.

Instead of doing what the world wants to do which is climb up, He did the opposite and came down. It was a sacrificial life-style. That sacrificial life corresponds exactly with who He is. Our Lord Jesus has this sacrificial mind, and He wants this same mind in me. He wants me to get off my pedestal and come down in a descending pattern to become a servant, humble, obedient even unto death, even to the death of the cross. That is why He said that the disciple must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Him. Down to the cross is where I am headed. All of us are supposed to be on the downward-path journey, which correlates to: humble ourselves and pray and seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways (2 Chron. 7:14). You see that in the Christian life, the *kenosis* has always been God's plan for us. ***Our exaltation comes after death.*** Exaltation does not come in the temporal life. It didn't for Jesus and it doesn't for us. And if you spend your time trying to gain exaltation in the temporal life, you are undoing the life-style pattern that God established. Satan chose for himself to undo the Lord's life-style pattern (Is. 14:13). The opposite of the *kenosis* looks like Chart 4.3.

We want to be sitting up here on the throne at the top (see chart 4.3). We want to be on the throne because we have been brainwashed to seek honor from other men. I too have been brainwashed into pursuing this

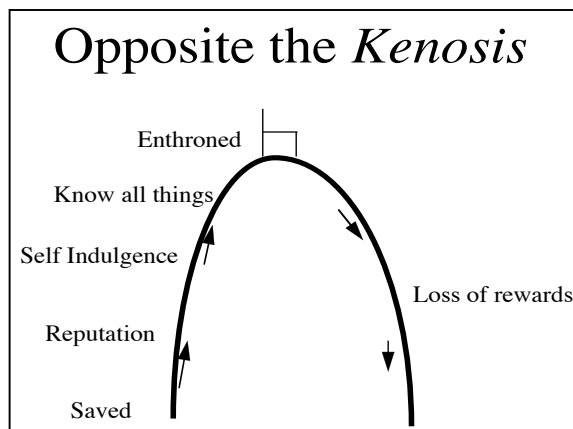


Chart 4.3

kind of pattern. Before salvation, we are all climbing and seeking horizontal honor. However after salvation, we may erroneously continue to pursue the climb because of our fleshly natures. Lets say that we start climbing up, and then we get some applause and some reputation. Instead of losing reputation (emptying ourselves of our reputation as described in Philippians), we go get us some reputation. We keep going on up. We do some self-indulgence, we get much knowledge, and we just keep on going up, up, up. Finally we are enthroned, and people just bow and swoon over us, and we think, "Man! I am the greatest Christian that ever lived." Friend, that tendency that I just described is in you. You can deny it, you can run from it, but I am telling you that it is there. Now, the best thing you can do is recognize it so that you can fight it.

Satan's thing is described when he said, "I think I will ascend,¹ and take my throne into heaven, I think I will just go up here and put my throne up here since I am the strongest, most beautiful angel." But that attitude is cast out. Satan was cast down. If you adopt Satan's pattern of pilgrimage, there will be destruction and loss after death at the end of your pilgrimage. If you adopt the Lord's *kenotic* path, there will be exaltation,

¹ Isaiah 14:12-15.

glorification, rewards, and sharing in His inheritance after death.² Do not be fooled. It is important that you hang on to this teaching because the wisdom of the world says that the *kenosis* is foolishness. The world says that if you have any sense at all, the reverse *kenosis* is where you need to be.

The *kenosis* is difficult! It is hard to hang on to the *kenosis*! You need to have some encouragement. So teach this doctrine, encourage others to adopt the *kenosis*, and then become soul mates with others on this pilgrimage because it is hard to go it alone. When you are going it alone and trying to stay on the *kenotic* pattern while the whole world, the church, and everybody is on the opposite pattern, how are you going to persevere in the *kenosis*? You will be all alone while sacrificing, being obedient and humble, dying to self, and giving up your life. It is tough! I venture to say that there are few people who can do this by themselves. We need encouragement to hang in there, to be tough. When the pain gets so much that you cry yourself to sleep, you will need somebody, a spouse or a friend, with whom you can share. You will need to hear someone say, “Man, we are going to do it together. The Lord is with us and helping us. We are going to make it.”

The temptation to abandon the *kenosis* will creep up on you. You can be fully committed to the *kenosis*, walk out of this class, turn the corner, and be right back in the rat race trying to climb in your quest for honor. The Lord says, “How can you hear the Word of God if you are looking for honor from men?” He says, “How can you hear the Word of God if you are on the climbing path?” I can tell you that you cannot hear it.

When we open up the Bible, the Christian population will see two different things. I see multitudes of requirements, and I think, “Oh, my! God, I cannot do this; it is too much!”

Other people say, “Oh, look at all the blessings; no works are required. All I need to do is just pray, and He will give me everything I want.” Class, I see this everywhere.

Many people see no need for works in the Scriptures: “I do not have to do anything. Jesus has done it all and is now going to dump out nothing but good and fun things on me, and then I am going to have crowns and a mansion in heaven.”

If you hear the Word of God while expecting horizontal or temporal honor in your temporal lifetime, then your ability to understand that you must deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow Jesus will diminish. Severe tests under these self-indulgent expectations will destroy your faith. When you are on the path of the opposite of the *kenosis*, you will not be free to yield to the Lord. You will be yielding to your understanding of Scripture through the world’s wisdom. It will destroy your faith and make you ineffective.

John 5:41-44 reveals the risk of seeking honor. He says, “How can you have any faith if you seek honor one of another rather than honor from the only One who grants eternal honor.” The *kenosis* path gets you no honor whatsoever in this temporal realm. None. Zip. Nothing. No “attaboy” here. Nothing but, “You are acting like a fool” from the religious crowd. You will hear words like: “What is wrong with you, why can’t you be normal?” That is what you will hear when you are on the path of the *kenosis*. But on the other hand, you will have the honor from God that will bless you slam to your toes, and you will know, even when the tears are running down your cheeks, that God is saying, “Hang in there, stay with it, you are glorifying Me, you are My true disciple, hang in there, and keep on walking with the cross just like My Only Begotten did.” That sacrificial lifestyle is what God wants of you.

² Philippians 2:5-11.

JOHN 6

FEEDING THE MULTITUDES

These people have been following the Lord because of His miracles. The Lord sees a huge crowd of people. He turns to Philip and says to him, “Where are we going to buy enough bread for these people to eat?” Philip, who is very much like us, looked in his pocket and says,

John

6:7 ... Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

Andrew then adds his information:

John

6:9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

And then the Lord implements His plan to multiply the lad’s contribution. The lad contributed all that he had, and even though it was little, God multiplied it and made it sufficient (He will do the same with you).

The Lord gives thanks for the lad’s little, **but sacrificial**, offering. This thanks is important because it is mentioned again later in the chapter. **True sacrifice, even though small, is the divine requirement for divine power to enter into the fulfilling of a divine task which has encountered a large human problem.** The Lord multiplies the little into a lot and His disciples feed everybody to their fill. The leftovers are even more than the original offering. The ministers themselves are fed from the leftovers.

Verse 14 is an interesting confession. These are ordinary people out there, and the issue of whether or not Jesus “is that prophet” has already been addressed in a prior chapter. These ordinary people are going to come to a conclusion that is more advanced than that of their leaders and their teachers. They are going to conclude that Jesus is that prophet.

John

6:14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

They had made a discovery. This is an intellectual understanding, not a heart thing yet, but they had advanced further along the road to faith than their learned elders, the scribes, and the Pharisees. This is a significant thing for the common people to understand.

Thus, the feeding of 5000 men is the fourth sign (see chart 4.4). I want to connect

SUMMARY OF THE SIGNS in the Book of John	
SIGN	SIGNIFICANT IDEA
1. Changing water to wine	Servants take part
2. Healing the nobleman’s son	Faith for healing
3. Healing the lame man	Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
4. Feeding the 5000	Jesus is the concerned Provider of all needs

Chart 4.4

this sign about feeding the multitude to the teaching on the bread and the receiving of horizontal honor. We can see this from verse 22 through the rest of the chapter, and then we will come back to pick up sign #5. This is kind of difficult teaching right in here.

John

6:22 The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but [that] his disciples were gone away alone;

6:23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

6:24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

6:25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

So He is saying, “You are seeking me in order that you may eat.” To get some free food was their motivation. So their focus was not on Him, but on themselves.

Sybil: This is like the rice-christians syndrome.

Steve: Yes, and it kind of lines up with our churches today. Everybody wants to go to heaven; so they get saved. They are not taught how to serve the Lord because all they want is this free salvation talked about in Ephesians 2:8-10.³ They want the freebies without having to do anything. This ancient example of being motivated by free food compares to current examples of Christians desiring the free salvation without any interest in serving the Giver of salvation.

V: Very good, Steve. You are describing the Christian on the left in Chart 4.5, which contrasts Christian life-styles.

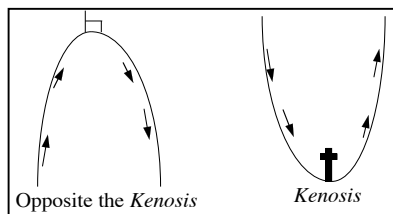


Chart 4.5

Where would you put the people being addressed by Jesus on these models here in chart 4.5?

Tim: It would be on the opposite of the *kenosis*.

Wanda: They wanted Him to feed them like He fed the Israelites manna. Free food is what they wanted.

³ Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

V: So they wanted ease, indulgence, contentment in their own lives (see the left model in chart 4.5). They had no interest in sacrifice. Were they even willing to hear the *kenosis*?

I have had students who were unwilling to hear it. I have witnessed to people in the market place who claimed to be Christians that held to the idea that salvation was their ticket to temporal glory and riches. The *kenosis* was foolishness to them.

Beth: When I was working with Narrowgate Ministries on Thursday nights at *undisclosed-name* Baptist Church, the desire for free-food frequently overshadowed the desire for spiritual food. Narrowgate put on a super good meal, tablecloths on the table, and real dishes. The needy people sat down to be served by members of the church. Everything was just great. When the meal was over, though, the pastor would deliver a small sermon, but nobody kept the guests from walking out. Most of the time when he was finished with his sermon, there would be very few left. After the needy people had come in and enjoyed the free meal, they were ready to leave. They did not want to hear God's Word.

V: That scenario is repeated every day across the land.

Homer: One time I was asked to preach at the Union Gospel Mission, and it was worse than that because the men were not allowed to eat until after the sermon. They were just waiting for me to get through. That is a hard act to do.

V: That is typical, Homer, for ministering to those in the left model of chart 4.5 by you who are here in the right model. The two parties have nothing in common.

Homer: You know, I think it is kind of strange here that we definitely see in verse 26 that the people were after the wrong thing. I mean they put forth a lot of effort to get there

in order to get this meal. Sometimes today we also have to go to a lot of effort in trying to achieve something with God that we really do not have to go through. Denying yourself, picking up your cross and following Jesus is actually a very simple thing. However, it is just that we make it so hard by going this climbing route as opposed to following the *kenotic* route.

V: I agree that the *kenosis* is simple, but it is far from easy. It is the hardest thing that we will ever do because it is self-sacrificial.

Verse 15 connects with sign #5:

John

6:15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

After the Lord had departed, the people begin to search for Him. Please examine this effort. It is not an effort out of context. The context is to crown Him as King so that now they can live in the land of plenty and free food. He just gives thanks, and two little fishes and five little loaves become a mountain load of fish and bread.

This desire to be taken care of is the same kind of thing that had happened with the crowning of the very first king. In that event, the Jews looked around at the other nations who had strong kings fighting and conquering their enemies. Who is king of the Jews? God!

However, their king, God, had said, “Okay, now I want you to line up here, get all your tribes together, get all the warriors out of each tribe, and line up in order to go in and fight the Philistines. Do not worry because I am going to go before you.” But those warriors had to line up with the looming fact that they were going to march forth into a real life-and-death battle. There they were, all the warriors from the twelve tribes, and they are all looking out there at those fierce Philistines.

Let’s imagine that in this scenario, I am in the front row. Nearly everyone in the front row is sure to be killed! I want a king in front of me to lead us. He would not be leading us into a situation in which he would likely be killed himself. However, since I am the elder in my tribe, it is my responsibility to be up front. I begin to think like so many other Jews were thinking: “What we need is a king. All the other nations have kings. The Philistines have a king. We need a king too so that he can fight and lead us to victory. By following a king, I would not have to think. All I have to do is obey orders, and chances are that I will remain behind the lines. I can fight if I have to, but I will not likely be right in the front. It is the king’s responsibility. Besides fighting our wars for us, the king can organize all of our agriculture and our economy, and we will have plenty, and he can feed us. This idea of a king seems like a good thing. And then in the tax system, I will be fed, I will be taken care of, and I will not have to work as hard. Yes indeed, this king business is a good idea.”

That kind of thinking dethroned God as king and brought in the first human king of the Jews. That model has continued all the way through history. Now, here we are in the New Testament times, and the people are still thinking the same way. “What we need is a king. We do not want God as a king because if we have Him as king, we have to be in the front line in our battles, and we have to take care of ourselves and our families. Having God, as the King, takes away our temporal security, puts too much responsibility on our own shoulders, and is certainly out of step with the rest of the world. We do not like all these negatives. We need an earthly king so that we can do what we want and still have our needs taken care of.

Therefore, these people are seeking Jesus with a purpose in mind. They are going to have Him as King. There is desperation here in their seeking because they want to establish

Him as King in order for Him to work the kinds of miracles which will insulate them from the Romans. He will fight their battles for them. There is a lot of political stuff that is going on here that is driving this quest. More than just food for one day, it is a way of life that they are searching for. The way of life being sought is the opposite of the *kenosis*, but the Lord Himself is on the *kenosis*.

The Lord and the people have opposite intentions. The problem of their opposite intentions is the same problem that you have in a church. You pastors have the *kenosis* as your model. You are trying to deny yourselves, pick up your crosses, and follow the Lord in true discipleship (at least, this is what you are supposed to be doing). You should be trying to implement the *kenosis* in your own life, and trying to get as many of your congregation to imitate you in this same model. But you need to understand that your congregation does not have any desire whatsoever for the *kenosis*. They are on the reverse *kenosis*. The problem in the typical church is the same problem as the one faced by Jesus in this Scripture. We have problems with understanding two different mindsets: God's mindset and the human mindset. This understanding is very, very difficult.

Sunday school teachers are supposed to be in the *kenosis* as well. You teachers are actually co-pastoring. A Sunday school teacher is the pastor of a small congregation. You are the shepherd of that little congregation. It is your responsibility to adopt this pattern in your life, and draw them into the same pattern. However, they are going to fight you every inch of the way.

This battle between adherents of the *kenosis* and the adherents of the upside down *kenosis* will rage continuously until the end of time. Everybody in here knows something about this battle, and you are going to have to

hang on to the *kenosis* and be willing to teach⁴ it and model it.

Verses 22 through 29 of the passage above show that the people are seeking Jesus, but their interest is not in the spiritual. It is in the physical.

BREAD OF LIFE

The following scriptures have to do with the bread of life, and we need to examine them closely.

Matthew

6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness!

6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Life's dichotomy is depicted right here! If you are in the *kenosis*, you will despise its opposite. If you are in the up-side-down *kenosis*, you will despise the *kenosis*. You cannot be in both of them. You must choose the one and reject the other. Over and over again God keeps talking about this. You cannot serve both God and mammon. Certainly we try to do both because we like to have our cake and eat it too. Since it is impossible to serve both at the same time, our compromise

⁴ I have a theory that it takes five teachings of the same thing for it to sink in. The Lord used four gospels to teach one thing. It took Him four times at it for us to catch on, and I figure that the best we can possibly hope for, is five, at least one more than the Lord used.

is to vacillate back and forth, from one to the other.

Matthew

6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, . . .

That willingness to sacrifice your life is when you are in the *kenosis*.

Matthew

6:25 . . . what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith?

6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

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

6:34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day [is] the evil thereof.

This is a long passage that is driving home the *kenosis*. This is the Lord's model, and if you will take up His model being truly

thankful for the little provisions, He will provide to you the needs (not wants) of life. If, however, you take up the reverse of His model, you must provide for your own needs and insatiable wants of life. The reverse *kenosis* will make you not useful to God. On the other hand, if you live the *kenosis*, you become very useful to God, and your needs are taken care of. Please do not adopt the reverse *kenosis* because you will be useless to God. Not only will you lose your usefulness, but you will be required to take care of your own needs. Plus you will never be satisfied because this wrong model demands that you climb up and get more than you need. You just work your whole life away trying to get into the throne and receive the crown, but you will probably never get there. The few who get in the throne will be in agony over failing to get even more. Those who get into the throne are not content. The quest will use up your life, and you will become unfit for God's use. In this scenario, you cannot even hear the Word of God. You cannot learn. Thus, you become ignorant.

The upside down *kenosis* has many terrible repercussions, like a domino effect. Let us just suppose that you get all the way to the top. You get in the throne. In your judgment, God will say to you, "Why did you lay up treasure that will rust away? You spent your whole life getting something that is good only while you are in the temporal life. It will not last into eternity. Why would you do that?"

On the other hand, the *kenosis* has the appearance of throwing everything away. You end up getting the cross instead of a throne. It is a downward move of sacrificing your life. At the end of life, in the eschaton, you are going to be exalted, and you will get to walk with the Lord. You will know His sufferings, and you will know Him personally in a much more dynamic way. During your life of sacrifice, God will use you to bring glory to Himself because you are a fit vessel. The *kenosis* is hard to do. John the Baptist

described it thusly: “I must decrease and He must increase.”

This passage in Matthew 6 is saying, “Do not do the reverse *kenosis*. Do the *kenosis*.” If you can shift gears into thinking like this, everything in the Bible is going to teach *kenosis*. It will all connect up once you shift over and begin to think with the mind of Christ. However, it is very difficult.

Matthew

19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go [and] sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come [and] follow me.

This part right here is again saying that if you are going to be His disciple, wealth or riches or reputation or whatever cannot hinder you. There are many things that can impede your following the Lord.

If you are going to be perfect (I cannot remember whether we already did the Doctrine of Salvation in this course or not), means you are going to get to the end. The Doctrine of Salvation is more than the new birth. The new birth is the event labeled on chart 4.6 as “justification.” When you become justified you are given the righteousness of Christ. You are made absolutely righteous, more than our works can deliver. It is the righteousness of Christ. It takes that much righteousness in order to get into heaven. That is the kind of righteousness that you get at the point of justification.

Justification occurs in an instant in time, an event. We draw a vertical line so that it indicates a dot in time (see justification on chart 4.6). That is your new birth that launches you on a pilgrimage, and that pilgrimage is called sanctification.

Sanctification lasts from your new birth to your death (see upward line on chart 4.6). That is the length of time that you have for the purpose of sanctification. Sanctification

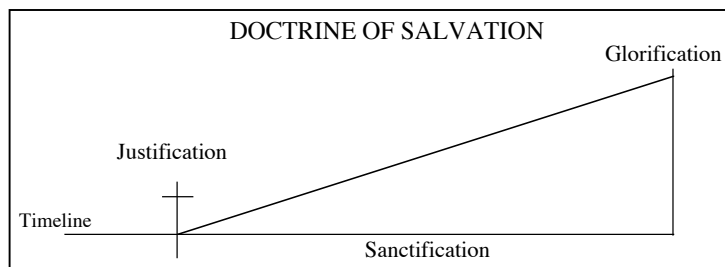


Chart 4.6

means to be clean from sin and separated unto God's use. That is also what holy means. Sanctification means to be made holy in person ***and works***. A holy person is a person who has been justified, i.e. his personhood has been set aside and dedicated to God's use. However, his works may be unholy even when moral, i.e. his actions may be dedicated to himself, not to God. *Kenosis* = a holy life. Reverse *kenosis* = an unholy life.

Sanctification is a rest-of-life process of being used by God. Justification is an event that marks the beginning of sanctification, and in sanctification, you are made both absolutely righteous and also God uses your works exclusively. God sanctifies your personhood right then and there at justification by forgiving your sin and birthing in you the Lord's Nature.

Jesus then says, “This is my servant,” and He puts His brand on you. At justification, you are God's clean property. Now it is up to you to do something about your will. Dealing with your will has to do with your mind. Philippians 2:5 says “Let this mind be in you,” so you are required to think like Christ. Thinking like Christ is extremely hard to do! When you start thinking like Christ, then you will be used by God exclusively. If you are going to be used by God, you must give up your reputation, you must be a servant, you must be as an ordinary man, no superman. You must be humble, obedient, and die to self. That kind of life is what discipleship requires. When He says, “If you are going to

be My disciple, first deny yourself, second pick up your cross, and third follow me.” All of that correlates with the *kenosis*.

Matthew 19:21 is saying, “If you are going to be perfect,” perfection is the final destination in the Doctrine of Salvation. We are trying to get to perfect. Let me show you how this works. When you are justified, He gives you a set of gifts, and you have human abilities, and those abilities dovetail with your spiritual gifts. He maps out His plan for you, His child. Here is His perfect plan for you (the upward slanted straight line in chart 4.7) if you are completely yielded to God. You will walk this path. It is customized just for you. I cannot do your path because only you have the proper gifts to do that good path.

Departing God’s Path of Sanctification

Suppose you set out on your path, and you are walking along doing really good. Then if you are like Perry on the back row (smile), you will oops and drop down below God’s chosen path for you. Hopefully, you will see your error and get back on your path. So there are a lot of “oops” going on with us. When you come out here to the end of life, you will lose those rewards which you would have received as represented by the gap between where the dotted line and the solid upward-moving line end up.

It could well be that part of the time you had decided that God’s path for you was not cool. You wanted to be like the majority of Christians. So you came over to the reverse *kenosis* and did some of that. In that model, you tried to gain a special reputation, acquire some wealth, receive the applause of men, do some good things in order to be seen, and get some honor. Now when you do these things, you are walking a path below God’s planned path for you.

When you are walking the sacrificial path of the *kenosis*, and you are persecuted, jump for joy because you have received an honor.

The top solid line on chart 4.7 is the *kenosis*. The upward slope indicates increasing difficulty. The dotted line below the solid line portrays the periodical lapses into the reverse *kenosis*, which detract from or competes with the *kenosis*. Within you, the battle that rages is between the two natures: one that wants the *kenosis* and one that wants its reverse. In your mind is where the battle is. You are continually trying to make decisions, and your decisions are, “Do I do my own thing, or do I do God’s thing.” You rationalize, “God’s thing has all this humility and obedience and sacrifice stuff. That cannot be the will of God. God wants to bless His children. Since I am His child, then God wants to bless me. Therefore this path of self-denial and suffering cannot be the path that God has called me to (our conclusion too often).”

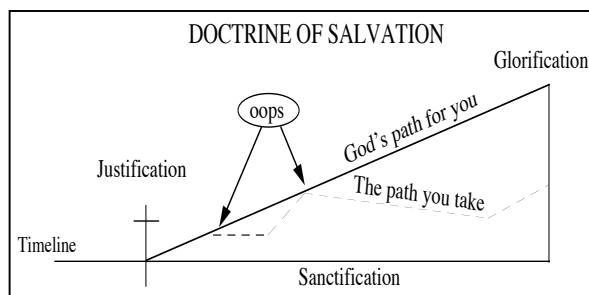


Chart 4.7

When we look at the upside down *kenosis*, we see fun, riches, and all of the things that your human heart craves: “Oh, this must be God’s will for me.” When you get on this path, then you are on the dotted line. Jesus did not walk the easy path! The Apostle Paul did not either. He was whipped, was stoned, and had his head cut off. During his time in prison, where he was cold and lonely, he wrote from prison and said, “When you send Mark, ask him to get the cloak that I left at my friend’s house and bring it to me. I am cold.” These are the kinds of hardships that He is calling us to.

Sanctification Leads to Perfection

When you are on God's path, you are going to an end point, and that end point is called *telos*, (from this word, we get the word tail, like the tail of a dog). It means the end goal, and it is translated perfection. Sanctification is your pathway to the end, i.e. to perfection.

You get into the race right here at justification (chart 4.6). You start running your race as a Christian soldier to bring your body under submission with your eyes focused on where you will be going. You will say, "I will submit to God no matter what the cost."

When you get to the end of your race and breathe your last breath, then will come the exaltation. Then comes the applause, all of the rejoicing, the jumping for ecstatic joy, and celebration for eternity. It is an exciting thing to look forward to. So when you come to the point of glorification (chart 4.7), you will have reached your end, *telos* is end, you will have been perfected, and when you see the word perfect in the Bible, that is the word for *telos*. It does not mean to be without any faults in your works. It means you have reached the end of your works, i.e. glorification in the doctrine of salvation.

The following describes being perfected: You are on your path. You are coming to the end of God's path of sanctification for you. This path ends at glorification. The intersection of sanctification and glorification occurs at the point of perfection. Perfection is at the point of glorification no matter how high, or low, on the glorification line you are. Glorification is an event just like justification. Both are events or points in time.

The end point is called perfection. That end point of perfection is where every one of us is headed. The path to get there is on the sanctification path. Sanctification is supposed to have the *kenosis* model in it. When you are

persuaded or deceived into the reverse *kenosis*, you are wobbling below your God-given line (path) of sanctification.

Being on your assigned path is what it means when the Bible says, "If thou wilt be perfect." If you want to get to God's highest glorification for you, go on His path of the *kenosis*. Everybody who goes through justification gets to glorification. However some reach a much higher point of glorification than others. Those on the *kenosis* reach the higher points of glorification.

The Love of Money

1 Timothy

6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, [even] the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

6:7 For we brought nothing into [this] world, [and it is] certain we can carry nothing out.

6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also

called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

6:13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and [before] Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

6:14 That thou keep [this] commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Now God is saying that there are many people who think that the reverse *kenosis* is godliness. He says that these people are so evil that you are to mark them and withdraw from them. Because the path of holiness is the *kenosis*, and if money draws you off this path, and draws you to the reverse *kenosis*, then you are drawn to the root of all evilness.

Whatever draws you to the reverse *kenosis* works on your flesh. Do you see how money, pride, the lust for power and reputation, self-indulgence, and things of this nature will pull you over to the reverse *kenosis*. If you have a partner, and your partner is going in that direction, you are likely going to end up going in that direction too. Your partner is going to say, "Come on," and you are going to be exhorted to move to the reverse *kenosis*.

What we must do now is to hear this teaching here that you are getting right now, dedicate yourself to walk in the Lord's path, fight against all of the drawing that will pull you away from the *kenosis*, and begin to teach and bring people into this same understanding.

Apart from holding onto the *kenosis* for your own lifestyle and also teaching it to others, there is going to be a great departure from holiness when the Antichrist comes into power because Antichrist is going to say, "I want you to be a good Christian, but the way you should do it is by climbing and receiving the blessings of utopia." He will lure you to be politically correct so that you will be able to buy and sell and have power. You will have a good reputation if you will follow his

plan. He will see to it that you are set up so that your churches will be upgraded and remodeled. He will put in your parking lots for you. He will do everything for you. All you have to do is line up with political correctness. The temporal temptations will draw the unwary Christian over.

Those on the *kenosis* will say, "Hold it! This self-indulgent climbing is not what I am about. Getting a great big new church and a new big air conditioner and a new parking lot and a good payroll is not what I am about." My friends, you need to start practicing the self-denying of political-*incorrectness* while it is easy and safe because the time is coming, folks, when political correctness will be a life or death issue, and that time is just around the corner. In fact, it is at the door!

Seek the Kingdom of God, Not Money

Luke

12:29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

12:30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

12:31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

12:33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

12:34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

When you can see the *kenosis* as the path of sanctification, God will be saying that this is the model that I want you to follow.

Do not be afraid, because the monster (see the monster in chart 4.8) has a formidable sword in his hand, and he is blocking your path. Here you are, a little guy with a little

sword. You are walking your path, and he says, “You are not getting past me, and if you do not run and hide, I am going to slaughter you.” When you encounter this monster, your first thoughts will be to run away or find a short cut around the monster so that you may avoid the fight. You will be tempted to search for anything to get around him. However, God said, “Do not fear, little flock. I want to give you the kingdom.”

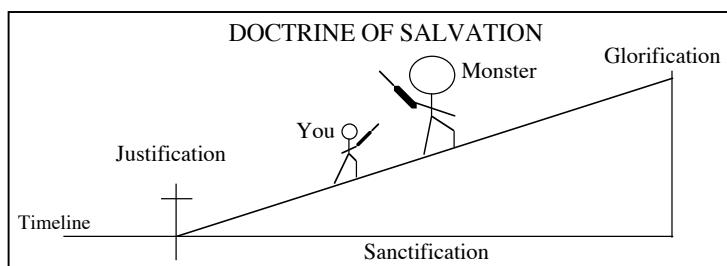


Chart 4.8

Pampered Christians think: “I am not to fear because God is going to give me the kingdom. Oh, yes, I am going to pray with a friend, and we are going to agree together that God is going to take the monster away and give me the kingdom now. Oh wow, this Christianity is fun. Let us pray in agreement and get some more stuff. Let us get the money needed to live the blessed problem-free lives of God’s children. Oh, yes, we will get the money. We have the kingdom now, and we are heading on up.”(sarcasm)

My dear friend, this sarcasm above is the way that many Christians think! We have been brainwashed to think that all the good part (which contains the rewards) is supposed to happen before death. The greatest Christian, Jesus Himself, did not even have a change of clothes, did not have a pillow to put His head on. He was so exhausted that He fell asleep in a smelly old fishing boat with His head on the bottom, on the wood, rolling around. The greatest apostle was despised, shipwrecked, beaten with rods, stoned, spit upon, snake bitten, cold, and imprisoned, and eventually they dragged him out and chopped his head off. These are God’s best. Yet, we read the Bible with the mindset of the deceiver. We are so self-centered that we claim that it says here, “Get the kingdom.” Yes!

You see, we run automatically with our prayer life to the upside down *kenosis* with our interpretation of the Word. However, God is all along talking about the *kenosis*, and we cannot even see it because we are so ensconced in the reverse-*kenosis* environment that we cannot even read the Word and understand it anymore.

SEEK YOUR TREASURE IN THE CROSS

Matthew

6:21 For where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also.

Can you see ***the treasure in your cross?*** If you can, then you are likely on the *kenosis* path. You can look past this giant in your path and see the glory on the other side. You can know that God will give you the power to fight the enemy and defeat him even if you have to die to accomplish that victory (victory is staying on God’s path for you, no matter what it entails).

When Jesus was facing His imminent, physical death on the cross, He prayed, “If there is any other way, get me out of this.”⁵ However, while facing His own excruciating death (the monster before Him) He prays, “Not My Will be done, but Yours be done.” He could see on the other side of the monster to the glory that lay before Him on the other side of the cross. That glorification took Him through the most terrible death known to man. That glorification is what He promises to you for following Him on the *kenosis*.

When He finished praying, He fell down on His face. He was exhausted with His pleas to the Father and His anticipation of the trial ahead. God sent an angel to nurture Him so that He could go through the trial. God did not lift Him out of the torturous trial and put Him over on safe ground and say, “Oh, I do

⁵ Matthew 26:36-45.

not want my Son to suffer. I will prevent His suffering, and He will still get the kingdom and all glory.” No, God gave Him an angel to strengthen Him so that He could go *through* the trial, and He went through at the cost of His life. That kind of sacrificial life is what He is calling for every one of us to do. This knowledge is hard.

You are blessed, however, because you can hear what I am saying. I can see it in your faces. But when you leave here, you have to face a lifetime of teaching all of your family, friends, and churches who will not hear or understand one word you are saying because of their worldly culture. I feel sorry for you. I wish there were some way you could say something, and the lights would turn on, and your people could hear again.

Joe: This reminds me of the youth minister in the back of the room praying about the youth in his church rebelling at this teaching.

V: Yes, the youth of today’s culture are being told that they are the center of the universe, and everything revolves around them. The parents of today’s culture are teaching them the upside down *kenosis*. Those parents are in your churches. Some are your deacons and church leaders. They hear this and say, “What kind of terrible teaching is this!” It is truly a bad situation that you all face.

GOD’S FORMULA FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Matthew

16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Again this passage is about the *kenotic* path. He is saying in different words, “Deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow me.” If you are going to follow the Lord, there is a path that He has designed just for you, and He says, “Follow me on this path that I have made for you.” He leads out on your path (see chart 4.9). You get to follow the King! You do not have to be out in front looking at the enemy all by yourself. You get to follow the King like everybody wants, but they want a flesh and blood king with food and real bread and all this other temporal stuff. You get to follow the King of kings. Little flock, do not be afraid. It is His desire to give you the Kingdom. But that gift comes in the glorification at the end of the path. This understanding that glorification comes after death is how you should interpret the Bible. This life of sacrifice during sanctification is what He wants you to do now.

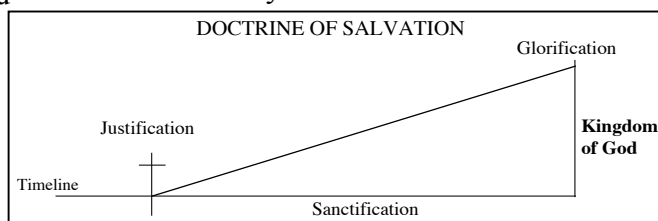


Chart 4.9

In your prayers, you may see that monster out there and fall down and say, “Oh, God! Get rid of that giant monster out there. I cannot fight the monster, Lord. Get rid of it.” The Holy Spirit, with words that cannot be uttered because you cannot utter these Words, will say, “Father, keep the monster out there. I will help this guy go through the monster because if he goes through the monster he will receive all of the treasures laid up in heaven for him.” My friend, you are going to receive all of these things because it says in

Matthew 16:27 “He shall reward every man according to his works.”

In words that cannot be uttered by you, the Holy Spirit says, “God, keep that monster in place. If this guy can just yield his will to me, I will whip that monster from here to yonder and back. Then this guy gets the victory and all its rewards too.”

Carl: People say, “Jesus is all that you need,” but when you get to the point where Jesus is all that you have, then you will know that Jesus is all that you need.

V: That is a very, very good point, Carl.

Carl: I have been there.

V: I think that you probably live there.

Here is God’s goal for every one of you. God wants to give you the Kingdom (see chart 4.9). When you get to the end of your sacrificial path of the *kenosis*, He is going to hand the Kingdom to you and say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.” You are going to say, “All this . . . for me?” He will then say, “That is not all. I am going to dump some more blessings on you” (Mt. 25 lesson on rewards). It gets more and more exciting, folks. It is so good that it will make you pat your feet (smile).

Henry: If we do not fight the monsters, we cannot handle the rewards for we have not grown enough?

V: Not grown enough to handle the rewards? . . . that is good, Henry.

BE FIT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD VIA THE KENOSIS

Luke

9:57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain [man] said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

9:58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air [have] nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay [his] head.

9:59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

9:60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

9:61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

During your time in the *kenosis* model, you are going to observe something in your life that you have not observed before. You will observe the power of God, the sweetness of His Word in new and refreshing ways. You will understand at a much deeper level, because the Bible is going to come to life. You are going to have the Lord’s comforting touch, and you will be able to touch His tears. When you know Him in His suffering, you will know the sweetness of His Kingship.

However, when you are on the *kenosis* path, you will be tempted by the devil to take an easier path (see chart 4.10). You will start thinking things such as, “Maybe the Lord did not call me to do this hard and costly ministry. None of the other ministers have to go through all these hardships. I think I need to be doing something else. Besides, if I change my priorities, maybe I can still get that next promotion at work.”

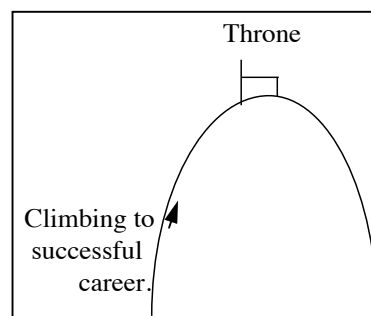


Chart 4.10

I counseled a group of people one time at a church in Fort Worth. I was mapping out some things that were very important for their spiritual growth. The group was a bunch of

yuppies working at General Dynamics. Everybody was making more money than I could count. But every one of them was unhappy with the money they had because they were striving for their next promotion (see chart 4.10).

I was recruiting them to go on a missionary journey with me because I wanted to train them in witnessing. I knew that a long-term commitment to training would not work with this group, but I figured that training via emersion for a short term might be palatable. What I received from them was: "Oh, I cannot do that! I am working 16 hours a day, six days a week." "Oh, no, I am doing a special project, and I cannot be gone even one day." "I am doing this and this and this, and I cannot do any of that kind of stuff. It is all I can do to be in church on Sunday." I counseled them, "Well, what you guys need to do is cut out some of your work, some of your promotions, and some of your money; trade all that in for some spiritual things."

"What????!!!" You would have thought that I was a leprous stranger who had jumped right in the middle of their private little meeting of the elite movers and shakers of a famous Fortune 500 company. They had never heard any talk like that; they could not countenance such an idea. Quit any of this that leads to the next promotion? How absurd!!!!

What this group had is a life-journey prescribed by society. Their pilgrimage was already marked out, and they were going to apply themselves to meeting the demands being required in order to chase their big dream. However, as "great Christian disciples" (in the church's eyes because of their financial success) they were going to work a little Christianity in along the way. They could do a little church thing here, and a church thing there as they climbed the career ladder. Besides that, their having already

been made deacons by the church proved how great they already were at ministry.

It seemed that in this church the ones who worked the most and got the biggest promotions at General Dynamics also were elected to the elite board of deacons. I never did correlate that process with the Bible, but that is the way it worked.

Jack: General Dynamics does not even exist any more.

V: Now isn't that interesting!

SET YOUR EYES ON THE ETERNAL GOAL

Homer: Luke 9:62 says, ". . . No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Those General Dynamics people that you were talking about had taken their eyes off the goal.

Oscar: When plowing, taking your eyes off of the end point causes a wobbling kind of row. The same will happen in our Christian walk.

V: Yes, In the Christian pilgrimage, we must keep our eyes on the goal of following Jesus. Otherwise, you get the wobbles in chart 4.7.

Walk on Your Path in the Lord's Power

Our pilgrimages should press on in the *kenosis* just like the Lord's. He pressed on through the *kenosis* and the sacrifices that it required for the joy on the other side of death. He could see across the chasm, and He walked through that monster death that stood in His path.

The Lord wants me to adopt the same *kenosis* to myself. I too have to be on the *kenotic* path setting my sights on the goal at the end of the sanctification line. I must steady my course so that I stay on path. I too must go through monsters. I know that the only way to defeat a monster is by submitting

my will to the Lord. My friend, you cannot get good enough to defeat Satan's monsters. There is nobody here good enough. Only the Lord can defeat them. You have only to **defeat your own will**.

Irenaeus, in describing the work of Christ in his Doctrine of Christ, said: "Satan confronted Jesus: 'I am going to use all my powers to defeat, kill, and bury you.' And Jesus replied, 'Bring all the power of darkness that you have and array it against me, but I am going to defeat you by merely submitting my will to my Father.'"

That submission of our wills to the Lord is the guaranteed way to victory, folks. It is within your grasp, but you have to conquer your will. Are you willing? Or is your will on the climb? Your will is controlled either by your spirit or your flesh. Do not let your flesh control your will. Please note that God also does not control your will. You are in charge of your own will, and that is what makes you responsible and accountable.

Joe: The submission of will takes an action. About twelve years ago I found myself lying in a hospital room after being told I had terminal cancer. Cancer was my monster. I was dying, and everything about my remaining life was going through my mind. The process was literally making me weaker. I started searching the Bible to understand what the Lord wanted of me, but I was missing something. I finally said, "Here I am trying to defeat this crisis all by myself." So I said, "God, what do you want from me because I cannot do it by myself?" The instant that I said that prayer, the overwhelming fear left me. I was still afraid, I still had to make that journey, I still had to go through the chemo-therapy and radiation, but faith takes an action. You cannot just read your Bible and nothing else. If you believe it, an action is required.

V: So that means that if you are going to be on this path, you actually must . . .

Beth: . . . you actually must step out.

V: And then you have to do it again.

Sara: You have to step out knowing that you are going to get beaten up?

V: That is right. You have to actually advance toward engaging that monster.

Mary: What you really are saying is, "Whatever You want, God, is all right with me." If Joe had not said that, he might have died.

V: Class, whether we live or die is not the answer to victory because Paul died and Jesus died, but they had victory. Victory is found at the point of submission of our wills to Jesus.

Press on toward the High Calling

Philippians

3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

This passage is your battle cry. That high calling is this end point of glorification (chart 4.9). We depict the path of sanctification as an upward path in order to convey the image of struggle. However, the high calling has a downward, sacrificial path. The *kenosis* is the only pathway to the high calling. It takes dedication and a pressing on no matter what gets in your way. You press on and on because this walk of discipleship is hard. It is not natural at all. You must **press on** to the high calling. You have to strive and run and work and deny yourself.

THE BREAD OF LIFE REVISITED

This difficult lifestyle called the *kenosis* was the actual teaching on Jesus' being the bread of life and the demand of the physical sacrifice that was required of the Lord's disciple. Yet in the midst of this good teaching, the Jews were coming and asking for

physical bread because they did not understand the *kenosis*.

When the time arrives when He says, “I am the bread of life,” his followers become offended. He has fed them with bread, and now they come to Him for more. He says that they came because they sought food. Then they say, “Give us a sign.”

John

6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

John

6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life:

Then they begin this murmuring:

John

6:41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

They said, “Is not this the guy whose father was Joseph and mother was Mary? We know all about Him.” Then He repeats,

John

6:48 I am that bread of life.

They ask:

John

6:52 . . . How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?

He responds to them,

John

6:53 . . . Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

They murmur and murmur because they do not like this hard teaching. They are just like us. When you start teaching this kind of *kenotic* sacrifice as the way of being disciples, your people are going to be murmuring. They are going to murmur at this teaching just like these guys did when Jesus taught it.

John

6:61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

John

6:66 From that [time] many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

6:67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

6:68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

6:69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

After Jesus fed the 5000, the people are clamoring to make Him king as an honor from men. **Honor from men is the enemy of faith.** He has to escape them. So, He departs by leaving in secret in order to avoid their grabbing Him and crowning Him against His will. They come seeking after Him, and He says, “You seek me because you were filled, not because of what you saw.” One reason for the people’s seeking Him indicates His majesty. The other reason indicates that He is the source of all their provisions for a life of ease.

Next they ask for a sign. They wanted a sign of manna. He tells them that He is that manna. To that declaration they respond: “How are we going to eat you?” At this point, He is turning the discussion to focus on spiritual things, but they are stuck over in the material realm. He is trying to gently build bridges between the spiritual and material realms so that they can make the transition. However, they are stuck in the material realm and cannot make the transition. Since they want nothing but the material realm, they leave Him! ***Spiritual things are offensive to people who want material things.***

Now I must ask you: are you stuck in the temporal and material realm? Do you interpret the Bible using the model of the upside down *kenosis*? Are you looking for physical blessings instead of spiritual blessing? Take a minute and reflect on your life and then talk to Jesus about it. (Pause)

There are twelve left, and they are in a confused state, and they cannot understand all this business about Jesus being the bread and eating Him for life. They are just like the rest of the followers. They do not know what is going on. He turns to them and says, "Are you going to leave, too?"

I can imagine all of them standing there, and the pain of having to answer that question. "What are we going to do? He is talking about us eating manna, and He is the manna. Are we going to eat Him?" They do not know what is going on here, and they do not know what to do. Peter says, "We do not have anybody to go to. Where are we going to go? You are the One. You are the Christ. You are the One that has the Words of life." They do not even understand anything of what the Lord is declaring. All they know is that He is the One. They do not understand anything else, but they are certain that He is the One. They are as lost in their puzzlement as the others, but they are dedicated to the One. They are hanging in there. They do not know why they are hanging in there other than He is the One. They do not understand the manna or that He is the manna and the bread of life. They conclude only that Jesus is the One, the Messiah. They decide to stay with Him.

Look, there is no one else out there that offers them hope. Jesus is the only One Who offers them the Words that lead to life. I like this. That is a dedication to the One, to the Man, to the Person, to the Christ Who did all that stuff. You see the others concentrated on the physical benefits. The twelve stayed because of what they **saw**, not because of what they **ate**. Can you see the difference there?

Ted: Is Judas the symbol of the ones in the church that are not actually of the body itself?

V: Yes. And I want you to see that of the twelve, there is one that is dedicated to the

reverse *kenosis*, and eleven that are not exactly on the *kenosis*, but they are at least open to it.

Judas, by going along in this decision of the twelve, is making the right decision. He knows that there is something special about Jesus. He does not understand it all, but he has seen what everybody else has seen. He is staying because of what he saw, not what he ate. These twelve are on target right here. They do not know much of anything. They are not theologians yet, but they know that this is the One. He is the Christ is their conclusion: "We do not understand what He is talking about. All we know is that we are staying with Him."

That dedication of the twelve is what He is asking of you and me. Will you stay with Him. You, in the doing of His Word, will come to understand His Word. But there will be many times that you are not going to understand what He is doing or what He is saying. Just do not run off and hide and be offended at the Word. Stay with Him through all of this confusion and doubt, and then the understanding will come. That is what happened to eleven of these twelve. One of the twelve was finally offended by the spiritual *kenosis* and decided to stay in the material, upside-down *kenosis* by betraying Him. This choice came about because of desiring the physical over the spiritual. He made the same choice as the multitude that stopped following him at the Bread of Life sermon.

What do you desire most in your life on earth? Talk to the Lord and tell Him right now. (Pause)

JOHN 6:16-21 WALKING ON WATER

John

6:16 And when even was [now] come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

6:17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it

was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

6:18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

6:19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

6:20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

6:21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

On our chart 4.11, which summarizes the signs, we are adding, "Walking on Water."

SUMMARY OF THE SIGNS in the Book of John	
SIGN	SIGNIFICANT IDEA
1. Changing water to wine	Servants take part
2. Healing the nobleman's son	Faith for healing
3. Healing the lame man	Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
4. Feeding the 5000	Jesus is the concerned Provider of all needs
5. Walking on Water	Jesus turned away from being enthroned

Chart 4.11

We have our five signs lined out on the chart.

We are going to come back to this chart in a little while to see if we can make a statement that puts the teachings of all the signs into some kind of order or context in which it tells us something about our Lord. Signs are meant to inform us. But in the meantime, let's look at the popular interpretation of the Messiah.

What is the Jewish conception of the Messiah in John 6?

1. They wanted the Messiah to be king. (Political motivations). John 6:15. A corresponding reference is 1 Samuel 8:19-20.
2. They wanted to eat and be filled. (Indulge flesh). John 6:26.
3. They had an insatiable desire for signs. (Wanted the spectacular). John 6:30.
4. They misinterpreted signs as earthly. (Locked into the temporal and material). John 6:41 and 52.

Can you see how all of the Jewish interpretation fits the reverse *kenosis*? A political kingdom comes with the idea that we can get a king and let him take care of us. The Jews are seeking to indulge the flesh. Therefore their interpretation is indulgent. The spectacular is entertaining and titillating. In the earthly interpretations, everything is temporal and material.

When we interpret these issues from the spiritual side, we find the opposite interpretation of every one of the issues. Instead of physical, it is spiritual. Instead of indulging, it is self-denying. Instead of spectacular, it looks like foolishness. Instead of an earthly king, we have a Heavenly King.

John 7, The World Hates Jesus

John

7:6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your

time is always ready.

7:7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

7:8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

7:9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode [still] in Galilee.

He makes this statement to His brethren: He says, "The world cannot hate you, but it hates (ongoing present tense) me because I testify of it." Why is it that the world hates the Lord and His disciples, but it does not hate its own?

Tim: It does not fear its own.

V: Okay, that is good.

Betty: The world does not try to make a change.

V: Okay, that is good.

Jack: I think Christ and His disciples bring conviction on the others.

V: Yes, that conviction grows out of the difference. What is owned by the world is like the world. Christ and His disciples who walk close with Him do not look like and act like the world because they do not belong to it.

Henry: Earlier in John, God says that the one who does evil hates the light.

V: So if the Lord is the light, and the people following Him reflect the light, they bring light into darkness. The darkness hates fleeing from the light. So there is a hatred of the light by the world.

What is the answer for us Christians who do not want to be hated by the world? Well, it is obvious if you have been observing church members for very long, right?

Sarcasm:

1. *Quit being the light in public. Be private light. Go in the sanctuary and be light for an hour. Then go out and be darkness, and then the world will love you. Hey, this works! The Lord does not want me to suffer, does He? God does not want me to suffer because I am His blessed child. Therefore, I will be out in the world and get along with it by not rocking the boat, i.e. go along to get along.*
2. *Then, I will go to church, sing our songs, sit down when required, stand up when required, and when the offering plate comes by, I will drop my money in there. They will love me here in the church, too.*
3. *You do it like you are supposed to at church so they will love you there. You do the world thing so they will love you there. That, then, is the answer. This is a good thing to know if you want the upside down kenosis.*

So the whole church has learned the answer. However, the world is going to hell. Yet while the society is plunging down into the chaos of lost moral anchorings, the church says, "Isn't this fun? We get to have our cake and eat it too. We are squeaky clean because we know about heaven as our destination. We get along great with those going to hell over here in the world. We are so righteous because we go to church and sing about heaven and how we are going there. We will even celebrate about how we are not going to

hell. Then we will go out in the world and fool these poor lost people into thinking that we are going to hell, just like them. And the people of the world will love us like the church loves us. Man, we have it figured out, and it works.

Steve: That is the best of both worlds.

V: The best of both worlds is spiritual compromise. The Lord says that to be friends with the world is to be at enmity with Him.⁶ This approach to life is wobbling around below the path of sanctification, not facing the monsters. It is to indulge yourself, turn away from all sacrifice, and have temporal treasure and friendship with everybody at all costs. Besides the church no longer marks them who act like the world. It does not withdraw from them. In fact most of those who act like compromisers are made into deacons because they are doing good in *everyone's* eyes.

Class, discipleship is a difficult life. There is a call on your life, and there is a commitment to which you are being drawn, and that commitment is to be ready to be hated by the world. That commitment should be to the death, and that death may come at the hands of the world. The world may take your life, but if you lose your life to the world, you will gain your life to God. You have everything spiritually to gain here with nothing to lose. But it will cost you greatly in your temporal life. I am saying pay whatever it costs because you are being offered a great bargain. Temporal costs for eternal rewards? Pay it!

Jesus says right here to these guys that the world does not hate them. The reason is that they are just like the world. But Jesus is not a bit like the world, and wherever He goes things start happening. He starts violating traditions, and He tells the guy to rise and be

⁶ James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

healed. The Jews say, “Why, you cannot do that on the Sabbath!” However, Jesus is not like the world or bound by its traditions.

It is terrible when the Jews and the political powers are all alike or when God’s people and the secular world are all alike. That is terrible because it condemns the world to hell and robs the saints of their spiritual rewards. The situation is so bad that to His own brothers, He says that the world cannot hate you because you are too much like the world for it to hate you.” Jesus knows that if He goes to the feast, the Jews are going to try to kill Him. However, His brothers can go to the feast and have a big old time because there is not yet a distinction between them and the world. They are just as dark as the world is.

Since the Lord is light, the world hates Him. But the world will hate you, too, you see, if you begin to reflect the Lord in the world. You have to hold your light up and take your hits. Please choose this life of discipleship despite its costs.

Jesus Is Accused of Deception

John

7:12 . . . He is a good man: others said,
Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

Satan, not Jesus, is the deceiver. The book of Revelation states over and over again that Satan is the deceiver. Here is Jesus doing the right thing. He is on His path right here on this line that leads up to glorification (chart 4.12), and the people are being convinced that He is the Christ.

The Jews come along and accuse Him of deceiving the people. They conclude irrationally that anybody on this strange path of self-denial is doing so in order to deceive the people.

I do not understand why self-denial is seen as deception or, on the other hand, why it is so difficult to see self-indulgence in some of the carnal paths. If a preacher charges the

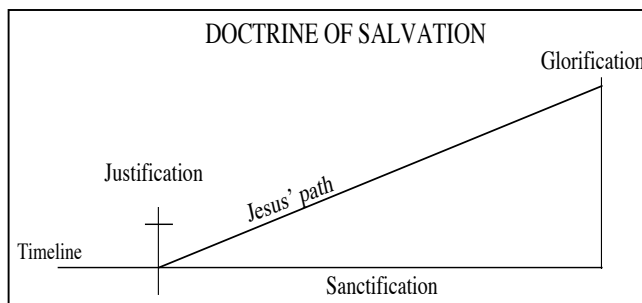


Chart 4.12

people to come into his show, or he is bringing in great gobs of money in offerings for his performances of maybe healing or some other kind of miraculous thing, and he is getting wealthy on his performances, then why is it so difficult to see the reverse *kenosis*? There is a monetary or carnal climb for his ministry. When the motivation behind his ministry is mercenary, why is that difficult to discern? To me it is very easy to see, but the people who fall into this trap cannot see it. It is deception. I see this kind of deception all around.

The irony to me is that when you believe in ministering to the people so much that you will lay your life down for them, that is when many will say, “He is deceiving the people.” Anyway, I am trying to help you to see that you are going to be labeled as evil and called deceivers. If you are walking in the light and sacrificing your life for others, not for temporal gain, but for the benefit of others, then you are on the *kenosis*. You are not on the climb, you sacrifice in order to minister, you have no motivation except for love, care and concern. You want people to be rescued out of the pits of hell, and you are giving your life in order to accomplish this rescue. In the midst of your sacrifice, many people are going to ridicule you and say that you are deceiving the people, just like they did Jesus.

While you are being ridiculed, you are going to see the ones who are actually deceiving the people, and it will be obvious to you.

You will be able to see that the false ministers are obviously motivated by something other than love and sacrifice for the welfare of others. However, almost unbelievably, the people are going to flock to the mercenaries and say, "These are the true ministers. Those others, like you, are sacrificing in order to deceive people into your hidden agenda." It is amazing to me. In my opinion, it has to do with the perceiver's perspective. The more one pursues the reverse *kenosis*, the more that he will respect that lifestyle in others.

In verse 47 the word deceived is there again. This conclusion comes after the contingent that was sent to arrest Christ returned and gave their report.

John

7:45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

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

7:47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

What I want you to see here is the difference in perspectives. Every one of you thinks you are right? Every one of you thinks that anybody that disagrees with you is wrong and is deceived. The Pharisees here have the weight of tradition and authority on their side, so they "know" they are right. In their mind, there is no question about their being correct. This Jesus has to be wrong, and so is anybody else that disobeys a direct order to go and arrest Him and bring Him back for execution. The officers did not arrest Jesus. According to the Pharisees, the officers must be deceived also because deception is based on the subjective perspective of the Pharisees.

These Pharisees are standing in the place of absolute sureness. The officers go out, and they come back and say, "Never has a man spoken like this." "What! Are you deceived?"

Deception is a description assigned to Satan. Yet, the Pharisees are asking the officers, "Are you deceived by Jesus?" And prior to that, they said this man Jesus deceives the people. They are assigning the function of Satan to our Lord, but it is based on their own subjective perspective, i.e. where they stand.

I am bringing all this perception up, not merely because of Satan and the Book of Revelation. What I want you to see here is that much of your evaluation depends upon where you are standing, your perspective. You must, then, be cautious because all of us are in error. There is only one perfect theologian. The rest of us are in error. Where the deception comes in is at the point where you think that you are perfectly right. Deception can only occur when you believe that you are correct. To believe something that you know is false is insanity. Believing a falsehood that you think is true is deception. When we start hearing some counter statements to what we believe, then we think, "That guy who is saying those things is deceived." However, if that other guy is correct, then Satan is going to be at your shoulder saying, "That guy is deceived. You are right, and he is wrong." If you are right, however, then Satan will be over there pointing at you and telling the other guy that you are deceived.

It depends upon perspective, and every one of us is wrong in some areas. We need to be willing to dialogue with other saints, study and be willing to admit when we are wrong. When we find an error in our system, we must tear it down, re-examine the elements, and put it back together again with the false planks replaced with true ones.

The scenario may be like this: You think that your system is good. Then you encounter a contradiction with another saint. You must conclude that at least one of you is wrong. You must investigate your doctrine objectively in a true search for the truth. When you

find it, then both saints should make sure that their doctrines line up completely with the truth.

Jerry, you are a mechanic. Something happens to your transmission. You take that transmission apart, and you spread it all over the place. Then you start putting it back together, and “Oh, there is the problem.” You throw that bad piece out, get a new good piece, and put the transmission back together again. You try the transmission, and it runs good for a while, but it will eventually break down again. You tear it all down again and repeat the process.

Class, our systems are not sacrosanct. We must be willing to examine our systems. Continuous examination is how you attack the deception in your life.

Jack: The Word of God says that you must become as one of these little children in order to enter the Kingdom of God.⁷ The thing about little children is that they will listen, and they will change.

V: Willingness is the key to both salvation and discipleship. Being stiff-necked and unbudging will guarantee that your deception will never be rooted out. Pride, which creates an unbending attitude, is the hazard that comes from higher education. The more degrees you get the more . . .

Carl: . . .the more plaques on the wall, the more letters you have on your name, B.A., M. Div., Ph.D., the more titles, doctor, deacon and so on create an inability to admit error.

V: Great academic accomplishments harden us, or rather they tend to harden us. They do not necessarily have to harden us, but they tend to harden us to the point that we are unwilling to examine our systems. We must be pliable, have a loose neck, not a stiff neck. Be pliable and able to re-examine everything that we have constructed. This kind of re-

examination is hard to do sometimes because you may have spent your whole lifetime building your system. You have risked your life on that system, and then you find out that there is a piece of it that is erroneous. You must pull that piece out. When you pull it out, the whole system may fall apart. You must start over. But you get quite skillful after a while when you repeatedly tear down and re-assemble these doctrines together into a systematic theology.

Jesus Is Sent with God's Doctrine, Not His Own

John

7:16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

If He is sent by God, that means He is an apostle of God. Apostle means the one sent from (*apo* = from; *stello* = send). Jesus is the Sent One from God. Not only is Jesus the Son of God, He is THE *Apostle* of God. He is sent by God.

We Must Do the Doctrine in Order to Know that It Is from God

John

7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself.

We were looking at this ability to dialogue with each other and to have a soft neck so that we are willing to examine our doctrines, expose them, and be able to say, “Oh, I was wrong on this thing. I must get rid of this part.” But there is another key ingredient, and that ingredient is the doing of what you know. If you are on the reverse *kenosis*, you will not know your error. You think that you are right, and because you are not looking for your deception, you are not going to find it. When you are on this climbing path, you cannot do the will of God, and you cannot, then, know the doctrine whether it be of God or not.

⁷ Matthew 18:3; Mark 10:15.

The content of verse 17 points out the key to knowing whether the doctrine is truly from God is by the doing of the doctrine. God says that if you know the truth, you have to do the truth or you are in sin.⁸ It is too late for everyone in this room to escape via ignorance. Here is the hooker: you have already come to know this requirement. That means then that you have to do what you know. If you do not do what you know, then you are going to be deceived. It is a given. If you do not want deception to invade your family, do the truth. We have already read and understood this verse, we have already looked at this requirement, we have examined what failure to do the truth will mean to us, and now it is incumbent that we all do what we know to be the truth. Otherwise, we cannot know the doctrine whether it be of God.

All manner of false doctrine can come at you, but you will be okay if you are doing the truth that you know. But if you step away from the light in your path and wobble down below, you are subject to much error because you will lose your ability to discern the truth.

Jesus is following the path of God, and you are supposed to follow Him. When He goes on up the path, but you go somewhere else because there is a monster up there where the Lord is going, then you will lose your ability to know the truth. When you are not following along right behind the Lord, you are in darkness. The light will progressively get dimmer as the space between you and the Lord lengthens.

Your darkness is relative to the gap between you and the Lord. You cannot see the truth in darkness, and you cannot know that the doctrine which you have encountered is of God. When you are wobbling around below the line doing the reverse *kenosis*, you are deceived, and you cannot find your deception.

⁸ James 4:17.

When somebody comes with a new doctrine, and you study on it, and you wrestle, and you find the positives on it, and you find the negatives on it, you still will not know what to do with it. If you should implement this new doctrine, you question what will happen? With the question going to “results,” you will likely start doing a teleological ethic. That kind of ethic is result oriented, i.e. the ends justify the means.

Our ethic should be based on following the scriptural guidelines by doing what God’s Word says. All manner of confusion happens in teleological ethics, and that is why some churches cannot figure out that homosexuality is wrong.

I heard a seminary staff member say that we should not boycott Disney as was encouraged by our Southern Baptist Convention because of Disney’s support of homosexuality. The seminary staff member said that it was ridiculous to boycott Mickey Mouse and he would never participate in such a boycott.

Ted: Christ, of course, had the perfect downward slope, but do you not think that most of us who are on the downward slope have these little upsurges (see chart 4.13)?

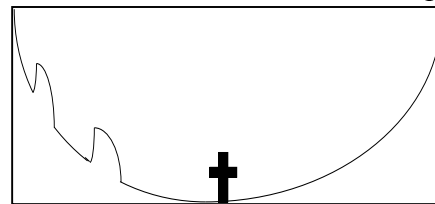


Chart 4.13

V:

That is a good description, and I believe that it is common to the best of us.

Ted: It is when we do not see clearly that we end up back on the climb.

V: Yes, we can bumpity bump bump all the way along the *kenosis*.

Wanda: I have found one thing in my short walk with Christ. On my own I cannot do the *kenosis*, but with Jesus I can do it.

V: When you are on His path of sanctification, He is the one that actually does the fighting. All you do is submit.

Henry: It is like the little child who wants to drive the riding lawnmower. The child is sitting on his dad's lap, working away, and looking all around with a big smile on his face. But, you see, his dad has his hands on the wheel, too. His dad is actually driving the mower while letting his child sit there and do his thing. If we could just realize that we would be like that child if we would just give the task to God, then it is God's power and knowledge that are brought to bear on the task.

V: We must submit our wills to God without being passive.

Walk in the Light by Following Jesus

You need to relate verse 17 to John 8:12 because it is a continuation of knowing the truth.

John

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

This is a promise that if you do His will, you will know whether the doctrine is of God (John 7:17). John 8:12 further says that if you follow the Lord, you "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." You see? These are promises. If you follow Him, you will have much greater ability to determine right and wrong because you have the light. If you do His will, you will know the truth of doctrine (John 7:17). Truth will open up to you, but it does not mean that you are going to be absolutely perfect as far as knowing your theology and your doctrine because nobody follows Him perfectly in everything.

I think that these detours in the road that we take create darkness in our lives and the ability for error to slip in and get into our systems. With the detours come some disciplinary problems that we must endure. To be safe, just do the Word of God. Do it, do it, DO IT! Submit your will to Him. Implement the doctrine of the *kenosis*. The *kenotic* doctrine of the Christian pilgrimage is one of sacrifice. Jesus is your model. Sacrifice is what He did. You do the exact same thing. You submit your will to Him the same way He submitted His will to the Father.

It is the Lord's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. That Kingdom is way out at the end of life, and the way He wants to give it to you is to give you heaven and a share of His rewards in reward for going on His path for you. The only way He can do that is for you to go through the monsters of ministry. If you go around the monster, there will be no reward. If you go through the monster, He will whip it with His power, and he will give you the rewards for sucking it up and denying yourself, picking up your cross, and following Him. He will reward you even when He does all the work. It is amazing! It seems that we should not be rewarded for the work which He does, but we will be rewarded for submitting our wills.

Review of the Signs

We need to go back to the chart on the signs (chart 4.11). I will name the sign, and somebody give me a statement of significance.

Water to wine

Ted: His servants' participating in the task are allowed to see the miracle.

Healing the nobleman's son

Bob: Accepting the Lord's Word allows our faith to work and grow.

Healing the lame man

V: (silence) Come on guys . . . the Son of God is Lord of the Sabbath.

Feeding the 5,000

Mary: He is both concerned and the sufficient provider for the people.

Jack: Do you think that feeding the 5,000 would be a foreshadowing of salvation being a free gift?

V: Yes, it sure could. The teaching on the bread of life followed in fairly close proximity to the feeding of the 5,000. It indicates that He takes care of the spiritual need in the same way that He takes care of the physical need.

Walking on the Water

On Jesus's walking on the water, He is warning against our taking the reverse *kenosis* over the *kenosis*. The reason that He went out on the water was to escape the mob that was wanting to crown Him as king, to give Him earthly glory. Jesus was avoiding the temporal glory. Since there was no boat there, He just walked on the water to get away from temporal glory. Jesus went to His disciples, and got into the boat, and immediately it was at the destination. The walking on the water part to me is a direct warning from Him for us not to seek to be enthroned. We are to seek instead to deny ourselves, to be humble, to become servants, and to be like Him.

Pete: If you do the *kenosis*, you will get to where you are going.

V: That is good, Pete! The *kenosis* is the goal, and it is reached immediately in the doing of it.

Can you imagine that if you prayed, and a miracle happened, and people came and clamored around you, saying that they want to exalt you by naming a holiday after you, naming some buildings after you, and putting you in the history books, and all of that. What would be the counsel of your Christian advisers?

Sarcasm: "Well, there is nothing wrong with recognition! The recognition of your good works actually glorify the Lord. Let them put your name on the thing and put your statue up. It is going to glorify the Lord. You might even get a chance to speak to the Congress of the United States or to the President. If you do, then you can announce to them that it was really Jesus instead of you who did all of those great works. Why not just go ahead with these kinds of celebrations. Let them exalt you because if they exalt you, they are exalting Christ."

Can you see the subtleness, the sneakiness of this temptation, and how horizontal glory will grab you and pull you in, and the next thing you know, you are useless?

When we allow ourselves to be exalted, we can pray for the next miracle all day long, and the Lord says, "Hold it, man. This is not the kind of prayers I listen to. The kinds of prayers that I listen to come from *kenotic* prayers. I send angels to their beckoning." When you are in the *kenotic* kind of prayer, you will be exalting the Lord with no side agenda of personal gain. The Lord hears that kind of prayer. When you are in a *kenotic* prayer, you are giving your life as an expression of love.

The Lord walked on the water to avoid being enthroned. He chose to walk away from the glory, and the way to do that was to just go out across the water, which He did.

Also I think that was pretty good what you said, Pete, about when you take this *kenotic* journey, you are immediately at the goal. And we know that over here in sanctification, when you get into the *kenosis*, you are going to get to the end at a higher level. However, even if you stumble all over the upside down *kenosis*, you will still get to the end, but at a much lower glorification than those who walk the path of self-denying *kenosis*.

CONSTRUCTING A STATEMENT WHICH CONTAINS THE FIVE SIGNS

Now, can we put these five into one sentence that has all five theses in it?

Steve: My servants should have faith in the Lord of the Sabbath who provides every need and helps them become overcomers.

V: Yes, we will write that down, and it will be a good start. Please understand that we have come through eight chapters and five signs. They have to say something to us. We need to construct a summary statement of what the five signs are saying. This is the way creeds were developed in the early church. A creed was developed to make one simple theological statement about Jesus that would teach the people. That same thing is what we are trying to do now. We have five signs, and we are going to make one statement about them just as if we were the early church making a creed. We are practicing something here.

Ted: My servants should have faith in the Lord of the Sabbath who provides every need and helps us to become overcomers.

V: Okay, here are the five things. Let's see if they are all in there. On the healing of the nobleman's son, Jesus provides for every need. Now let us put some of these together. I wonder if we need to put heals and provides together to cover the feeding. Then for healing the lame man, Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Okay, indulge me for a minute. I want to put my interpretation of overcoming by adding "through self denial."

I think we need to have servants up there since this sign about the wine had servants in significant roles. "We servants . . ."

Jack: "Who have faith . . ."

V: "We servants who have faith in the Lord of the Sabbath . . ."

No, if we do it like that, the statement presumes that we are servants.

Carl: Say, "We who are servants."

V: "We who are servants have faith in the Lord of the Sabbath Who is our sufficient Provider . . ." Now we have it. Now can you put this creed in a model of a doctrine of salvation? "We who are servants" means that we have been justified and have started this sacrificial journey of sanctification. "We who are servants have faith in the Lord of the Sabbath." Wait a minute we need to have "should have faith" in here because a lot of us will not have faith in the Lord of the Sabbath.

Sybil: Could you be a servant and not have faith?

V: Yes. You see the up and down effect in chart 4.13. Down-up, down-up, down-up.

Tim: Can you say, "Having faith"? "We who are servants having faith in the Lord of the Sabbath?"

V: That is a good start, but it is still an incomplete sentence. We have run out of time, and I need to close this session.

The Gospel of John is an exhortation from God for people to believe in His Son Who has been sent here to save us from sin. The signs and their order are given as an exhortation for us to have faith in the God-Man called Jesus. Because of the information contained in these signs, we should have faith in Him. So, hold on to this idea of God's exhortation that "we should have faith in Jesus because the signs point to Who He is and what He is about."

Steve: It is sort of like Paul's writings when he was saying, "therefore." First, there is the teaching in the book, and then follows the exhortation. The word "therefore" indicates that we should do what the teaching says because we must do what we know. That same scenario would fit in this class-

room, would it not? John presented that same thing to us.

LEVELS OF CHRISTIANITY

V: I want you to see something that I believe is very important. What if the signs stopped right there. The description to this point could be taken as an event-oriented salvation, a salvation which is just the new birth, and that is it. This perversion of the doctrine of salvation is common. Many times when you talk to people about salvation, they will say, “Yes, I have been born again.” That is the end of it. They live the rest of their lives without living in the power of God. They do not live in self-denying, cross-bearing fellowship. They do not do anything that is worth anything because they spend their lives seeking after the American dream of the good life. Their Christianity is nothing more than going to church. They have been born again only.

Joe: They have faith in the tradition that if they walk forward at church. . . .

V: Right, they think that they have done everything that is required of them to be a disciple because they have gotten the new birth. They are going to heaven, and that is all they know. They do not understand anything about sanctification.

Some of the “real spiritual” Christians will move to the emotional-experiences level. When they add that dimension, they think that

they have truly arrived. They just celebrate everything about their higher emotions. They do not have to do anything beyond experiencing their emotional highs when they have assembled themselves together. Nobody has to work, nobody has to deny himself beyond going to church and giving his money.

Wanda: Get on your knees and ask God for blessings?

V: You do not even have to get on your knees or ask. You can just confess things into being. Just agree with another Christian and speak what you want into being.

Then there is the next level of Christianity which is that level that focuses on the do-nots. Do not do this; do not do that. The Christian’s whole life-style is avoiding sin—there is some sanctification in life-style, but the sanctification is solely in the moral dimension. These Christians do not smoke or drink or carry on with the girls who do. They become wonderful overcomers because they do not do all the bad things. They overcome the sins of commission.

Lastly, we come into real discipleship. These Christians not only handle the sins of commission by being moral, but they also become doers of the Word. Through their living out the Word, they overcome the sins of omission. Their holiness is composed of not only being morally clean but also of being completely available to be used by the Lord.

Chapter Questions

1. What is the two-fold issue of healing the lame man?
2. What is the four-fold witness to Jesus?
3. Illustrate (draw) the *kenosis* including the Scripture reference.
4. Name the parts of salvation, and explain each one.
5. What does the word “*kenosis*” mean?
6. What is the Jewish conception of the Messiah in John 6? List the references.

Chapter 5

HEALING THE BLIND MAN, AND THE KINDS OF SHEPHERDS

SUMMARY OF THE SIGNS in the Book of John	
SIGN	SIGNIFICANT IDEA
1. Changing water to wine	Servants take part
2. Healing the nobleman's son	Faith for healing
3. Healing the lame man	Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
4. Feeding the 5000	Jesus is the concerned Provider of all needs
5. Walking on Water	Jesus turned away from being enthroned
6. Healing the Blind Man	Enables clear vision via God's power

Chart 5.1

JOHN 9

HEALING THE BLIND MAN

When the Lord walks by and sees the blind man, He gives him sight. In their assumption that the blindness is due to sin, the Lord's disciples asked Jesus about who sinned, the blind man or his parents?

Explain the theology behind the question, "Who sinned to cause the blindness?"

1. Deuteronomic Theology (DT): Sin brings curses; goodness brings blessing.

In this kind of theology, you can determine sin by looking at the results or effects. Basically what we have here is a jumping to conclusions. If you see someone who is blind or someone who is lame or somebody who has any bad issue with their health, then under DT, you will tend to jump to the conclusion that the issue was caused by sin. That is why this question was phrased the way it was: "Who sinned, was it this man or was it his parents?"

Currently, if somebody were hurting, then under DT, the conclusion would be that the person has sinned, because sin brings on curses. Therefore the hurting person is guilty of sin. DT is alive and well today. Please observe the irony, though, that under DT, one

would have to conclude then that all of the greatest Christians were filled with sin because they were killed or martyred or exiled or persecuted or whatever.

2. Under DT, sin's results affect you in the temporal, visible, physical, and material realm.
3. DT presumes that there are no natural consequences to the Fall.
4. DT does not realize that God uses nature to reveal Himself.

In this healing that the Lord does, He makes the clay and puts it on the man's eyes and tells him to go wash. The man obeys and gets his sight. The Pharisees see him afterwards, and they question, "Is this the guy that was blind?" They can hardly believe their eyes that this guy who can now see is the same guy that they had known to be blind.

What I would like to pose right now is a question to you about the priorities of the three different parties here: the priorities of Jesus, the priorities of the man that was healed, and the priorities of the unbelieving Pharisees. What would you think are the priorities and the motivations of those three parties?

Steve: Jesus had compassion on someone that He could help. However, because He first helps the person physically, the person is then enabled to look at Him spiritually.

V: Physical and spiritual concern and compassion for the person is accurate.

Tim: He wanted to show that because a person is blind, it might be because God has a miracle to work in the person. Christ needed to demonstrate His power on him as a sign.

V: Very good observation, Tim. This restoration is a sign of our need for spiritual sight.

Jack: I agree with what Tim is saying because it is like Christ's healing of Lazarus. Jesus waited for him to die and for the people to know that Lazarus was dead. In this way, Jesus worked a miracle so that all would know its depth. He wanted His glory shown. Likewise, Jesus chose the blind man because He knew the blind man would give Him the glory.

Beth: The Pharisees were just interested in the Sabbath rules and their own self-importance in monitoring the keeping of them. I think Jesus' priority was to do God's merciful will. However, because He did it on the Sabbath, the good deed ticked off the Pharisees. The blind man was just probably looking for help.

Bob: Jesus did this miracle no doubt for all these reasons that have been stated, but an underlying issue was that He wanted to reinstate mercy on the Sabbath. Doing that kind of work on the Sabbath should certainly be allowed in our humanitarian concerns. Since all the other humanitarian works were done on the Sabbath, why not this act of mercy? He needed to have the people understand that we are not in bondage to a mere legalistic system. He wanted to make some changes in the system that they were using which would include God's mercy, not just a set of rules. He knew ahead of time that the religionists were going to bow up.

Ted: Spiritual blindness was the issue here. The Pharisees failed to see their need for God in the spiritual sense, and Jesus' priority was to bring them to a spiritual awakening in the proper relationship with God. Also the blind man not only had a physical handicap but also a spiritual handicap. I think all the priorities focused on the issues of spirituality with God, a true relation with the

true creator. They all point to one issue, the priority of spirituality.

Tim: If the man had received his sight via the periodical healing at the pool of Bethesda, the Pharisees would not have fussed about that because it would have been accepted as normal even on the Sabbath. But because Christ did it, they had a criticism to offer because of the Sabbath. Christ was not supposed to do an act of mercy on the Sabbath day.

Wanda: That blind man is also a great witness because he stood up to the Pharisees and said, "I do not care what you say, He has to be from God or He would not be able to do this miracle."

V: What do you think about the assessment that the Pharisees had of the Lord?

Henry: They did not want to let go of any of their power. If He is a man from God, the Pharisees are going to lose a lot of power. They did not want to believe that He was from God. They also did not want their people to believe that either.

Jill: I am sure the blind man needed the spiritual healing but I firmly believe that he was a lot like we are. When we come to Christ we do not know what we need, we just know we need something. I think he had enough faith that Jesus could take care of his immediate need, but he did not know about all the theological implications down the road. That knowledge is going to come when his eyes do open, not just physically but spiritually. I think he is at a point where he knows enough to know that he needs help, and he knows the Man who does the helping.

V: Class, all your points are good.

Returning to the Creed

We started working on a creed of the first five signs last week. This would be another sign to add to the next part in that sentence. I

would like to hear from you the phrase or clause or whatever you would like to add to that creed to get this next sign included. We did the first five, and here is number 6, what would it be?

Oscar: By opening eyes.

V: Okay, good. After obedience came the spiritual sight. So when you walk along according to the *kenosis* in self-denying, cross bearing, following of the Lord rather than trying to get the Lord to follow you, then you are going to be given spiritual insight. The Word of God is going to open up more to you if you are following along behind the Lord obeying Him. But if you do not go through that step of obedience, there will not be any of this spiritual vision, being able to see clearly, for you must be close to the Lord in order to have the full light for understanding. Following the Lord through *kenotic* obedience produces spiritual vision.

We will get to sign #7 in a little bit, but for now, add on to the creed this thing about having your spiritual vision which will come after obedience.

Let's go on to an evaluation of Jesus by the Pharisees. The Pharisees are talking to the parents and then to the blind man.

John

9:24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

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

The Worldly Cost for Identifying with Jesus

The blind man is testifying to what he absolutely knows first hand: "Well I do not know about who or what this man is, but this one thing I know. . . ." Unlike this blind man who experienced the healing and then found out Who healed him, you were introduced to

Jesus to know Him first and then experienced the healing. You have met the Lord, and He has given you vision and understanding that cannot be disputed. You just know it, and you have put your life on it.

This blind man, different from you, is retreating from the theological issues, retreating to where he is rock solid. He is standing on this "one thing I know." He retreats to that point, but then he is going to come out of retreat, and he is going to make a stand. He is going to make a very good stand. After he makes the retreat, they make the mistake of asking him,

John

9:26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

The man is going to come off of his retreat, and he is going to push back now.

John

9:27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear [it] again? will ye also be his disciples?

9:28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

9:29 We know that God spake unto Moses: [as for] this [fellow], we know not from whence he is.

9:30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and [yet] he hath opened mine eyes.

9:31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

9:32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

9:33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

9:34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

The blind man took a big risk here in his witness. As a result, he gets excommunicated

from any kind of temple participation.¹ He is thrown out because he stood up against political correctness and took not the “so called” proper conclusions from religious tradition. He retreated, yes, but he came out of that retreat very strong. He took a bedrock stance and did some good solid debating here. The man shows a true integrity that I think Jesus highly values. The man’s putting his entire religious risk on what he knew for sure will cause Jesus to seek him out for salvation.

John

9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him,

I think Jesus went looking for him because the guy had taken a hit by the same people who were rejecting Jesus. That result indicates to the Lord that the man is willing to pay the price in his stand for the truth against the Pharisees and is worthy of being sought out.

Mary: He is out in the deep water.

V: Yes. This is the kind of disciple that the Lord prefers. He goes after him, and . . .

John

9:35 . . . when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

9:36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

This guy is so ready to believe that he says, “Just point Him out so I can believe on Him.”

John

9:37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

9:38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

¹ The Pharisees’ act is illegal because excommunication must come from a tribunal from the Sanhedrin. So, power not legality is the underlying issue for the Pharisees.

He gets saved immediately, but I want you to see the value of the sacrifice that this guy made. The sacrifice points out the worthiness of the man to be a disciple of the Lord. This man is already practicing the *kenosis*. He even begins taking the hit before he is saved. This is good stuff here, folks. This guy is a good model for us to imitate and run with. ***The Lord today values this kind of sacrifice.*** When you are taking a hit because of your testimony for the Lord, the Bible says that you are to rejoice for great is your reward in heaven.² Rejoice, jump with joy because of the reward that God is going to give to you because you are like this guy, being cast out.

JOHN 10 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The different kinds of shepherds are listed by God in this chapter. What are those? I will list and discuss them from bad to good.

1. *The false shepherd.*

The false shepherd is described in verse 1, “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” If the false shepherd does not come by the door, he is not even saved. This would be a cultic kind of person, a person who is coming in without the Doctrine of Christ or with a perverted Doctrine of Christ. This person is going to be plundering the sheep.

2. *The hireling.*

This would be the mercenary kind of minister who is carnally tending the sheep for personal gain. I am looking at verse 12, and it describes him as a hireling, and not the shepherd who identifies with the sheep. When he sees the wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and flees. Then the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees

² Matthew 5:12.

because he is a hireling and does not care for the sheep.

The hireling shepherd is a minister who cares for money and himself, not the sheep. If there is something that must be sacrificed in this scenario, it is the sheep. He will let the sheep go as long as he can keep the money and his life. He does not do his own personal sacrifice. When the wolf comes he takes off out of there. If there is danger, the hireling runs, and the sheep are sacrificed.

3. *The plain shepherd.*

The sheep hear this shepherd's voice, he calls the sheep by name, he leads them out, he goes before them, they follow him, they know his voice, and they flee from a strange shepherd.

4. *The Good Shepherd.*

The Good Shepherd actually dies for the sheep.

John

10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

I want you to connect Psalm 22 to the good shepherd. Psalm 22 is the prediction of the death and the agony of the crucifixion. The Lord is the Good Shepherd who fulfills that prophecy who dies for the sheep.

5. *The Great Shepherd.*

Hebrews

13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

13:21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The word for *great* in this passage is *mega*. You need to parenthetically relate this term, the Great Shepherd, with Psalm 23. Here, the idea is that the Great Shepherd rises

from the dead and perfects the sheep. We have in Psalm 22 a picture of the Shepherd dying for the sheep, and in Psalm 23 we have a Shepherd leading the sheep after He has risen. That is what is happening to us. Our Good Shepherd has risen, and He is leading us as the Great Shepherd. He has a plan that leads to perfection, and He is taking us there. "Perfecting" means to get to the end, and so the Great Shepherd has arisen, is leading us, and is leading us to His chosen end for us, i.e. to perfection.

6. *The Chief Shepherd.*

1 Peter

5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The word, chief, is *archi*, so this title would be archetypical of the title shepherd. This word means that this shepherd would be the highest model of shepherd, the shepherd of shepherds. Psalm 24 is the Psalm to relate to this one. The Chief Shepherd is coming back to reward the sheep.

You can see the Doctrine of Salvation in just using the term shepherd here in the Bible. The Good Shepherd dies for the sheep; the Great Shepherd arises and leads the sheep to perfection; and the Chief Shepherd appears and rewards the sheep when they get to their end. So there in the term shepherd is found the Doctrine of Salvation with its three parts: justification, sanctification, and glorification. So there in Psalms 22, 23, and 24, bang-bang-bang, can be found the doctrine of salvation.

THE SAVING WORK OF JESUS

The shepherd work of Jesus requires sacrifice. John 10: 17-18 describes it. We need to read and then talk about it for a minute.

John

10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

10:18 No man taketh 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 commandment have I received of my Father.

There is a reason for sacrifice here that I want to bring to your attention. The Father loves Jesus. It is not just that He loves His person, but the Father loves His work. The Lord's Person and Work correspond exactly.

Hypocrisy is when your works and your personhood do not correspond. You are saved but you act like you are not saved. Or, you are not saved, but act like you are saved. Both of those scenarios are hypocrisy. Another form of hypocrisy that is more commonly known is when your words and actions do not match.

So here is a statement that the Father loves Him because He laid down His life. That is number one: Jesus laid down His life. Then number two is that He might take it up again.

There is a plan for laying down His life. That plan includes rising again. He is going to lay it down in supposed defeat, but He is going to take it up again in manifested victory. Laying it down is a requisite for victory for Jesus and for us as well. The *kenosis* requires sacrifice. God loves the Lord's work because it is the model of sacrifice within the *kenosis*. It is laying His life down as a freely given sacrifice of everything that He had.

Last week, we looked at the *kenotic* pattern. The sacrifice is the going down by giving up all that you are and have. To be perfectly done, you go all the way to the bottom. You are going to die, and then there is going to be the resurrection with the rewards for your sacrifice. If you can just look to the rewards on the other side of your going down to your death, you will be enabled and encouraged to go all the way to the bottom. Whatever the Lord has in your perfecting, there is going to be that ability for

you to look on the other side while you are going down. What you see on the other side will help you to maintain your course and go through the sacrifices.

But it is important for you to see that the Father loved the Son, not just for Who He is, but for His Works as well. "Because I laid down my life that I might take it up again." God wants the same thing from us. He already loves your personhood because when He looks at you He sees Jesus. But He also wants your works to match your person. He wants your works to follow the *kenotic* model of Jesus. He wants you to give your life to Him to use as He desires in the *kenotic* model.

If you do lay down your life as His slave, you can with confidence know that you will take it up again in the eschaton just like the Lord did in temporal history. When you take it up again, it will be with the exaltation and glorification given to you by the Lord Himself.

However, if you do not lay your life down as a slave, God will not like your works. Even though He still loves your person, He will not like your works because you will be running for yourself trying to gain temporal glory and rewards. But He loves your person no matter what your behavior. When God looks at your person, He sees His only begotten Son because you have the blood of Jesus over you. You have the righteousness of Jesus. No matter what you do, He still sees you as a holy person. That is why every born-again Christian will go to heaven. But eventually, the Lord Jesus is going to require an accounting of our works as His representative. If you have forsaken the *kenosis*, He is going to cast your accomplishments away. He is not going to cast you away, but He is going to cast your works away. You are still going to have the advantage of going to heaven, you see, because heaven is a gift based on your newborn ontology (person-

hood). It does not depend upon your works. The gift of going to heaven regardless of works is hard to believe. However, your works will determine the additional rewards you will receive in heaven.

The Power of God, or of the Devil?

The Jews argue over whether Jesus accomplished healing the blind man in the power of God or of the devil:

John

10:19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

10:20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

10:21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

There is a division here that is raging, and the same conclusion arises again. They declare that Jesus has a devil and is not of God. Please remember that this conclusion comes from that mindset that is rejecting, rejecting, rejecting what the Lord has done and Who He is. The doctrine that the Jews are holding to rejects a *kenotic* savior. Their theology is all about the upside down *kenosis*. Their rejection of Jesus is growing worse and worse to the point now that Jesus is declared to be demonic.

Statements like, “He has a devil” indicate that the rejection of Jesus has progressed. The more that the Lord does good, the more that evil reacts against Him. That is why I say that when you follow really close to the Lord, you are going to have some reactions against you just like those recorded here. It may take a little while, however, like it did here in John’s account, but it will surely come.

The Testimony of the Lord’s Works

We are going to look at the last half of chapter 10 to see the testimony of works. The Lord is going to point to His works to help us understand something about Himself. Of

course you should know by now that we should obey Him in our own works.

The Jews ask Him:

John

10:24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

10:25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.

10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

It is hard to understand this unbelief, and it is unbelief in the face of evidence that is so overwhelming that it is rationally irrefutable. It takes a hard heart to maintain unbelief in the face of this kind of evidence. But there it is in the Jew’s history, and there is no hope for them because they were a faithless generation.

In verse 33, they say that they were not going to stone Jesus for a good work but for blasphemy. They are ready to kill Him.

Here is a historical account about a progressive unbelief and hardening of the heart. It has reached the point where Jesus has been called a person that is not from God. He has been called a sinner, and it has been said that He has a devil. And now they claim that He has blasphemed God, and they want to kill Him for it. This is a huge progression in the rejection of Who the Lord is, and none of it is based on the Lord doing a bad thing. Every bit of this rejection filled with increasing hostility is based on the potential loss for the religionists, i.e. their positions as religious leaders in a religio-political environment. They had self-interest rather than a God-interest. They cannot even confess that Jesus’ works are good even when they are good. There is a progressive hardening of the Jews from mere rejection to evil hostility.

Jesus says to the Jews:

John

10:37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

10:38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father [is] in me, and I in him.

As a result of this claim by Jesus, there is a rage that begins to build in the Jews, and they sought again to take Him, but He escaped out of their hands. The hostility of the Jews is progressing, and it will soon lead to the Lord's death.

But coming back to you and me, our works testify as to who we are. Your works give credibility to your words. If your works correspond to the Lord's works, then there is going to be a credibility given to your testimony. When you are making proclamations, you will have a hearing people. If you have the climbing kind of work (the upside down *kenosis*) along with your testimony of a sacrificial Lord, then your works and your proclamation are not going to correspond. But if you have *kenotic* works, and your testimony is to a sacrificial Lord, then your works and your words are going to correlate.

The Hireling

What is going to appeal to the people in the climbing church when you are the hireling or the false shepherd? The upside down *kenosis*, in which you will be robbing the sheep of their eternal rewards on the promise of temporal rewards for them, will actually appeal to your church members. Not only will the members want to be liberated from the sacrificial requirements of the *kenosis* so that they can fulfill their own quest for power, riches, and the good life in the upside down *kenosis*, but they will also seek the same thing for their institutional church. Stealing the sheep away from other churches will be fair

game because church growth fits in with the goals of their shepherds.

If you demonstrate the reverse *kenosis*, then you are a bad shepherd, a hireling. You are climbing for personal gain, and that is fine with the sheep because they want to get on that kind of model themselves. You are the shepherd, you are leading them, and they are going to follow you. They are going to follow your upside down *kenosis*. That fits their carnal desires, but you will be hurting the sheep in their eternity. The false shepherd and the hireling shepherd are both bad shepherds.

A good shepherd sacrifices for the sheep. His sacrifices are displayed in his *kenotic* model of shepherding. The sheep that he leads are more apt to follow the *kenotic* model in their lives because he is exemplifying it to them. I am encouraging you to make your words and your actions correspond. If you are going to testify to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the world, then live it. Stay with it. Do not succumb to the enticements that will draw you away from the *kenosis*.

Now if you stay with the *kenotic* model, you will go down to the bottom. It is a painful path, but the reward is on the other side, and it is huge and lasts forever. If your sheep follow you on this model, then they are going to rejoice and hug your neck for eternity because they too will be rewarded.

Wanda: We sheep, with discernment, should know the right model.

V: You should, but we have such strong enticements from the world. Deception is flooding in from every side. There are many shepherds on the reverse *kenosis* for every shepherd on the *kenosis*.

There is also much confusion about being filled with the Spirit. The groups that are the "me first," the "me now," the "I have to feel it," and that kind of thing are really

identifying a carnal experience as being filled with the Spirit. They are dancing around and enjoying life, and everything is cooking right and going their way, and they are caught up with their spirit of ecstasy. However, “filled with the Spirit” means that the Spirit leads you, that you have yielded your will to the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is not getting a lot of the Spirit. It is the Spirit getting a lot of you.

Many Students: Amen!

V: When He gets you, He is going to go the way of the *kenosis*. The man who is filled with the Spirit is in agony, going through hell on earth. He also is the man who can stay with it, stand in there, and take the hits because he is sacrificing for the sheep. Every shepherd who will follow the *kenotic* path of the Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

The hireling wants to use the sheep to advance himself. Certainly, there is still the possibility that the hireling could lead the sheep into salvation via justification. However, at the same time, the hirelings will lead by example the sheep on the upside down *kenosis* in their sanctification journeys. As a result, their works are not sanctified. Their works are going to be for naught, and all the opportunities and rewards for glorification will all go down the tubes even though the sheep may go to heaven.

The false shepherd, unlike the hireling, leads the sheep to destruction, i.e. into hell because he leads them into a false salvation. The false shepherd does not come into the sheepfold through the door.

Imitating the Good Shepherd is what I want for you. I want desperately that you be good shepherds who lead the sheep into the path of Christ so that they will follow The

Good, the Great, and the Chief Shepherd. Help them to go the whole distance, to make that sacrifice, to take the hits, to stand in there, and to bring a smile and a “well-done” to the Lord’s Lips. When you do that, oh my soul, it is going to cost you, cost you, cost you, but those costs on earth will diminish to practically nothing when compared to what you will earn in eschatological rewards. And when you get to eternity, the sheep are going to sing your name, and hug you.

If you have those terrible church members that are on their climbs, that are frustrating you right now, just you hang in there. You pay the price, get tough, go the distance until you are screaming in agony. It will be in eternity when those members will be saying, “Thank you for not giving up because we would have missed out on all our rewards.”

None of the sanctification journey is cheap. Nothing in Christianity is cheap or easy. It all begins with the highest price there is: the death of Christ. Then comes the death

SUMMARY OF THE SIGNS
in the Book of John

SIGN	SIGNIFICANT IDEA
1. Changing water to wine	Servants take part
2. Healing the nobleman’s son	Faith for healing
3. Healing the lame man	Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
4. Feeding the 5000	Jesus is the concerned Provider of all needs
5. Walking on Water	Jesus turned away from being enthroned
6. Healing the Blind Man	Enables clear vision via God’s power
7. The Resurrection of Lazarus	Power over death

Chart 5.2

to you, and then comes the death to your sheep, and then comes the death to their sheep. That is the multiplication process toward glorification, and it will pay richly—in eternity.

**SIGN #7, THE RESURRECTION
OF LAZARUS**

First there is the pronouncement that Lazarus is dead, and the Lord heads toward Lazarus’ home. In verse 21, Martha, the

sister of Lazarus, comes out to meet Jesus. She says,

John

11:21 . . . Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give [it] thee.

Verse 21 through verse 27 is Martha's statement of faith: "Whatever You ask of God, God will give it to You."

John

11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Martha does not quite understand this statement by the Lord, but she is a believing soul. She is making a tremendous statement of faith here at the level of her understanding. She does not quite understand that Lazarus is about to be raised right now, but she is convinced in her soul that Christ can raise him in the last day and that Jesus is the Christ.

Next, Mary makes the statement that Jesus could have prevented the death of Lazarus altogether.

John

11:32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

The Jews in verse 37 have observed all of this conversation.

John

11:37 And some of them said, Could not

this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

I believe that this question is more of a rhetorical question that points to their faith. Therefore, they are saying that they believe that Jesus could have stopped Lazarus from dying. These Jews believe that Jesus has supernatural capabilities at this point. So that question also is a statement of faith.

John

11:39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been [dead] four days.

Martha only seems to be backing up from where she was, but she is still of the understanding that the last day will bring a resurrection. She is completely faithful in what she understands. When He says, "Take away the stone," she realizes that Lazarus has been dead four days, and he is now decomposing and stinking. Martha is not backing up from her statement of faith that she had made earlier. She just does not understand that Lazarus is about to be raised right now, before the general resurrection of the end times.

John

11:41 Then they took away the stone [from the place] where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up [his] eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

11:42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said [it], that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

Now this prayer by the Lord is specifically from the Lord to the Father, and it is not a prayer that is for the sole purpose, you see, of being overheard. Jesus is actually communicating to the Father, but he wants to be

overheard. So He says this to the Father, “I thank thee that you have heard me, and I know that you have heard me always.” He does not just stop there because that would not have been communicating to the crowd, but then He validates what He has said to the Father by saying, “I said that so that they would know that you have heard me.”

After the resurrection of Lazarus, we have belief and we have unbelief.

John

11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

These who have begun to believe are “many of the Jews.” However, in verse 47 we will see the unbelief.

John

11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

11:48 If we let him thus alone, all [men] will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

Please notice that this conversation is filled with self-interest and upside down *kenosis*. Self-interest is preventing them from believing Who the Lord is. I want you to see that this same self-interest is playing a part in our lives right now. It is crucial to understand the terrible consequences of self-centered interests.

This upside-down *kenosis* pattern will drive you onto a path that will cut your belief short. It will draw down your faith to something that is minuscule. It will cut your Christian sanctification into nothingness. It will rob you of the glorification that God has planned for you. It will rob your sheep and everybody around you. It will cause many to go to hell. It is very costly, and self-centered interest, i.e. temporal and material gain, is going to have an extreme cost on eternal gain.

Self-centeredness and eternal gain are not compatible!

The *kenotic* interest is to locate your gain on the other side of death. It is to have the Lord’s interest in your heart. It is to give your life to Him on this side of death. It is to sacrifice yourself to Him. It is to yield your will to Him. It is **not** to have your life now. It is to give away your life now. It is the opposite of self-centered interest. *Kenotic* interest is what we must have in order to have maximum faith, maximum Christian walk, maximum adventure, maximum glorification, maximum impact on the world, and **maximum joy in your sheep**.

However, Satan wants to trade you out of your maximums for a self-centered interest in temporal rewards. Your self-centered interests will rob you of God’s eternally wonderful gifts and rewards. We are seeing self-centeredness in these Jews right here in their statement that if let alone, all men will believe on Him and they themselves will lose their positions.

You remember how John the Baptist pointed the Messiah out to his disciples so that they could follow Jesus? What he was doing was decreasing so that Christ would increase. That was a temporal decreasing, i.e. *kenosis*. I want to tell you that John the Baptist has great exaltation coming to him on the other side of the grave. He is going to be big in heaven. He decreased during his physical life, and so that same thing is what I am asking you to do.

Decrease, give your life to Jesus; throw in with the Lord. Do not do your own career or your own indulgence and enjoyment of life. Yield yourself to the Lord. Take others with you in that pattern of life. Otherwise self-centered interest will stop you dead in your tracks. Oh, you will have that carnal Christianity, and people will look at you and say, “Oh, what a wonderful Christian. He has it

all!” But you had better get your applause now because there will not be any on the other side.

How did Caiaphas predict the substitutionary atonement? The answer is in verse 50.

John

Verse 50: Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

He did not know the truth in what he was saying here. Basically he said that if we can get this guy to die, then our position will be retained, and the Romans will not come in and destroy our nation. So it is best if this one man should die for us.

John

11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

That is a true prophecy from Caiaphas. Here is a man who is not saved but he makes a true prophecy. It is an ironic statement of self-interest that one man should die for the entire nation. As long as that one man was not one of the religious leaders, then it sounded like a good deal to them.

JOHN 12

MARY'S KENOSIS VERSUS JUDAS' SELF-INTEREST

In this chapter, there is a supper at Bethany in which the contrast between Mary and Judas is manifested. There are several days of feast that are part of the Passover celebration. In one of those feast days, the Lord is going to observe the feast with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. When Jesus arrives on the scene, Mary takes some very costly ointment and begins to anoint the Lord. When Judas Iscariot observes the worship, he says . . .

John

12:5 Why was not this ointment sold for

three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

God discloses to us what was motivating Judas to say what he said.

1 John

2:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

What Judas is doing is basically raising a critical issue about the poor in order to disguise his real motivation, i.e. self-interest. He is a greedy person and wanted to get his hands on this money. His raising the issue over the poor is nothing but guile. His willingness to force a different use of a possession than what the owner wanted is considered by God as a thief's desire to steal the possession. Also it had been given to Jesus, and he objected to the new owner's possession. Both ways are a willingness to steal because, at heart, Judas was a thief.

There is a lesson here. Someone who talks about the poor and the needs of the poor without doing anything that is personally sacrificial to meet that need is basically just like Judas. It is the disguised greed of materialism. I see this all the time. Politicians love to do this. They clamor about giving to the poor. However, they do not give their money to the poor. They give ours and gain two things: power over the distribution of wealth, plus credit for giving to the poor without actually giving anything at all.

BELIEF VERSUS UNBELIEF

Belief and unbelief arise over Lazarus.

John

12:9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

This is the group that believed. They wanted to see Lazarus, and they wanted to see Jesus. They wanted to be around them.

Lazarus' Resurrection Was Causing Belief

John

12:10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

How terrible is this—a fellow Jewish citizen gets raised from the dead, and the Jewish religious leaders want to put him back in the grave! The Lord gets you out of the grave, and that is the pro-life stance. However, evil puts you back into the grave, and that is the pro-death stance. Please see the lesson in that agenda of self-interest, e.g. the Lord gives goodness, life, and light. Self-centeredness produces evilness, death, and darkness.

John

12:11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

The religious leaders wanted desperately to stop this movement any way they could. They had concluded that the guy who was raised was creating a great interest among the citizens many of which came to believe on Christ. Thus, the religious leaders concluded that they needed to get rid of Lazarus, too. They are looking to get rid of both Lazarus and the Lord.

Henry: All throughout several of these different miracles and signs, it is obvious that the Pharisees want to stop Jesus, and the reason is apparently because He is kind of messing in their parade. Do you think that they really believed what He was saying was true, but yet they were going to kill Him anyway?

V: I am glad you asked that question because we need to address it. What is the feeling of the class along those lines? Do you think that they believed what He said was true and that they were rejecting it because of their self-interest? Or, do you believe the self-

interest caused them to disbelieve? Which is it: believe or disbelieve?

Henry: I think it is like a lot of the world today, like a lot of people you witness to. I think their eyes are being blinded. The Word of God says that they see, but they see not, they hear but they hear not.³ I feel that the religious leaders were doing the same thing back then. They had such an interest in where they were, their position, their self-esteem, and all the money and power that came with it. They were selling themselves to the enemy. They were allowing him to keep them blind.

Beth: I kind of have an idea that they were liars who told so many lies that they began to believe them.

V: Okay, those are both good points.

At the beginning they were just resisting Jesus by using lies. But after a while their lies became reality to them.

Betty: Along this line of self-deception, I think they came to a point where they had to decide: I must either buy or not buy into this claim about Jesus. If I buy into it, then look at what I am going to lose. So I am not going to buy into it. They blinded themselves at the point of counting the costs.

Bob: It looks like it is a “regression” on the Pharisees’ part.

Ted: A hardening.

Bob: A hardening, kind of like the rich man that wanted to have eternal life, and Jesus told him, “Lay down what you possess (*kenosis*) and follow me.” He could not do it. He knew, he understood, but he could not do it. He could not bring himself to sacrifice, and I think that is what the Pharisees were

³ Mark 4:12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and [their] sins should be forgiven them.

doing. They rejected Him once, and that started a progression like Pharaoh had with Moses. Reject once, and then it is easier to reject the next time. It just gets easier as each rejection comes along. In this case, they were going to kill Jesus as the ultimate rejection.

Carl: The progression is growing because now they want to kill Lazarus too.

Homer: And they are just going to keep pursuing no costs to their self-interest.

Joe: I was going to say exactly what Bob said. Their wanting to kill Jesus reminded me of Pharaoh. When the Jews were crossing the Red Sea, he decided, after he had let them go, to make a last-ditch attempt to kill them. This progression of hostilities against Jesus lines right up with Pharaoh.

False Expectations Created a False Hermeneutic

Mary: I think that traditionally, they had been looking for the political messiah-king for hundreds of years, and they could not see any point of view other than what they had been taught. The Jewish leaders thought in those terms, and they had taught their people to expect someone to provide the upside down *kenosis*.

V: It sounds like that expectation had become their hermeneutic. Their expectation for all of those centuries had generated a hermeneutic, or a set of lenses through which they looked at the Scriptures. They see things the way those lenses shaped them. It is a seeing based on your hermeneutic. So they see Jesus, but He does not fit in the way their hermeneutic said He should. I am not speaking of how he looked physically but behaviorally. They are going to reject Him based on their hermeneutic, and their hermeneutic of expectations of a political messiah who fulfils their self-interest is couched in their Law. So, when He breaks the Sabbath, they conclude that He must be from Satan because one

cannot break the Sabbath and be from God. Their hermeneutic would have him lining up exactly with their longstanding Jewish laws.

Another part of their looking for a political deliverer was their desire for a victorious-king syndrome like that which caused their forefathers to coronate Saul.

Mary: One thing that kind of made me laugh is the resulting irony. He broke the Sabbath, and they wanted to “murder” Him for breaking the Law.

Pete: I think that frequently, in current times, the people who are most vocally against Christianity are the ones who were exposed to it at some point in their lives. They have made the decision not to be a Christian. So they became hardened as the years went by. These hardened rejecters fight Christianity more than the ones who were never exposed to it much at all. The hardened detractors have developed an anxiety about Christianity and can only rid themselves of the anxiety by getting rid of Christianity altogether.

Beth: God said, “I gave them over to a reprobate mind.”⁴

Ted: Because they had begun to reject, they continued to reject. The rejection became very hard, very firm.

Jill: After feeding the 5000, Jesus knew that they wanted a political Messiah. The Scripture said that He just sort of disappeared from the people, where He . . .

V: . . . went into hiding in order to avoid fulfilling their desires for a political Messiah.

Jack: That is when He walked on the water to get away from them. However, the people got in a boat and went hunting Him again. They were after a great material pro-

⁴ Romans 1:28.

vider. However, He avoided their intentions and did not accept what they wanted.

V: That is right; He did not yield to their expectations or desires.

Pete: But then He comes out of hiding riding in on the ass. That lowering of Himself was a sign.

V: Good point about the sign, Pete.

Tim: You look around at what is happening today. You are teaching us the *kenosis*, and we turn the *kenosis* upside down. Many churches today are turning that *kenosis* upside down. After a few generations of people wanting desperately to turn this *kenosis* upside down because we want it all right now, we too can be deceived into taking a false hermeneutic. Christianity, as a way for you to get all your desires met, is a deception that is swamping us. Why could that same thing not be what happened back then, especially to the leaders who were reaping the benefits?

Tim: What percentage of people claiming to be Christians would you think to be willing to walk the *kenosis*? How many of **us** are willing to walk the *kenosis*? The numbers would be very low because of what has come down through the generations of easy Christianity. We are a people wanting to get our nickels, live our lives, and go to church to be told how good we are doing. This deception has set in and hardened over the years. What about the deception in John's time? Would it not be similar?

V: I think their hermeneutic was cast in the mold of a political Messiah who was going to ride in with power and victory, throw off the Roman yoke, and give everybody the good life. That is what they wanted when they crowned Saul. They had every intention of having a great king to come in and straighten out the entire problem of living in a world full of threatening nations. They wanted a king to lead them to victory over the

Philistines and give them security. Then they could just live happily ever after.

Wanda: Everybody just flat out wants the good life—easy Christianity.

V: You are right, Wanda.

Oscar: When Martin Luther pointed out the faults of the Roman Church, it became more hardened in what it was doing. The hardening was advanced in reaction to when a large number of people bought into Martin Luther's doctrine of salvation.

Oscar Cont'd: The same thing is going to happen with Antichrist. Protestant churches are going to be going the way of political correctness. They will say, "No, we are going to reject rebellion against the established government because government is ordained by God to be obeyed and supported. We have done it for years, and we are going to keep on doing it."

Henry: I wonder if a lot of what happened to the Jews is because they had translated the Law of God so many times to fit their own schemes. They had several evolutions at that point in time of how to apply the Laws of God. Basically the Laws of God were so twisted into rules that enslaved the people that the Jews could no longer see the Truth of God's Word.

V: In other words, the leaders were already expert at fitting religion to their schemes for power mongering.

Beth: They worshipped the Sabbath day. They did not consider the purpose that God had for them on the Sabbath.

V: I want to suggest to you another model on the *kenosis* that I think is prevalent today. I want to show two parts to the *kenosis* on the same chart so that there will be higher contrast (see chart 5.3 on the next page). I think that this depiction is of a popular but wrong model. It is absolutely and totally

wrong. But I think that this model is in place today among many. The way it works is that Jesus did this downward part, and we do this upward part.

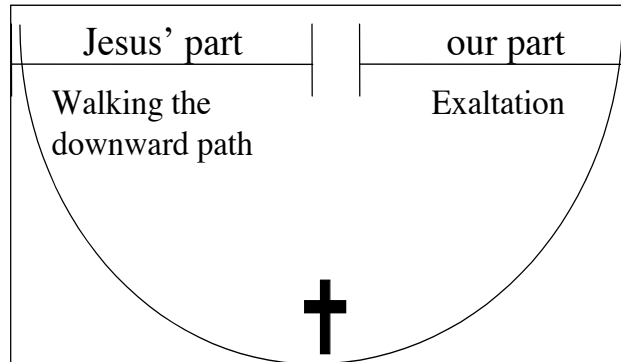


Chart 5.3

Carl: Yes, I see that model all the time.

Beth: After all, the hymn says *Jesus Paid It All*.

V: Yes, today's saint really likes it because Jesus paid it all, and we get it all. He did the dying, and we do the living by fitting the religion to our upward climbs of selfishness.

Mary: That is how that verse of Scripture which says, "He came to give us life more abundantly"⁵ is interpreted.

Sybil: My dad, a pastor, always makes the comment: "Everybody wants the resurrection, but they do not want the cross."

V: Sybil, your dad's comment is right on the money.

If the Pharisees and Jewish leaders had the self-interest model, then they were looking for a Messiah who is going to align with their model. They are not looking for a Messiah to walk the *kenosis*. They are looking for a Messiah that follows their own model. Accordingly, they have the idea that He is going to come in and establish the religio-

political kingdom, and then they are going to be exalted in that kingdom. Their expectations fit with the upside down *kenosis* of self interest.

What will distort your hermeneutic is anything that has to do with self-indulgence, self-gain, temporal-gain, or the lack of self-denial. Anything like that will cloud over your understanding of the Word, and you will begin to interpret the Word of God with all your self-centered biases. You will look for all this stuff about blessings, and you will interpret them as temporal blessings. You will think that God does not want you to cry or suffer because you are the exalted child of God, and He is swooning over you because you can breathe in and out without getting mixed up.

Pete: I hear that all the time.

V: Certainly. The whole world is bombarded with that teaching.

Steve: Many times it comes from your own family.

V: Yes, Steve, that really does hurt. However, it hurts the most when I hear it from the pulpit

Let's look at the Lord's teaching beginning in verse 24:

John

12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

Can you see that you are now the corn of wheat dying?

John

12:25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Can you see the *kenosis* here? He that loves his life will lose it, and he that hates his life in this temporal world will gain it.

⁵ John 10:10.

John

12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will [my] Father honour.

This strikes at the heart of what we erroneously call serving God today. Our tendency is to strike out on a path, and say to God, “Come follow me, bless me. I have this great ministry, come bless what I am doing,” and He says, “No, if any man is going to serve Me, he must follow Me.” Christ is the leader, and we are the followers. It is important to understand this beyond the cliché-level. It is easy to get the discipleship pattern flipped around so that we lead out and ask Christ to follow us and bless what we are doing.

John

12:27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

I was laying in a hospital bed once when this verse came to mind. I had been praying for God to save me from death. But then I caught myself, maybe to die an exemplary death is why I was born. We have to give our lives to the Lord to do with them as He wishes—there is no alternative. That is why you are born. That is why you have been brought to this point in your life, i.e. just to give your life into His Hands. We are prone, however, to say, “Lord, do not sacrifice me; do not require me to suffer.” Wake up, my dear friend. To give yourself into the Lord’s work is why you were *born again*. In order to do that, you will suffer the resistance and rejection from the same world that resisted and rejected and killed Jesus.

John

12:28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, [saying], I have both glorified [it], and will glorify [it] again.

12:29 The people therefore, that stood by,

and heard [it], said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

12:30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me.

Then we come to the contrast of belief and unbelief.

Unbelief

John

12:37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

This verse is the fulfillment of Isaiah when he said they have ears but they do not hear.⁶ It says in verse 38 that Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled right there: He had blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart and be converted that He should heal them.

John

12:41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

12:42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

Incomplete Belief

Of this terrible statement in verses 42 and 43, I ask you something now about these people. Are they saved? I ask because they are not willing to confess Jesus before men.

John

12:43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

These people believed on Him. Yet they could not confess it out of their mouths

⁶ Isaiah 42:20

because of a fear that they would be cast out of the synagogue. They could not confess their faith because they feared the rulers. The indictment of this latter group is in verse 43: “For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” My question to you: “Are they saved?”

Beth: It says confess with your mouth.

Ted: Only one in a thousand will go with the *kenosis*, but the others will not. The blind man was truly saved. These people will not give up their being praised by men.

V: These people were not worthy of the Lord committing to them. The blind man strapped it on the religious leaders about his faith, and they excommunicated him. He has no right to come into the temple any more. The Lord hunted him down, and gave him a personal witness of Himself. That man was worthy of the Lord’s commitment. However, these other men who have observed and believed have a limit to their belief. Their belief encompasses no risk. Their faith is faith without works—dead faith. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. As a result they do not take a hit from the world. They do not witness. They stand over here like closeted Christians seeking and loving the praise of men. They are going to have their cake and eat it, too. They are going to believe in secret, and they are going to have the praise of the men who hate the Lord. Basically, they are calling out to the world to love them and praise them. Like many church members today, they will admit that they are church members. But they want to remain perfectly compatible with their worldly environment because they do not act any different from the worldly crowd. They do not jam their religion down the worldly people’s throats. However, in their secret hearts, you see, they are going to say, “That must be the Lord doing all these miracles.”

So, the question, then, comes down to what does your life amount to? Do we make a confession enough to be baptized, and then we turn to the applause of men, and forsake our testimony in order to escape the hit?

If you get your justification, you are going to the end, i.e. heaven. You are going to make it to perfection, the end point, but while enroute, you should make your works match who you are. Do not embarrass the Lord. Do not drag His name through the mud. Do not hide from identifying with Him. This is the pathway of Judas who sought money and the approval of men and sold out Jesus to achieve them. Don’t you do this too by keeping your silence.

Be willing to take your hits. Be sacrificial. Follow the Lord, and testify of Him. Give your verbal witness. Give your tracts out. Preach when you can, and teach when you can. Do what you can. Lift others up, and give them a helping hand. Minister and publicly identify with Him. If you are really a Christian, there is going to be pain in your life. There is no such thing as a secret Christian. The person who will not testify openly of his faith is an imposter. Give your life in sacrifice to carry forward the Lord’s work.

Dear friend, lead your people. By being in these classes, you leaders know something. That means then that you are like parents to children. Now your relatives may be older than you, but you are still parents to them as if they were your children. What kind of parent is going to have the knowledge, and know what the child ought to do, but not tell the child because they want the child to love them and praise them. Do not do that. Love your children at your own personal expense.

Take care of the sheep that you have. It will cost you to do that, but do it for their sake. Do it! Sacrifice for the sheep, be a good shepherd.

Henry: Jesus said that the parent who loves his son will chasten that son, but he who loves not his son will not chasten him. If I love you, if I truly have the love of God in me, I am going to let you know the truth.

V: Right. Every one of you has a gigantic responsibility in knowing this much stuff about true Christianity. There are people who will never know this much, never in their whole lives.

Homer: So I guess James Dobson had it right: parenting must be tough.

V: Yes, because you have to choose between the good of the child versus your own desire for praise and the escaping of pain, conflict, and rejection.

Beth: In the History of Christianity course, I learned about Christians who escaped the persecution by burning the incense and bowing in worship to the statue of the emperor. . . . And then after the purge, they

came back to the church and said, “We really did not mean it. We want to join back to the church now that all the heat is off.” Well, now, we are coming to a point in our history of Christianity to where making that mistake will be fatal. We are coming to the point of taking the mark or not taking the mark. I believe that if we should take that mark, we will have made that fatal mistake. We are at the point in history to where the heat is going to start coming down. What choice are we going to make?

V: Let us start practicing our choices now. You must live for your sheep, not for yourself. You must not be a hireling. You must not be a false shepherd. You must be a good shepherd following the Good Shepherd’s example. You must give your life for your sheep. If you do not sacrifice for the sheep, it will not be because of ignorance. Every one of us in this class flat out knows too much to escape this responsibility.

Chapter Questions

1. Explain the theology behind the question, “Why the man was born blind?”
2. List and define the 6 kinds of shepherds?
3. What Psalm is associated with the description of the Good Shepherd?
4. What Psalm is associated with the description of the Great Shepherd?
5. How did Caiaphas predict the substitutionary atonement?

Chapter 6

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE OF THE *KENOSIS*

I will begin with an overview of chapters 13 through 20 by describing the high points in chart 6.1.

CHAPTER	HIGH POINTS
13	The <i>kenosis</i> is the “ought.”
14	Hope enables the <i>kenosis</i> . We should obey because of love, and we do the <i>kenosis</i> because of hope.
15	Fruitfulness comes through purging. Friends of Jesus are considered as enemies by the world.
16	The Holy Spirit comes to provide the help that we need.
17	The Lord’s prayer of intercession for the saints.
18	The arrest of Jesus. Peter’s denials.
19	The expression of religion as a hatred for Jesus. The crucifixion.
20	The crucifixion (first part of chapter)

**Overview of Chapters 13-20
Chart 6.1**

You ought to be able to see in this survey something about the Christian walk. When we developed the initial creed from the earlier chapters, we ended with self-denial, the *kenosis*, the walking on the water in order to get away from the crowd trying to enthrone the Lord. We begin with that in chapter 13 as the *kenosis*. But the *kenosis* is an “ought,” and there has to be some kind of an enablement for the *kenosis* to be effectual in your life and mine, and that enablement is hope. Without hope, the *kenosis* is impossible to do, and so we are going to look at how hope enables the *kenosis*.

After you have decided that your choice of Christian model is the *kenosis*, and you are enabled through hope, then there will come obedience because of love. We are going to look at what part love plays in obedience.

You should be able to see that if you get this far, there will be the need for increasing fruitfulness. That increasing is done through purging. Each one of us is going through a purging process in order to maximize the fruit of our lives.

Lastly there is the opportunity to become the friend of Jesus. This series of steps described above is a progression in your growth of discipleship. You cannot start at the end point of being friends of Jesus. You have to have the enablement and the love motivation in order to get to the end point. Then when you are a friend of Jesus, you can anticipate that the Holy Spirit is going to give you all the help you need for following the Lord in ministry. Not only is the Spirit going to impact the world, but also the Spirit is going to impact the church as well through you.

This chapter is a series of lessons which should bring us to an understanding of what we are supposed to do, what the promises are, what our obligations are, and what the model for doing them is. Then we have the prayer of intercession for you by the Lord, which seals it. That sealing of those requests means that the Lord’s mind, God’s mind, and the Holy Spirit’s mind are all together. We are to have that same mind according to the *kenosis* passage. If you want to know what you are supposed to do, you go to the *kenosis* and the Lord’s intercessory prayer in chapter 17 because that is what the Lord has prayed for you and me to be doing. There it is, the prayer of intercession that seals our mission. The final

point here deals with each one of us directly and specifically.

Now God's provision for us is sealed, the race is won, and the mission is completed all by the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. All of the part that we are supposed to be involved in is within a completed thing. That means then that the ultimate goal of everything we do has already been completed. The power is here, and the victory is in place. Now, we are to become agents of blessing from the One who has completed the blessing.

Here is a series of things that are going to take place. Peter's denials, I think, are going to exemplify what we have to look forward to when we get the *kenosis* reversed. Peter does not have a clear-cut understanding of the *kenosis* and the hope on the other side of death. Without that hope, you cannot do the *kenosis* no matter who you are, how strong you are, and what skills and resources you have. Without a complete understanding and the vision of hope, you cannot do it. Peter is going to demonstrate that failure for us. We are supposed to learn something about hope out of this milieu.

We are given a hope that is signed, sealed, and delivered. That means then that I can go through that *kenosis*, that downward move, knowing that there is an upward move on the other side.

JOHN 13

The beginning of the *kenosis* is by becoming a servant, the lowering of one's self. The Lord Himself demonstrates that lowering of self by becoming a servant. You see that in His washing of the disciples' feet. This act is a model of descending, and the Lord began His whole life's work on this model. He left heaven, He descended to earth, He took on the form of a man and a servant and was humbled. Here is an expression of that descending pattern. Washing the disciples' feet is an enactment of the *kenotic* principle. This act is

like a parable that is acted out. Through this act of foot washing by our Lord, you can get a picture of what a *kenosis* really is. As He goes through this washing of the feet of the disciples, He says:

John

13:14 If I then, [your] Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

The Lord declares that His *kenotic* demonstration equals ought. Then He says:

John

13:16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

13:17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

These two verses connect with the following two verses:

John

13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

13:35 By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

This commandment of love is for *agape*. *Agape* is unilateral, self sacrifice for the benefit of the other person. That means that if I love (*agape*) a person, that love is a unilateral sacrifice for his welfare. He does not have to love me back. *Agape* love does not depend upon the response. It means that I love him regardless of what he does in response, and my behavior in that kind of love is purposefully self-sacrificial for his welfare. In effect, *agape* means that it will cost me something. And *agape* means that I am to continue loving him even if he rejects me.

Many times we love someone, and we are rejected. *Agape* does not accept that rejection. It keeps on loving, keeps on advancing the other's welfare. When you have an enemy, and you love that enemy with *agape*, then you do good things for that enemy. Is

that not right? That is what the Scripture says. That one-sided love is what *agape* love is. Jesus demonstrated that kind of love. When He died for us, every one of us was at war with Him. The entire world was at war with Him. However, He still died for us. This is the kind of love these verses are talking about.

The *kenosis* means to go down in a sacrificial move. The downward move is to become a servant, and it is to be a servant to others. It is the serving of other people that is required of us, and this is the “ought” that He expresses in the form of a commandment. And He says that this kind of love is a new commandment which He has given to us—that we love sacrificially and unilaterally one another as the Lord has loved us.

The whole world is going to know that we are the Lord’s disciples because of our obeying this new commandment. Demonstrating that sacrificial love is how a Christian disciple becomes visible in the world. The world will notice that self-sacrificial, unilateral *agape* love that we have for each other and even for our enemies.

When *agape* rules in your heart, you will go knock on the neighbor’s door when he is in need. You will go to the next person in your mission of witnessing. It does not matter if they reject your offers or slam the door in your face. You keep right on going to the next person because this is a love that drives you on.

JUDAS

We need to look at the description of Judas in John 13:21-30. The Lord says that one of the disciples is going to betray Him.

John

13:21 ...Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Jesus is talking about Judas, and He identifies him. The other eleven do not understand this identification, but it is clear to

Judas himself. When Judas is told to go and do quickly what he is going to do, the rest do not even know what Jesus is talking about.

How the eleven miss the significance of the Lord’s words is like a significant disclosure in a matter-of-fact style. Imagine a scenario in which the Lord said to us, while we are all participating in the Lord’s Supper with Him, that when that door opens and closes that we will have five minutes before the last trumpet blows. If we are sitting in here and that door opens and closes, the discussion will go something like this: I wonder which opening and closing He meant. I wonder if He meant slamming where everybody would be startled. I wonder if anybody comes in or goes out. All manner of questions would occur.

Here in this passage, the Lord is identifying the one, via the sop, who is going to betray Him, but yet when he goes out to work the betrayal, nobody knows. When Judas gets up the Lord says, “What you are going to do, go do quickly. And the others are wondering what is he going to do? Is he going to give something to the poor?”

This missing of significant things is typical. What these disciples conclude is typical, and we do the same thing. It is hard for us to see the clear handwriting on the wall. He says that we all are to read the signs of the times. However, there are not many people I know who can read the signs of the times.

Tim: I think the major reason that we have trouble reading the signs is that the signs are usually not what we want to see.

Henry: That is good, Tim, because just like when Jesus came, the Jews were expecting a political Messiah. Because of their wrong expectations, they missed the significance of that great event.

Sybil: After many of the predictions, there elapsed such a long period of time

before they actually happened that people tended to think, “Yeah, maybe someday.”

V: Obvious signs of the end times are being totally missed by Christians today.

Judas is going to betray the Lord, and Peter is going to deny the Lord. Compare Judas against Peter.

Beth: Judas intentionally betrayed Jesus whereas Peter just chickened out. Peter’s was not a malignant betrayal.

V: That is a good point, Beth.

Jill: The Scripture says that Satan entered Judas. It does not say that about Peter.

Bob: Peter is a lot like us in that we act out of ignorance. Judas did not understand completely, but he had a plotting mind where Peter kind of bumbled around into things.

V: What do you think went through Peter’s mind when the Lord was talking about the one who was going to betray Him? The Lord says, “It is this one to whom I give the sop.” Right after that He says to Peter, “You are going to deny me.” I wonder what Peter thought. Perhaps, he is thinking, “I did not get the sop, did I?” Was it the next sop, or was it the third sop? You know, you start wondering these kinds of things. I am thinking there is some tightness running through Peter here. I know if I were sitting in the crowd, and He said, “One of you is going to betray me,” and at another time, He pointed to me and said, “You are going to deny me three times.” Ooooh, that would scare me to death.

There is a tightness running through Peter right here. Could it be a sufficient tightness to make doggone sure he is not the one to betray Him? His heartstrings caused him to follow along when the soldiers take Jesus. He is going to make sure that he is not the one to betray Him when He is taken in for questioning, but then he just caves under the pressure. He denies Him, but he does not betray Him.

There is a lot to consider here in Peter’s experience for us to ponder.

Hope Enables

Class, while Peter has seen the *kenosis* demonstrated, he does not know the up side (the after-death glory) of the *kenosis*. Without that knowledge and the hope that the Spirit gives, he lacks the will to stand under the pressure. For that starch in our backbones is why we need the enablement of the Spirit Who gives us the hope that is on the other side of the cross. The knowledge of the glory that is coming on the other side of death is the key to our enablements on this side of death. We will be looking at that hope in John 14.

The *kenosis* is the path that you must tread. It includes the emptying of the self, the becoming a servant, the humility, the exclusion of rights, exclusion of name, exclusion of reputation, and obedience unto death. Then after death, comes the exaltation.

This placement of the exaltation is significant. That placement is where Jesus is exalted and praised as Lord of the universe, and every knee bows, and every tongue confesses. The Lord said that He endured the shame of the cross and all of His suffering for the joy of what lay before Him¹. That exaltation is the hope! By seeing that hope on the other side of death, you will be enabled to tread a path of sacrifice. ***It is hope that enables you to crucify your will.***

Now let’s look at the hope that is in Chapter 14.

More about Hope (John 14)

Hope is our pathway through troublesome times:

John

14:1 Let not your heart be troubled:

That commandment is to you and me because we have to go through troublesome

¹ Hebrews 12:2

times in our paths of discipleship. Sometimes, however, my heart is troubled, even though the Lord says right here,

John

4:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

14:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: . . .

So, we must look over to the eternal side of the *kenosis*, and consider the mansions in it. This eschatological hope provides perseverance for the present, and He says that this hope is not a trick:

John

14:2 ...if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also.

So where the Lord is when the tongues are confessing and the knees are bowing is also where we are going to be. That is a hope that should drive us forward.

So here in this passage is a statement of hope. If we reverse the *kenosis*, and we get the throne in our lifetime, then we are going to have only the physical and temporal hope here in our lifetime. The question that naturally arises is what are we going to have after life here ceases? The answer is that there will not be any mansions. There will be no hope of exaltation. You see, a reversal occurs.

Everybody gets a down side, and you want it on this side of the grave. Hear that! This is wisdom talking to you. The down side is what you want on this side of the grave. The up side is what you want on the other side of the grave. Whatever is on the other side of the grave is for eternity. You cannot beat that. I do not care what kind of deal you get on this side of the grave. You cannot beat the multiplier of eternity. That hope for the other side of the grave is why our saints, our forefathers, and the great martyrs of history have said that they could endure the pain, the

suffering, the death, and the fires for a little while because on the other side, there is nothing but glory forever.

The first part of John 14 deals with our enablement for implementing the *kenosis*. Now, the next part deals with obedience of our discipleship requirements.

Obedience Proves Love

God connects obedience with love as its output, a result, or a proof of love.

John

14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John

14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

The kind of love that is being used in these verses is *agape* love. That kind of love is a unilateral sacrifice for the welfare of the beloved. If you will love the Lord through sacrifice, then you will obey the Lord.

John

14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words:

...

14:24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: . . .

Okay, the Lord here is locking love and obedience together, never to be separated. Any attempt to disconnect them is to make God a liar. You cannot legitimately disconnect love and obedience even though many Christians are doing so. Love and obedience are a married couple that can never be put asunder.

What, then, is love (*agape*)? Love is self-sacrifice for the benefit of another, unilaterally without regard to response. That definition means then that it is a downward move on the *kenosis*. That kind of move means putting yourself into the Lord's possession as a bond slave and taking the hits that come

with it. All of that downwardness is called love (*agape*), self sacrifice on a unilateral basis, and it is equated to obedience.

This kind of obedience is the path that the Lord took. He came out of heaven, became a humble servant Who refused to do His own will, and He moved down, down, down, through obedience to His Father's will, even to death, even the death of the cross. Death is the maximum sacrifice, and it is, therefore, the maximum love.

Carl: Even though the disciples were with Jesus for three years, would it not be fair to say that part of the reason why Peter denied Jesus was that they were still looking for an earthly Messiah? That expectation generated a further expectation that if Jesus were to get killed, then somebody would be taking over in His place. You may not want to put that thought in there necessarily, but they had not yet come to understand the Lord's mission?

V: The Jews cannot understand the sacrificial mission given the cultural shaping to their value system. They do not know what the *kenosis* is. The Lord has told them that He must die, and John the Baptist has demonstrated the sacrificial life. The Lord has enacted the *kenosis*, and He has told them about love and obedience over and over again. What are they hearing? mansions, yes; kings, yes; abundant life, yes; sacrifice, no; death, no. What do we hear?

Mary: Mansions and kings and riches.

V: Yes, and ask for anything that you want in the name of the Lord, and you will get it. You can pray things into being, pray things out of being, confess changes into reality. It is disheartening what the Christian church has come to. We are interpreting everything on the opposite of the *kenosis* as did the disciples. They were expecting a political Messiah, and whenever He says anything, they interpret it from the upside down *kenosis*. They cannot hear the *kenosis*.

Under their views, the Messiah cannot be someone that dies on a cross! The Messiah instead must be one that will become their King.

Betty: They saw what they wanted to see.

V: Yes! We too see and hear what we want. We must get our hermeneutics right. The general church must get it together. It is a fight that the Lord has won, but we are losing. You can see the truth, you can hear it, you can be gripped in your heart by reading these passages and seeing what is transpiring here, and you can become so committed to the Lord that you can lay down your life. However, you can then walk out that door, and five minutes later you are right back in the trap because you have spent your whole life in the reverse *kenosis*. Wherever you go from here, you are going to be bombarded with the concept of the reverse *kenosis*. You have to fight hard against the flesh to do the *kenosis* consistently. You have to fight hard to even embrace the *kenosis* in your understanding, much less do it.

I am looking at the best candidates for the *kenosis* when I look at you. However, when you go out there to deal with your people, I think of what you are up against. I have an easy job compared to what you have. You have to go out there and convince those who are climbing as hard as they can to quit climbing and hit the skids. They are going to say that you are crazy.

Please hear me because I know what I am talking about. I have been grabbed and removed from a church for saying what I am saying to you right here today. I have been accosted in a church parking lot and been told that I was insane. The lie of the upside down *kenosis* has been solidified in our minds as if cast in concrete. Only by the power of God can the lie be overcome!

Wanda: The wisdom of Christ is foolishness to men.

V: Yes! There are very few people who can hear this. We must wake up fast. Time is running out.

Pete: Lining up with the *kenosis*, is Paul when he was talking about light afflictions. I believe that Paul, just as all the other disciples, had to grow to that place where he spoke of his tribulations as light afflictions. We can get there too.

V: Yes, Paul's spiritual growth was through, not to, the *kenosis* model that he described. There is no growth in the reverse *kenosis*!

JOHN 15 PURGING FOR DISCIPLES

We are going to look at something that we need to do in order to get on the path of real growth. We know what the path is, and we know what enables us to stay in the path, i.e. hope. Now we know the motivation needed to stay in the path, i.e. *agape*, that self-sacrificial love. But how do we get there? We must get purged to get there. Lets look at John's description of purging.

John

15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every [branch] that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

In these verses, there are the following three conditions of His branches: fruitless, fruitful, and bearing more fruit. The *fruitless* branch is taken away. The *fruitful* branch is purged in order to bring forth *more fruit*. Without being in Jesus, you cannot bring forth fruit, but He that not only is in Jesus but also abides in Him brings forth *much fruit* in verse 5 (see chart 6.2).

John

15:5 I am the vine, ye [are] the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Then the Lord talks about what He is going to do with those who do not abide. He is going to cast them aside. They will be gathered up and treated as refuse, and people will burn that refuse. But . . .

John

15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

No Fruit
Fruit
More Fruit
Much Fruit

Chart 6.2

If you are abiding in Him, you can pray just like the Lord prayed, and what the Lord prayed is how to accomplish His Father's will instead of receiving a nice temporal mansion, and having wonderful power, status, money, etc. The Lord did not pray for that kind of junk, not at all, and if you are abiding in Him, you will be praying for His will just like He did. You will be saying, "Nevertheless, Lord, not my will but thine."² This is what abiding in Him means. It is not some kind of pious mask so that you can pray and get a new house, not have to suffer any, or just live your life in the good-times. That is not what He is talking about here. He is talking about having the power to go through the pain, through the suffering, and through the cross for following Him.

In summary, He says there is a *no-fruit* kind of Christian. Then you get a *fruitful* kind of Christian. Then in verse 2 there is some *more fruit* that comes via purging. And in verse 5, there is *much fruit* that comes via abiding. What God is looking for is fruit.

The subject at hand is fruit, fruit, fruit! He is interested in fruit. We think that what God wants is a lot of branches, and we really do not worry about this fruit business. We figure that if we could just get the tree with

² Luke 22:42.

the most branches that has ever been seen, then God would just swoon over our wonderful tree! We seem to be focused on the business of getting branches, putting them in there in our tree, and doing whatever it takes to keep the branches from getting purged.

Our stupidity goes something like the following: God really did not mean what He said here where He is talking about fruit. We know a lot about what the Lord wants. He wants trees with lots of branches. Did the Lord not have all the multitudes, the 5,000 that He fed? Was He not interested in having them in His church? Do not confuse me with this business about the twelve; we want to look at the 5,000.

We need wisdom at this point. Here is the concept—a turning of things. God wants fruit!!!! Fruit comes in the *kenosis* model. If a church wants fruit, they are going to be on the *kenosis* model.

If a church only wants branches, it will walk the reverse *kenosis*. That way people will know the renowned pastor. Many pastors are not as concerned with the fruit as they are with having that big church with lots of branches because they mistakenly think that that is what the Lord wants. The mistake is made at the temporal level of evaluation. In the biggest-is-best concept, the Lord does not want a little bitty church of twelve little bitty disciples. He must have a huge number of people, like the 5,000.

Well class, the Lord wants fruit, fruit, fruit, and He is going to prune, prune, prune to get the fruit, fruit, fruit! Here is a tree for example (chart 6.3). It has branches all over the place, but only one fruitful branch on the whole tree. The Lord is going to start pruning. The next thing you know the tree will have all this fruit hanging on it, and He will say, “I like this tree” (see chart 6.4)

On the other hand, He will say about a fruitless tree, “Now this tree is in danger.”

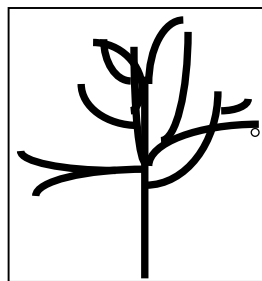


Chart 6.3

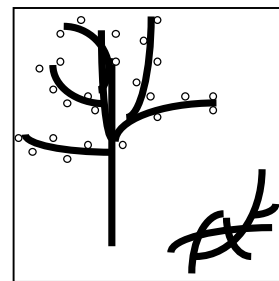
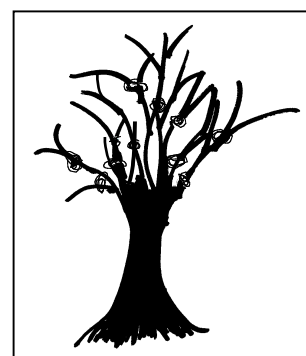


Chart 6.4

Why? Because what He wants is for the tree to produce fruit. If the tree does not begin to produce fruit, He will start whacking off the limbs. He will throw the limbs over in a pile to be burned by man. Man is going to despise them and think, “What a bunch of phony, hypocrite Christians they are.”

We see this scenario of fruitless trees all the time. In each of these scenarios, the pastor will say, “Man, I need a big tree.” His tree might be just a trunk with just a few limbs on it. His ministry will be to gather the pruned limbs from other trees and glue, tape, and bandage them onto his tree. He will splint on another one, and another one, etc. The little tree may be sagging over from the dead weight, but he just connects dead limbs all over that little tree. Then he thinks that he has a good tree with lots of limbs on it even though there is not a fruit anywhere on that tree. But they are now having to start a building program because all these old withered limbs that were being burned by the world are being brought in there and taped on in order to produce a big tree (see chart 6.5 showing the taped on branches). The pastor

will say, “Man, I am doing good. I am getting my tree built. Pretty soon they are going to



Tree with barren
branches attached
Chart 6.5

make me full time. I did such a good job on this one; I think I will go into church planting. I will make a whole bunch of these because there are a lot of these old limbs laying around.”

Then there is the guy who has a good tree going, no fruit, but he has the tree going. He sees the other tree, and he says to one of the dead limbs, “Hey, man, untie yourself from that tree and come over, and I will tie you in right here in this new tree. This is a ground floor opportunity.” With this scenario, we get the passing back and forth of these withered branches, and we spend the rest of our lives running after withered branches. The world is dying and going to hell, but nobody knocks on the doors. Nobody gives out tracts. They just give out offering envelopes to obtain the finances for searching after more dead branches and building a bigger temple to house them.

What happens in these two scenarios? Where is the fruit? If the Lord is interested in fruit, then we ought to be interested in fruit. How do you get the people to be fruitful? by purging, i.e. preaching and teaching *kenotic* discipleship. What does purging mean? The *kenosis* requires that you sacrifice some things in your life. You give up your pleasures, you give up your comforts, and you give up your career. You give up everything that YOU want because that is the definition of self-denial. If you cannot do that, you cannot be a disciple because the first requirement for discipleship is: “Let him first deny himself.”³

This passage is about increasing the fruit. The Lord is interested in fruit bearing. If we have quality Christians, there is going to be fruit popping out all over our tree. It can be a little tree, but a little tree with a lot of fruit is better than a big tree with little or no fruit. When that fruit starts popping out, there is going to be love for one another, the new

commandment, and the church is going to demonstrate to the world just who the Lord’s disciples are. The people in the world are going to be drawn and won, and that tree is going to grow and become gigantic with many limbs **and much fruit**.

Jack: It will also start more trees.

V: Yes, the seed in the fruit will go out all over the place, and more trees with much more fruit will result from this tree’s fruitfulness. This is simple stuff here folks, but you cannot understand it if your hermeneutic presumes the upside down *kenosis*.

Friends of Jesus

Now we are going to be looking at the requirements for being a friend of Jesus. Verse 9 says, “Continue in my love,” and verse 10 says, “If you keep my commandments you shall abide in my love even as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”

How do you abide? by continuous obedience. That is what the Lord did. He obeyed, and He obeyed all the way to the cross. That obedience is continuous. It is the pathway for abiding in the Lord’s love. He says, “I want you to abide in my love.”

Those who abide in the vine will bring forth much fruit. How do you abide? By obeying! Not by merely existing! Obeying is the key to fruitfulness. Obedience is sacrificial; it involves self-denial. You cannot obey and do what you want to do. You have to deny what you want to do in order to obey. You have to sacrifice your life to Him. You have to give away your purpose, your agenda, and go with His. That is what this discipleship business is all about.

The Lord declares joy as the product of discipleship’s *agape* type love (unilateral self-sacrifice for the brethren).

John

15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and

³ Matthew 16:24

[that] your joy might be full.

15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Sacrificial love is when you give your life for the brethren. That purpose is why you are here in this course, *i.e.* to learn what you need in order to become a fruitful minister (a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ). To be a minister of the Lord means that you give your life away for the brethren. You sacrifice yourself for the brethren.

John

15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

That definition of sacrifice is what you are called to do, *i.e.* you are called to lay down your life for your friends. Then he goes on further to say,

John

15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Through obedience comes friendship with Christ. Obedience produces all that fruit, benefits to others and the kingdom, helps the brethren, and brings joy and friendship with Christ.

John

15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

You need to see this now about how a friend of Christ knows the plan. A friend of Jesus buys into partnership with Him. He knows what the great commission is. He knows what the mission is, *i.e.* the *Missio Dei*, "I came to seek and to save that which is lost."⁴ That *Missio Dei* is the Lord's mission. Why did He come here? He did not come here just to die. He came to seek and to save that which is lost. His sacrificial death and resurrection saved eleven people. Then those

eleven were to take that plan out to others so that the Lord's plan of seeking and saving the lost would be expanded from eleven souls into millions.

The *Missio Dei* is the Lord's plan to reach those souls. The plan and its lofty goals has already been paid for and placed in our hands. Now the *Missio Dei* is our mission. We are the stewards (managers) of the Lord's investment.

What is the alternative? *missio hetero*, some other mission. I do not want *missio hetero*. I want God's mission. I want to be in yoke with my Lord. I want to do what He wants to do. This is my commitment. Now that commitment is going to cost me dearly, and it is going to cost you dearly. You cannot have your own life's mission and sacrifice it too. You must lose your life in order to gain it.

Becoming the friend of Jesus goes through servant hood. ***Before you can become a friend, you must be a servant, i.e. Jesus must be your BOSS.*** He is talking progressively about love, servant hood, and friends. When you get to be a friend of Christ, He gives you the complete knowledge of what His plan is. He will tell you things that will blow your mind.

As the friend of Jesus, you will have new thoughts running through your mind, a new venture everyday. You come out of the bed, and you say, "Oh my, what is the Lord planning today? I know it has something to do with the *Missio Dei*." When you are part of that friendship, you will meet people and see them differently. You will think, "I wonder if this person is saved?" You begin to think in terms of what Jesus thinks. When you go to the grocery store, it is a missionary journey. When you go to the bank and meet strangers in the bank, you are talking to them, giving out tracts, speaking and being nice to them. You are lifting people up, helping them. Through that sacrificial helping of

⁴ Luke 19:10.

others, you see, you will add credibility to your words. Your life will not be a cold lip service where you act like the world on the one hand, and then you talk all this sweet junk on the other—this is the hypocritical kind of life. But when your actions confirm your words, then there will be some hearing by the people of what you are saying.

According to the Scripture, the *abiding* obedience will eventually result in becoming friends of Jesus. At the beginning of the *kenotic* trek is obedience without understanding. At the lower part of the trek is friendship with Jesus with partnership-level understanding of the plan. There are some things in the Word that you are going to read and not understand their purpose, but you must do them because of Who said them. It does not matter whether you understand His underlying reasons for them.

You may not understand the motive behind the command. To Abraham, God said, “Sacrifice your only son to me.” To Abraham that was a dagger in the heart. He did not understand the reasons behind the command, but He obeyed it. God said, “Sacrifice your son to Me.” It was Abraham’s only son, the son that he loved and through whom was to come God’s promises to Abraham. Yet without understanding, Abraham obeyed that command.

Proverbs says, “Lean not to your own understanding.”⁵ You see, we must trust God even when it defies our logic. Our obedience of God will be on that *kenotic* trek that is filled with sacrifices. Servant hood is obedience many times without understanding but always with sacrifice. But just because of Who said it, you do it.

As a parent you tell your children, “Do not do such and such,” and they say, “Why?” And you reply: “Because I said so!” We expect obedience even when our children do

not understand either our reasons or our overall plan.

Henry: I think it is interesting that He says down here in verse 15, “I call you friends instead of servants,” but He preceded this statement with the words in verse 13 that the greatest love is expressed when a friend lays down his life for his friend.

V: He sure does, and that is why we cannot become friends apart from sacrificial (servant-hood) obedience. We cannot become friends over on a different model. Always divine friendship is going to be in this laying down of your life, the sacrifice as described in verse 15.

When you are going down into sacrificial obedience like that in verse 15, you will start getting close to death. Unsaved people under Satan’s control will hate you and despise you. The world will hate you and castigate you. Only then will you be catching on because you will begin to have the mind of Christ, i.e. the *kenosis* of Philippians 2 which says, “Have this mind. . . .” Then when you are walking with the mind of Christ, you will be walking in the plan of the Lord, following Him in the *Missio Dei*. You will know which way He is going to turn because He is making all things known to you. All of a sudden the plan of the world, the plan of history, all of that starts falling into place. You start knowing some things completely in a different way.

Before this point of friendship, you were intellectual, but at this point of friendship, you are spiritually wise. That greater understanding of God’s plans only comes at the friendship level. The rest of the time it is obedience because of Who said it. That pathway of obedience without the understanding, however, will take you ultimately to the point of friendship.

⁵ Proverbs 3:5.

Do not forget that love exists in obedience. We just saw that love, *agape*, is sacrifice for another's good. All obedience points to love and friendship. It all dovetails, links up, ties together, and results in friendship. There is no way to remove obedience out of the requirements for discipleship, *i.e.* to have your cake and eat it, too by reducing your love to mere lip service: "I really love the Lord." No, my friend, we must qualify for being His friends through obedience. It is wrapped up solely in actions.

The Disciples' Love

One kind of love looks like chart 6.6. *Eros* love is when one person loves another, but the ultimate purpose or agenda of *eros* is for self-gratification. It is not necessarily bad to seek your own good. *Eros* can actually be a good thing when there are no losses for the

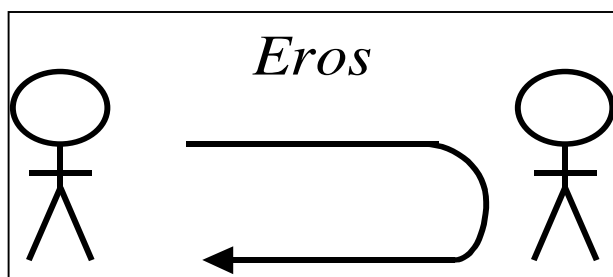


Chart 6.6

other person. It is essential to have the *eros* kind of love as a part of life, but it cannot be at the second person's expense because that would make it evil. Many Christians have this kind of love for Jesus.

Another kind of love is *phileo* (chart 6.7). *Phileo* love is brotherly love, *i.e.* friendship in which you love another person who responds in kind, and you love the person some more, and the person responds repeatedly in kind.

Phileo is a common kind of love, and you practice this all the time. For example, a man will come to the dinner table to eat. He will thank the wife for the good dinner, and the wife will respond by making another good

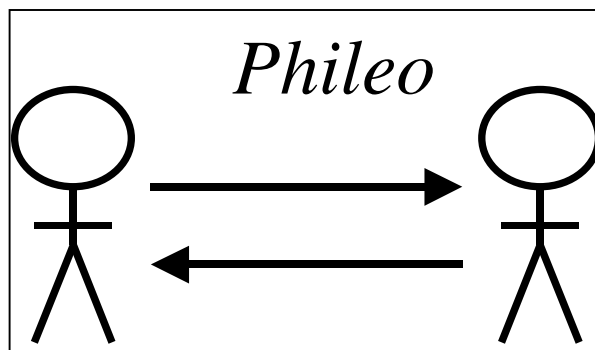


Chart 6.7

dinner. Both are showing appreciation to the other in an act and react scenario. This is friendship. If the man quits complimenting his wife for the wonderful meals, then she may quit making them. In order for this love to keep going, you cannot have a break in the reciprocating actions. If you have a break, then the friendship falls apart. Most likely you have already experienced this kind of break with a friend in the past. You must be nice to one another continually in order to have friendship love.

Phileo is cyclical, and repetitive. With or without sacrifices on either side, it does have blessings towards the other person. You want good for the other person, but your sacrifices are being repaid. Many Christians have this kind of love for Jesus. Their walks are for mutual benefits. However, many of these are the Christians who are also friends with the world. The Lord declares those particular Christians to be His enemies in James 4:4 instead of His friends.

Another love is *agape* love (chart 6.8 on the next page). *Agape* is going to cost the first person, or the one doing the loving. *Agape* costs the first person because he is unilaterally seeking the welfare of the other at his own expense. That is what Jesus did. He came down to seek my good by saving me. It cost Him his life. He did this not for a friend but for an enemy. He died for enemies. *Agape* is the very highest kind of love, the kind of love that Jesus had.

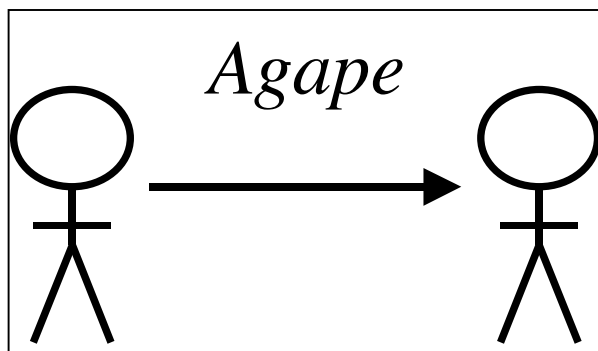


Chart 6.8

Your greatest opportunity is to accept Jesus' offer of being His friend. This friendship love looks like the friendship model (chart 6.7), but it is a *spiritual friendship*. Jesus wants us to be His friends. Jesus has already demonstrated *agape* love, a sacrificial love, and He does so every minute of every day for every one of us. Jesus Himself petitions on your behalf. He takes care of all your needs. He asks His angels to watch over you.

However, what Jesus wants from you is a reaction in which you sacrifice for His welfare (chart 6.9). The only way to get that result is for you to have *agape* for Him. When you do that by sacrificially obeying His commandments whether or not you understand the reasons behind them, you will be called servants for a while. When you sacrificially obey on a consistent basis because of Who said it, He will call you friend. At that point, He will give you knowledge of His plan

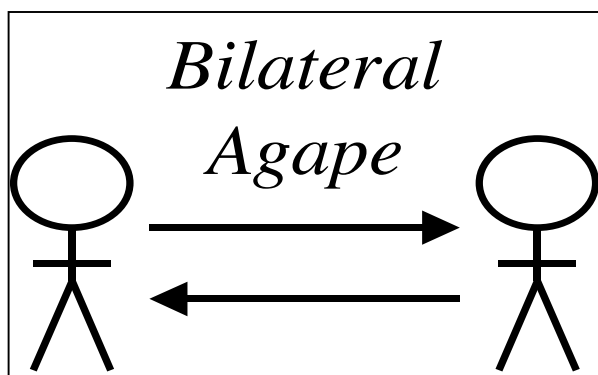


Chart 6.9

so that you will understand the reasons behind His commands. Everything that the Father has shown Him, He will reveal to you because a servant does not know what the Master is doing, but His friend knows the whole plan.

Enemies of the World

Okay, we have looked at faithfulness through purging and becoming friends of Jesus. Now we need to look at the other side of the coin—hatred from the world.

John

15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

The world hates Christians! Christians are always surprised when the world hates them. They cannot understand why the world would hate a person who tries to do nothing but good. However, consider how the world treated the greatest person who actually did nothing but good.

If you want to be friends with the world, get on the world's path. Be like the world. Climb up at the expense of others. Do not sacrifice—climb, seek betterment, be just like all the rest of the world's people, and they will say, "Hey, he is one of us. He is just doing what is supposed to be done, just trying to get a career, trying to earn some money." You can even step on your competitors. Step on them and climb up over them. The people of the world will still love you because you are doing what worldly people are supposed to do. If you try to do all this *agape*-loving business, they will throw hurdles in your path and call you every manner of fool.

One time in my experience, two deacons grabbed me and carried me out of the church for teaching that the church should practice the *kenosis* in the same way as the individual Christian. In the parking lot, one of the two deacons said that I was insane in front of my wife and kids. He could not see how the

church should be sacrificial and questioned me about how I could talk like that. I tried to tell him that *we* are the church. The church is not a separate institution to be sacrificed to. We are the called out ones, *ecclesia*, who are to practice the *kenosis* as a group just like we do as individuals. Enriching the institution is not God's Missio Dei!

Ecclesia (the word for church) means called out of the world. Those deacons were trapped in Institutionalism in which the church had become an idol. It was no longer people but an institution that we were to serve with all of our resources. The institution was to receive, not give. It was to be celebrated, praised, and worshiped under the guise of worship of God. It was OK for the members to suffer, but not the institution. It was commonly thought in that mega-church that any suffering by someone was because of his sin. Therefore, the institution should never suffer like Christians because *it* was esteemed as the *spotless bride* of Christ.

Ecclesia describes a pilgrim motif. People begin life in and of the world, but when we get saved, we are called out of the world and over into the church or *ecclesia* in Greek (*Ek* is out, *caleo* is called). As the called-out people, we live the rest of our lives as travelers through the world as pilgrims on our way to our new home.

How does holiness connect with *ecclesia*? Holiness means both morally clean and also set aside for the Lord's use. The person of the world is not dedicated for the Lord's use. He is dedicated to making his career and pursuing his dreams. However, once saved, he is cleansed and called out of the world to be set aside into the *ecclesia* for the Lord's use (*ecclesia* is a practical definition of holiness).

We are cleaned up and set aside for the Boss's use (in plain English). To be in the *ecclesia*, you have been chosen out of the world. "Therefore the world hateth you." As soon as you get off of that upside down

kenosis, you will have a problem. "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you," is the very next verse. You may ask why is it that you will be persecuted? The Lord says: "Because they know not Him that sent Me," verse 21. Verse 25 points out the perplexing mystery, "They hated me without a cause." It mystifies me about how much hate is generated toward a person who is sacrificing via *agape* to the point of giving one's life for his enemy. Christians do good, and yet the people of the world hate us for it. It does not make any sense! However, that is where we shall live the rest of our lives.

Please do not trip over this idea that you are going to be hated by the world. Jesus is telling you ahead of time so that . . .

John

16:1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: . . .

The Reformers before us experienced this:

John

16:2 . . . yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

You need to digest this prediction. It is a scary thing to know that the people who kill you are going to think that they are serving God. We are not talking about atheists here.

Look at the words!

Joe: It is fulfilled in Revelation.

V: Yes, the persecution of true Christians will be done in the name of God. . . . They are going to kill you. If you are so serious as to be in a disciple's *kenosis* and take seriously what I am teaching right here and begin to live as a disciple, they are going to kill you in their supposed service to God.

Bob: The *deacons* of the apostate church will do it!

V: It is certainly possible that they will initiate the process to be finished by the

government! We are getting close, even now, to worldly intolerance of our even being alive.

Is it going to happen to you? I think some of you are young enough that this is going to happen to you. You could live long enough to get your head cut off. But if it does not happen to you, watch out for your children. Your children had better be trained and equipped for hardships. You must be training your children! All this that you are learning in this class, you are obligated to teach it to your families, your churches, and your friends. I will tell you this: God does not lie, and He says that the numbers who are going to have their heads cut off will be so numerous that they cannot be counted. It is not only coming, but it is at the door!

Pete: One of my leading church members with the greatest tenure quit this week because I am teaching the requirements of discipleship. His words were, "That preacher will not quit preaching theology, and I am quitting."

V: That member could be a fruitless branch being purged by God. You and I and everybody in here must keep preaching sermons that are theologically sound, or God will purge us.

There is a strong deception concerning God's Law about being friends of Jesus and enemies of the world, or the reverse of being friends of the world and enemies of Jesus (Jas. 4:4). That deceitfulness is that you can be a friend of Jesus and also a friend of the world, and it has infiltrated our churches. But what I want you to see here is always that when you are a friend to Jesus, then you will be an enemy to the world, and *vice versa*. The formula is friend and enemy, never friend and friend. When you are a friend of Jesus, you are an enemy of the world. When you are a friend of the world, you are an enemy of Jesus.

If you are thinking you are a friend of Jesus, but you are also a friend of the world, you are not a friend of Jesus because there is nobody on the reverse *kenosis* who is a friend of Jesus. Nobody! On the reverse *kenosis* the Christian is taking care of self, indulging self, looking out for self. You do not know God's plans. You do not have any idea what God is about in this world, and who He is going to use.

THE SPIRIT'S DEALINGS IN THE WORLD AND IN THE CHURCH

In Chapter 16, the three-fold work of the Spirit in the world is described along with the three-fold work of the Spirit in the church. The Spirit works in both places. This is a promise.

How can we minister to the world in the midst of all its hostility? We are enabled through the Spirit's help to minister in either place to anyone. When you go out preaching, the conviction is going to land on the hearers. You can preach Jesus out on the streets, and you can give an invitation knowing full well that because you uttered His Word, the Holy Spirit is grabbing their hearts and pulling them, grabbing and pulling. You should have every confidence that the Spirit is there wherever you are preaching. Just preach it and watch things happen.

The Spirit's Dealing with the World

How the Spirit deals with the world is the first category. In it are three descriptions of how the Spirit deals with the world:

1. He convicts the world of sin.

The people of the world are convicted when you live in self-denial while they are living in self-indulgence by grabbing, stealing, using and abusing others for their own benefit. The Spirit will take God's words and your life, assuming that they correlate, and convict the people of the world of their sin.

This conviction will cause them to enact their hostility to the Spirit's conviction by attempting to get rid of you.

When God's standard is preached and lived, then the people will be convicted of its righteousness. We deny this conviction with little tricks like, "The Scriptures say that homosexuality is a sin. But my brother is a homosexual, and he is a good guy who goes to church and loves the Lord. So homosexuality really cannot be a sin. Instead it must be just an ailment or some other thing. These people who think that homosexuality is a sin are mean spirited homophobes." You justify sin by denying the Spirit's conviction of righteousness because it is the opposite of your loved one who is righteous in your eyes.

Another example: you receive God's Words condemning abortion. But then you find out that your daughter had an abortion. "Well, abortion cannot be that bad because my daughter had an abortion. My daughter is a good church-going Christian. Therefore, her abortion was a necessary self-protection. Abortion is not murder. My little girl was just taking care of herself." But the Spirit's conviction of righteousness will call for the rejection of unjust killing.

2. He is going to convict of righteousness.

Class, when you stand for the Word, and the Word judges you and your loved ones, you must remain under the Word without compromise. When you do this, the world will be convicted of righteousness because you are demonstrating righteousness.

If you believe God, it is accounted as righteousness. Believe Him, or you cannot be righteous. If He says something is right or wrong, it is not to be debated. It is what He says it is.

3. He is going to convict of judgment.

There is going to be a divine judgment of our works. The people of the world may go to hell because of disbelief, but the degree of punishment that they will receive in hell will correspond to their works.

Today's society goes through life as if there is no end. However, the Spirit will always be convicting them of judgment to come. The people may put it out of their minds through drugs, music, fun, and the ever present climb toward power, fame, and fortune. However, our message of the certainty of coming judgment will be used by the Spirit to warn the people to prepare to meet their ignored God and Judge.

The Spirit's Dealing with the Church

The Spirit deals with the church not only in the three ways that He deals with the world but also in three additional ways.

1. He will guide you into all truth.

The Spirit's help in our understanding the truth is part of the doctrine of revelation. It comes in the part of revelation that is called illumination. Illumination is described in the doctrine of revelation in Book 1 of this discipleship series.

The things of God cannot be understood by the unaided mind of man. The Spirit's help in the understanding is a necessity. Not only will He give you understanding of His Word, He will open the door and enable you to walk in that Truth.

2. He will show you things to come.

When you have the mind of Christ that is commanded in the passage describing the *kenosis* and have become His friend, you will be able to look across the chasm between temporal and eternal life and see what is to come. You can neither see these eschatological things nor know the plan of God without demonstrating obedient faith and becoming a friend of Jesus.

3. He will glorify the Lord.

The Spirit leads and empowers believers to honor their Lord through their words and matching deeds. Anytime you do something good in the name of Jesus, He is glorified--but vice versa for a bad deed.

We have much help from the Holy Spirit, and that help is going to have two focal points: (1) in the world, and (2) in the church. Not only does He help each of you in the church and help the church corporately, but also He does an effective work in the world.

When you preach or teach, the Spirit will make it fruitful. The Spirit will use that sermon like a big hammer and whack away in the world: wham, wham, breaking hearts. When there is a fruit-bearing Christian who is denying himself and obeying the Lord in cross-bearing fellowship, then he will be testifying of his faith through deeds that match his words. The result in the world will be the conviction that the Spirit brings to the world.

JOHN 17 THE LORD'S PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

There is a new economy being presented here in this prayer, and we are locked into it. You see, the Lord Jesus Christ prayed this prayer. This prayer is sealed in heaven and being answered. It will not be undone.

John

17:13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

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

17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

So we are going to be in the world without partaking in its evil. We are pilgrims on the Lord's kind of pilgrimage, i.e. pilgrims who

are not in isolation from the presence of evil, but who are kept from the evil.

John

17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

We know about the Doctrine of Salvation. We know what sanctification is. It is the walk of the justified. How are you going to walk? Your walk is up a difficult hill (see chart 6.10). You are sanctified by the Word's influence on your walk. Note that the

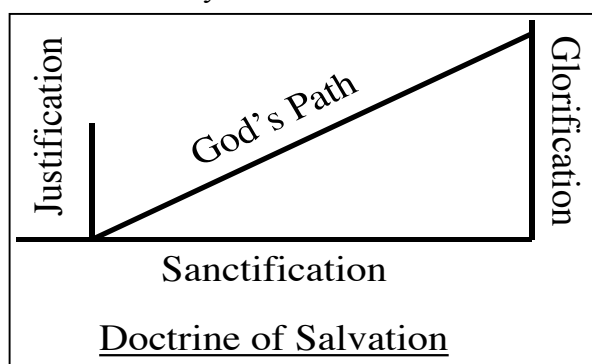


Chart 6.10

medium of your sanctification is the Word of God. Walk in His Word! Grab hold of this Bible and walk therein. That walk is sanctification. Jesus already prayed it, and there is not going to be any change in this plan: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

John

17:18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

You are on the same mission as Jesus was on, the *Missio Dei*. Jesus was sent on the Mission of God, I am sent on the Mission of God, the same mission. Oh my, you mean that my Lord thinks enough of me to hand me His mission, and say, "Go, do the same thing that my Father sent me to do"? That assignment, my dear friend, is a great and wonderful honor. To be sent on the same mission as Jesus is huge! Oh, my soul! I can

hardly understand how He could honor a sinner like me with that kind of mission. Listen, He honored you with the same mission, and He sealed it with His prayer.

A long time ago, I was working in my office on the railroad. My wife called me and was so excited that she could hardly talk. She said, I just got through reading Chapter 17 of John, and I could hear the Lord speaking. I replied, "I hear Him all the time." She said, "No, I heard Him in my ears." I said, "You did what?" She said, "I heard Him in my ears. As I was reading Chapter 17, I heard Him speaking the words. You know how when you see a movie, and a letter comes from the warrior out on the battlefield to the wife at home, and she starts reading it. She is reading it with her voice, but then the voice changes, and it is his voice? That is what happened."

Boy, was I jealous! I thought, "Man, why did that never happen to me?" She was ecstatic, and I was jealous. This Bible that I am holding up is the same Bible that I had in my office on the railroad. She hung up, and I grabbed this Bible and started reading this chapter, and it happened to me too!

I started reading. I did not read out loud. I just started reading. I was listening hard because if it was just going to be a little tiny whisper, I wanted to hear it. I was listening, and I was reading, and I was listening, and I was reading, and I heard it. It was so subtle that when it started I did not even recognize it. I kept thinking that what I was hearing was my thoughts. I kept reading further and further and further, and it got louder and louder and louder. Then I was ecstatic. I could hear the Lord saying the words.

Though that experience was very exciting, hearing it is not the ultimate accomplishment. It is reading the Words, putting them in your heart, and sealing them there to be **enacted in your walk**, because this is a prayer that is already sealed in heaven. Jesus prayed, not

just for the saints during His incarnation, but for all of us and others coming in the future.

So this prayer in chapter 17 is a sealed prayer, and nothing is going to change this prayer. This is wonderful for us. This prayer established a new economy. Very few people understand the economy. But there it is. It is the *Missio Dei* given to us pilgrims of God!

CHAPTER 18 THE ARREST OF JESUS

In this event of the arrest of Jesus, we observe some people getting slain in the spirit. We have many Christians running around in various churches getting slain in the spirit. They think they are friends of Jesus, but verse 6 demonstrates that it was His enemies who were slain in the spirit. They approach to arrest Him saying, "We came to get Jesus." Jesus said, "I am He." Bang, they went backward and fell to the ground.

Class, there are many people seeking to observe and experience being slain in the spirit. The "minister" touches their heads and says: "In the name of Jesus" and bam, they fall down backwards as if dead.

Being slain in the spirit is not the pathway of becoming spiritual. Being knocked down in the biblical event was because of an irreverent approach to the Lord Jesus as an enemy. These Christians of today should examine themselves to find out why they want such a carnal experience. James 4:4 declares that friends of the world are His enemies.

Peter's Denials

John

18:17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also [one] of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

When they came to arrest Jesus, Peter whipped out his sword. He planned to use a physical weapon to fight a spiritual fight. That strategy is the opposite of the *kenosis*.

Using the world's strategy for spiritual warfare is not sacrifice. Carnal victory is to whack the enemy's head off. Jesus demonstrated true spiritual victory in His death on the cross.⁶

Peter does not quite understand all of this new, spiritual strategy because He is conditioned by the world. He and the other disciples were expecting a political Messiah who would gain enough of a following to drive the Romans out of Israel. He is of the world, and his hermeneutic is worldly.

Even so, when the soldiers take Jesus away, there is a tug on Peter's heart because of his love of Jesus. That love for Jesus draws Peter to follow where the soldiers take Him. In this following, I believe there is some self-denial in Peter.

While warming his hands at the fire, I wonder whether Peter would be wondering under the old hermeneutic of worldly wisdom: "Oh, they have my Lord. They have my Lord! We need to rescue Him so that we can also be enthroned with Him when He takes over the government. I will be at His right hand. That would be the place for me since I am the leader of the other disciples and have alone tried to save Him."

⁶ There are two kinds of warfare for God's pilgrims. One is spiritual warfare which is conducted via discipleship. This warfare involves defeating the devil and his schemes by using spiritual weapons. These are denying our fleshly desires, taking up the cross of death to self, and following Jesus in His Mission on earth. All of these are described in God's Word.

The other warfare is physical. In this warfare, victory is achieved by defeating the physical threat by using physical weapons. These are killing or subduing the physical enemy in order to protect your family and friends.

Distinguishing when to wage war in the spiritual or physical domains can only be done by the pilgrim who has the wisdom of God's Word residing in him to sanctify his walk.

As soon as the damsel asked, "Are you one of His disciples?" Peter immediately jumps from caring about Jesus to looking after only himself. So, he denied being one of His disciples.

John

18:25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also [one] of his disciples? He denied [it], and said, I am not.

18:26 One of the servants of the high priest, being [his] kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, . . .

Now the servant has spotted Peter and recognizes him as the one who chopped off his relative's ear.

John

18:26 ...saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

18:27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Pilate Interviews Jesus

Pilate's interview focuses on the kingship of Jesus, and . . .

John

18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, . . .

This world's kingdom consists in the upside down *kenosis*. If your kingdom is of this temporal world, then you will not share in the Lord's Kingship. The Lord's kingdom for Christians consists in the *kenosis*. If you can see that the Lord's kingdom extends into the eschatological world, then you can live as a temporal slave to Jesus because of the hope of exaltation in His eschatological, eternal Kingdom.

If you have the hope of exaltation, you can sacrifice your life in the temporal world. But Peter did not have the understanding of the *kenosis* and its spiritual, eschatological hope. Therefore, he could not make the ultimate sacrifice. You cannot do it either without the understanding of the *kenosis*. You must have the hope of God's promised future kingdom.

JOHN 19

THE JEWISH RELIGIONISTS’ HATRED OF JESUS

John

19:6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify [him], crucify [him]. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify [him]: for I find no fault in him.

Pilate, the governor, has the God-given responsibility to promote good and restrain evil (every government has this God-given responsibility according to Rom. 13). Pilate has examined the Lord, found no fault in Him, and said, “Just go ahead and crucify Him.” My friend, that is the greatest act of injustice known to man—to execute the innocent. For Pilate, the sacrifice of the innocent is okay: “Jesus did not do anything wrong. However, if you want to kill Him, just go ahead and kill Him.”

Carl: Pilate was a deacon of God.

V: That is right, Carl, a deacon of God. Romans 13, says that all of our government workers are deacons of God.⁷ Their authorities given to them by God’s ordination are for the purpose of serving the people via restraining evil and promoting good. However, their definitions of good and evil are to be according to God’s definitions of good and evil.

I want you to see something here. The governors’ and rulers’ responsibilities go much further than just the taking care of themselves. Those responsibilities are much like those of a parent. A parent takes care of the children. For the child’s welfare, the parent should be willing to sacrifice his own life. That is the way the government and rulers are to behave as well. If you are a boss with employees under you, then you are to

care for your employees’ welfare over your own. You are supposed to take care of them. You are to promote the good and restrain the evil. Take good care of everyone under your rule.

John

19:7 The Jews answered him, We have a law,

The Jews have the Law. However, they have demolished it by this time. They are force-fitting their excuse to execute an innocent person under the Law. By their Law, however, Jesus should not die because He truthfully declared Himself to be the Son of God. He **is** the Son of God. They are attempting to respond to Pilate in a way that Pilate himself could not but agree to their demands.

Pilate was trying to wash his hands of the whole mess at the expense of Christ. He is going to turn Jesus’ fate over to the Jews. Pilate has already judged Him to be innocent, but he is still going to knowingly condemn an innocent person to be executed.

Remember that the Jews had already said that they could not execute Him when they brought Him to Pilate. They declared that their Law says that Jesus must be executed because He has declared that He is the Son of God. They said that Jesus must be executed for His claim, but they could not execute Him because Rome said that execution was outside of Jewish authority. Thus they tell Pilate: “We cannot execute Him. You have to do it.” Pilate is in a bind that puts him in double jeopardy. Whatever he does is going to bring him trouble. He interviews Jesus again in hopes of finding another way out of this predicament.

John

19:10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speak-est thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

19:11 Jesus answered, Thou couldst have

⁷ Romans 13:1-6. Government rulers even have the God-given responsibility for leading the country to worship the One True King.

no power [at all] against me, except it were given thee from above:

You need to see that this power of life and death comes to the governor from God, and it originated with the ordination of Saul. When God's Kingship was set-aside for a human king, God ordained human government right there. When He ordained human government, no matter how sorry a government we have, and it is going to be the worst in the world when Antichrist assumes the headship, the power to establish justice via the sword was given to human government. It has been here on this planet in its corrupt form ever since the coronation of Saul. The evil version of human government is going to end with Antichrist's end.

John

19:12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, . . .

They put even more pressure on Pilate by pitting him against Caesar.

John

19:12 ... saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend:

So, Pilate parades the Lord out as King of the Jews.

John

19:15 . . . The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

You are going to hear something similar when Antichrist arises. You are going to hear many religionists say that they have no king but Antichrist.

Please notice that the Romans are the ones who crucify Him. The Jews manipulated the power of the Romans to accomplish it. It is Pilate who knowingly condemned an innocent man to be crucified.

John

19:16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led [him] away.

19:17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called [the place] of a skull,

which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: 19:18 Where they crucified him, . . .

I want you to see that couched in just these four words in verse 18 is all the world of pain and suffering of all of our lifetimes.

In my study of church history, I found that many of our forefathers suffered and died for Christ. They experienced a whole lifetime of suffering. You know how much space in history they have? Most of them did not even get their names mentioned. They were just numbers of a group, for example: "There were thirty-six Anabaptists burned." England's records under Bloody Mary did not give their names, did not give the stories, did not give anything. The account just says, "thirty six burned." These faithful martyrs for Jesus are going to be chief in heaven. When you go to heaven, you are going to be saluting these martyrs. These are Christians who laid down their lives for their Friend. No greater love hath any man than the one who gives his life for his Friend (John 15:13). That is *kenotic* discipleship of the highest order.

Then we come to the resurrection, which we are going to treat extensively in the next lesson. I want you to know, though, that you have been challenged tonight. The models have been drummed in. I have used repetition by teaching the same things over and over again. You can see, in the summary statements of John, the signs that teach about the Doctrine of Salvation. The *Missio Dei* is given to us in chapter 17 and is sealed with the Lord's Prayer of sanctification for us. It is in place forever because the Lord Jesus has prayed it. You are the actors. Jesus is your High Priest. The Holy Spirit is your helper. You have no excuse. Yet, we have a world going to hell. We have a church that thinks that the sign of being a good Christian is money and attendance. We have a hermeneutic that is so distorted that when people read the Bible, they even divine how

to achieve prosperity in the Bible. What is wrong with us?!?!?

May the Lord have mercy on our souls, by letting us be in yoke with Him in spite of our wretchedness. What a joyful opportunity and honor to be given His mission.

Pray with me now: **“Lord Jesus, I surrender to You as my savior, my Lord, my Boss, my King, my God. You rule over**

my life because I am Yours to do with as You see fit. Take me my Lord and use me for Your Glory. I love You, Lord Jesus. Thank You for first loving me when I was still Your enemy. I am Yours now, and I want to be Your friend.”

If you prayed this prayer, say “Amen” out loud right now.

Chapter Questions

1. What is the “ought”?
2. What is the enablement of the “ought”?
3. Describe *agape*.
4. How do we love Jesus?
5. Compare verbally the *kenosis* to the reverse *kenosis*.
6. How do we become a friend to Jesus?
7. What is the *Missio Dei*? Where is the scripture found?
8. Draw the chart that illustrates *eros*. What does *eros* mean?
9. Draw the chart that illustrates *phileo*. What kind of love is *phileo*?
10. Draw the chart that illustrates *agape*.
11. What is holiness?
12. How does the Spirit deal with the world?
13. How does the Spirit deal with the church?
14. Illustrate the Doctrine of Salvation.

Chapter 7

THE RESURRECTED CHRIST

JOHN 20

THE RESURRECTION

We have been going through this gospel and having the hurts put on us, but now we get to enjoy some victory parts, which are where our hope is built. In the beginning of Chapter 20 is the resurrection of our Lord which is the eighth sign.

John

20:1 The first [day] of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

20:2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

20:3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

20:4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

20:5 And he stooping down, [and looking in], saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

20:6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

20:7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

20:8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

20:9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

20:10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

John Believes

This event was being perceived as something other than the resurrection. It was perceived as the moving of the body. That is what Mary saw, that is also what Peter saw, but John saw something different. John believed in the resurrection and became the first to believe that the resurrection of Christ had actually occurred.

These observers knew from the Old Testament Scriptures that there was going to be a resurrection. They knew something about the Messiah and the prophecy about the Messiah, but they thought that He was going to be a political Messiah instead of a sacrificial Messiah. When they saw the empty tomb, there was not an immediate understanding of the Scriptures that they had read and perceived generally. They had not locked in on the doctrine of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah in a belief system like what we expect of ourselves and our congregations. But these observers were familiar with the Lord's Words that said He was going to die and that He was going to be raised. He had told them all of that, but yet, except for John, they did not lock in on it.

However, John locked in on the doctrine and believed. When he saw the empty tomb, the Lord's words came back to him, and he believed. It would be good if we could believe based on the words. Please hear me. When we read the words, we need to believe at that level displayed by John. That will mean then that you will associate the evidence with God's Word. All physical evidence must line up with God's Word, not vice versa. God's Word should be believed as absolute Truth. Besides that, if you should receive a supposed proof to the contrary, you should still believe the Word of God, not what you

see with your eyes because you can be fooled at the sensory level.

Here in this passage, we have read about the first experiences concerning the resurrection. Peter saw, John saw, Mary saw, but John alone believed.

Mary's Encounter with Jesus

John

20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, [and looked] into the sepulchre,

20:12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

20:15 Jesus saith unto her . . .

Notice that Jesus said the same thing that the angels said:

John

20:15 . . . Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and [to] my God, and your God.

20:18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and [that] he had spoken these things unto her.

Notice that there are two missions going on here. The Lord is on a mission of taking His offering to heaven, to the Father. Also at

the same time that He is doing that, Mary is on a mission of taking the message of her encounter with the risen Lord to the disciples. This is really quite good here. Who is the first missionary of the resurrection? Mary is. What is the time of her mission? the very minute that the Lord Himself is ascending to the Father with the offering. Man!

That is thrilling to me when I think about Mary being commissioned by the Lord in His initial resurrection state, and He is saying, "Go to my brothers and tell them this message. I am going to ascend to the Father," and so zoom, zoom, He goes up and she goes horizontally.

Salvation Declared for Disciples

Mary's mission is exciting to me because not only is her mission simultaneous with the Lord's mission, but Jesus uses some terminology here that is very exciting. He says, "Go to my brethren," and then He says, "Tell them I ascend unto my Father and your Father." He is already putting them in the category of salvation. They are already being counted as in the family of God. He says, "And to my God, and your God." There is something significant that has transpired here, and it looks to me like they have been reckoned as saved at this point.

Mary is sent on a mission to saved people to tell them this message. I used to think that you had to have the Holy Spirit to indwell you before you could be counted as being saved. I still think that condition of the indwelling of the Spirit is a requirement of salvation for us. But I think that right in this passage here, their salvation and indwelling are in fact a future happening that is of such a certainty that it goes far beyond foreknowledge. It is as good as having already happened. It is a certainty of such a kind that is based on their faith in Him (evidenced by the words, "to whom can we go, you have the words that lead to life.") that He is counting them as

saved prior to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.¹

It is such a radical change that He says, “My brethren” instead of “My Disciples.” However beyond that new designation, He then says: “My Father and your Father.” Furthermore, beyond those first two statements, He then says: “My God and your God.” I believe that right here in these three wonderful statements, salvation is declared by the Lord for those who had expressed faith in Him, even without a full understanding of the sacrificial death and victorious resurrection of the Messiah. My friends, Jesus, that same Messiah who declared salvation for His first disciples, has declared your salvation too.

Appearance #1: in the Midst of the Assembly

John

20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first [day] of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you.

20:20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them [his] hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

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

Verse 21 is a commission of sending all of His disciples on the same kind of mission as Jesus was sent by His Father. My friend, this commission includes you and me.

John

20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on [them], and saith unto them,

Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

20:23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; [and] whose soever [sins] ye retain, they are retained.

Concerning this commission of being sent on the same mission as Jesus, the *kenotic* model must be employed. Philippians 2 declares that we are to have the same mind as Christ who employed the *kenosis* for His Messianic Mission. He says, “As I have been sent by the Father, so send I you.” That means now that we are on the same mission with the same mind.²

However, our prevailing problem is that we modify the mission. We do tricks with it. Plus, we do everything possible to get out of this downward move of the *kenosis*. But I want you to know that there is no escape. It is already sealed. God said it. You have been sent on a descending and sacrificial mission just like the one that the Lord was sent on. There is no escape from that because the *kenosis* is the model that the Lord was sent on, and it was a humiliating, sacrificial model.

We saw John the Baptist display this *kenotic* model in his career. His career was short lived, and he did not have much of a life, as a matter of fact. But he demonstrated that *kenotic* model in his life, and he did a really good job of it. He did so well that the Lord proclaimed him to be the greatest of all men.

The Lord was given the ascension and the exaltation after His death. Therefore, the words “So Send I you” mean that you too are not going to get your glory and all of that kind of thing prior to your death. Your life on earth is to be a life of sacrifice just like the Lord’s—“so send I you.” So, there is the commission that we are to follow in His footsteps, not to generate some good-feeling kind of trip that you really want to do. Oh, one of our tricks is to baptize our desires and

¹ When Jesus prayed His prayer in John 17, It was signed, sealed, and delivered to God the Father for establishing the New Testament as soon as the Lord’s sacrifice was completed. Therefore, as soon as Jesus stood in His innocence before His Father after having paid for our sins, sins that He did not commit, His part of the *Missio Dei* was completed and His disciples (past, present, and future) were saved.

² Luke 19:10.

put a Christian mask on your life so that you can have your cake and eat it too. We can't get by with that.

Yes, you can trade in your birthright. This commission from the Lord and its corresponding glory after death is your birthright. That birthright is to hear the Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" when you have followed in His footsteps. That is your birthright!

When you get down to the end, at glorification, there will be much reward, and great celebration. That is also part of your birthright. But my dear friend, you can trade your birthright for a bowl of stew, i.e. for the dung of an exaltation prior to death.

Instead of your birthright as a child of the Living God, you may get in your earthly throne, get the praise of men, get your career, get all your self-indulgence and your carnal pleasures and all this good stuff that the world says that you should pursue. You baptize these things, make them look Christian, and fool all the saints, but you do not fool the Lord. You can sell your birthright! Esau sold his!

This temptation to sell your birthright is something that is going to be dogging your heels all of your life. You will be out hammering away on your mission from the Lord, and you are going to be tempted to trade in your birthright. I dare say that the great majority of Christians are going to trade in their birthright because they do not even know what the birthright is. They do not even know that the Great Commission is a sacrificial mission cast in the *kenotic* mold. They can sound the words out, but they do not know what it truly is. The hurting thing is that when the pressure is applied, we too forget what it is. But there it is: "as My Father has sent me, even so send I you."

Appearance #2: to Thomas

John

20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

20:25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

20:26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: [then] came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace [be] unto you.

20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust [it] into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed [are] they that have not seen, and [yet] have believed.

This was a dangerous thing that Thomas did, and it is not just the business of doubting because there are going to be doubts that flood you. You are going to be going through life, and when the heat is on, you are going to doubt: "Am I going the right way?" You are going to have all manner of questions that are going to surface as you are moving through life, but do not ever come down to this point where you are going to set the conditions of belief. Never allow yourself to get into that kind of position where you say, "Lord, if You do ___, then I will believe," or "If this condition is not met, then I will not believe," or "If He does not do ___, then I am not going to go." Setting conditions for God to meet is dangerous to your spiritual and perhaps physical health.

Setting the conditions for your belief is trying to become God. We are not allowed to

set the standards or the conditions for any kind of missionary journey, or belief, or system, or anything. God does not put up with that. This is a great act of mercy here with Thomas. Here is Thomas saying, "If I do not stick my fingers in His hands I am not going to believe." The Lord is saying, "Believe my Words."

Again, class, do not come in here saying, "If I do not see an angel or lightning, I will not believe." Do not do that. Not only do we not have that kind of power, but the Lord could easily say, "Okay, then, do not believe." But He showed mercy here. And when Thomas hears this reprimand, he realizes that he was on thin ice. Thomas represents the kind of guy who could have a spontaneous expression coming out of a quivering mass of flesh that is on the verge of falling into the lake of fire. I imagine that right here it dawns on him, "Oh my soul, this is God!" He says, "My God!" That is a much different expression, a great turn around from his last one. Thomas' doubting is not some kind of innocent doubting. His expression of doubt is a lot more serious than first meets the eye. You may have doubts, but never ever set conditions for God to meet.

Then the Lord goes further and says, "You have believed because you saw. Blessed are those who believed without seeing."

John saw the empty tomb, and believed. But what we are supposed to do is to believe the Words of God. When you read the Scriptures, please know that they are God's Words. You do not need to see any other kind of physical proof. When the Word of God says that Antichrist is coming, you had better believe that Antichrist is coming. When it says there is going to be a resurrection, judgment, and a lake of fire execution you had better believe that they are coming. We are not going to set any conditions and say, "When I see this happen, then I will

believe" because it will not work like that. God is not going to meet our conditions. We have to stay with what the Word says.

Jill: Like you say, many current "prophets" are doing just what you are saying. Everybody is caught up with looking for all the signs. We are just kind of shrinking away from the objective Word of God and demanding signs to tell us what to do.

V: Mocking is coming in the end-times. The mocking could come out of setting up some kind of condition for which you are going to believe. You say, "If this does not happen, and this does not happen, and the temple is not rebuilt right on this spot, then I will not believe." And sure enough when all your conditions do not happen, and you do not believe, and you start mocking God, then you will be participating in the apostasy of the end times. The people are going to start saying, "Well, when is He coming? He has been saying that He is going to come, where is He? Why isn't He here?"

That scenario is what the Bible says is going to come—mocking in our end times. It says the Church is going to become dissatisfied with the proclamation of the straight out, objective truth of God's Word, and they are going to start heaping teachers to themselves who tickle the ears,³ who will tell them how sweet and nice they are, who will tell them how they do not have to go downwards in the *kenosis* and suffer, who will tell them how Christianity is a great and wonderful life full of temporal blessings, who will tell them how our path is an all rewarding climb into the good life, and who will tell them how all you have to do is confess your desires into existence or get another carnal Christian to pray in agreement with you in order to force God to give you temporal blessings.

In the end-times apostasy, you can have the American dream, and you can just grow

³ 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

and have a wonderful time because the sacrifice has already been made. Since the sacrifice and suffering is completed and over with, then you do not have to make any sacrifices. You just enjoy the good life. By His stripes, not our stripes, you are healed.⁴ Therefore He has the stripes. We do not have any stripes. We just have joy, fun, happiness, indulgence, and everything that we ever want.

Class, you see this stuff all the time. Everywhere I go, I see this kind of stuff going on. Since this kind of apostasy is an end-times phenomenon, then why is it occurring in our times? Could it be that we are in the end times?

We are not preaching sanctification that is contained in the sacrificial *kenotic* model. We just pull these two ends of salvation, i.e. justification and glorification (see chart 7.1), together to the point where sanctification is omitted. There is no longer a line (sanctification), just a dot (see chart 7.2 which shows salvation as totally defined as an event). Everybody gets all that salvation has to offer right now. There are no requirements on the Christian life, just glory and self-indulgence.

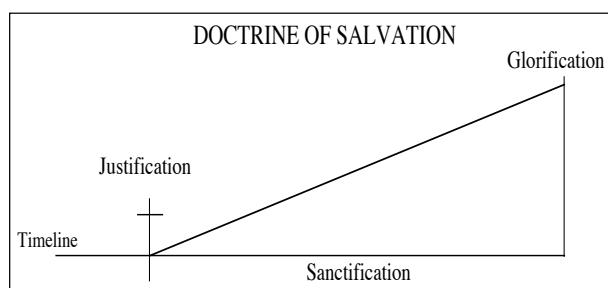


Chart 7.1

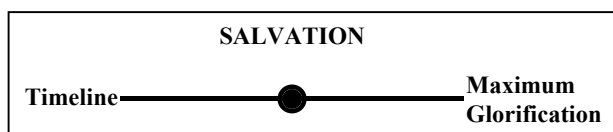


Chart 7.2

The Gospel of John is a book of signs. We have been interpreting these signs, one

after another, and putting them together in order to develop the Doctrine of Salvation. We did five signs and put them together already. There are many miracles that the Lord did which were signs to the witnesses, but they were not all recorded.

John

20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

You see how you might have life? These signs occurred in such a way that they describe Jesus and His mission. You do not need a new set of signs. These signs, which are recorded in God's Word, are enough for us. All we need to do is believe what is written.

You can take all of those signs and put them together, and they will tell significant things about the Lord. Verse 31 is a re-statement of the same principal that we have already practiced.

CHAPTER 21 APPEARANCE #3: THE HUGE CATCH OF FISHES

21:1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he [himself].

21:2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the [sons] of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

21:3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

21:4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

21:5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Chil-

⁴ 1 Peter 2:24.

dren, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

21:6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt [his] fisher's coat [unto him], (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

21:8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

21:9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

21:10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

21:11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

21:12 Jesus saith unto them, Come [and] dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

21:13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

21:14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

Notice that the disciples are in the boat when they see the Lord on the shore. They do not know who He is. John also is not able to recognize that the person on shore is the Lord. The Lord then speaks to them and asks about the fish. They tell Him that they do not have any. He says, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat." They do, and then they catch all these fish. John looks back over at the Lord, and he says, "It is the Lord."

Peter hears the words from John, "It is the Lord." Peter immediately acts upon this witness. It is not that Peter looked and squinted and strained to see, and said, "It must be the

Lord." It did not happen like that. Peter did not conclude that it was the Lord based on the catch or anything like that. It says that John said, "It is the Lord," and Peter immediately girded himself and jumped in the water to swim ashore. That act from Peter is from trusting the witness of John.

What kind of situation would it have been if Peter not acting on the witness from John had jumped in the water out of curiosity and swam to shore only to find a Roman or somebody else that Peter does not know? We can only speculate on that scenario. However, he heard John say, "It is the Lord," and there was no further discussion, no questions, no analysis, and no making doubly sure before acting. There is not even any looking again to see, but just a jumping in the water based on the words that came out of John's mouth. I like that.

Henry: When John said it, Peter realized it too, immediately, like what you already said—he believed the words.

V: Yes, it was Holy Spirit power in the words, the testimony. When you recognize miracles with God's Hand Prints on them, call attention to them as a witness. There may be a Peter in your midst to act upon your witness.

Betty: Something else that is connected with John's belief occurred when John and Peter ran to the empty tomb. John was the one that first believed that Jesus had risen. You know that he would probably begin to tell everybody that the Lord had risen.

Homer: So when the opportunity came up, he said, "There He is!" Peter is out of the boat like a shot because he is always acting spontaneously.

V: Yes, but in this case, you see, I believe that he is acting upon a witness. It is a faith thing. This episode is really quite good about believing words. It is just the opposite of Thomas. Peter could have said something

like this: “Unless He tells us to throw the net on the left side, and we catch just as many on the left side, I am not going to believe it is the Lord.” Then he would have been setting the conditions for belief. I do not believe that the Lord would have met His conditions because God is not in the business of meeting our ridiculous conditions. Besides that, John’s belief would set in judgment over someone’s disbelief because they both had the same evidence and opportunities for faith. I like the way Peter acted upon his belief of a witness and the way John was so quick to believe.

Mary: John had discernment. Peter had action. That goes back to the special descriptions in the triangle of piety that you have taught us.

V: That is good, Mary, that you are connecting the interlinking doctrines.

JESUS ASKS WHETHER PETER LOVES HIM

John

21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Let me put these words for love in a chart (see chart 7.3). We have “*agape*” and “more”: Jesus says, “Do you love Me more than these?” The second one will be another *agape*, but without the “more.” The third one will be *phileo*, which is that friendship, mutual-benefit love. The first two questions are where the Lord is asking by using the word *agape*. However, in Peter’s replies, he uses the word *phileo* in all three replies. The Lord then issues the following three commands: feed, shepherd, and feed. The first command is to feed His lambs, the second is to shepherd His sheep, and then He returns to the words “feed” and “sheep” again. You

Question	Jesus Asks	Peter Replies	Jesus Commands
Sacrifice (more)	Agape (more)	Phileo	Feed My lambs
Sacrifice (<i>kenosis</i>)	Agape	Phileo	Shepherd My sheep
Friendship	Phileo	Phileo	Feed My sheep

Chart 7.3

already know what *agape*, *phileo*, and *eros* mean. What you need to do now is look at the grid in chart 7.3.

In the grid, let’s reword the questions to reflect the meanings based on the specific words chosen by the Lord. In the first question, Jesus asked Peter: “Do you love me more than these?” In effect, since *agape* means sacrifice, He is asking Peter whether he loves Him sacrificially more (*agape* Him more) than the other disciples. Peter responds by using the word meaning that he loves Him as a friend (*phileo*).

In the next question, Jesus asked whether Peter loved Him sacrificially (*agape* Him as in the *kenosis*). He leaves off the comparative “more than these” at this time. However, Peter responds the same way as he did to the first question.

In the third question, Jesus asked whether Peter loved Him merely as a friend (*phileo*

Him). Peter responds for the third time that he loves Jesus as a friend (*phileo*).

The first two times that the Lord asks Peter about his love for Him, He is using the one-vector, sacrificial word for love, i.e. *agape*. However, Peter, in all his replies is using the two-vector friendship love (*phileo*), and he is purposely staying away from the word that the Lord used.

During the arrest of the Lord, Peter denied the Lord those three times because he was afraid of suffering himself. So as a result, he could not bring himself to use the word, *agape*. Because he was protecting himself via his denials, he was not identifying with the unilateral sacrificial love for the other person at his own expense. So, he stays away from the *agape* word. Thus when Peter says, "Lord, you know that I love (*phileo*) You," he is using the friendship love and purposely staying away from that sacrificial love.

The Lord takes his answer, and says, "Then feed My lambs." Lambs are little. So, I think that He is saying that Peter is to teach the Lord's baby Christians.

Then the Lord asks Peter, "Do you love me sacrificially?" He does not use the comparison "more than these" this time. Basically, He is asking Peter simply: "Do you sacrificially love (*agape*) Me?" Peter replies, "Now you know that I do love (*phileo*) You." He is still purposely dodging that *agape* word. The Lord is purposely using the word, but Peter comes back with a different word. The Lord again takes Peter's answer and then says, "All right shepherd My sheep." That word sheep, now, is designating full-grown Christians.

Being the shepherd means that you guide the sheep and watch out for them, and they will just walk along following you. We have already talked about the different kinds of shepherd, and the Lord is directing Peter's thoughts to those teachings.

The shepherd determines where it is safe for the sheep: "Okay, sheep, it is safe over here. There is good pasturage over here." The sheep are basically feeding themselves. They are eating and living off the land to which they are led by the shepherd.

In the third go-round, the Lord uses the word Peter has been using, and it grieves Peter greatly because He is asking Peter if he is telling the truth. That word grieves Peter: "Peter, do you even *phileo* Me?" And Peter is saying to himself, "Gosh, I have been telling Him all this time that I *phileo* Him." This grieves him, and it is a dagger in the heart. And in agitation he says, "You know that I love (*phileo*) You." He was probably thinking: "I have been telling You this all along, and I am still telling You that I am Your friend, and that I love (*phileo*) You." The Lord takes that answer, and He says, "Feed my sheep, i.e. teach mature Christians."

What do you make of that series of interactions? Is there a progression or regression or anything?

Jack: I think Jesus is trying to get Peter to realize, or maybe come to, a better understanding of exactly what Jesus is talking about. It is like a progression. He gives Peter this one shot to be true to Him in the midst of persecution, and Peter misses it. He gives him another one, and Peter misses it, etc. Now, He is trying to restore Peter back into the fold.

Steve: He starts off with lambs and progresses to full-grown sheep. That is a progression, but there is a regression when it comes to the word love.

V: Okay, so the Lord is regressing in the word for love. He is saying the following:

1. "Are you the maximum sacrificer?"
2. "Do you even sacrifice at all?"
3. "Are you just happy with mutual benefit without any sacrifice?"

Steve: Of course Jesus knew ahead of time, but He was bringing Peter to that point where he realizes that Jesus was coming down in His appraisal of what He expected of Peter. He was pointing out to Peter that Peter's prior self-appraisal was much too high and that he fell far short of his self-appraised mark. However, Jesus was reminding him also that he was still going to play a part in the shepherding function. By descending to the *phileo* word for love, Jesus was saying, "Okay, if this is all you can do, then I am going to start you off feeding the lambs. Then I am going to use you to shepherd the sheep. Finally, I am going to use you in feeding the sheep."

Steve cont'd: Jesus is pointing out the basic requirement for a shepherd as opposed to a good shepherd. The good shepherd must give his life for the sheep. Someone whose love is limited to *phileo* is not able to shepherd the sheep at the point of sacrifice because a good shepherd must be able to love sacrificially (*agape*). He did not regress to the point of limiting Peter's ministry to the lambs. He gives Peter the full range of ministry that *phileo* love allows.

V: That is a very good analysis, Steve.

Ted: I think He is giving Peter three separate ministry calls. Because Peter was given the keys, and because of his denials, Jesus is referring back to both the keys and also the three denials. I think that Jesus is issuing three calls to Peter. I want you to feed My lambs, I want you to shepherd My sheep, and I want you to feed My sheep. Even if Peter is called differently from how we see it today, I think He is giving Peter three separate instructions here. He is couching the call according to Peter's answer.

Ted: It is like you are working with a child, trying to get him to admit to doing wrong. You ask him a question, and he detours around that question with his answer. You then approach him in a different way to see if he detours around the question again to

avoid admitting something. With Peter, Jesus is asking about *agape* with more sacrifice than the others. And Peter skirted around it with an answer about *phileo*. Basically, I think that in the Lord's three questions, He is saying, "This is part of your call, this is part of your call, and this is part of your call." I think He was giving Peter ministry instructions.

V: Yes, Jesus gave Peter the instructions in three parts.

Homer: It turned out that Peter was basically the leader of the disciples. He was the one they looked to for overall guidance. So he did all three of the ministry functions. He did go out and teach the unsaved. Then he brought the lambs in. He fed the saved and shepherded the saved. He also guided the disciples. So then he basically ministered there at three different levels.

V: That is good analysis, Homer.

Well, let me ask you this: As a pastor, teacher, or some other kind of minister, do you see a progression here for "your ministry"? for "you to be" or "to be doing" in your ministry?

I think, and this is just me now, that if you are a minister who is not on the *agape* path of sacrifice, then your ministry should correlate to this passage. So, if you are on the *phileo* path, not on the *eros* path, then these three stages apply to your path. If then the Lord meant something by taking Peter's answer and saying to him, "Do these three things, even though you are at the level of *phileo*," then you ought to be able to feed the lambs, shepherd the sheep, and feed the sheep. You can do all three things at the *phileo* level because we are not talking about sacrifice here. This is at the mutual benefit level.

But you know what is happening? Many of us are doing this feeding of the lambs, shepherding of the sheep, and feeding of the sheep at the *eros* level for our own gain. I do

not think that that kind of ministry is going to be rewardable one bit by God. I think that the minimum level of love for ministry is *phileo*. Because that is what Peter said. He said, "You know that I *phileo* you." The Lord said, "Feed My lambs." Then at the next time, "You know that I *phileo* you," and the Lord said, "Shepherd My sheep." And the third time, "You know that I *phileo* you," and the Lord said, "Feed My sheep." Neither Peter nor the Lord was even speaking about the *agape* level in these three ministry functions.

I believe this as well: the optimum of what God wants is for you to love at the *agape* level and to do these ministries at that sacrificial (good shepherd) level.

Bob: That level is *kenosis*.

V: Yes Bob, in the *kenosis*, you get *agape* as the standard kind of love because your path is filled with sacrifice. In your ministry, you are sacrificing by giving your life to the people.

Beth: Dr. Vinson, I do not think I understand. How could you teach and feed and shepherd at an *eros* level?

V: For self-gain, for the applause of men, or for filthy lucre.

Joe: But what if you are a teacher, you do not get paid.

V: Your payment could be from your own self-gratification or from the praise of men.

Carl: Years ago I was asked to start a mission church, but the sponsoring church did not have much money. So I offered to start the work and get it going without financial support as a lay minister. Even though there was no money in it for me, I worked. After about six months, we had 50 members, and the Lord was really saving people. Money was starting to come in. Before the money started to come in, I called this pastor who had been ministering for 40 years. I asked

him, "Can you come and help us?" He asked, "How much money is involved?" That is the first thing he said. "Well, we might be able to give you \$50 a week to come and minister and preach." He goes, "You mean to say that I am going to be receiving practically nothing to go preach there? I must have more money than that if you want me to pastor there."

Carl cont'd: A year went by, and I told the church, "It is time for you guys to start looking." So the church ended up asking that same guy that I had asked. But since the offerings had gone up, then he was willing to come. But he was not willing to go on his own initiative. He was not willing to sacrifice. I do not think he had *agape* love to meet that great need. I was inexperienced and could not meet their need. Then after the money went up, . . .

Sybil: Did the church prosper after he went there?

Carl: No, it did not.

V: I had a student named Buck. Just before he came to my office one time, I got a phone call from a guy out in Eastland, Texas, who wanted someone to come and do a church start for their mother church. He wanted somebody that had some education and some knowledge. He asked me for a reference for somebody. I could not think of anybody on the spot.

The next thing I knew, Buck walked into the office, and I said, "Buck, God sent you in here. I have a great assignment to offer you." I started telling him about starting this church out there near Eastland, Texas, which is about one hundred miles west of Fort Worth. He said, "Yeah, that sounds good! Oh, yes, I can do that. I would rather do that than anything. Let me do it; please let me do it." I said, "I tell you what, I will give you the guy's phone number." I said, "Buck, it is only \$100 a month." Buck was sitting there, and I saw this sagging look come over him. I could see

he was in the throes of a tough decision. He was wrestling with it, and he said, “Man, that is going to be hard. I am going to be driving such a long distance there and back, three trips a week that is going to be expensive.” Then he says, “But I have to do it. Tell them I will pay the \$100 a month for this opportunity.” Buck did not know that the \$100 was to be paid to him. He thought he was going to have to pay it to the church as a fee for the privilege to do the ministry.

That episode describes what we are talking about here. When Buck found out that the \$100 was going to be paid to him, he got so excited that he could not sit still. That is what this *agape* ministry is all about. It is about sacrifice without expectations of temporal rewards.

DISCIPLESHIP REQUIRES FOLLOWING THE LORD’S WILL

John

21:18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry [thee] whither thou wouldest not.

21:19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

This is a commission the Lord is talking about now in this passage. It applies to every one of us in here. This is the common description of the paths that we are traveling. Jesus says that when you are young you are going to go where you want to go because you do not know any better. But when you get old, and that is old in the faith, you are going to be going where you do not want to go, and you are going to stretch forth your hand and say, “Help me, God. Help me.” You are going to be going through some very tough, trying things, and you are going to

stretch forth your hand, too, and say, “O, help me, God.” He is going to lead you where you do not want to go, but you are going to go if you *agape* Jesus.

It is a given that He *agapes* you. But do you *agape* Jesus? He asked Peter, “Do you *agape* me? Will you sacrifice for me?” He is asking us the same thing. We need to say, “Yes.” Way up at the top of the *kenosis*, say: “Yes.” Then as your sacrifices grow, stretch forth your hand and say, “Help me, Lord.”

However, when looking at the suffering which surely comes when traveling the *kenosis*, you will shy away from it. You do not want to suffer, but you should say, “Yes, Lord. O, help me, Lord, please help me!” and go on through it.

I will guarantee you that if you will deny yourself and take up your cross of suffering and follow the Lord on through the sacrificial life of ministry, you will rejoice for eternity because the more you do not want to do something, the more He appreciates your doing it. When you love Jesus enough to do what you do not want to do, that is *kenotic* discipleship. If it is beyond your ability to do it, that is when you start reaching out—“Oh, God, help me!” His help will enable you to walk through those hard sacrificial places that you cannot walk through by yourself.

You begin to walk with the Lord. Then immediately after He says, “Follow me,”—that is a command—you are going to follow Him on a more difficult path. Guess what kind of path you are going to be on. You will be on the sacrificial *kenosis* path. That is what is meant when He says, “Follow me!”

My theme song is *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*. “Though none go with me, I still will follow. The world behind me, the cross before me, I will follow Him.” It is a good song with good theology.

Peter Inquires about John's Path

John

21:20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21:21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what [shall] this man [do]?

21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee? follow thou me.

21:23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee?

21:24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

We have then this statement where Jesus says to Peter, "My dealings with John are between John and Me. My dealings with you are between you and Me. **You** follow Me!" That is also what He is saying to each one of us. There should be no intrusion by one of us into what the Lord is doing with another disciple. He says, "If I will that he tarry until I come again, then what is that to you?" It just so happens that John did tarry until the Lord came back again, you see. If you go over to the Book of Revelation, you will see Jesus coming to John on the Isle of Patmos and John falling prostrate in worship to Him. Thus the Lord Himself had come again and was present in that setting.

THE DOCETICS

The *Docetics* maintained that Jesus just appeared to be man since matter is evil. They are a Christian category of the *Gnostics*, who claim that matter is evil. Thus the *Docetics* were Christians who declared that matter was

evil. However, through this philosophical position, they reached a crisis in their theology. That crisis was that Jesus could not have been a real man because a real man is made of matter and would, therefore, be evil. The *docetics* were Christian *Gnostics* who harmonized their theology with their philosophy by saying that Jesus only **appeared to be** a flesh and blood man. He was only an apparition. He was not there on earth in a physical sense.

CHAPTER 21

THE APPENDIX

What is the **content** of the appendix to the Gospel of John (Chapter 21) and its **purpose**?

Content

1. John 21:1-14. Fellowship resulting from justification.

Those first fourteen verses describe the dining together of the Lord and His disciples. They are going to break bread together and eat the fish together. This togetherness is a fellowship, and it results from justification. I believe that justification occurred back there in that verse where He said, "My God and their God," "My Father and their Father."

2. John 21:15-17. Service/ministry resulting from sanctification.

In these verses you have the questions of "Do you love me? Feed my sheep." These commands point to ministry. Service means, ministry. Service/ministry is the part of salvation dealing with sanctification, but it must come after justification.

3. John 21:18-19. Death resulting in glorification.

This is the part dealing with stretching forth your hand and asking for help for going where you do not want to go. That place is Golgotha.

4. John 21:20-25. Individual responsibility.

This passage means, then, that when I go on my pilgrimage, I am individually responsible for my fellowship of Jesus. You cannot do it for me. I have to be the one that does it. You have to be the one that does yours. I cannot do it for you. We can pray for one another, but that individual responsibility is always there. That means your children are going to be responsible for their own fellowship. As much as you want to shield them from the pain, the suffering, the *kenosis*, the sacrifice, and the *agape*, they must do it. Hear me on this, class; train them to do it!

Purpose

The Appendix of this Gospel, chapter 21 of John, defines our relationship with the risen Lord. Our purpose in life is Jesus. Our purpose is not to live. It is to die, i.e. die to self and allow Jesus to live through us. The outworking of the Lord's purpose for us is that we are to deny ourselves always. As we are denying ourselves, we are to take up our crosses and follow our Lord Jesus. He walks the sacrificial *kenotic* path, and He calls us to follow Him on His specific path that He has worked out just for each of us.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY STUDENTS

The rest of the class was turned over to the students to use as they saw fit. They decided to address the class with their thoughts.

Stu: When I was in our Hebrews class, I just kind of sat back there and did not get up here to say anything. I wish I had. But this class has meant so much to me on the basis of learning this theology of the *kenosis*. I find it to be so weird because I go to a humongous church, and there are so many people there that have never seen any of this good theology. I am a fairly new Christian—I will be celebrating two years in October. God has put me in here to learn stuff quickly and then to take it to other people. Taking it to others

is such a blessing to me. I am able to take this *kenosis* and the Doctrine of Salvation, and all of those other doctrines out to others. It is incredible to see these truths, to be in a class like this, to get that much knowledge so quickly, to be able to take that knowledge out to other people, and then to teach them the right way. There are so many people on that bottom line of sanctification, just wasting their lives on indulging themselves. Those are the only people that I know. I do not know any people who are in this *kenosis* model, even in my church. To me it is our job and our responsibility, now that we know these truths, to take them to the people in our churches. If you are like me, the Holy Spirit works on you until you have to do it. This is the third seminary class that I have taken with you, Dr. V. I just kind of jumped in these classes just to get a little more knowledge, and now I feel like God is calling me into the ministry. I am looking forward to His leading me wherever He wants. I am going with the flow. I need to get out into the deep. I am still kind of dog paddling in the shallows, but God is slowly getting me out into the deep water. I just thank Him and give Him all the glory.

Jesse: Stu, you spoke of being a new Christian. I have been a new Christian since I was 16 years old, and sometimes I think I am still out here just dog paddling around. I am still just eating the milk toast instead of going after the solid food. This is my first class at the seminary, and wow, Dr. V., I could not have picked a better one. The Gospel of John has really given me a whole new perspective, especially when you illustrated the fruit and the branches. I think that many pastors are going for the branches instead of the fruit. That simple truth really made an impact on me.

Rick: Other than being a new Christian who is just a year old, I guess that this class has really meant a lot to me because I have learned a lot of new things such as witnessing

out in public. Now I am not so afraid to go up and say, “Are you going to go to hell, or are you going to go to heaven?” I mean, just before this semester, I thought, “Oh, gosh, I cannot say that to anybody.” But now I can. After learning about the *kenosis* and the fruit, I went home about to cry. I thought I was backslidden too far to make a change. But, the *kenosis*, and the purging in order to bear fruit worked on me pretty good.

Rick cont’d: I work security at Turners Village on the weekends, and many kids come to work there on a rotating basis. Most of them are around 16 years old. Simply by looking at them and their behavior, I can tell that the home they are coming from provides little guidance and is not headed where it should be going. So now I can sneak in my 2 cents here and there where needed because I am a supervisor. One kid had a bracelet which contained the letters WWJD. I said, “What does that WWJD stand for?” He said, that it stands for “world-wide juvenile delinquent.” Then I said, I am going to get me one of those, but mine is not going to stand for that. Then I started explaining to him what it stood for and how it was supposed to help us go in the right direction. Then I started wearing one so that he would begin to think differently.

Rick cont’d: And then I had another kid come to work for me just this last weekend, and I broke out this *kenosis* all over a piece of paper. This kid was actually a good kid who had good parents. He was a well-mannered, high-grade student-athlete at South Grand Prairie High, the all-state football champion. He had it written all over him that he was chasing the American dream. When I showed him that *kenotic* model, he said, “That is going to be tough, man!” Yes, that *kenosis* is going to be tough, but that sacrificial life has been what I have been pursuing ever since I have been in this class.

Joe: I have been in seminary for two years. I have wanted to say this ever since I have been here. God has predestined us to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. That transformation is through the *kenosis*. I have been a Christian for 24 years, and a bi-vocational pastor for 18 years. And I really thought about this, Dr. Bill. Jesus takes us where we are and moves us to this sacrificial path on the *kenosis* as we yield ourselves to Him, and that is where we all want to be.

Joe cont’d: After two years in seminary, taking a lot of classes with a lot of professors, I have enjoyed this class the most by far, and I am saying that from the depths of my heart. You know my pastor friend Glenn, you and Kathy have heard of him. He and his staff kept saying, “Take a class from Dr. Vinson, take it, take it.” And finally, I got smart and signed up. I am so glad I did because I have learned a lot from this class.

Joe cont’d: One of the things I have been seeing that really has bothered me is the lack of solid-biblical-based teaching. And it really, really bothers me. And I thank God that there is somebody here that is teaching the grass roots of theology and standing on the Word of God. Too many of the professors that I have had here for the past 2 years major on the minors and then teach the majors as if they are mere academics. So I thank God for you, Dr. Bill, and I thank God for this class.

Jerry: I want to encourage all of you. Do not let these professors scare you. Professors are just persons like you. A lot of times when I get up in front of people, forgive me, Dr. Vinson, but I picture them naked, and that way they are equal with me. They are just people just like us. Do not be afraid of anyone. When your deacon is mean and ugly to you, stand up for what you believe. And if you need encouragement, call Dr. Bill, he is a great encourager.

Several students: “That’s right!”

Carl: This has been an excellent class for me because when I realized that this John was the same John over in Revelation, my understanding of John was increased. I see a young John here and an old John in Revelation.

Carl cont'd: When I look here in verse 18, I feel like a "jed." "Jed" is one of my new expressions. A jed is an old guy unable to get around except in a wheelchair pushed by somebody who takes him where he does not want to go. Tonight it was explained to me, and I thoroughly understood it. When we get on this walk right here on the *kenosis* (pointing to the downward part of the *kenosis* chart on the blackboard), we are going to be going where we really do not want to go. I do not want to go there, but I know if I want to go over here (pointing to the upward part of the *kenosis* after death) for a glorious eschaton, then I must go down in sacrificial service on this temporal side of the grave. My example was John in Revelation. He did not want to go there, but he ended up all alone (except for when the Lord came to him) on the island of Patmos. What a blessed example when you look at what happened to John. He is on the *kenosis* when you see him on that island. Revelation says that the Lord came with a loud voice, which startled him while he was worshipping. Suddenly there was his Lord. And it was explained tonight that John tarried, and the Lord came back to him. Wow! We have learned about heaven entering the here and now.

Carl cont'd: In Hebrews we talked about entering into the Lord's rest, i.e. bringing the essence of heaven right here. I could just go on and on. All this stuff is just so good, and finally I have gotten to the point of knowing what I must do. When you start looking at the encouraging parts of these Scriptures and studying them, and seeing what God has really done for people, then you can get on that *kenotic* path and stay on it. I hope that you all are as encouraged as I am. Praise God

for this class. [A chorus of amens came from all over the room.]

Max: I have to read something to you that really means more to me with each reading. I am talking about Jesus' first miracle. It says that when the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, he knew not whence it was. Here is the good part: but the servants who drew the water knew. We all know now! And there are no longer any excuses. Dr. Bill has made sure that we all understand that. There is no excuse! I do not know about you guys, but I do not need an excuse any longer.

Donald: When I was reading John, I was looking at how Jesus called the disciples and how they followed Him not really understanding who He was. Then I thought about how He arose from the dead and came back to them. That was when they suddenly realized who He was. Can you imagine what they must have thought? How can it be me who is actually getting to be friends with the Son of God? God has chosen me to live this life and to walk this particular walk. It must have been really almost impossible for them to believe.

Donald cont'd: Sometimes I look at my life and my calling, and I think, "Well, now, Jesus is not really calling me to do this wonderful ministry. I mean, I am too insignificant for what He has put before me." I just like to think about how awesome the disciples must have felt when they realized that they were actually walking with the Lord. I praise the Lord that He has called each one of us to walk with Him and hope that we can make Him happy.

Evan: Dr. Bill, hey, you have been both a blessing and also, I guess, a . . . threat. As I continue to minister, I must change to be sacrificial. I have been a Christian for 15 years. I started out strong, and then I, over the years, I just kind of. . . . See, something that you have taught me which I have never

seen before is that you can study the Bible on and on, on your own, but you also need someone to teach you. That good teaching is something I have never had. And Brother Bill, you really pushed me forward. Before this class, I was ready to give up studying the Word of God because the world has, and even many churches have. There is a strong current that is pushing us away from the Bible and the true Word of God.

Luis: I just want to encourage you young guys. It is a battle like Dr. Bill has described. It is a battle out there when you leave this class. Sometimes you feel like you are by yourself. About a year ago, I was involved in a huge Hispanic church which was pastorless. A couple of other members of the church and I were in charge of ministering to the flock. It was there that I got into a huge battle.

Luis cont'd: When you have different people believing different things in one church, the preaching and teaching ceases to work. And let me tell you, if you are not rooted in the Word of God, if you do not

study it, and you do not interpret it in its true meaning, then I can tell you that your mind will cease to think straight. You can really get discouraged, and I have really been discouraged! For a long time, I wondered whether I was even teaching the Word of God. And so, when I called Dr. Bill's secretary, and she told me about this class, I determined that I had to take it because I had to start studying the true Word of God and get my mind straightened out and functioning again.

Luis cont'd: If you look thoroughly at John the Baptist, you will see a great example of a man committed to denying himself and following the Lord in the *kenosis*. Our path is not to be guided by feelings and emotions. It is to be guided by the Word of God. And that is something that you have taught me, my dear Brother. You are probably going to get tired of seeing me because I am going to take all of your courses.

Chapter Questions

1. What is the eighth sign in the book of John?
2. Analyze John 21:15-17. Include in your analysis the Greek words for love, and the implication of those words from Jesus point of view.
3. What is the content and purpose of the appendix to the Gospel of John (Chapter 21)?

CONCLUSION

The book of John introduces Jesus as God's Son and our Savior and Lord. However, couched within this overarching theme are several important topics which were current in John's time and which are now current again. One of those is Gnosticism. John was fighting against the Gnostic Christianity of his day. These Christians were called Docetics because their claim concerning the humanity of Jesus was that He only "appeared" to be a Man. For them, He was just a spirit-Man without flesh and blood.

Gnostic Christians (Docetics) declared that spirit was good and material was evil. Knowledge was therefore salvific basically because knowledge is spirit and thereby could impact our spirits. Because their emphasis was on knowledge and spirit, the Gnostics deemphasized the human body because it was considered to be worthless material. Thus into their theology crept license for evil practices because salvation came at the point of our spirits leaving our evil physical bodies. Evil practices, then, affected only the physical body which is the part not saved and left behind anyway. Only the spirit part of man was saved.

Modern-day Gnosticism abounds in the emphasis on knowledge as the answer for everything. Because of the lack of emphasis for the application of knowledge, license for unseemly behavior has resulted. The dichotomy between spirit and flesh in our being has resulted in our neglect of subduing our flesh (denying ourselves and taking up our crosses). License and self-indulgence have ensued from this neglect. If the body is evil, and the spirit is who we are, then the sins of the body (living for ourselves instead of following Jesus) really do not matter. Only what we know, not what we do, truly matters to the modern-day Gnostic. Thus a Christian's sin

was not so serious as long as it was not disruptive of fellowship by being public.

Another issue against which John was also fighting was the Ebionitic tendencies of another Christian faction of his day. The Ebionites emphasized the physical over the spiritual. As the Gnostics are wrong in their neglect of the flesh, the Ebionites are wrong in their neglect of the spirit. They thought that Jesus was a great Man, but not God. What He accomplished, He accomplished as a Man.

The over emphasis of the social dimension of Christianity is how the recurrence of Ebionitic tendencies plays out in our current times. Ebionitic Christians tend not to pray to Jesus because He is considered to be less than God. As a super Man, Jesus did not possess the power of God, but yet He accomplished many great things. The Ebionitic Christian then sees Jesus as our Example, not our Lord. Thus the social gospel gains the ascendancy in this brand of Christianity. For these Christians, preaching salvation by faith in Jesus is replaced by good works of helping the poor and downtrodden.

Returning to the overarching theme of John, we should note that the miracles of Jesus reported by John are signs that point out that Jesus is God's Son, the Messiah. The Gospel of John is therefore a book of miracle-signs which give us information about Jesus' having the power of God. The miracle-signs point out that the Human Jesus was also Divine. Jesus is the God-Man. He is all God and all Man at the same time. Against both Gnosticism and Ebionitism, John's Gospel identifies Jesus as the perfect balance of Deity and Humanity in His person. Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah.

Jesus' Personhood united Man and God. His personhood also defined His messianic mission, i.e. to unite man and God. His person and works were fully integrated. Who He was and what his purpose was were found in His personhood.

Based on His divinity, Jesus has all authority. He is going to be shown to be Lord over nature, man, disease, death, and life. His purpose for being born as a Man was to seek and to save that which is lost by paying for the sins of men. He brought us life by taking our penalty of death on Himself. By our becoming His disciples in the way that He has defined discipleship, i.e. denying ourselves, taking up our crosses, and following Him, our eternal lives (both present and in the eschaton) become more abundant.

John the Baptist introduced Jesus as the King of the new Kingdom, the Kingdom of God. The Baptist claimed that Jesus was the Christ Whom the Jews anticipated. However, the kind of Messiah that was commonly anticipated by the Jews did not have the same mission as the Messiah Jesus. The Jewish Messiah was expected to be a political champion who would lead Israel to victory over Rome. But the Messiah introduced by John the Baptist was the Lamb of God who was to be sacrificed for our sins.

John the Baptist demonstrated how we are to relate to the Lord. Jesus is to increase and we are to decrease. Jesus demonstrated the same *kenotic* model within the Trinity. The Father was to increase while the Son was to decrease.

The *kenotic* model is our heritage also. We are to decrease while Jesus is to increase. If we are to be disciples of the Lord Jesus, then we must deny ourselves, pick up our crosses, and follow Him. Jesus is our Lord which means that He is Boss. We must know

and obey Him as our Boss. As Boss, He requires us to be holy vessels (clean vessels which are set aside for the Lord's *exclusive* use). Discipleship, then, requires: holiness, i.e. self-denial, cross-bearing, and followship. One could actually say that holiness, which means to be both clean and also set aside for the Lord's use, swallows up the three characteristics of discipleship (self-denying, cross-bearing, followship) in its definition.

Jesus appeared as light in the darkness. The ready acceptance of Jesus by the Jews soon turned into rejection and eventually became death-seeking oppression. Some, like the woman at the well, accepted Him immediately as the Messianic Lord and Savior Whom God had sent. She then went on a witnessing mission whereby she proved her faith to be genuine. Other Jews, especially the religious leaders, wanted him killed. They hated that so many of their countrymen believed on Him when He raised Lazarus from the dead. Their reaction to that miracle was not faith but a desire to kill Jesus and also to put Lazarus back into the tomb as well.

SUMMARY OF THE SIGNS
in the Book of John

SIGN	SIGNIFICANT IDEA
1. Changing water to wine	Servants take part
2. Healing the nobleman's son	Faith for healing
3. Healing the lame man	Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
4. Feeding the 5000	Jesus is the concerned Provider of all needs
5. Walking on Water	Jesus turned away from being enthroned
6. Healing the Blind Man	Manifests the works of God
7. The Resurrection of Lazarus	Power over death

The variety of miracle-signs added elements to the identifying picture of Jesus. From each miracle-sign new information is provided about the God-Man Jesus Who was sent from Heaven to earth on a mission to save that which was lost. Changing the water to wine allowed several men to participate with the Son of God Himself in the performance of the miracle. Healing the Nobleman's son showed the importance of belief/faith. Healing the lame man showed that the

Sabbath was under the Lord's rule because He was the Son of God.

Jesus declared that He was the Bread of Life. This statement calls for a choice by you and me about where our emphasis will be placed. Which do you want for your bread? Jesus? or physical bread? Will you leave off following Jesus in order to pursue temporal bread? Or will you leave off pursuing temporal bread to follow Jesus. Which is your priority? Decide now which one you choose. Both the multitude of followers and the twelve disciples had to make this decision. The multitudes wanted the physical bread to satisfy their carnal hunger. When Jesus made His claim that He was the bread, they ceased following Him. The Twelve, however, chose Jesus because "He alone had the words that lead to life." If you choose Jesus, then your treasure is to be found in the *kenotic* cross. Jesus demonstrated His chosen Messianic model by walking on the water to turn away from being enthroned by the multitudes who had chosen physical bread. *Please pause here and talk to the Lord about your choice.*

The testimony of the Lord's works bears witness to Who He is. The ultimate sign is when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. This shows that Jesus has power over death.

Do you have a false hermeneutic? Based on the signs and their significance, it is clear that Jesus is both Divine and Human. As a Human He is our example. However, as God, He is our Boss. If you accept that Jesus is your Divine and Human Boss, then your hermeneutic ought to be such that you understand what He has commanded in the Scriptures. Rather than treating His Words as suggestions, you must see them as life-giving commands. To do otherwise is to experience loss of rewards in the judgment and loss of the great adventure before the judgment.

Do you love the Lord? If you do, you must obey Him (John 14:21). There is no

such thing as true love (neither *agape* nor *phileo*) for the Lord without obedience.

However, the kind of love for the Lord that most of us have is *eros*. This kind of love is expressed in an institutionalism in which service to the Lord is replaced by service to an institution. We claim that this institutionalized service is Christian service. We participate in it in order to be accepted by the large number of those ensnared in idolatrous institutionalism. We practice idolatrous institutionalism by doing what has become acceptable to the traditions of the local church as it has evolved into an organization that is steeped in the things of the world. In institutionalism, we expect to define our own Christian walk by sacrificing to the institution while expecting the Lord to bless us with every good gift. You and I have grown to expect blessings even while we are in rebellion.

Eros is the kind of love that Judas had for Jesus. *Phileo* is the kind of love that Peter had. The eleven disciples eventually grew into *agape* love for Jesus, but they did not start there. Both Judas and Peter died because of the kind of love each had for Jesus. Who got the better deal?

Will you deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Jesus in the path that leads to death of self and glory to Jesus? The choice is yours to make. If you choose this difficult path because you do love Him to the point of sacrificing yourself, you will be following the One who defeated death and will share with you those benefits that He has earned. Your hope then would rest on the God-Man whose real accomplishments were performed in history. These miracle-signs point out clearly that Jesus should be your Boss and my Boss because He alone is Lord!!!!

Appendix 1

OUTLINE BY HERSCHEL H. HOBBS

BASED ON SIGNS

Purpose of This Book: Believing on Jesus Unto Eternal Life (John 20:31)

The Word Made Flesh (Ch. 1)

Eternal Creator

Light

Incarnation

New Wine, New Birth (Chs. 2-3)

Water to Wine (sign #1)

Cleansing the temple

Nicodemus

The Water Of Life (Ch. 4)

Woman at the Well

Healing the Ruler's Son (sign #2)

The Bread Of Life (Chs. 5-7)

Healing the Lame Man (sign #3)

Feeding the Multitude (sign #4)

Walking on the Water (sign #5)

Bread of life

Water of life

Spiritual Sight (Chs. 8-10)

Woman Caught in Adultery

Light of the World

Healing the Blind Man (sign #6)

The Good Shepherd

The Resurrection And The Life (Chs. 11-12)

Raising Lazarus from the Dead (sign #7)

Leaving A Legacy (Chs. 13-14)

Lord's Supper

Betrayal

Secret of an Untroubled Heart

Threefold Legacy

Jesus' Final Teachings (Chs. 15-17)

Vine and the Branches

Help of the Helper

Prayer of Jesus

Jesus' Arrest, Trial, And Crucifixion (Chs. 18-19)

Jesus' Resurrection (Chs. 20-21)

Empty Tomb

Peter's Love

Jesus' purpose statement: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10b).

Appendix 2

JOHN—INVITATION TO LIFE

OUTLINE BASED ON PROCESS

Introduction (1:1-51)

- I. The Word of God (1:1-18)
- II. The Witness of Man (1:19-51)

Part One: The Book Of Signs (2:1-12:50)

- I. The Reception of the Revealer (2:1-4:54)
 - 1. The New Joy (2:1-12)
 - 2. The New Worship (2:13-25)
 - 3. The New Birth (3:1-21)
 - 4. The New Master (3:22-36)
 - 5. The New Fellowship (4:1-42)
 - 6. The New Life (4:43-54)
- II. The Resistance to the Revealer (5:1-10:42)
 - 1. The Authority of Life (5:1-47)
 - 2. The Bread of Life (6:1-71)
 - 4. The Judge of Life (8:12-59)
 - 5. The Light of Life (9:1-41)
 - 6. The Shepherd of Life (10:1-42)
- III. The Rejection of the Revealer (11:1-12:50)
 - 1. Jesus the Resurrection and the Life (11:1 -54)
 - 2. Preparation for the Passover (11:55-12:36a)
 - 3. Conclusion to the Book of Signs (12:36b-50)

Part Two: The Book Of The Passion (13:1-20:31)

- I. Jesus Prepares his Disciples (13:1-17:26)
 - 1. The Last Supper (13:1-30)
 - 2. The Departure and Return of Jesus (13:31-14:31)
 - 3. The Responsibility of the Disciples (15:1-16:33)
 - 4. The Prayer of Consecration (17:1-26)
- II. Jesus Dies for his Disciples (18:1-19:42)
 - 1. Jesus Accepts his Passion (18:1-18)
 - 2. Jesus Defends his Passion (18:19-19:16)
 - 3. Jesus Fulfills his Passion (19:17-42)
- III. Jesus Lives for his Disciples (20:1-31)
 - 1. The Appearance to Mary Magdalene (20:1-18)
 - 2. The appearances to the Disciples (20:19-31)

Conclusion: The Revelation Of Jesus (21:1-23)

- I. The Revelation of Jesus in Galilee (21:1-23)
- II. The Conclusion to the Gospel (21:24-25)

Answers to Questions

Chapter 1

1. Who is the author of the book of John?
Internal evidence: John 19:26, John 13:23, John 21:20,24.
External evidence: The external evidence is given to us by Polycarp and Irenaeus.
2. Who is Polycarp?
He is the bishop of Smyrna; a disciple of John; the one who taught not only the church at Smyrna but also Irenaeus, an early writer about Christianity.
3. Why were the early Christians called atheists?
Because they would not worship the multiple gods of the Roman Empire.
4. How is John the Baptist a pattern for witness?
 1. He was sent from God. John 1:6
 2. His purpose is to witness. John 1:7
 3. He is a witness of the light. John 1:7
 4. He is an agency of belief. John 1:7
 5. He does not point to himself. John 1:8.

Chapter 2

1. How does John the Baptist identify and describe Jesus as the Christ?
 1. He calls Jesus the lamb of God who takes away sin. John 1:29.
 2. Jesus is higher than John the Baptist and pre-existent. John 1:30.
 3. John baptizes in order to point out Christ to Israel. John 1:31.
 4. John witnessed the dove descending and abiding on Christ. John 1:32.
 5. God said that the Holy Spirit would identify the One who baptizes in the Spirit. John 1:33.
2. Why are signs used in the book of John?
Signs are used to point out information and to authenticate the Son of God.
3. What are three examples of witnessing in Chapter One?
 1. John the Baptist points out Christ to two of his disciples. John 1:35-37.
 2. Andrew introduces Peter to Jesus. John 1:40-42.
 2. Philip introduces Nathaniel to Jesus. John 1:43-51.
 4. Describe the first week of Jesus' ministry.
 - Day 1. John the Baptist renounces claim to messiahship. John 1:19-28.
 - Day 2. John the Baptist witnesses to Jesus as the Messiah. John 1:29-34.
 - Day 3. The first disciples are pointed to Jesus. John 1:35-39.
 - Day 4. Peter is led to Jesus. John 1:40-42.
 - Day 5. Nathaniel is led to Jesus. John 1:43-51.
 - Day 6. Nothing.
 - Day 7. Sign #1, water to wine. John 2:1-11.
 5. What was Sign #1?
Changing the water to wine at the wedding at Cana.

Chapter 3

1. Explain the difference between "making the peace" and "keeping the peace."
"Keeping the peace" is to not stir up trouble or to quell potential trouble. "Making the peace" is to instill the peace of God into one's heart or someone else's heart. It is establishing change, change that is going to disrupt some things, but the purpose of the change is peace.
2. What is a "rice" Christian?
A "rice" Christian is a person who calls himself a Christian for the temporal benefits that can be derived. The term comes from a missionary in China who gave rice to the people who came to hear him preach. When the rice was gone, there were no people coming to hear him preach.
3. What is the condemnation described by Jesus in the Nicodemus encounter? John 3:19-20.
 1. The light came into the world.
 2. Men loved darkness.
 3. Their deeds were evil.
 4. They do not come to the light.
 5. They do not accept correction.
4. What is the growth of a career as described by John the Baptist?
It is decreasing so that Jesus may increase. John 3:30.

5. What is the “milk” of the Word, and what is the “meat” of the Word.
Meat is for the warrior, the mature person, for the person who is walking with the Lord, who is just like John the Baptist. Meat is **doing** the Word of God. Milk is **learning** the Word of God. You need to see the difference because there are a lot of Christians today that think that meat is learning the hard things of the Word of God rather than just the simple things. It is not that at all. Meat is the doing

of the Word of God. John 4:31-34; Hebrews 5:11-14.

6. What is the second miracle?
The healing of the nobleman’s son.
7. What is the progression of faith in the healing of the nobleman’s son?
1. The nobleman sought help. John 4:47
 2. He believed the words. John 4:50
 3. He believed in Jesus. John 4:53
 4. His household believed in Jesus. John 4:53

Chapter 4

1. What is the two-fold issue of healing the lame man?
 - (1) It is Sabbath breaking.
 - a. The Sabbath is made for man, not vice versa. Mark 2:27.
 - b. The priests and Levites performed ministry on the Sabbath, why not Jesus?
 - c. Ceremonial acts were done on the Sabbath, why not acts of mercy?
 - d. Beasts were protected with provisions, why not man. Luke 14:5 and 13:15.
 - e. Refraining from doing good is the same as doing evil. Mark 3:4.
 - (2) Jesus is the Son of God and Lord.
 - a. Since the Father works, then Jesus would work. John 5:17.
 - b. Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath. Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5.
2. What is the four-fold witness to Jesus?
 1. John the Baptist. John 5:33
 2. His works. John 5:36.
 3. His Father. John 5:37.
 4. Scripture. John 5:39
3. Illustrate (draw) the *kenosis* including the Scripture reference.
See Chart 4.2.
4. Name the parts of salvation, and explain each one.
 - a. Justification: Confessing that you are a sinner and the asking for forgiveness from Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. It is a punctiliar event in which one moves from being a slave to sin to being a slave

of Jesus Christ. A saved person’s destination changes from hell to heaven.

- b. Sanctification: The process of moving from justification to glorification. During sanctification, a person serves Jesus Christ in a *kenotic* lifestyle; he should submit to the Lord’s leading to join Christ in the *Missio Dei*. His life should be dedicated to serving the Lord sacrificially and obeying His commands without question.
 - c. Glorification: The transition from this journey on earth to one in heaven where God exalts that person according to his walk of sanctification. Total submission of one’s life to Jesus Christ while on earth results in total glorification. As sinners we are rewarded according to how close we walk the path God has designed for us. Glorification is a punctiliar event.
5. What does the word “*kenosis*” mean?
To empty oneself.
6. What is the Jewish conception of the Messiah in John 6? List the references.
1. They wanted the Messiah to be king. (Political). John 6:15, 1 Samuel 8:19-20.
 2. They wanted the Messiah to feed them so that they could eat and be filled. (Indulge flesh). John 6:26.
 3. They wanted the Messiah to titillate them with miracles because they had an insatiable desire for signs. (Spectacular). John 6:30.
 4. Misinterpreted signs as earthly when the signs actually pointed to His divinity and Lordship. (Secular). John 6:41 and 52.

Chapter 5

1. Explain the theology behind the question, "Why the man was born blind?"
 1. You can determine sin by looking at the results.
 2. Sin is physically transmitted.
 3. There was no realization that there are natural consequences to the fall.
 4. There is no realization that God uses nature to reveal Himself.
2. List and define the 6 kinds of shepherds.
 1. The false shepherd (John 10:1). He does not enter the gate pen through the gate but climbs over by some other way. He is a robber and a thief.
 2. The hireling (John 10:12). When the wolves come (those who would steal, kill, and destroy), the hireling will run away; he will not protect the sheep since they do not belong to him.
 3. The plain shepherd (John 10:2-4). This shepherd enters by the gate, he opens the gate and leads his sheep to pasture; he calls his sheep by name; his sheep recognize his voice; and his sheep will follow him. He owns the sheep.
 4. The good shepherd (John 10:11 and Psalms 22 and 23). He lays down His life for His sheep.
 5. The great shepherd (Hebrews 13:20-21). Our Lord Jesus is the Great Shepherd who has died for the sheep and has risen again to equip His people with everything they need to do His work.
 6. The Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4 and Psalm 24). He will appear, and He will award the crown of glory to the worthy ones. He is the King of glory.
3. What Psalm is associated with the description of the Good Shepherd?
Psalm 22; it is the prediction of the death and the agony of the crucifixion.
4. What Psalm is associated with the description of the Great Shepherd?
Psalm 23; it the idea is that the Great Shepherd rises from the dead and perfects the sheep.
5. How did Caiaphas predict the substitutionary atonement?
The answer is in verses 50-51.
"Verse 50: Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.
"11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;"
That is a true prophecy. Here is a man who is not saved but he makes a true prophecy.

Chapter 6

1. What is the ought?
The *Kenosis*
2. What is the enablement of the "ought"?
Hope
3. Describe *agape*.
It is the unilateral sacrifice for another; it does not accept rejection.
4. How do we love Jesus?
By keeping His commandments (John 14:15, 21, and 23).
5. Compare verbally the *kenosis* to the reverse *kenosis*.
The *kenosis* is the downward walk of sacrifice to accomplish the mission of Christ. The reverse *kenosis* is the upward walk of temporal success in human terms. It is the seeking of material gain and praise of men.
6. How do we become a friend to Jesus?
By being obedient. We must first be a slave, then Jesus may take us as a friend with whom He shares His plans.
7. What is the *Missio Dei*? Where is the Scripture found?
The *Missio Dei* is the Mission of Christ. It is found in Luke 19:10, and it is that Christ came to seek and to save the lost.
8. Draw the chart that illustrates *eros*. What does *eros* mean?
Loving yourself at someone else's expense. See Chart 6.6.
9. Draw the chart that illustrates *phileo*. What kind of love is *phileo*?

Phileo is a friendship love that requires a like response. Without the response, *phileo* disappears or becomes *agape*. See Chart 6.7.

10. Draw the chart that illustrates *agape*.
See Chart 6.8.
11. What is holiness?
Holiness means clean and dedicated solely for the Lord's use.
12. How does the Spirit deal with the world?
 1. He convicts the world of sin.

2. He convicts of righteousness.

3. He convicts of judgment.

13. How does the Spirit deal with the Church?

1. He guides you into all truth.

2. He shows you things to come.

4. He glorifies the Lord.

14. Illustrate the Doctrine of Salvation.
See Chart 6.10.

Chapter 7

1. What is the eighth sign in the book of John?
The resurrection of our Lord.
2. Analyze John 21:15-17. Include in your analysis the Greek words for love, and the implication of those words from Jesus point of view.
For your answer see chart 7.3 and related descriptions.
3. What is the content and purpose of the appendix to the Gospel of John (Chapter 21)?
Content
 - a. John 21:1-14. Fellowship resulting from justification.
 - b. John 21:15-17. Service/ministry as the content of sanctification.

c. John 21:18-19. Death resulting in glorification.

d. John 21:20-25. Individual responsibility.

Purpose

The Appendix of this Gospel, chapter 21 of John, defines our relationship with the risen Lord. Our purpose in life is Jesus. Our purpose is not to live. It is to die, i.e. die to self and allow Jesus to live through us. The outworking of the Lord's purpose for us is that we are to deny ourselves always. As we are denying ourselves, we are to take up our crosses and follow our Lord Jesus. He walks the sacrificial *kenotic* path, and He calls us to follow Him on His specific path that He has worked out just for us.

GLOSSARY

Apostasy: Apostasy is from the Greek words *apo stasis*. *Apo* is from; *stasis* is standing. Apostasy, then, is standing away from Jesus.

Cliché: a phrase or word that has lost its original effectiveness or power from overuse; an over-used activity or notion (dictionary).

Dichotomy: a separation into two divisions that differ widely from or contradict each other; the phase of the Moon or a planet when half of its surface is in the light and half in the dark.

Docetic: a person who denies the humanity of Christ: Jesus only “seems” to be a man.

Ebionite: a group or a faction of Christianity that is coming with the idea that Jesus was a great man, a great prophet, but not God.

Exegesis, exegete: “Ex” is out of, and “exgesis” is to dig, and so exegeting something is to dig the meaning out of it. The antonym is *eisegesis*, which means put it in, dig it in.

Fallacious: containing or involving a mistaken belief or idea; deceptive or liable to mislead people (dictionary).

Gnosis: Knowledge.

Gnosticism: A pre-Christian and early Christian religious movement teaching that salvation comes by learning esoteric spiritual truths that free humanity from the material world, which was considered to be evil (dictionary). Gnostics came up with an evolutionary plan in which coming down from the highest, greatest god was a sub-god, and from that sub-god another sub-god, and so forth while degenerating with each generation (called an aeon). After going down several layers of this, there came an aeon who was messed up enough that he could create this evil, material world.

Guile: a cunning, deceitful, and treacherous quality or type of behavior, or particular skill and

cleverness in tricking or deceiving people (dictionary). No guile is a kind of innocence or naiveté. A person with guile is a person who has a hidden agenda, and he is manipulating you towards that agenda. He keeps it hidden; there is duplicity in that person.

Hedonism: a devotion, especially a self-indulgent one, to pleasure and happiness as a way of life; a philosophical doctrine that holds that pleasure is the highest good or the source of moral values.

Hellenism: the culture and civilization of Ancient Greece, especially in the period after Alexander the Great when it spread to other parts of the Mediterranean and Middle East and North Africa; the enthusiasm for or adoption of ancient Greek philosophy.

Malleable: used to describe a metal or other substance that can be shaped or bent without breaking; easily persuaded or influenced by others (dictionary).

Manipulate: to control or influence somebody or something in an ingenious or devious way; to change or present something in a way that is false but personally advantageous.

Ontology: It is your personhood, your essence.

Scattering the sheep: holding God’s sheep and using them for your own advantage. This results in voiding God’s use of His Own sheep. The sheep are to follow the Lord, not the pastor or some other leader in the church.

Shemah: Israel’s creed that God is One God.

Signs: miracles that point out information from God to authenticate something from God.

WISEMAN: information from Dr. Vinson that needs to be written down and learned for test purposes. As Dr. Vinson puts it, “a wiseman will learn this.”

THE DISCIPLES' BOSS: A NEW LOOK AT THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

John wrote so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name (John 20:31).

In *The Disciples' Boss*, Dr. William E. Vinson, Jr. explores the powerful themes of love, light, life, and truth found in the Gospel of John.

Learn how Jesus, our Boss, led the way by emptying Himself (*kenosis*) and calls us to walk the downward path of love and obedience.

IN THIS BOOK YOU WILL:



Understand the meaning of Jesus' kenosis and how it applied to His life.



Discover the seven signs of John and their significance.



Grow in bilateral agape love for God and others.



Learn God's path for you: justification, sanctification, and glorification.



Live as a disciple who reflects Christ in every relationship.



SUMMARY OF THE SIGNS IN THE BOOK OF JOHN

SIGN	SIGNIFICANT IDEA
1. Changing water to wine	Servants take part
2. Healing the nobleman's son	Faith for healing
3. Healing the lame man	Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
4. Feeding the 5000	Jesus is the concerned Provider of all needs
5. Walking on Water	Jesus turned away from being enthroned
6. Healing the Blind Man	Manifests the works of God
7. The Resurrection of Lazarus	Power over death



WILLIAM E. VINSON, JR., PhD

Former director of Seminary Extension in Nashville, TN, and professor of Biblical Studies with over 40 years of experience teaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Seminary Extension, and 4Disciples. The discipleship series is a unique approach to Biblical education.



4DISCIPLES.ORG

EXALT. EQUIP. ENGAGE. ENCOURAGE.

RESOURCE GUIDE

FREE TO DOWNLOAD • FREELY SHARE



PDF



AUDIO



VIDEO



STUDY



TEACH



SHARE