

'THE REALLY GOOD LIFE'

(Life of Christ Series)

Gospel of Luke

Teaching: The Art of Moving Hearts & Lives With the Word of God

*“And moreover, because **the Preacher** was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, **he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs**. The preacher sought to **find acceptable words**; and what was written was **upright – words of truth**. **The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of the scholars are like well-driven nails, given by (the) one Shepherd.**”*
 (Solomon) Ecclesiastes 12:9-11

*“All these things **Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables**; and **without a parable He did not speak to them**, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”*
 (Quoted as a paraphrase of Psalm 78:2) Matthew 13:34-35

Teaching: A Duty & A Gift

(All Christians must teach but all Christians aren't teachers)

Every true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is obliged to teach others about God, the Bible and the gospel as a normal part of their Christian life. Our witness and explanations light the way for those still in the darkness of unbelief. Christian mothers and fathers are responsible for the Bible education and spiritual development of their children (*Deut. 6:6-9, Psalm 78:1-9, Eph. 6:4, 1 Tim. 2:15, etc.*). By family devotions and church ministry involvement, parents are ultimately accountable for their children's attitudes toward spiritual things. All Christians are responsible to teach the non-Christian society in which they live and work about God, Christ and the moral and spiritual values of someone who has the Spirit of God alive within them. By our lives and by our talk, those apart from Christ should learn about Him by watching and hearing us (*Matt. 5:13-16, Phil. 2:15-16, 1 Peter 4:1-6, etc.*). However, some Christians do have a very special and wonderful spiritual gift of the Holy Spirit called *teaching* which is the unique and powerful ability to learn, comprehend and clarify God's Word in a creative and practical way to believers in the family of God. True teaching is used of the Lord to impart repentance, spiritual growth and maturity to Christians for their continual, steady development of Christ-likeness in their lives, families and churches. The spiritual gift of teaching is always at or near the top of every spiritual gifts passage of the New Testament (*Rom. 12:7, 1 Cor. 12:8, Eph. 4:11-12*). It is an absolute essential of any man called to the pastor-teacher position in a local church ministry (*Eph. 4:11-12, Col. 1:27-29*) and a pre-requisite of any man chosen to be an elder of a local church congregation (*1 Tim. 3:1-2, Titus 1:7-9*).

Teaching God's people is not a task that just anyone can do, nor is it one that should be embarked upon hastily (*James 1:2*); it is a special *calling* of God to only those *anointed by the Holy Spirit* to do so (*2 Cor. 1:21-24, 1 Tim. 4:14, 1 John 2:27*). In these last days before Christ's return there will be many self-appointed teachers, preachers, and leaders who do not have God's clear calling upon them to teach His people. They will mislead carnal Christians and weaken good local churches by drawing people away from good ministries to follow them as they fulfill their own personal aspirations for authority over others (*1 Tim. 1:6-7, 2 Tim. 4:2-4*). Unstable, untaught and immature believers will be attracted to such for things other than *good Bible teaching*. Unfortunately, such followers know very well that they are not being adequately fed the Word of God and that the Lord wants them to join a better *Bible teaching* church family (*1 Tim. 6:3-5*), but ulterior motives make them languish on in an inferior environment as their spiritual life weakens. Sadly, this will be to their own soul's demise as well as their families' and friends' (*2 Peter 2:1-3*). The enemy of God knows that Bible teaching is the essential ingredient in any God-blessed local church (*Eph. 4:11-16*) and will tempt biblically weak believers into scriptural compromise by permitting unbiblical and uncalled people, who aren't gifted teachers, to hold ministry leadership positions of local church congregations (*1 Cor. 14: 33-37, 2 Cor. 11:13-15, 1 Tim. 2:11-12, 3 John 9-10, etc.*). All spiritual gifts of believers are vital to a healthy church body, but teaching is like the nervous system that takes messages from the head to all the extremities and vital organs. Christ is the Head of His body 'the church family' (*Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 1: 18*); the Word of God as contained in the Bible is the '*mind of Christ*' (*1 Cor. 2:16, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, etc.*); expositional Bible teaching is the primary way the Holy Spirit transmits the mind of Christ to the rest of the church body (*Is. 28:9-10, John 14:26, 1 Cor. 2:13, 1 Tim. 4:16, 2 Tim. 4:1-5*). Every Christian who has been entrusted with the awesome spiritual gift of teaching should prepare and pray diligently over every lesson and those who will hear it. Students should also pray for Spirit-filled ability to hear and perceive and apply what God says through any teacher. Churches must always remember the Savior's mandate for His work while He is away: *“All authority has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. God therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **TEACHING THEM** to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*
 (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Savior's Supper-Time Stories (Parables of Dining Etiquette / Luke 14:1-24)

This week = 14:1-14

Parable: from the Greek word para-bow-lay meaning literally to throw down alongside. A parable therefore is the creative oratory art of telling a creative story that illustrates an important spiritual doctrine, eternal truth, biblical command or life principle. Usually the story is told, then the point of it or moral of the story.

The Pharisaic Appetizer: The Sabbath Set-Up (The poor etiquette that provoked the parables)

“Now it happened, as He (Jesus) went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him and let him go. Then He answered them, saying, “Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer Him regarding these things.” 14:1-6

The religious leaders try to use this man with a malady to entrap Jesus (what a heartless bunch of hypocrites!) Jesus has disregarded their Sabbath legalism at least 7 times previously (Luke 4:31-37, 4:38-39; 6:1-5; John 5:1-9; Luke 6:6-10, 13:10-17 and John 9). Obsession with laws on how to spend Saturday regulations ruins the day of rest and refreshment it was meant for (Exodus 20:8-11). Religion that equates adherence to rules with a relationship to the Lord is heretical (Matthew 15:1-9).

Jesus gave these hypocrites something to chew on – they cared more about livestock than human souls and lives! It was true, so they didn't refute Him. ‘To help an animal is okay; mending a broken human being is obligatory!’

The Parabolic Entree: The Reserved Seating Story (The proper etiquette of being seated at a wedding feast)

“So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: “When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, ‘Give place to this man,’ and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, go up higher.’ Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” 14:7-11

Good manners are part of a right walk with God. Jesus implies that there will be a wedding feast invitation coming that needs to be accepted humbly. Although proper decorum must be part of a Christian's walk in all settings, Jesus was probably eluding to the wedding/ marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9) where humility determines the seating arrangement and commendations of glory you will receive at that time.

This parable probably left a bad taste in the mouth of many there and no doubt caused a loss of appetite for any further servings of soul food from Jesus. His humble pie is hard to swallow but is good for you.

The Prophetic Dessert: The Sweet Reimbursement (A tip about the heavenly etiquette of 'blessing those at the table')

“Then He also said to him who invited Him, “When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” 14:12-14

Apparently, Jesus pulled His host aside and advised Him on how to improve the guest list next time. Christ probably didn't intend to exclude friends, family, and affluent people from social fellowships. He probably intended to convey the idea of having fellowships that include people who really need and appreciate being included with your usual circle of friends. Are some down-and-outer brethren on the guest list of your next get together? Jesus promises to pay their way if you'll have them over.

Jesus' promise to give His host his just desserts at the resurrection of the just indicates that the man was probably a believer (or the Lord knew he would become one). I wonder if the host had another party so he could invite the man who had been healed of dropsy earlier. Wouldn't that have been a sweet treat for the healed man as well as for the One Who healed him?