

But where are the nine?

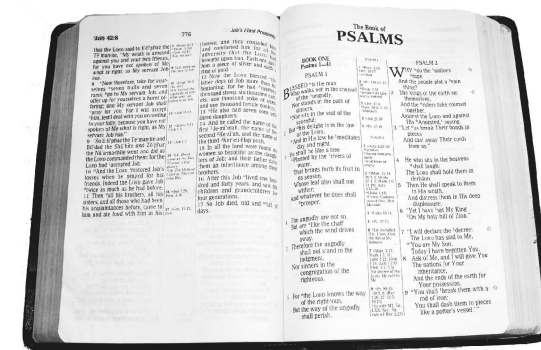
The Lord Jesus was about to enter a village on the border between Galilee and Samaria when he was met by ten men who were suffering from leprosy. They remained at a distance because of their condition (cp. Leviticus 13:45–46); it is obvious that they had heard of Jesus because they called on him by name to have mercy on them (11–13). Jesus did not touch them nor command that they be healed but told them to show themselves to the priests who would be able to pronounce them clean (cp. Leviticus 14:1–32).

The men took Jesus at his word and as they turned to go on their way to the priests, they were healed. One of them, a Samaritan, seeing that he was healed, returned to Jesus. He praised God with a loud voice and fell at the feet of the Master, giving him thanks (15–16). Jesus asked, ‘*Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?*’ (17). Only one had returned to give thanks and he was a Samaritan – belonging to a race despised by most Jews. Jesus told the grateful man to go on his way for God had honoured his faith (19).

Ingratitude to God is a terrible sin which should never be found among those who profess to love the Lord Jesus (cp. Romans 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:2). **A thankful, praising heart glorifies God and brings great blessing (Psalm 50:23; Philippians 4:6–7,11–12).** J.C. Ryle comments, ‘Let us pray daily for a thankful spirit. It is the spirit which God loves and delights to honour. ... Above all, let us pray for a deeper sense of our own sinfulness, guilt, and undeserving. This, after all, is the true secret of a thankful spirit. It is the man who daily feels his debt to grace, and daily remembers that in reality he deserves nothing but hell, — this is the man who will be daily blessing and praising God. Thankfulness is a flower which will never bloom well excepting upon a root of deep humility’ (EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON LUKE, volume. 2, pages 234–235).

PILGRIM BIBLE NOTES

God’s holy Word simply explained and applied



February 2014

Bible readings from Psalms 25 and 26
Luke chapters 11 to 17

Increase our faith

The challenge of the words of Jesus (3–4) left the disciples painfully aware of their own shortcoming. They had been privileged to perform miracles but they were aware of the weakness of their faith (9:6, 40–41). They said to the Lord Jesus, *'Increase our faith'* (5). The Christian life is far from easy and we are painfully aware of our failings but we must not be content with weak faith. We need to pray often, *'Increase our faith.'* We may imagine that it requires great faith to work miracles, but it takes greater faith to live the Christian life (eg. to forgive those who have wronged us, whose repentance appears to be shallow; to trust God in perplexing circumstances).

Jesus spoke to his disciples of *'faith as a mustard seed'* (6). A mustard seed is very small and yet grows into a tree which was large enough to shelter birds (cp. Matthew 13:31–32). *'Faith as a mustard seed'* is a trust in God which does not give way to despair when prayer is not immediately answered. It continues to maintain fellowship with God and to pray fervently. It is not motivated by sinful desires when it prays; it expects great things from God and attempts great things for God. **Let us pray that the Lord will increase our faith and give us grace to persevere in whatever he has given us to do. We will then prove God and find that he is strengthening our faith.**

The Lord Jesus goes on to tell a parable about a servant who had been working in his master's field. He comes in from the field and is obliged to prepare his master's supper before he is allowed to rest and refresh himself. The master does not thank his servant for the work that is expected of him. Jesus is telling us that even when we have done all that he has commanded there is no room for smug self-congratulation. Whatever we do for the Lord is insignificant compared with what he has done for us. We are all unprofitable servants who have done only what was our duty to do (7–10). The earthly master does not thank his servant for his toil but our heavenly Master will indeed reward us for faithful service (Matthew 25:21, 23, 34–40).

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If your brother sins against you

The Lord Jesus reminded the disciples that any person who causes a believer ('one of these little ones') to stumble and thus fall into sin, will face a dreadful judgment (1–2; cp. Matthew 18:6–7). Unbelievers are answerable to the Lord for the effects of their behaviour on believers.

What must you do *if your brother sins against you* (3)? You must go and tell him privately and seek to win him over by his repentance and reconciliation to you. There can be no forgiveness for him until he repents of his sin. Forgiveness brings reconciliation between the aggrieved parties and the restoration of fellowship. Is there someone in the church with whom you are not talking because they have offended you? The Lord has not said that you must wait for them to make the first move. Go and seek them out and get matters put right between yourselves. You may have misunderstood them and discover that no sin is involved at all (Satan delights in causing misunderstanding between believers.)

What should we do when a brother repeatedly sins against us and yet expresses his sorrow and repentance for his deeds? We must go on forgiving him as long as he seeks our forgiveness (4). We also sin often against the Lord and need often to come to him for forgiveness. He is very patient with us and readily forgives; we must be imitators of Christ. **If you refuse to forgive someone who has sinned against you and has repented of that sin, you must question your own salvation and what you know of the love of God in your heart.**

J.C. Ryle comments, 'Let us leave the whole passage with jealous self-inquiry. ... How often we have given offence, and caused others to stumble! How often we have allowed unkind, and angry, and revengeful thoughts to nestle in our hearts! These things ought not so to be. The more carefully we attend to such practical lessons as this passage contains, the more shall we recommend our religion to others, and the more inward peace shall we find in our own hearts' (EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON LUKE, volume 2, pages 223–224).

The secret of the LORD is with those who fear him

David had prayed, '*Show me your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me*' (4–5). He goes on to meditate on the goodness of God and he affirms that God teaches his way to the humble and that *all the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth* (9–10). If we love the Lord we will also love mercy and truth. Prayer involves trusting in the Lord (2) and waiting on him (3,5,21). To wait on the Lord is to be patient and to rest in him, trusting him to intervene for us in his good time. This requires much faith, especially when everything appears to be going wrong.

The Christian can enjoy intimate fellowship with God. *The secret of the LORD is with those who fear him, and he will show them his covenant* (14). To fear God is not to be in a state of cringing terror before him. It is to reverence him, to respect his word and to obey his commands. The word '*secret*' is the secret counsel which God communicates to his friends. Those who fear God and walk with him know his special friendship. We see this demonstrated throughout the Bible. The Lord revealed his secret to Noah concerning the coming of the flood to destroy the old world (Genesis 6:13–22). He told Abraham that he would destroy Sodom (Genesis 18:17–20). The Lord gave Paul and John visions of heaven and of things to come (2 Corinthians 12:2–4; Revelation 4:1). He reveals his secret to those who fear him and he shows them his covenant. Christians are bound to God in a covenant relationship through Christ. Do you delight to keep the terms of that covenant (10) – to love the Lord and to seek always to please him, to be faithful to him and to shun sinful ways?

David had many troubles (15–20) and we must realise that we are not kept from trouble and distress when we belong to the Lord. The great difference is that God is with us and he will bring us through. David said, '*My eyes are ever toward the LORD*' (15). If we trust in the Lord, we can look to him with confidence and hope, knowing that he will never fail us. **Do you look to God in your troubles?**

Vindicate me, O LORD ... Examine me, O LORD

One of the most difficult trials for a Christian to suffer is that of being misrepresented or slandered. We may know that our motives and desires are right and also our hearts, but we are still slandered. What should we do in such circumstances?

- We must ask the Lord to vindicate us for he is the righteous God. David prayed, '*Vindicate me, O LORD*' (1). It may appear from a superficial reading of this psalm that David was being very smug and self-righteous (eg. verses 4–6). That was not the case. He prayed for God to vindicate him in the face of slander and opposition (1). We must never seek personal revenge but commit our cause to the Lord as David did on this occasion (cp. Romans 12:19).
- David prayed, '*Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my mind and my heart*' (2). We have to recognise that our hearts still have the remains of sin and we too should pray that God will examine us, prove us and try our minds and hearts. We may convince ourselves that we are right when we may be wrong. For this reason it is important that we call upon the Lord to examine our hearts and see if there is any wicked way within us (cp. Psalm 139:23–24).
- We must examine our own hearts. Are we able to say that we have trusted the Lord and have walked in integrity and in his truth (1–3, 11)? Do we shun the gatherings of evil-doers to avoid partaking of their sin (4–5)? Christians cannot be at ease in the company of the ungodly but we cannot isolate ourselves from them (the Bible doesn't authorise us to build monasteries). We should be concerned to tell unbelievers of God's wondrous works (7). Do we love God's house and desire to worship him with his people? The Lord's Day is the best day of the week if we are walking with God, because we appreciate the precious time set apart to worship him (cp. Psalm 27:4–6). **If our desires and motives are right, we can be sure that God will vindicate us and bless us when we are slandered (Matthew 5:11–12; 1 Peter 4:14).**

There is a great gulf fixed

The Lord Jesus reinforced his warning against the love of mammon (riches) with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man enjoyed a self-indulgent, opulent lifestyle but was lacking in compassion for the beggar. Lazarus waited at the gate of his mansion hoping to receive some scraps from the rich man's table while the scavenging dogs licked his sores (19–21).

The two men were different in death as well as in life. Lazarus died and he was carried to Abraham's bosom by angels. The rich man died but he went to Hades (hell) where he was tormented (22–23). Lazarus did not go to heaven because he was poor any more than the rich man went to Hades because of his wealth. Lazarus was received into heaven because of the grace of God in his life. God does not bestow his grace according to our possessions. When we die we do not cease to exist; we will be in the presence of God (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:21–23) or in a conscious state of torment in hell.

The rich man thought that he could obtain mercy after he passed from this world. He asked for mercy, but it was too late. He was told that '*there is a great gulf fixed*' between heaven and hell (23–26). He also made another mistake. He thought that if Lazarus were sent back from the dead to testify to his five brothers, they would then repent of their sin. Notice that he had only a concern for his own brothers rather than everyone who was still living on earth without the knowledge of God. The answer was clear – if they refused to listen to the word of God ('*Moses and the prophets*') they would never be persuaded to repent even if someone rose from the dead (27–31). A man named Lazarus was later raised from the dead but the enemies of Jesus still refused to believe (John 11:45–57). Saving faith comes through hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), not through seeing miracles. **Have you repented of your sin, or are you living for the passing pleasures of this world which could be snatched from you in an instant? It will then be too late to repent.**

God knows your hearts

Though the words of Jesus had been directed to his disciples, the Pharisees had also been listening (1). The Pharisees appeared to be very religious but they were lovers of money and the teaching of Jesus made them uncomfortable *and they derided him* (14). Ungodly men and women who despise the word of God are similar to the Pharisees. They sometimes resort to scorn rather than to reasoned argument when they are challenged with the claims of Christ. The Lord Jesus told these hypocrites who sought to be right in the sight of men that they were wrong in the sight of God. Jesus said, *'God knows your hearts'* (15). Their religion was a sham. The law and the prophets point to the Lord Jesus and John the Baptist had preached that the Christ ('the Messiah') was actually present. A great number were now pressing into the kingdom of God ('everyone' in verse 16 does not mean literally every Jew, but refers to everyone entering the kingdom of God). They were energetically entering God's kingdom (cp. 13:24) but the Pharisees lacked this urgency.

The Pharisees professed to keep God's law but they had their schemes to get around it and they imagined that they would still enter the kingdom of God (cp. Matthew 15:1–9; 23:23–26). Some of them manipulated Scripture texts to suit themselves. They took the statement permitting a man to divorce his wife because she finds no favour in his eyes (Deuteronomy 24:1) as a sanction to divorce their spouses for the most trivial and ridiculous of reasons (18). The word of God teaches the sanctity and permanence of marriage. Permission for divorce was only given because of the hardness of men's hearts and to give legal protection to the wife (cp. Matthew 19:8–9).

God's word is despised by many, but let us remember that though the ideas of men often change, his law, his holy standards do not change and will never pass away (17; – a *'tittle'* is a small hook which is found on some letters of the Hebrew alphabet). **God knows our hearts. Does he find within your heart a love for his word and joyful obedience to his precepts?**

Lord, teach us to pray

Discipleship involves a disciplined prayer life and one of the disciples asked Jesus, *'Lord, teach us to pray'* (1). He then gave them the model prayer which is known as 'The Lord's Prayer'. Verse two mentions three very important things — our Father's name, our Father's kingdom, and our Father's will. Christian, do you realise just how great a privilege you have in knowing the almighty, sovereign, wise and good God as your heavenly Father? **The way we think about God makes all the difference to the way we pray.**

When we pray, we must remember our relationship to God. He is *our Father in heaven* (2). He welcomes us to his throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16), he delights in us and wants to receive our worship and our prayers (18:1; cp. John 4:23). Though God is our *Father in heaven*, we must hallow his name which means to reverence, to honour and to exalt him. God's name reveals his character and he is holy and awesome in splendour and purity. We must never be familiar with God or sloppy in our worship like some who address God in prayer as 'Dear Dad'.

We should also pray for the coming of the kingdom of God through the spread of the gospel and the return of Christ (10:2; Revelation 22:20). Do you pray for missionaries, for revival and for the salvation of sinners in your locality? Prayer also involves submission to the will of God. *Your will be done*. If we are rebelling against God's will and providence in our own lives, we can hardly pray sincerely and effectively. Prayer involves worship, adoration and a desire for the glory of God through the increase and coming of his kingdom; it involves submission to the will of God. How do you pray?

*Lord, teach us how to pray aright,
With reverence and with fear;
Though dust and ashes in thy sight,
We may, we must draw near.*

(James Montgomery)

Luke chapters 1 to 10 are covered in notes for September to November 2013

Forgive us our sins

We repeat yesterday's reading and think now of the second part of 'The Lord's Prayer'. Prayer not only expresses our worship but also our helplessness and dependence upon God. We should be thankful for our food each day; in times of plenty, we should never forget that God could remove everything from us in an instant. We are to ask for '*our daily bread*' and not for luxuries. God is concerned for our needs but not for our greed (cp. Philippians 4:19).

Our sin puts us in debt to God. We cannot repay this debt, but the Lord Jesus has cleared it through his death at Calvary. We must pray, '*Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us*' (4). If we have truly repented of our sin, we will seek God's help to enable us to forgive those who have wronged us and who seek our forgiveness. The word of God instructs us: '*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you*' (Ephesians 4:32). We sin every day in thought, word and deed, and by failing often to do what God requires of us. **Do you seek God's forgiveness every day or do you blissfully ignore your own sins while refusing to forgive others?**

The prayer '*And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*' (4) recognises that God is sovereign in all our trials and temptations. It reminds us that we are vulnerable, that we must be on our guard and that we cannot defeat Satan in our own strength. We must not take this verse to mean that God tempts us to sin. The Bible is quite definite that this is not so (James 1:13–16). The Lord will not allow us to be tempted or tested beyond what we are able to bear, but will make the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). We belong to God and he is our heavenly Father. We may be weak, but he is strong. He reigns in sovereign power and majesty for ever and he will never allow the evil one to snatch us from his hands (John 10:29).

No servant can serve two masters

There are two parables involving rich men in this chapter. In the first (1–8) a rich man discovered that his steward (business manager) was cheating him. The steward knew that he would lose his job and he summoned every one of his master's debtors and reduced their debt. This shrewd move put his master's debtors into his debt and he knew that they would then help him when he was out of work and destitute. He was commended for his shrewdness but not for his dishonesty (8).

This parable teaches us that our lives and possessions are a stewardship from God. The dishonest manager had an eye to the future and so should we. We must use our earthly possessions ('*mammon*' – 9) in such a way that we will be received *into everlasting habitations* (heaven) at the end of our lives when our wealth is of no use to us. Money used to support the work of God will reap eternal dividends. Do we take seriously the teaching of the Lord Jesus concerning the stewardship of our possessions? If we are not faithful with our money, the Lord will not entrust us with spiritual riches (10). We must remember that we too must give an account on the day of judgment (Romans 14:10,12; 2 Corinthians 5:9–11).

Many Christians fail to be generous in their giving to the Lord's work because they love money. We must never let money be our master. Jesus said, '*No servant can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and mammon*' (13; cp. 1 Timothy 6:9–10). If we live for riches, they will eventually master us. If we make an idol of money, we will soon despise God. The love of wealth brought disaster to the lives of Lot and Achan (Genesis 13:10–11; 19:30; Joshua 7:10–26). The word of God is quite clear – '*You cannot serve God and mammon*' ('riches' – 13). **Are you restless and uncomfortable in your Christian life? Could it be that you are trying to serve two masters, that you are trying to please God and man, that you are trying to serve Christ and the world? It does not work. Do get your priorities right.**

It was right that we should make merry and be glad

The elder brother was in the field when his brother returned and by the time he came in from his work, the party was in progress. When he asked a servant what was happening, he was told, ‘*Your brother has come*’ (25–27). He was very angry when he heard that the merrymaking was for his worthless younger brother and he was vehement in expressing his feelings to his father. His resentment was so great, that he referred to his brother as ‘*this son of yours*’ when speaking to his father, who said in reply, ‘*Your brother*’ (30). The elder brother was just like the scribes and Pharisees who were proud, hard and unforgiving. He was full of his own good works and he despised the wretched sinner (29–30). **Such an attitude with its pride, envy and peevishness has no place in the life of a Christian.**

If God is willing to forgive repentant sinners, we must also be prepared to forgive those who have wronged us. If we nurse grudges and bitterness, our Christian life and witness will be severely damaged. The father assured the elder brother of his love for him, but pointed out, ‘*It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found*’ (32). Notice that these are words which describe our state before and after conversion – ‘*dead and alive – lost and found*’.

Let us pray for the conversion of many sinners and seek to win them to Christ. There is no joy like that of seeing the lost brought to faith in Christ and seeing lives transformed through the grace of God! If you are not a Christian and wonder whether or not God will forgive you and accept you, take heart! Come to the Lord Jesus, trust in him and repent of your sin. He will not turn you away.

*How helpless and hopeless we sinners had been
If he never had loved us till cleansed from our sin!
Unto him who hath loved us and washed us from sin,
Unto him be the glory for ever! Amen.*

(Arthur T. Pierson)

Ask, and it will be given to you

The disciples had asked Jesus, ‘*Lord, teach us to pray*’ (1). After giving them a pattern for prayer (2–4), he went on to give two important principles: we must be persistent and expectant when we pray. Jesus told a parable of a man who had an unexpected visitor arrive at his home at midnight. He had no food to set before the visitor who would have been very hungry after his journey. He went to his friend’s house to ask for the loan of three loaves but the friend was reluctant to disturb his sleeping children. The man persisted in knocking at the door and his friend eventually rose out of his bed and gave him as much as he needed (5–8). We may obtain from reluctant men because they are displeased with our persistence. We receive from a willing God because he is pleased with persistent prayer. Zacharias and Elizabeth had learned this lesson (1:13) which the Lord Jesus repeats later in this Gospel (18:1).

Let us be encouraged that:

- When we pray, we come to more than a friendly neighbour. We come to our heavenly Father who loves us.
- It is never midnight with God. *My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth ... he who keeps you will not slumber* (Psalm 121:2–3).
- He is able and willing to meet all our needs. The Lord Jesus gives a wonderful promise to those who persist in prayer. ‘*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you*’ (9; cp. Philippians 4:19).
- Sinful men know how to give good things to their children; how much more will our heavenly Father give us good gifts and the best of all gifts, the Holy Spirit (13; cp. Psalm 84:11; Romans 8:32). Every Christian has the gift of the Holy Spirit (cp. Acts 2:38; Galatians 4:6) but we need each day to ask him to enable us to live the Christian life and to direct us as we read God’s word. **Are you persevering in prayer? Do you really expect God to answer you?**

He who is not with me is against me

After Jesus delivered and healed a man, who was demon-possessed and mute, the amazed crowds wondered whether he could be the promised Messiah (cp. Matthew 12:23). The Pharisees reacted to this by saying that Jesus cast out demons by the power of Satan (14–15; cp. Matthew 12:22–24). He responded by showing that such an accusation was foolish – Satan cannot cast out Satan; a kingdom or a house divided against itself cannot stand. The devil would be completely powerless if he were divided against himself. Jesus is stronger than Satan and has bound him to bring deliverance to the captives (17–22). Others wanted to see miraculous signs, though they had already seen the dumb man speak (14,16). Some people are so hardened in their sin, that they will never be convinced that Jesus is the Holy Son of God who came into the world to save sinners.

Jesus went on to give two solemn warnings:

- *‘He who is not with me is against me’* (23). We cannot be neutral and we must not sit on the fence regarding the Lord Jesus. **Are you with Christ? If you refuse to submit to his claims on your life you are against him.**
- The next warning is against seeking reformation in our lives without the transforming power of Christ through the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke of a man who had been delivered from an unclean spirit. The man had a new start and the ‘house’ of his life was in order but the unclean spirit then found seven other spirits more wicked than himself. They returned to enter the man, making his last state worse than ever. The Jews had been privileged to hear John the Baptist and Jesus but an interest in religion was not good enough. We may have religion which has led to reformation in our lives, and yet know nothing of repentance from sin and faith in Christ. If we have that kind of religion, it will lead us to hell, however sincere we may be.

When he came to himself

The parable of the lost son has much to teach us concerning the misery which sin brings to a person’s life, of the nature of true repentance, and of the love of God. The younger brother was entitled to a third of his father’s estate under Jewish law (Deuteronomy 21:17). Property was normally divided after the father’s death, but the younger son demanded his share of the inheritance in advance. He soon left home for a distant country where he squandered his wealth in wild living (11–13). He found himself destitute and friendless and was forced to look after pigs in order to survive. This would have been most repugnant for a Jew as pigs were ‘unclean’ according to the law (Deuteronomy 14:8). A sinful lifestyle seems to offer freedom and joy but it leads to misery and death (Proverbs 13:20; Isaiah 57:21; Romans 6:23).

True repentance leads to action. *‘When he came to himself’* (17), the wayward son reasoned that his father’s servants were far better off than himself and he determined to return to his father, confessing his sin and worthlessness, and begging to be taken on as a servant. The son who had so selfishly said, *‘Give me’* now says, *‘Make me’* (12,19). **When we come to Christ, we must come with a humble and submissive spirit.** J.C. Ryle comments, ‘Let us beware of any repentance, falsely so called, which is not of this character. Action is the very life of “repentance unto salvation”. Feelings, and tears, and remorse, and wishes, and resolutions, are all useless, until they are accompanied by action and change of life. In fact they are worse than useless. Insensibly they sear the conscience and harden the heart’ (EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON LUKE, volume 2, page 184).

The father was waiting for his son and ran to greet him. He had compassion on him, embraced him and kissed him. As the son confessed his sin, the father called for the servants to clothe him and to prepare a welcome feast. What a great picture of God who is so gracious and so generous in his forgiveness!

This man receives sinners

This is one of the best known chapters in the Bible containing the parables of the lost sheep (3–7), the lost coin (8–10) and the lost son (11–32). The Lord Jesus told these parables because of the murmuring of the Pharisees and scribes (2). Tax collectors, who were infamous for their cheating, and sinners gladly heard Jesus and he accepted invitations to eat in their homes. He had also chosen a tax collector to be one of the twelve disciples (5:27–32). The Pharisees and scribes had no message of hope for these people. They considered them to be beyond repentance or forgiveness.

We are all sinners and our condition without God is described as being *lost* (6, 9, 32). What a comfort it is to know that *this man* (Jesus) *receives sinners* (2) and that he seeks them and finds them as the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin illustrate (cp. 19:10). The Lord Jesus seeks sinners, receives sinners and he died to save sinners (Isaiah 53:6; John 10:11,15–18). This is a wonderful message!

The Lord Jesus was also accused of being *a friend of sinners* (7:34). Could we be accused of the same thing? The wicked lifestyle of some people may shock us and we cannot condone their wickedness. We will not win them by shunning them, however. Do we welcome those who are lost into our meetings, whatever their lifestyle? Do we seek to befriend them and win them to Christ? The lost sheep and lost coin were sought, found and restored and there was great rejoicing.

The scribes and Pharisees should have been full of joy that sinners were being sought and converted. How different they were from the angels! Heaven is a place of indescribable joy but that joy is even greater whenever a sinner repents. There is *joy in heaven over one sinner who repents* (7) and *joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents* (10). **The Lord delights in mercy (Micah 7:18). He loves to save sinners. That should encourage us in our prayers and in our evangelism.**

This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign

Though many in the crowd were hostile to the Lord Jesus, a woman lavished praise upon him by saying how blessed was the mother of such a Son. He corrected her by pointing out that the truly blessed are *those who hear the word of God, and keep it!* (27–28). Mary was indeed blessed (1:28) but those who worship her are in great error. You too are blessed if you hear God's word and obey it.

The scribes and Pharisees were so blinded by their tradition and so hardened in their unbelief that they refused to accept the claims of Christ. They had seen many miracles, but when they were unable to gainsay the evidence, they accused Jesus of being in league with the devil and wanted a sign from him (15; cp. Matthew 12:38). The Lord Jesus warned against seeking signs saying, *'This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign'* (29). Many professing Christians are addicted to seeking after signs and wonders. This is not an evidence of faith, but of weakness and immaturity.

Jesus did promise a sign – that of the prophet Jonah (unlike modernist scholars, he accepted Jonah's three day experience in the stomach of the great fish as historical fact). Jesus was here prophesying his own resurrection from the dead (30; cp. Matthew 12:40) but even that failed to convince his enemies (see Matthew 27:62–64; 28:11–15). The heathen of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah who performed no miracles. The Queen of Sheba had travelled far to hear the wisdom of Solomon. They would be called to witness against them on the day of judgment because a greater than Jonah or Solomon was among them, but they rejected him. **Many unbelievers claim to have intellectual difficulties in believing in the gospel, but the problem is not one of intellect, but of a sinful heart.** *This is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil'* (John 3:19). There are none as blind and stubborn as those who refuse to see (33–36).

You have taken away the key of knowledge

When a Pharisee invited the Lord Jesus to eat with him it provided an opportunity to try to catch him in his words so that they could accuse him (37, 53–54). They marvelled when he failed to observe their man-made ritual of ceremonial washing before eating (this washing had nothing to do with hygiene). Their religion was all outward show and Jesus denounced them for their hypocrisy:

- They paid minute attention to outward show and ritual while neglecting the justice and love of God (39–42). **Harsh, loveless religion does not honour the Lord.**
- They loved religious pomp. They were proud and wanted to be seen in the best seats in the synagogues and to be admired for their elaborate greetings (43). *God resists the proud* (James 4:6).
- They were like beautiful tombs which contained rotting corpses. They appeared to be good but were rotten inside.

Jesus also reproached the lawyers (religious law-experts) who were responsible for interpreting Scripture and were allies of the Pharisees. (45). He then pronounced three woes upon them:

- Because their man-made rules and regulations made religion a miserable and burdensome affair and they lacked compassion (46).
- Because though they honoured the very prophets whom their fathers had murdered, their evil deeds showed that they were no better than their fathers (47–51). They insisted that they would never have slain God’s servants had they lived at the time of their ancestors, but the murderous blood of their fathers flowed in their veins.
- Because they had *taken away the key of knowledge* (52). They obscured the plain teaching of Scripture with their complex ritual so that seekers after God were hindered rather than helped (52). The Scribes and Pharisees hated the plain speaking of Jesus (53) and hypocrites today are no different. **Let us beware of hypocrisy in our own lives; it dishonours God and hinders the work of the gospel.**

Whoever does not bear his cross ... cannot be my disciple

The Lord Jesus challenged the great crowds who were following him concerning the cost of discipleship. Many have been puzzled by verse 26. Jesus is not commanding us to hate our relatives; the fifth commandment rather teaches us to honour our parents. When faced with difficult Bible verses we must allow Scripture to interpret itself. It is clear from the parallel passage in the Gospel of Matthew that we are not being urged to hate our family members, but to love them less than we love Christ (Matthew 10:37). Discipleship is costly, especially when our allegiance to Christ strains family relationships. Jesus must come first. This is part and parcel of bearing our cross to follow him. *‘Whoever does not bear his cross ... cannot be my disciple’* (27).

Jesus told two parables to illustrate the great need to count the cost of following him (27–33):

- Anyone planning to build a tower would first sit down *and count the cost* lest he make a fool of himself by not being able to complete the work.
- A king facing an army twice the size of his own must first consider whether he has any hope of victory; if not, he will sue for peace; he counts the cost.

The words of Jesus are a very necessary reminder that to be a Christian, a person must be his disciple, and discipleship demands sacrifice. Many evangelical churches have succumbed to an ‘easy Christianity’ whose practices have little in common with the commitment that Christ demands.

Salt is a symbol of purity and is used to preserve and to enhance the flavour of food. Jesus described the Christian as the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). Shallow Christianity is like salt that has lost its saltiness through exposure to the elements. It is useless and fit for nothing (34–35). **Does the Lord Jesus have first place in your life? Have you counted the cost of following him? Are you prepared to follow him, whatever that cost?**

I cannot come

After Jesus had referred to the resurrection of the just, one of the Pharisee's guests exclaimed, *'Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God'* (14–15). The Lord Jesus then told them a parable of another feast, of a certain man who *gave a great supper and invited many* (15–21). Invitations had been sent out and when the supper was ready, those invited were summoned to the feast. They then began to make their excuses for not coming; one said that he had to see a piece of land that he had purchased, another had to test five yoke of oxen that he had bought for his farm. Another man had married a wife and said, *'I cannot come.'* They all claimed to be too busy but their excuses were weak. Many people still claim to be too busy to follow Christ.

The master of the house was angry when he heard these pathetic excuses and he told his servant to go out and bring in the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind. There was still room and the servant was told to go out again to bring others, compelling them to come in. Israel had repeatedly rejected God's messengers and their message and were continuing to do so (13:34–35; Isaiah 65:1–2). The Lord Jesus was here indicating that his gospel would go to Gentile as well as Jew and the church would be made up of all nations (cp. Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11–14,18).

What does this parable teach us? God graciously invites sinners to come into his kingdom, to repent of their sin and to trust in Christ to save them. Many make far-fetched excuses and may give plausible reasons for not following Christ but God is not deceived. If in this life, we refuse God's invitation to enter his kingdom, we will be shut out of heaven when we die. Have you taken this solemn lesson to heart? If you are not a Christian, have you been saying, *'I cannot come,'* when you have been invited to follow Christ? **One day; there will be no more invitations – it will be too late. The door of God's kingdom will be shut in your face for ever!**

Do not be afraid

A great crowd gathered to hear the Lord Jesus but he addressed his words to his disciples: *'Beware of the leaven ('yeast') of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy'* (1). We may hate hypocrisy but we can ourselves become hypocrites without realising it. Our religion may degenerate into an outward, lifeless show. Such a thing happens if we become proud, failing to glorify God for all that we are and have. Just as yeast affects a whole lump of dough, hypocrisy saps us of our spiritual vitality. We may deceive men but we cannot deceive God who will expose all religious sham on the day of judgment (2–3).

Fear is natural when wicked men threaten to kill us, but Jesus says, *'Do not be afraid'* (4). What is the answer to the fear of wicked men?

- We must fear God who is able to cast into hell (5; the Greek word 'Gehenna' which is here translated 'hell' refers to the place where the wicked are sent on the day of judgment; cp. Mark 9:47–48). A Christless eternity is truly dreadful. Jesus died to save us from that! The Christian's fear of God is not one of craven dread, but is an attitude of reverence, awe and love towards him.
- Our heavenly Father lovingly cares for us so we should not fear men. God feeds the birds but we are much more precious to him than the birds (6–7). We were bought at tremendous cost, even the precious blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18–19). Hardened sinners may say all manner of wicked things against the Lord Jesus and may even blaspheme the Holy Spirit, but we must not be afraid of their threats and accusations. The Holy Spirit is with us and he will teach us what we should say (8–12). The fear of man brings a snare (Proverbs 29:25) and may keep us from confessing Christ (8). Dare we remain silent when the ungodly blaspheme his name? **Can we be ashamed of our precious Saviour who loves us? Do you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9)?**

*I'm not ashamed to own my Lord or to defend his cause,
Maintain the honour of his word, the glory of his cross.* (I. Watts)

Beware of covetousness

The Lord Jesus has warned us against hypocrisy (1) and now goes on to warn against the sin of covetousness. Hendriksen points out that the literal meaning of the Greek word is ‘the thirst for having more’. Someone in the crowd did not have his mind on the words of Jesus. He was hurting within because of a family dispute over inheritance and he wanted Jesus to get involved. Rabbis were often approached to settle serious disputes and the man may have taken Jesus to be one of their number. The Saviour would have none of this and he warned, ‘*Beware of covetousness*’ (15). In our ‘consumer society’ we need to be constantly reminded that our quality of life does not depend on material possessions. The Lord Jesus drives home the point with the parable of the man whom God called ‘*You fool!*’ (20).

In the parable, a certain farmer was blessed with fertile ground and he reaped bumper harvests, becoming very rich. He decided to build greater barns to store his crops and his accumulated goods but he did not give one thought to God who is sovereign over our lives. He planned an early and comfortable retirement but God told him that he would die that very night. His wealth would be passed to others and he would spend an eternity separated from God. What a fool he was to make elaborate retirement plans and yet to make no preparation for eternity (16–20). It is more important to be rich toward God being thankful and content for all that he has provided for us than to seek after wealth (21; cp. Philippians 4:11).

Do you live for the things of this world or do you love God and honour him in your life? Are you covetous, always wanting the latest gadget or luxury? Covetousness violates the tenth commandment; it is idolatry and it will never bring you lasting satisfaction (Colossians 3:5; cp. 1 Timothy 6:9–10). Happy the man who lays up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19–21). ***Beware of covetousness. It could be Satan’s weapon to ruin your Christian life.***

Whoever exalts himself will be abased

The Lord Jesus was invited to take a Sabbath meal at the home of a leading Pharisee; other guests included Pharisees and experts in religious law. A man who had dropsy was also there, perhaps deliberately brought along to see if Jesus would heal him on the Sabbath. *They watched him closely* (1–3). They remained silent when Jesus asked them, ‘*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?*’ He healed the man and then asked them another question regarding their own observance of the Sabbath but they did not answer him (5–6).

Jesus noticed how guests at the meal sought the most prominent seats. He challenged them to take the lowliest places; it is preferable to then be invited to fill a more honourable place than to be asked to move lower down the table. He said, ‘*For whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted*’ (11). We must all learn this important lesson for our life in the church and in Christian service (cp. Philippians 2:3–4; 1 Peter 5:5–6).

Jesus then challenged his host about his practice, which was quite common, of inviting only friends, relatives and rich neighbours to meals (forming a tight social circle to promote self-interest). He urged them to invite those who were unable to repay them to their feasts, such as the poor and needy. Such deeds of kindness are seen and rewarded by God on the day of resurrection (12–14). ***Does your kindness ever reach beyond your own circle of friends? Do those outside God’s kingdom see the love of Christ in your life?*** Do you think that they will be won to Christ if you are indifferent to their needs?

*Give me a faithful heart,
Likeness to thee,
That each departing day
Henceforth may see
Some work of love begun,
Some deed of kindness done,
Some wanderer sought and won,
Something for thee.* (Sylvanus O. Phelps)

But you were not willing

Some Pharisees urged Jesus to get out of Herod's territory (Galilee and Perea) because Herod was planning to kill him (31). This was not an act of friendship on their part (cp. Mark 3:6). Their colleagues in Jerusalem were already plotting to arrest and to kill Jesus (cp. John 7:1) and this would be easier away from the great following that he had in Galilee. Jesus was scathing in his reference to Herod as *'that fox'*. His message for the king was that he worked to God's timetable and that his ministry would continue until he was *perfected* – a reference to his death for sinners (32–33; cp. Hebrews 2:10).

Jerusalem, the holy city which contained the temple, was known as the city of God (Psalm 48:1–2). It was also a wicked city which had murdered God's servants (33–34). Its people had been privileged to receive numerous opportunities to turn from their sin and to come to the Lord, but they had refused God's gracious offers of mercy. The Lord Jesus grieved and lamented over Jerusalem. The intense emotion and the pathos of his grief is shown in his repetition of the word *'Jerusalem'* (cp. David's lament over Absalom, 2 Samuel 18:33. *'O my son Absalom – my son, my son Absalom'*). The Lord would have often gathered Jerusalem to himself, to have them for himself and to lovingly protect them, but they were not willing. Jerusalem and its temple was to be destroyed and left desolate in AD 70. Jesus would not make any public appearances to the Jews after his death and resurrection until his second coming when *every eye will see him* (Revelation 1:7). People will then say, *'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!'*

The words of Jesus, *'But you were not willing'* will haunt many a person who has rejected him. He is very patient and very kind, but will not leave open his door of mercy and opportunity for ever. Is your heart right with God? Have you responded to Christ's invitation to turn from your sin and to follow him? **If you are not willing to submit to Jesus as your Lord and Saviour now, do not be surprised when he rejects you on the day of judgment.**

Do not worry about your life

Anxiety brings weariness and distress to many people and may make a child of God weak and prayerless. You may be free from the tyranny of seeking to heap up riches for yourself, but be over-anxious about providing for your basic needs. What is the answer to such worry? Remember that your heavenly Father knows exactly what you need (30). The Lord Jesus urges, *'Do not worry about your life ... nor have an anxious mind ... do not fear'* (22,29,32). Life is more than food, drink and clothes (23). Will not God who has given you a body provide for its needs (cp. Romans 8:32; Philippians 4:19)?

Worrying will not improve your circumstances (25) but will turn your eyes away from our heavenly Father. Look at the promise in verse 31: *'But seek the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added to you.'* Have you got your priorities right? Are you beset by fear and care? Turn your care into prayer (Philippians 4:6–7). Trust your Father in heaven. He will never fail you.

Anxiety is often caused through having our treasure in the wrong place. We are either storing up treasure on earth or in heaven. Treasure on earth is not secure. It may perish through decay or be snatched from us (33). The *'health and wealth'* movement which teaches that it is every believer's birthright to be wealthy and never to be ill is a denial of the word of God. It does the very thing that the Lord Jesus warns against here.

It is foolish to set our minds on earthly possessions when we have a glorious inheritance in heaven (1 Corinthians 2:9; Ephesians 1:11,18; 1 Peter 1:4). We cannot take our worldly possessions with us when we die, but our heavenly treasure is for ever. It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom (32). **Where is your treasure? It is where your thoughts and affections are found.** Take time to think about this because Jesus warns us, *'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'* (34).

Therefore, you also be ready

The Lord Jesus now emphasises the importance of being prepared for his return by faithfulness in serving him and by righteous living (35–48). There are two parables, the first of them about servants who are watching for their master's return from a wedding. They have their waists girded to enable them to work. Servants were hindered in their work if they left their long robes hanging loose. They tucked them into their belts so that they had greater freedom of movement to work (35). Their lamps were kept burning so that they would be able to open the door immediately on their master's arrival. Verse 37 has an amazing statement. The master will gird himself and serve his servants. Little wonder that they are blessed. This is a picture of the Lord Jesus who came to serve (22:27). We must follow his example and serve one another (John 13:15–17). We too must be ready to welcome him when he comes again and be involved in faithfully serving him. Jesus exhorts us, *'Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect'* (40).

He then told the parable of the faithful servant and the wicked servant. One man had been appointed to rule his master's household but he had betrayed that trust. He knew his master's will, but assumed that he could be cruel and careless because the master was delaying his return. Such a person is like the hypocrite who appears to be a true Christian and may even have a position in the church, but by his actions dishonours Christ. His portion is with unbelievers (46). **If we know God's will and do not obey it, the punishment will be more severe.**

Jesus asked, *'Who then is that faithful and wise steward?'* (42). The faithful and wise steward is the person who occupies himself with the work given to him by Christ. Though salvation is by grace and not through our own works, an evidence of the grace of God in our lives is love to Christ and faithful service. If God has entrusted us with gifts, we have an awesome obligation to use them in his service. There will be rewards for the faithful and punishment for the wicked (43–44, 47–48).

Lord, are there few who are saved?

Many Jews believed that all their race would be saved because they were 'Abraham's children' (cp. John 8:30–42). The teaching of Jesus left them in no doubt, however, that their Jewish pedigree was not enough. They had to repent of their sin and trust in Jesus as the holy Son of God; they had to deny themselves daily as they followed him. Someone asked Jesus, *'Lord, are there few who are saved?'* (23). Jesus did not say, 'Yes' or 'No' but challenged the man about his own soul. *'Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able'* (24). Our English verb 'to agonise' is derived from the Greek verb translated 'to strive'. We are in a fierce struggle against Satan, the world and our own sinful nature when we seek to enter the kingdom of God. The gate is narrow. All religions do not lead to God.

The Lord Jesus warned that the door of salvation would not remain open for ever. He had taught the people and they had eaten with him (26; eg. when he was a guest in the household of a Pharisee, when he fed the multitudes) but they did not own him as their Lord. They would say, *'Lord, Lord, open for us'* on the judgment day, but it would be too late (25). Many believe that some connection with Jesus will bring them salvation. They rely on their baptism, on church attendance, saying prayers, or having Christians in their family, but they are not relying on Jesus and they will be lost (26–27). The day of judgment will be a day of weeping and Jesus made it quite clear that many Jews would be lost and many Gentiles would be saved (28–30).

J.C. Ryle comments, 'There is a time coming when many will repent too late, and believe too late, — sorrow for sin too late, and begin to pray too late, — be anxious about salvation too late, and long for heaven too late' (EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON LUKE, volume 2, page 134). **How is it with you? Do not waste time speculating on whether few will be saved, but consider whether you will be saved. If you are not saved seek the Lord now.**

What is the kingdom of God like?

What answer would you give, if you were asked, ‘*What is the kingdom of God like?*’ The obvious answer would be that it is a kingdom over which God reigns, whose subjects own him as their King. The Lord Jesus twice posed the same question, ‘*What is the kingdom of God like?*’ He told two parables to teach different facts concerning God’s wonderful kingdom (18–21).

- The parable of the mustard seed (18–19) illustrates ‘the progress of the gospel in the world’ (J.C. Ryle). The mustard seed is very small, but it grows into a tree which is ten to fifteen feet high and which could shelter birds in the shade of its branches (30–32). Can it be that the kingdom of heaven is really growing like the mustard seed? From small beginnings with the ministry of the Lord Jesus and the apostles, the church has seen phenomenal growth. In spite of intense opposition throughout the ages, the kingdom of God is now established in the lives of people throughout the world. When China fell to the Communists in 1948, reliable estimates put the number of Christians in that great country at one million. It is now estimated that there are well in excess of 50 million Christians in that land. Yes, the church is rapidly growing in many parts of the world, even if it appears to be in decline in certain countries. Let us be encouraged! *
- The parable of the leaven (20–21) shows ‘the progress of the gospel in the heart of a believer’ (Ryle). We do not see the beginning of a work of grace in the human heart. The ‘leaven’ may be presently working in the life of someone we have on our heart and for whom we have prayed for years. This too encourages us to persevere in prayer and witness. God’s work in the heart is never static. Little by little, it influences all aspects of the believer’s life as he grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Is this apparent in your life?**

* See CHINA’S CHRISTIAN MILLIONS by Tony Lambert, published by Monarch Books, 1999. Lambert was formerly a British diplomat in Beijing and is a thoroughly reliable witness

Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth?

The Bible often connects fire with judgment (3:17; cp. Isaiah 66:15–16; Amos 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–8). The Lord Jesus here speaks of sending fire on the earth and he warned the disciples that he himself was to be baptised with a baptism of intense suffering (49–50). He was to bear the punishment of his people at Calvary and thus satisfy divine justice. J.C. Ryle comments, ‘Let the recollection of his burning readiness to die for us be like a glowing coal in our memories, and constrain us to live for him, and not to ourselves. Surely the thought of it should waken our sleeping hearts, and warm our cold affections, and make us anxious to redeem the time, and to do something for his praise’ (EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON LUKE, volume 2, page 96).

You may be puzzled by the words of the Lord Jesus, ‘*Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division*’ (51). How could the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) who blesses peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) bring division rather than peace? It is because many people hate Christ and his gospel. A Christian may find that his own family members become his greatest enemies as long as he remains faithful to Christ (52–53). When faced with such pressure, should a believer turn back from following Christ? No! Our supreme allegiance must be to our Saviour who loves us and who gave himself for us. Just a word of caution. Some Christians alienate their families through lack of wisdom and a neglect of duties at home. When a person becomes a Christian, they should become a better husband, better wife, better son or daughter than they were before their conversion.

Jesus warned the crowds who were able to forecast the weather by discerning the face of the sky and of the earth but were unable to discern the time (54–56). They needed to see the urgent need to respond to his message. They would sooner settle matters with an earthly accuser than face court action, but when accused by God’s holy law, they did nothing (57–58). **If you are not a Christian, now is the time to seek peace with God! It will be too late on the day of judgment.**

Unless you repent you will all likewise perish

When some disaster or tragedy occurs, many people question the love and the goodness of God. They ask, ‘If God is a God of love, why did he allow such-and-such to happen ... ?’ In New Testament times many Jews saw disasters as manifestations of divine justice and judgment on sinners. They would say, ‘God has punished them for their wickedness.’ Some people still believe this, but our reading shows us how we should view disaster and tragedy.

Jesus was told of a terrible atrocity in which Pontius Pilate had ordered the cold-blooded slaughter of some Galileans while they were offering their sacrifices in the temple. This may have been a reprisal for some terrorist attack on the Romans. Jesus pointed out that these victims were not worse sinners than any other Galileans. He referred to the eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell on them and said that they were no more sinful than other dwellers in Jerusalem (1–4). Disasters and tragic happenings are divine warnings to impress upon us the uncertainty of life and our urgent need to repent of our sin. Jesus told his listeners, ‘*Unless you repent you will all likewise perish*’ (3,5). If tragedy struck you, would you be ready to meet God?

The Lord Jesus then told the parable of the barren fig tree to press home the urgent need for repentance (6–9). The owner of the vineyard ordered the manager to cut down the fig tree following three fruitless years. The man pleaded for another year during which he would tend and fertilise the ground around it. If it then failed to bear fruit, it would be cut down. The parable refers to Israel which was being given a final opportunity to produce godly fruit. Judgment came after the message of Christ and his apostles was rejected (AD 70).

When God delays sending judgment, it must not be taken to mean that he is indifferent to human wickedness. It is rather an expression of his mercy, giving sinners further time to repent (cp. 2 Peter 3:4–9).

Immediately she was made straight, and glorified God

The religious leaders did not heed the call of Jesus to repentance but became more determined in their opposition to him. This is seen in the account of the miraculous healing of the woman (10–17). Jesus *was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath*. There was a woman in the congregation whom Satan had bound and bent for eighteen years. She was a faithful believer (Jesus called her ‘*a daughter of Abraham*’ 16) and her sorry physical condition did not keep her from Sabbath worship. **She would shame many who profess the name of Christ and yet make all manner of excuses for their absence from worship.**

When Jesus saw her, he called her to him ... laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God (13). The churlish synagogue ruler was angry because Jesus had healed the woman on the Sabbath. He addressed the congregation saying, ‘*There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day*’ (14).

Jesus responded by calling him a *hypocrite*. He would not have hesitated to lead his animals to food and water on the Sabbath but he had no compassion for the poor woman who faithfully attended his synagogue. Jesus said, ‘*Should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound ... for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?*’ (15–16). The ruler and his allies had no answer to Christ’s telling argument and they were shamed into silence. The people in the crowd rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

J.C. Ryle comments, ‘The principle here laid down by our Lord Jesus is the same that we find elsewhere in the Gospels. He teaches us that the command to “do no work” on the Sabbath, was not intended to prohibit works of necessity and mercy. The Sabbath was made for man’s benefit, and not for his hurt’ (EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON LUKE, volume 2, page 122). Ryle points out, however, that we are to keep the Sabbath day holy and give it to God. **Do you?**