

## Church of Christ in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Lesson 12

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- Matthew 19:16-22
  - We read the Matthew account of the rich young ruler
  - Mark 10:17-22 & Luke 18:18-23 are the parallel accounts
  - And in vs 16, the young man asked Jesus “...*what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?*”
  - This was just after he acknowledged Jesus as the “*Good Teacher*”
  - There’s no indication as to whether this young man was a true believer that Jesus was the Messiah, but at least he seemed to have heard of Jesus and acknowledged that He was a good teacher
  - You can see here that acknowledgement of Jesus is not enough – we know from the complete account that this young man was not approved of Christ even though he is obviously aware that there’s something special about Christ
  - Belief only salvation is not true (James 2)
  - Jesus in His excellent humility defers the glory to God the Father
    - “*Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.*” (vs 17)
    - If anyone was ever worthy of praise, it was Jesus
    - But He came to serve rather than be served (Mark 10:42-45)
  - And then He tells the young man to keep the commandments
    - Embodying the message of Christ obviously involves action
    - We all know that you cannot claim to be of Christ’s and then blatantly disregard His word
    - We all sin (1 John 1:8), but we cannot do so intentionally, we cannot live in sin (Hebrews 10:26)
    - Rather we must be striving to live like Him (1 Peter 2:21)
  - Jesus then lists a few of the commands for him, to which he responds “*All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?*” (vs 20)
    - This passage of Scripture is interesting
    - This young man seems to have had decent morals
    - He was not a murderer, nor an adulterer, nor a thief, nor a liar, he honored his father and mother, and loved his fellow man
    - I can confidently say that because the young man said that of himself and Jesus did not correct him
    - But what’s interesting is that despite seemingly being a decent person morally, this young man knew he was missing something
    - 1 John 5:13 – “*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*”
    - You can know that you are in a saved state
    - God tells us so – study the Word and have faith in God when He says that
    - But if you can know that you are saved, then apparently you can also know it if you are not saved

- This young man kept the major commandments – murder, adultery, stealing, etc.
    - But he knew he wasn't saved – that's a sad state to be in
  - *"If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."* (vs 21)
    - Luke 9:23 – *"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'"*
    - To follow Christ, you must deny yourself
    - Not only must you deny yourself, but you must deny yourself for something that the world deems unpopular
    - Our treasure is not this world though (Matthew 6:19-21)
    - We should be fixing our eyes on things eternal, not things of this world (2 Corinthians 4:18)
  - This young man could not do that – he couldn't part with his great possessions
    - Where was his treasure? In the things of this world
    - Jesus didn't approve of that – you and I need to take note, because if we try mimicking the attitude of this young man, He won't approve of us either
  - ~2000 years later, we know this man for his wealth, not for his service to Christ
    - I can't say that he didn't change his mind later on in his life
    - We aren't told anything of this young man other than this account in Matthew, Mark, and Luke
    - It was evident by his actions here when faced with Jesus that this young man wanted to be known for his wealth
    - Mission accomplished, young man – but at what cost?
    - If he didn't repent later in his life, he found out the cost
    - Mark 8:36 – *"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"*
    - That's a rhetorical question of course – it profits you nothing
    - This world with all its riches is but a vapor (James 4)
  - This young man did not embody Christ, rather he embodied his riches – his worldly pleasures
  - As Christians, we must embody Christ (Philippians 2)
  - When people see me, they should see Christ
  - How do we do that?
  - That is the question we answer tonight
- As a brief recap...
  - Lessons 1-4: foundational information of the church
    - Christ is the king, the head of the body
    - The church is His kingdom (Ephesians 1 and Ephesians 5)
    - We are servants in Christ's kingdom (Philippians 2, Mark 10)
    - There is only 1 church (1 Corinthians 1, Ephesians 4)
      - Anything else is really no gospel at all (Galatians 1)
    - And we become a member of the Lord's church by following His instructions
  - Lessons 5-6: organization of the church

- The eldership – how they are to shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28)
    - The deacons – how they are to serve in the church via assignments given to them by the eldership (Acts 6)
    - The qualifications, roles, and responsibilities of each – not just any person can serve in these roles (1 Timothy 3)
  - Next we studied the acts of worship of the church
    - Lessons 7-11 – the Lord’s Supper, singing, preaching and teaching the word, prayer, and giving
  - Now we are discussing the church’s interaction with the world
    - Obviously, we must evangelize which we will talk about in our next class (our final class)
    - But we can’t evangelize in the name of Christ if we aren’t living like Christ
    - So how do we do that?
- Let’s start by looking at **1 Peter 4:4**
  - In our past lifetime (our lives before we became Christians), we satisfied the will of the Gentiles
  - We satisfied our own wills
  - And as we all know unfortunately, that is what the bulk of the world’s population does
  - And as a result, when they see us not doing that – they should think it strange
  - We think of being strange as a negative thing – we’re different than others
  - But one place that we should always be strangers to though is the things and places of the world
  - It should surprise the rest of the world when you do not participate in the things they do
  - And that takes strength – but through Christ we can have strength (Philippians 4:13 – whether we are abased or abound)
  - We must stand up for the truth and the world will notice a difference
  - We must be in the world, but not of the world (John 17:14)
- **Matthew 12:43-45**
  - A man had an evil spirit, but removed it somehow – great
  - The evil spirit when looking for a new place to go, considers its original inhabitant
  - Finds the man’s home unoccupied and clean
  - As a result, the evil spirit brings 7 others who are more wicked with him
  - They all dwell within the man who is now worse off than his original state of just the 1 spirit
  - So what’s Jesus’ point?
    - The man was ridden of the evil spirit – which is the correct start
    - But after the spirit left, he left his house unoccupied
    - I.E. he did not fill the void with godly things – he simply left it void
    - Philippians 4:8-9 – *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*

- This man did not do so, leaving room for the evil spirit to come back with others (making his final state worse than his original state)
  - This man took the appropriate steps to rid himself of the evil spirits, but he did not take appropriate action afterward
  - He should have submitted his life to Christ and filled the void with Christ (Romans 12:1-2)
- 2 Timothy 2:15 – *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*
  - We must rightly divide the word of truth
  - By doing so, we will be workers approved of God
  - To do this, we must know the word
  - But dividing here requires action
  - James 1:22 – *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*
  - We can be the greatest Bible students of our day, but if we don’t put the teachings into practice, we deceive ourselves
  - Thinking we’re acceptable in God’s sight because we know His word
  - But we know that we must embody His word as well
  - Because even the demons believe – but they shudder (James 2:19)
  - And even Satan knows Scripture (Matthew 4)
- Matthew 7:20 – *“Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”*
  - Do men gather grapes from thornbushes?
  - Figs from thistles?
  - Do good trees bears bad fruit or vice versa?
  - By our fruits will we be known
  - So let’s look at the fruit that we should embody, thus showing the world around us that we belong to Christ
- Galatians 5:19-26
  - Notice first that the **works** of the flesh are listed here vs the **fruit** of the Spirit
    - Singular vs plural
    - Meaning that to possess the fruit of the Spirit, you must possess all of these qualities
    - However, to be considered fleshly, you only need 1 of these
  - Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like
  - If you practice any of these things – you will not inherit the kingdom of God
  - Notice that things such as jealousy, envy, selfish ambitions are listed with things such as murder and adultery
    - What may seem trivial to us sometimes may not be trivial in God’s sight
    - We must be watchful for these types of behaviors
  - Rather than these, we must embody the fruit of the Spirit
  - When someone says *“Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”*, and they look at us – the fruit that others should know us by is the fruit of the Spirit listed here in Galatians

- We must possess love
  - John 15:13 – *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”*
  - That same sacrificial mindset of Christ’s is to be ours (Philippians 2)
  - We demonstrate that we love our fellow man and the Lord by serving them just as Jesus did in John 13 – just as He did on the cross
  - We denied ourself when we became Christians
  - Luke 9:23 – *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”*
- We must possess joy
  - It is easy to be joyful when things are going well
  - Perhaps you’ve just been promoted at work, perhaps you just got married, perhaps you just had a child, etc.
  - But we should be joyful in all situations – even what the world would deem a bad situation
  - Like in Acts 5:40-42
  - The apostles had just been beaten for proclaiming the gospel
  - The world would have looked at that and denied Christ – “I’m not taking a beating for Christ or anyone for that matter”
  - The apostles departed rejoicing – they were deemed worth to suffer shame for the name of Christ
- We must possess peace
  - Much like Peter in Acts 12
  - Herod just had James the brother of John killed (vs 2)
  - And then Herod seized Peter (vs 3)
  - Everyone knew what was going to happen to Peter
  - The Jews were pleased with the death of James the brother of John
  - How much more so would they be pleased if Peter died
  - The church knew what was going to happen (vs 5) – they were constantly praying on his behalf
  - I’m sure Peter did his fair share of praying as well
  - That’s how Peter could sleep despite his awful earthly situation (vs 6)
  - Imagine the amount of peace that Peter must have had
  - If we turn things over to God in the form of prayer, then we can have the peace that passes understanding as well (Philippians 4)
  - The kind of peace that the world would not understand – the kind of peace that will allow us to sleep in the face of persecution because we know that regardless of what happens, God is going to take care of us
- We must be longsuffering or patient
  - Much like Job
  - Despite all of the trials that Satan threw at him, not once did he curse God (Job 2:9)

- Even after his wife – the 1 person who I assume that he thought would be by his side regardless of what happens – told him that he needed to curse God and die (Job 2:9)
    - Job considered this foolish talk from his wife (Job 2:10)
    - He would not curse God
    - Despite the fact that Satan took everything from him – his possessions, his children, his health
    - Job exhibited great patience here
    - We must be as patient as Job was
  - We must possess kindness, goodness, and gentleness
    - Be polite and respectful to people
    - *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”* (Matthew 22:37)
    - This is the second greatest command and it is similar to the greatest command: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”*
  - We must possess faithfulness and self-control
    - The same self-control that Joseph displayed in Genesis 39 when tempted by Potiphar’s wife
    - The same faithfulness of Abraham that when God told him to go to a place that he would receive as an inheritance – he went, even though he did not know where he was going (Hebrews 11:8)
  - When the world looks at the Christian, these are the qualities that they should see
  - And therefore, they will see the fruit of the Spirit
  - They will see us embodying Christ – putting the Word of the Lord into practice
  - Don’t practice any of the works of the flesh – those who do so will not inherit the kingdom of God
  - Rather practice and get good at the qualities that define the fruit of the Spirit
- An excellent way that you can build up these qualities is to have faithful attendance during activities and assemblies of the church
  - **Hebrews 10:24-25**
    - The early church was together just about all the time
    - They were together daily (Acts 2:46)
    - Constantly encouraging and strengthening one another
    - If you are a part of the church and the church assembles, the rest of the church would truly benefit from your presence
    - We can help encourage you to love and good works (2 traits that describe the fruit of the Spirit)
    - And you can encourage us to do the same
    - We all exhort each other as we constantly look forward to the Day of the Lord
- Next, let’s look at a practical example
  - **Matthew 25:31-46**
    - Who here is given the inheritance?
      - Those who: fed hungry, gave drink, welcomed strangers, gave clothing, helped sick, visited prisoners

- Of these, the King says: “what you did for the least of the brothers, you have done for me”
  - Who here is sent to the eternal fire?
    - Those who did not: feed, give drink, welcome strangers, give clothing, help sick, visit prisoners
    - No indication here that these folks were murderers, thieves, sexually immoral, etc.
    - But they were not part of the righteous
    - They were given eternal punishment
    - Of these, the King says: “what you did not do for the least of the brothers, you did not do for me”
  - We must embody Christianity and we can show the world that we are Christians by our good works
  - By our fruit, they will know us and we should be embodying the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5)
- Next, let’s look at **Matthew 5:13**
  - We (Christians) are the salt of the earth
  - Salt brings flavor, preservation
  - Here, Jesus is discussing flavor though (this verse specifically mentions taste)
  - Christians are to make the gospel attractive
  - When others see our good deeds, they praise the Father in heaven
  - To make attractive, we must behave as Christians
  - The world should see a difference in our behavior because we are striving to embody Christ vs anything in this world
  - Flavor the gospel, let your light shine by doing good for others
  - Show others the power of God by your actions
  - Galatians 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
    - Our actions/speech should display Christ
- Let’s look at 1 more Biblical example
  - **Galatians 6:9-10**
    - Do not grow weary of doing good, for you will be rewarded
    - Especially for believers, but this does apply to all (non-believers as well)
    - Do good for all – and thus, we will be embodying Christ and representing His church to the world
- In conclusion, let’s look at **John 13:35**
  - Ultimately, the world will know that we are servants of Christ by our love
  - If we serve our fellow man and exhibit that we love them by showing that we care about their souls, then the world will see a difference in us
  - They will see that we are striving to embody Christ