“THE PROFOUND TEACHINGS of JESUS CHRIST”
(As presented in the four gospels)
by Dr. D. W. Ekstrand

This study contains over “two hundred profound teachings of Jesus Christ” that are presented to us in the four gospels. I have chosen to present these teachings in the reverse order in which they are listed in the New Testament — beginning with the gospel of John (that was simply a matter of preference). I also made an attempt to not be redundant in listing the various teachings… that is, if a particular teaching was taught in more than one of the gospels, I purposely chose to state it just one time; hence the omission of various teachings from certain gospels. I also did not record some of the signs and wonders that Jesus did — only those that were accompanied by a significant teaching. For each of the teachings I identified the “primary verse” from which it is presented, with the understanding that the verses immediately before and after it may also be relevant to that teaching; therefore read each of them accordingly if you are using your own Bible while going through this study. In addition to stating the various teachings, I often defined terms and gave a short explanation as well. Each of these teachings should be carefully reflected upon and contemplated in a devotional kind of way; after all, these are not just forensic truths, but the dynamic truths of the Living God of creation given to us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for the expressed purpose of making us the people of God — which in itself is an incredibly profound truth. Place special emphasis on the italicized words — they emphasize significant aspects of the various teachings.

The Gospel of John

Jn 1:1 — Jesus is the eternal existent One through whom all things came into being. As God, He did not have a beginning, but has existed from all eternity.

1:4 — Jesus is the life that brings light into this dark, lost world. The light of God is a living reality — it is not mere abstract truth.

1:12 — Those who receive Jesus, God makes them His children. Salvation is not by doing your best or by joining a church — it is by believing that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through His work on the cross He accomplished salvation for us.

1:14 — The Lord Jesus is full of grace and truth. He embodies all the realities of goodness within the universe — He is perfectly honest and giving.

1:19 — John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of Jesus into the world, by preaching a message of repentance and forgiveness.

1:29 — John declared that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The lamb was a sacrificial animal among the Jews.

1:33 — Jesus came to take up residence (dwell) in the hearts of those who believe in Him, in the person of the Holy Spirit.

1:41 — Jesus is the Messiah (the Anointed of God) of whom the Law and the Prophets speak. Incidentally, that was the message of Andrew to his brother Simon.
Jn 2:11 — Jesus first manifested His glory by turning water into wine at a wedding. It was a “sign” (a miracle) with a meaning; ultimately the signs and wonders and miracles of Jesus revealed to men that He was indeed God.

2:15 — Jesus cleansed the Temple of God in Jerusalem of all impure activity.

3:3 — Jesus emphatically stated, “Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Just as the first birth is necessary for physical life, so a second birth is necessary for divine life.

3:16 — Said Jesus, “God so loved man that He gave His only Son for him, that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but would be saved and have eternal life.”

3:19 — Human beings love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Since men prefer to run their own lives (which is sin), as opposed to living in submission to the will of the Father, they reject Jesus.

3:34 — Said John, “Jesus speaks the words of God and gives the Spirit without measure,” that man might know the truth and walk in love in this world.

4:14 — Said Jesus, “Whoever drinks of the living water I give shall never thirst.” By contrast, there is nothing this world can provide to fill the human heart.

4:24 — Those who truly worship God (who is spirit) must worship Him in spirit and truth. There must be no pretense at being religious; one must come before God in truth with a pure heart.

4:35 — Jesus said, “The fields are white for harvest… one sows and another reaps.” As we spend time contemplating the great needs of the world, the Lord lays on our heart a burden to reach out to the lost souls around us.

5:18 — The Jews sought to kill Jesus because “He broke their Sabbath law and called God His own Father, thus making Himself equal with God.” This was blasphemy to them, because they felt His claims were false.

5:36 — Jesus said, “The very works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” The miracles which the Father gave Jesus to do bore witness of Him, that the Father had truly sent Him.

5:39 — Jesus said, “The Scriptures bear witness of Me; if you truly believed Moses, you would believe Me, because he wrote of Me.” The main thrust of the Old Testament message dealt with the coming of Christ.

6:27 — Jesus said, “Do not seek food which perishes, but food which endures to eternal life.” Satisfying one’s physical appetite is not the most important thing in life — feeding one’s soul with the Word of God is paramount.

6:32 — Jesus said, “My Father gives you true bread from heaven to give you life; I am the living bread that has come down out of heaven” (6:51). Jesus Christ is the spiritual bread that feeds the soul.

6:35 — Jesus said, “I am the bread of life, he who comes to Me shall not hunger.” Those who come to Christ find in Him enough to satisfy their spiritual hunger forever.
Jn 6:44 — Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father draws him.” Man in and of himself is utterly hopeless and helpless; he does not even have the strength to come to Jesus by himself.

6:53 — Jesus said, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.” The Lord Jesus was simply stating that unless we appropriate to ourselves by faith the value of His death for us on Calvary, we can never be saved. Eternal life comes to us through the body and blood of Christ.

6:63 — Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” Those who were listening to Jesus had taken His words literally and did not realize that they were to be understood spiritually.

7:17 — Jesus said, “If any man is really willing to do God’s will, then he shall know the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.” It is only when we are willing to do God’s will that He reveals truth to man’s heart — that is a promise to anyone who earnestly seeks the truth.

7:19 — Jesus said, “Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me because I healed a man on the Sabbath?” Although they gloried in the Law, evidently none of them kept it; they were even plotting to kill Jesus.

7:37 — Jesus said, “If any man is [spiritually] thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.” Unless a person knows he’s a sinner, he will never see the need to turn to Christ for divine forgiveness and eternal life.

7:46 — The religious officials said, “Never did a man speak the way this man speaks.” They had never heard anyone speak with such authority and wisdom.

8:7 — Regarding the woman caught in adultery by the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said to them, “He who is without sin among you, throw the first stone at her” — they all declined. Jesus then said to the woman, “Neither do I condemn you… go and sin no more.” Those who wish to judge others should be pure in themselves; the Law condemns everyone even though they have not been caught.

8:12 — Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life — unless you believe in Me, you shall die in your sins.” Naturally speaking, the world is in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and aimlessness; apart from Christ there is no sight, no life, and no deliverance.

8:31 — Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you shall know truth, and the truth shall make you free.” True believers continue in the liberating teachings of Christ; though they stumble, they do not permanently turn from them.

8:38 — Jesus said, “I speak things from My Father… you do things you heard from your father. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father, in whom there is no truth; he is a liar… whereas I speak the truth of God… only those who are of God hear the words of God.”

8:58 — Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am” (cf. Ex 3:13-15). The One who has existed from all eternity, Jesus, made another clear claim to be God.
Jn 9:3 — Regarding a man born blind, Jesus said, "It was neither this man’s sin, nor his parents; this man was born blind in order that the works of God might be displayed in him."

9:39 — Jesus said, “I came into this world that those who do not see may see…. if you were truly blind (said Jesus to the Pharisees) you would have no sin; but since you say that you see, your sin remains.” Those who admit that they do not see are given sight; whereas those who proudly believe that they see (without Christ) are confirmed in their blindness. Humility is essential for experiencing spiritual sight.

10:1 — Jesus said, “He who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep is a thief… he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep… the sheep follow him because they know his voice… they will not follow a stranger because they don’t know his voice. The thief comes to destroy, but I have come that you might have life… I am the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.” The Pharisees claimed to be the rightful shepherds of the people of Israel (they were self-appointed messiahs for the nation); they did not come by the way the OT predicted the Messiah would come.

10:30 — Jesus said, “I and the Father are one… I am the Son of God” (10:36). The Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is one in being or essence, and exists eternally in three distinct “co-equal persons.” Though our human minds cannot fully understand the triune nature of God, that is the essence of the Godhead (cf. Gal 3:20; Jam 2:19). Christian baptism is made in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 28:19).

11:25 — Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life: he who believes in Me shall never die.” Jesus Christ is “the life” of the believer (cf. Jn 14:6; Col 3:4).

12:24 — Jesus said, “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life shall lose it, but he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal.” Jesus was referring to Himself as a grain of wheat; if He did not die, He would only abide with the angels of heaven; though He would enjoy the glories of heaven with them; there would be no saved sinners with which to share His glory.

12:37 — Though Jesus had performed “many signs,” yet the people were not believing in Him; “thus fulfilling the word of Isaiah the prophet… nevertheless, many of the rulers were believing in Him, but were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” Their unbelief was not caused by any lack of evidence; the people simply did not want to turn from the darkness that ruled in their souls (cf. Jn 3:19).

13:14 — Jesus said, “If I, the Lord, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet;” that is, they needed to humbly serve one another.

13:34 — Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, just as I have loved you… by this all men will know that you are My disciples.” During Christ’s absence, they were to be governed by the law of love; without love they would be no different from the very world they were commissioned to reach (cf.1 Cor 13:1-3).

14:1 — Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me… I go to prepare a place for you… I will come again and take you to be with Me, that where I am, there you may be also… I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” Though Jesus was going away, yet He told them to
believe in Him in the same way they believe in God. Here is another claim of equality with God.

Jn 14:11 — Jesus said, “Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me.” There is a perfect union between the Father and the Son; they are one in essence.

14:14 — Jesus said, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” Live in the center of His will, walk in fellowship with Him, ask for anything that the Lord would desire, and your prayers will be answered.

14:15 — Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” Obeying God is the measuring stick of your love for Him (cf. Jam 2:20; 1 Jn 3:17).

14:16 — Jesus said, “The Father will give you another Helper… that is the Spirit of truth… and He will abide in you. He will teach you all things (14:26)… and bear witness of Me (15:26). My peace I give to you… let not your heart be troubled.” The word “Helper” is a translation of the Greek word “Paraclete,” which means “one called alongside to help.”

15:1 — Jesus said, “I am the true vine… you are the branches; he who abides in Me bears much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.” Walking in intimate fellowship with Christ is the requisite for living a fruitful life… otherwise life is nothing but an unfruitful, fleshly exercise. By abiding in the vine, we draw all our life and nourishment from it.

15:13 — Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” The disciples of Christ are called to this type of devotion; giving up the self-life for the divine-life.

16:7 — Jesus said, “It is to your advantage that I go away, or the Helper shall not come to you. When He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment. When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth, and glorify Me.” Carefully note the chief functions of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in our world.

16:28 — Jesus said, “I came forth from the Father… and I am leaving this world again and returning to the Father. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace… In the world you will have tribulation… but take courage! Why? Because I have overcome the world! So rest assured, you are on the winning side!”

17:3 — Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that people may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” The Greek word “know” (ginosko) means to know someone relationally, experientially, and progressively.

17:11 — Jesus prayed to the Father, “Though I shall no longer be in the world, yet My disciples shall continue to be in the world. Father, keep them in Thy name… that they may be one… and may My joy be made full in them. Keep them from the evil one. Sanctify them in the truth of Thy Word. As Thou didst send Me into the world, I have sent them into the world. I do not only ask in behalf of these, but for those who will also come to believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one… may they be perfected in unity. May the love wherewith Thou didst love Me be in them.” Love must characterize the body. Too often the Christian life is looked upon as an individual experience rather than a corporate experience; Jesus focused on the need for
unity, genuine fellowship and love in the believing community… not a lone ranger experience. God has endowed you with special grace to serve other believers.

Jn 18:36 – Jesus said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world… it is not of this realm.” Jesus’ kingdom does not receive its power or authority from the world.

19:11 – Jesus said to Pilate, “You would have no authority over Me unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin.” All governments are ordained by God, and all authority, whether civil or spiritual, is from God (cf. Rom 13:1).

19:30 – After Jesus provided for the continuing care for His mother (by the apostle John), and knowing that all things had been accomplished, He partook of a sponge full of sour wine that was given to Him upon a branch of hyssop, and cried out, “It is finished!” At that point Jesus bowed His head, and gave up His spirit. The work His Father had given Him to do was now finished… redemption was now accomplished.

The Gospel of Luke

Lk 1:26 – The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin named Mary and said to her, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you! You have found favor with God… you will conceive and bear a son, and you shall name Him ‘Jesus’ (Jehovah is salvation)… He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High… and He will reign over the house of Jacob (Israel) forever; and His kingdom will have no end” (cf. Rev 21:2,10-27).

2:10 – There were shepherds out in the field near Bethlehem, and an angel of the Lord appeared to them saying, “I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (i.e., the Messiah or Anointed One of God).”

2:39 – The Lord Jesus was raised in Nazareth (near Galilee), and He continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. The Savior of the world was born as a human baby, and matured into a man, yet He was fully God. This perfect union of God and man is referred to by theologians as “the hypostatic union.”

2:41 – Joseph and Mary attended the Feast of the Passover every year in Jerusalem… when Jesus was twelve years old, he went into the temple to listen and ask the teachers questions… “and all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.” Jesus took the place of a normal child, learning in humility and quietness from His teachers; and yet in the course of His interacting with them He must have asked some extremely poignant questions, and offered some incredibly profound insights. Wouldn’t you love to have been present that day in the Temple?

3:21 – When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River… while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him “like a dove,” and a voice from heaven said, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.” Obviously, Jesus had grown into an incredible human being, of which His Father in
heaven was extremely proud… and now at the age of thirty He would be starting His earthly ministry.

Lk 4:1 — Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. His responses to Satan were these: “Man shall not live on [physical] bread alone… you shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only… and, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” A person who is full of the Spirit is emptied of known sin and self, and is richly indwelt by the Word of God (cf. Col 3:16). Many of us study and know the Scriptures, but when temptation comes, we have a very difficult time applying it to our lives — it is here where we have to “wage war” against the enemy of our souls by leaning upon the Word of truth with all our weight (cf. Prv 3:5-6), and reject the idea that spiritual warfare is easy (Satan’s lie!).

4:16 — While ministering in His home town of Nazareth, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up and proceeded to read these words from book of the prophet Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me… He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives… recovery of sight to the blind… set free those who are down-trodden… and proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.” After closing the book, He said to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” He was saying in the clearest possible way that He was the Messiah of Israel. Then He said to them —

4:24 — Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his home town.” Following His words, those assembled together rose up and cast Him out of the city. Jesus was simply stating a deep-rooted principle in human affairs — great men of wisdom are not appreciated in their own neighborhood… familiarity breeds contempt.

5:20 — Some men were carrying a man on a bed who was paralyzed… and Jesus seeing their faith said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.” The scribes and Pharisees reasoned that Jesus must be blaspheming, “because only God can forgive sins.” To which He responded, “Which is easier — to say your sins are forgiven, or to say rise up and walk?” Again, Jesus’ response left the Pharisees speechless. What could they say?

5:31 — When the tax-collector Levi gave a big reception for Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees grumbled at His eating with tax-gatherers and sinners, to which He responded, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” So salvation is only for those who humbly admit they are sick sinners in need of a Savior. You could almost hear all of the Pharisees claiming, “We are good… we don’t need a Savior!” (cf. Lk 18:19).

6:2 — Some of the Pharisees complained that Jesus was doing things that were “not lawful” on the Sabbath, to which He responded, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry… how he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone?” The Lord’s answer was that the law of the Sabbath was never intended to forbid a work of necessity; but the Pharisees had a difficult time applying that truth. Jesus then said, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” — He is the One who gave the Law in the first place, and no one was more qualified to interpret its true spiritual meaning than Him.

6:9 — After healing a man’s withered hand, Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees who were watching, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, do harm, save a life, or destroy it?”
It is interesting that they again could not present a strong argument against what Jesus was saying… so filled with rage, they discussed together what they might do to Him.

Lk 6:13 — Jesus went and spent the whole night in prayer, and when day came He called His disciples to Him and “chose twelve of them,” and then named them “apostles” (“ones sent”). They were not all men of outstanding intellect or ability — they represented a cross-section of humanity. They were probably all young men in their twenties when Jesus chose them. Given the right caliber of men, He could train them and send them out to do a profound work of ministry. Jesus frequently spent significant time in prayer before engaging it highly important ministry.

6:20 — A large multitude gathered and Jesus went up on the mountain and preached what is known as “The Sermon on the Mount” (Luke 6 and Matt 5-7) — in it He summarizes the character and conduct expected of His followers. The sermon opens with the Beatitudes (blessings) and then goes on to expand upon other spiritual principles —

- Blessed are the poor [in spirit], for yours is the Kingdom of God.
- Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.
- Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
- Blessed are you when men hate you for My sake, your reward is great in heaven.
- Woe to you who are rich, you are receiving your comfort in full.
- Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry.
- Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.
- Woe to you when all men speak well of you.
- Love your enemies… bless those who curse you… pray for them.
- Treat others the way you want people to treat you.
- Do good to your enemies… your reward will be great.
- Be merciful just as your Father is merciful.
- Do not judge and condemn and you will not be judged and condemned.
- Give and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and running over.
- By your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.
- Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye; and fail to see the log in yours?
- Each tree is known by its fruit.
- The mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.
- Why do you call Me “Lord” (Master), and do not do what I say?
- Those who build upon truth, build upon a rock; those who do not, build on sand.

7:22 — The disciples of John the Baptist were sent to inquire of Jesus if He was “the Expected One?” Jesus told them to go back to John and report what they had seen — “the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them” (notice, He didn’t just respond with a “yes I am” answer). John’s uncertainty may have been due to the fact that Jesus did not show signs of being the political and conquering Messiah that the Jewish people were anticipating. Instead, Jesus gave “evidences” that demonstrated the genuineness of who He really was — One sent from God.

7:28 — Jesus said to the multitude, “Among those born of women, there is no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” The
lowest person in the new era of God’s kingdom is higher than the greatest prophet of the old era.

**Lk 7:36** — Jesus entered a Pharisee’s home and reclined at his table… a sinful woman also entered and brought with her an alabaster vial of perfume, and weeping she began to wet His feet with her tears… and anoint them with the perfume. After telling Simon (a Pharisee) a *parable of two debtors* who had both been graciously forgiven, Jesus asked, “Which of them would love the moneylender more?” He responded, “The one whom he forgave more.” To which Jesus replied, “When I entered your house, you gave Me no water for my feet, but she has wet them with her tears… you gave Me no kiss, but she has kissed my feet… you did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.” Since we are all great sinners (i.e., we are all self-centered fleshly humans), we can all know *great forgiveness*. Simon’s attitude was quite different: he felt that prophets (like Pharisees) possessed a far greater righteousness than other people.

**8:17** — Jesus said, “Nothing is hidden that shall not one day be *known* and come to the light” (cf. Ἱερ 4:12-13).

**8:21** — Jesus said, “My mother and My brothers are those who hear the word of God and *do* it;” His true family consists of those who hear and faithfully do God’s will.

**9:23** — Jesus said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, *let him deny himself*, and take up is *cross daily*, and *follow Me*. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what does a man profit it he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory.” Although salvation is a free gift (cf. Ἰν 3:22; Ἑφ 2:8-9), Jesus also warned that following Him would entail suffering and hardship (cf. Ἄλτ 5:10-12; Ῥωμ 8:17; 2 Θή 1:5). We are to live for Christ regardless of the cost (cf. Ἰν 21:20-22).

**9:46** — An argument arose among the twelve disciples as to which of them was the *greatest*. Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side, and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me…and he who is *least* among you, this is the one who is great.” True greatness is seen in loving the helpless (those the world passes by).

**9:62** — Jesus told a man along the road what it meant to really follow Him — He said, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” True genuine followers of Christ are not made of half-hearted stuff; they persevere even during the most difficult times — Christ reigns in their hearts without a rival.

**10:2** — Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the *laborers* are few… behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.” A positive response awaited them even though they would face much rejection. The need for workers is always greater than the supply.

**10:30** — A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers who beat him and left him for dead… three people happened to come by, but only one felt compassion on him and helped him… of which the Lord said “the one who showed mercy fulfilled the great commandment — go and do likewise.” We can all come up with excuses for not serving and just minding our own business in life — either we
take serious our faith and become fruitful servants of Christ, or we live unproductive selfish lives. If a person is hungry, either we help feed him or we don’t — those are the only two options; yet we all try and justify our fruitless actions (cf. Mt 25:40, 45).

Lk 10:38 — Jesus said to Martha, “Only one thing is really necessary — listen to God’s word.” Jesus knows that our first need is to sit at His feet and learn from Him, so He is diligently at work in our lives trying to change us from being Marthas into being Marys. We can all offer excuses as to why we don’t spend time at the feet of Jesus; it is important to remember that Jesus prizes our affection significantly more than our service — occupation with the Lord Jesus is the one thing that is indispensable.

11:2 — When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He told them to pray like this —

- Father, hallowed be Thy name.
- Thy kingdom come.
- Give us each day our daily bread.
- And forgive us our sins.
- For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
- And lead us not into temptation.

11:9 — Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. Everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.” This verse does not mean that we receive whatever we want in prayer; God gives us what is spiritually beneficial when we pray in His name (cf. Jn 14:13). The “present tense” verbs in this verse emphasize the importance of continually asking, seeking, and knocking; thus when we are seeking God’s will in a matter, we need to do a lot of asking, seeking and knocking.

11:23 — Jesus said, “He who is not with Me is against Me; He who does not gather, scatters.” As one man put it, “Either we are on the way or in the way.” A man who is not for Christ is against Him.

11:29 — Jesus said, “This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign… but no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah.” The people had heard Jesus’ words and had witnessed His miracles… but they were still not satisfied. The Lord responded, “No further sign would be given except the sign of Jonah” — the last conclusive miracle in the earthly ministry of Jesus would be His resurrection.

11:39 — Jesus said to the Pharisees, “You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup… but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness… Woe to you Pharisees! You pay tithe of mint, yet disregard justice and the love of God… you love the front seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market place… you are like hidden graves which people walk on without knowing. Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers… you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of learning about God; you yourselves would not learn, and you stopped others from learning also.” The Pharisees concerned themselves with “outward appearance” and ritual cleanliness, while what was inside, what really counts, was full of selfishness and evil. God looks at the inside of a person — his heart (cf. 1 Sam 16:7).
Lk 12:1 — Jesus said to His disciples, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees — it is hypocrisy. There is nothing covered up that will not ultimately be revealed and made known.” A hypocrite is one who wears a mask, one whose outward appearance is utterly different from what he is inwardly. The Pharisees posed as paragons of virtue, but were actually masters of masquerade — one day they will all be disrobed.

12:4 — Jesus said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body; rather fear Him who has the authority to cast into hell!” This verse anticipates the presence of severe persecution (just like we’re seeing in the world again today); but there is a limit to what men can do (they can only kill us physically)… God, however, can render a far more severe punishment — eternal death in hell.

12:8 — Jesus said, “Everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him before the angels of God; but he who denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him.” By rejecting the ministry of the Holy Spirit to your heart, in effect, one is saying that the Holy Spirit of God is the devil — and that is the “unpardonable sin,” because it denies the witness of the truth to one’s heart (there is no other witness). This sin cannot be committed by a true believer; backsliding is not the unpardonable.

12:13 — A man said to Jesus, “Tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” Jesus responded to him, “Be on guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” Jesus then told him a parable about a rich man who was very productive, and who wondered what he should do with all his extra crops. He reasoned that he would build bigger barns to store them all… and take ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your soul is required of you! So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” The issue here is “the deceitfulness of riches.” Do you see the “greed” in the one brother wanting his share of his family’s inheritance? Or is “greed” a secondary issue in your mind? (that’s the direction our flesh wants us to go). It has often been said that where there is “a will,” there are a lot of relatives; obviously the hearts of men are greedy. Keep in mind the wisdom of Agur: “Give me neither poverty nor riches… lest I be full and deny Thee, or in want and steal” (cf. Prv 30:8-9). As human beings we are all very fickle creatures — we can either have too much or too little — none of us can master great wealth (selfishness is always at the door) or extreme poverty (grumbling results when we suffer great hardship), so resolve to be faithful with what God has given you, and truly satisfied (be humbly grateful) with what He has entrusted to you (cf. Mt 6:11, 24; 1 Tim 6:9-10).

12:22 — Jesus said to His disciples, “Do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat or wear, for life is more than food and clothing; your Father knows that you need these things. Seek for His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you. Sell your possessions and give to charity — make for yourselves an unfailing treasure in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” One of the great dangers in the Christian life is to make temporal things the foremost aim in life… we become so occupied with earning money for these things that the work of the Lord is relegated to a secondary place. The emphasis of the NT is that the cause of Christ should have
first place in all of our lives (not just pastors lives). When we plunge ourselves into His service we embrace the life of faith.

Lk 12:42 — Jesus said, “Who is the **faithful and sensible steward**, whom his master will put in charge of his servants and possessions, to give them their rations at the proper time? Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the **alert and serving** when he comes (12:37). The steward’s main responsibility in life is to be concerned with people, not material things; hence the warning against materialism and covetousness — it is people who are important, not things; thus the **“greatest commandment”** is to love and care for the needs of others (cf. Mt 22:36-40; 25:31-46).

12:48 — Jesus said, “To whom much has been given, shall much be **required**.” The main principle here is this — the greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility; thus there will be **degrees of reward** in heaven.

12:51 — Jesus said, “I have **not** come to establish peace on earth, but to bring **division**; households will be divided — father against son, mother against daughter.” Part of the mission of Jesus was to create a **division** within the human family — incredible as it may seem ungodly relatives would often rather have their son a drunkard and dissolute person than have him take a public stand as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

13:18 — Jesus said, “What is the kingdom of God like? It is like a **mustard seed** that is planted and **grows** into a large tree… It is like yeast that is placed in a large tub of flour until it makes all the dough rise.” The point of the parable is **“the power”** that is inherent in the seed (cf. Mk 4:26-29).

13:24 — Someone asked Jesus if there were just a few who were being saved. He said to those listening, “Strive to enter by the **narrow door** (salvation on God’s terms)… many will seek to enter [on their own terms] but will not be able.” Salvation is through the cross of Christ alone (cf. Acts 4:12) — there is no other way (contrary to what many teach).

13:34 — Jesus said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets. How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood… but you **would not have it**. Behold, your house is left to you **desolate**… you shall not see Me until the day comes when you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’”’ God has abandoned His people Israel until they receive Him and recognize that He indeed is the Messiah sent from God.

14:2 — Jesus questioned the Pharisees, “Is it **lawful** to heal on the Sabbath?” They kept silent. He then said, “Which one of you shall have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?” Again, they made no reply. Jesus read the minds of His critics by asking them pointedly whether it was **lawful** to heal on the Sabbath — as much as they would have liked to have said that “it was not,” they could not support their answer, so they remained silent. Since they could not refute Jesus’ explanation, they grew increasingly angry with Him.

14:11 — Jesus said, “Everyone who **exalts himself** shall be humbled, and he who **humbles himself** shall be exalted.” Jesus taught that it is better to be advanced to a place of honor than to grasp it and later have to relinquish it. We sow… but God determines what we reap in life. Nothing escapes His notice. So no matter how hard we may try to “**manipulate the system to win in life**,” God is the one who dispenses what we shall reap.
Lk 14:26 — Jesus said, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple . . . So no one can be My disciple who does not give up all he possesses.” We must surrender the “ownership” of everything we possess to Christ, because He must have “preeminence” in our hearts.

15:4 — Jesus said, “What man, if he has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? I tell you, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, then over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” Even as believers, we are all prone to wander… yet God never gives up on us, and always brings us back to Himself (cf. Jn 6:39; 1 Th 5:24).

15:11 — Jesus said, “A certain man had two sons…the younger one asked for his inheritance, so the Father divided his wealth between them. The younger one left home and squandered his estate with loose living… and became exceedingly poor, to the point where he had to feed swine to live (the Mosaic Law forbid Jews to eat swine). When he came to his senses, he recognized that his father’s hired hands were better off than he was… so he decided to return to his father… repent of his waywardness… and ask him if he would make him one of his hired men. When his father saw him coming from a long way off, he felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. His father rejoiced in his return and threw a huge party for him! The father’s response made the older son angry, and he refused to participate in the celebration.” Though the prodigal was more than willing to accept “second-class treatment” (become one of his father’s servants), the Father made him a full member of the family again! The principle? there are no “second-class citizens” in God’s kingdom! It is interesting to note that the mercy shown to the prodigal son was unacceptable to the self-righteous older son — a poignant picture of the proud heart of the hypocritical Pharisees who were blind to their own distance from God.

16:10 — Jesus said, “He who is faithful in a very little thing, is also faithful in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is also unrighteous in much. No one can serve two masters; ultimately, he will hate the one, and love the other — you cannot serve God and mammon.” It is utterly impossible to live for God and something else at the same time — the preeminent obsession in our lives will reign supreme in our hearts.

16:17 — Jesus said, “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.” God’s Word abides forever (cf. Is 40:8; Mt 5:18; 1 Pet 1:25). In effect, Jesus was saying to the Pharisees, “You cannot disregard the greater moral laws of God and still claim a place in the kingdom.”

16:31 — Jesus said, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they listen to anyone else… not even someone who has been raised from the dead.” There is no additional revelation that would convince any human being of “the truth.” A person who rejects God’s message (the Spirit of God ministers truth to the soul) will not be persuaded by resurrection.

17:6 — The apostles felt they lacked the faith to be as forgiving and loving as Jesus suggested, so they asked Him to “Increase our faith!” Jesus said to them, “If you have faith like a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be cast into the sea,’ and it would obey you.” In effect Jesus said, it was not so much a matter of
quantity of faith, but *quality*... and it was not a question of getting more faith, but *using the faith they had*. It is our *pride* that prevents us from forgiving others.

**Lk 17:21** — Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is not a physical realm that can be observed... it is *within* you!” In your soul! Thus Jesus was making it clear that the kingdom of God has two phases — a physical one that is still yet future (cf. Lk 17:22-37; Rev 2:26-27; 5:9-10; 11:15; 20:4-6), and a spiritual one that exists in our hearts in the present age.

**18:1** — Jesus told His disciples a parable to show how they ought to “*pray at all times and not lose heart.*” There was a certain widow who kept imploring the Judge of the city to give her legal protection from her adversary... though he was unmoved by the validity of her case, because the widow kept *persisting*, he ultimately granted it to her.” So said Jesus, “If an unrighteous, insensitive judge would act on behalf of the poor widow, will not God the Father respond to His own children when they cry out to Him?”

**18:10** — Jesus told the parable of two men who went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee prayed, “I thank Thee God that I am not like that tax-gatherer... I fast twice a week and pay tithes of all that I get.” The tax-gatherer humbly bowed his head and prayed, “*God be merciful to me, the sinner!*” Jesus said, “This man went to his house *justified*, whereas the Pharisee did not; for everyone who *exalts himself* shall be humbled, and everyone who *humbles himself* shall be exalted.” The Pharisee focused on his own righteous efforts, which he proudly assumed were meritorious... and failed to see any shortcomings in his life, of which all men have an abundance. As sinners, we must approach the Lord with humility, honesty, and complete transparency.

**18:16** — Jesus said, “*Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them,* for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these... whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a *child* shall not enter it at all.” The kingdom of God consists of those who respond to Him with *the trust that a little child* gives to a parent.

**18:18** — A certain ruler asked Jesus, “*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*” To which Jesus responded, “*One thing you lack; sell all that you possess and give it to the poor,* and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me.” When the man heard this, he became very sad; for he was extremely rich. The truth of the matter was, this man was not as righteous as he thought he was; he was living a *selfish life*, with no real love for others whatsoever. Said Jesus, “*How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!* (It is difficult to have riches without loving and trusting in them). It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” The people then questioned and wondered who can be saved? Said Jesus, “*Things impossible with men, are possible with God.*” Only God can accomplish the impossible in the heart of man; only God can make a man perfectly righteous (cf. Rom 4:2-8; 2 Cor 5:21).

**19:10** — Jesus said, “*The Son of Man has come to seek and to save those who are lost.*” This verse expresses the very heart of Jesus’ ministry, both His work of salvation and His quest for the lost — Jesus both *initiates* and *effectuates* our salvation (cf. Jn 1:13; 6:44, 65; Jam 1:18), and He used the occasion with Zaccheus (cf. Lk 19:1ff) to restate His mission.
Lk 19:26 — Jesus told a parable of a man who entrusted his wealth to his slaves to invest while he went away on a journey. Those who did so were highly rewarded; those who did not were reprimanded and received nothing. Said Jesus, “Everyone who increased what was given to them shall be given more, but those who did not, even what they had was taken from them.” God gives each of us opportunities to serve Him — those who serve Him passionately and faithfully are given ever-widening areas of opportunity to serve Him, not only in this life, but in the life-hereafter. Failure to buy up opportunities results in a loss of reward (cf. Mt 25:14-40; 1 Cor 3:12-15; 2 Cor 5:10; Gal 6:7-10). Whereas salvation is a “gift,” rewards are “earned,” and have eternal consequences.

20:22 — The Pharisees asked Jesus, “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar?” Jesus responded, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” Some of our money may belong to Caesar, but our entire lives belong to God. Someone put it this way, “Let the world have its coins, but let God have its creatures.”

21:2 — Jesus saw a poor widow putting two small copper coins into the temple treasury and said, “This poor widow put in more than all of them… they gave out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty gave all she had to live on.” Ultimately, the problem with riches is twofold — man fails to understand that everything in this world belongs to God; we are simply “stewards of His possessions” (cf. Lk 12:48). It is the greedy impropriety of our heart that makes us uncaring, self-centered creatures. Have you noticed how many of Jesus’ teachings dealt with self-centered living and the repercussions of it? What is your response? Do you ignore His warnings? This is heavy stuff.

21:10 — Jesus said, “The day will come when you will suffer severe persecution — it will lead to an opportunity for your testimony… I will give you utterance at that time as to what you should say. But you will be delivered up even by parents, friends and relatives… you will be hated by all on account of My name.” Though persecution may seem like failure and tragedy in the moment, the Lord overrules such thinking by making it a testimony for His glory. Just as the cross purchased our salvation, so our persecution results in the salvation of others. Blessed are those who endure it (cf. Mt 5:10-12).

21:25 — Jesus said that at the end of the age Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies. “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars… in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves… the powers of the heavens will be shaken… and then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud and great glory… When you see these things begin to take place, lift up your heads, because the kingdom of God and your redemption are drawing near. Truly I say to you, heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away. Be on the alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to stand before the Son of Man.” The cosmic signs and earthly chaos are indications that the decisive and consummate rule of God is approaching. The day of Jesus’ return should not take us by surprise… we should live as if it is imminent (cf. 1 Jn 2:28).

22:16 — Jesus and His disciples gathered together in the upper room to eat the Passover meal… and He said to them, “I shall never again eat this meal with you until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” In the kingdom to come, when final victory is celebrated, Jesus again will eat this meal with us (cf. Rev 19:9).

22:31 — Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail… once you have turned
again, strengthen your brothers.” The Greek word for “you” is plural, indicating that Satan had asked permission to trouble all of Christ’s disciples. Though Peter would backslide and be overcome by the flesh, he never lost his faith — though it was a weak and imperfect faith, it was a genuine faith, nonetheless (just like ours). Following his restoration, Peter was to strengthen and encourage his brothers. The truth is, God was still mightily at work in Him!

Lk 22:40 — After sharing the Passover meal, Jesus and His disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane, and there He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” Because of our unredeemed humanness (flesh), and a propensity to walk accordingly, we often fail to take those steps that will help insure victory in the Christian life. Here, Jesus is telling us how important prayer is in the life of the believer; it’s important to note that prayer essentially is a matter of conforming our will to God’s will (always remember that when praying), and that happens when we affirm the truths of God’s Word in the inner man, and humbly acknowledge our need of His grace. The truth is, we are all extremely weak, fallen creatures (cf. Mt 26:41; 2 Cor 12:9; Heb 4:15); nevertheless, we have been commissioned to “fight the fight of faith!” (cf. 1 Tim 1:18; 6:12).

22:66 — After Jesus was arrested in the Garden, due in part to the betrayal of Judas Iscariot, He was taken to the council chamber and questioned by the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Supreme Court), “If You are the Christ, tell us…” and “Are You the Son of God?” Jesus said to them, “Yes, I am.” You’ll notice, His response had no effect on changing their minds; their proud hearts simply were not open to receiving the truth.

23:22 — After King Herod and Pontius Pilate questioned Jesus extensively… and the people demanded that He be “crucified”… Pilate responded, “What evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death.” But the masses were insistent, and in spite of Pilate’s feeble attempt to exonerate Jesus, the vicious demands of the masses drowned him out.

23:34 — When Jesus was taken away and crucified, Jesus said to the Father, “Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And after much suffering Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.” And having said that, He breathed His last. Those who put Jesus to death acted in ignorance, not really understanding who it was they were killing. With infinite love and mercy, Jesus felt pity and compassion for them, not anger and resentment — only God could respond that way.

24:25 — After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to two of His disciples on a road to Emmaus (about seven miles from Jerusalem). God had prevented the two men from recognizing Jesus — “He appeared to them in another form,” as Mark writes (cf. Mk 16:12; Lk 24:16), and they began discussing all that had taken place in Jerusalem that week. Finally, Jesus said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. Once they arrived in the village of Emmaus, they reclined at a table to eat, and when Jesus took the bread and blessed it, “their eyes were opened and they recognized Him!” and He vanished from their sight. Like the apostles, we learn slowly and need to constantly
be reminded of the truths of Scripture. We all seem to forget truths so easily; again, another evidence of our fallen condition.

Lk 24:36 — While all of the disciples were gathered together discussing all that had taken place, “immediately Jesus Himself stood in their midst!” saying, “See My hands and My feet, that it is truly Me!” Then He said to them, “these are My words which I spoke to you while I was with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (cf. Acts 16:14). “You are witnesses of these things… I am now sending forth the promise of My Father, the Holy Spirit (cf. Is 44:3; Ezek 36:27; Joel 2:28), and you will be clothed with power from on high (heaven).” Jesus then led them out as far as Bethany (a little village on the mountaintop just east of Jerusalem), and He lifted up His hands and blessed them… and it came about that while He was blessing them, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (cf. Acts 1:9). And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple, praising God” (cf. Acts 1:12). Luke’s gospel opened with devout believers in the Temple, praying for the long-expected Messiah… and it closes in the Temple with devout believers praising and blessing God for answered prayer and for accomplished redemption.

The Gospel of Mark

Mk 1:2 — Isaiah the prophet records these words from the God of heaven: “Behold, I will send forth My messenger before You (Jesus), and He will prepare Your way.” He shall be the voice of one crying in the wilderness, saying, “Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight’ — John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And great multitudes from Judea went out to him, and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River and confessing their sins. And he declared, “After me comes One who is far greater than I… I baptized you with water: but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!” John the Baptist’s message was that the people should repent (change their minds about their sinfulness and forsake it) in order to receive the remission of sins… otherwise they would be in no position to receive the Lord. Only holy people are able to appreciate the Holy Son of God. Though many were enthusiastically baptized by this fiery preacher in the desert (cf. Mk 1:5), the majority obviously didn’t genuinely confess and forsake their sins, as the following narrative suggests.

4:11 — Jesus said to His disciples, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables, in order that while seeing, they may see and not perceive; and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, lest they return and be forgiven” (a quote from Is 6:9-10; 43:8; Jer 5:21). Because they spurned the Light of the world, they would be denied the light of His teachings; henceforth, they would see His miracles, yet not understand the spiritual significance… hear His words, yet not appreciate the deep lessons in them. Essentially, Jesus’ opponents failed to understand what He taught because of their own spiritual blindness. It is important to remember that not everyone will understand the teachings of Christ.
Mk 4:26 — Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil, and goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts up and grows — how, he himself does not know.” By a mysterious, miraculous process, quite apart from man’s strength and skill, the Word works in human hearts, producing fruit for God. Man plants and waters… but God causes the growth (cf. 1 Cor 3:6).

6:2 — When the Sabbath came in Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth, He began to teach in the synagogue, and those present were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as are being performed by His hands? Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James (who wrote the book of James), Joses, Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us also? And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his home town and among his own relatives.” Jesus wondered at their unbelief. For some strange reason, “familiarity breeds contempt” (that’s a very common maxim in our world). It has also been said, “There is no place harder to serve the Lord than at home.”

7:6 — Because of the criticisms levied at Jesus’ disciples by the scribes and Pharisees, “for eating bread with unwashed hands,” Jesus said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites when he said: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’ Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.” Men come up with elaborate rituals, thinking that in them there is acceptance before the Lord and conveyance of divine spiritual power — they substitute these traditions for the doctrines of the Bible.

7:15 — Jesus said, “There is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, and all manner of sin” (cf. 1 Sam 16:7). Food and unclean hands don’t defile a person, contrary to what the Pharisees said; uncleanness comes from the heart (Jer 17:9).

8:31 — Jesus was teaching His disciples that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him… and Jesus rebuked him saying, “Get behind Me, Satan” (Peter’s words were satanic in origin); for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s. If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. [the Christian life is not about “what we think is right;” it’s about what God’s Word says is right; we are not free to pick and choose what we want to believe]. Jesus then says, “Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but who loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” Just as Christ had to suffer, so too must we; be it the foregoing of personal comforts, social enjoyments, grand ambitions, material riches. This isn’t “legalism” — the Lord’s words call us to lives of self-denial, surrender, suffering, and sacrifice (cf. 1 Pet 4:1).
Mk 9:23 — In an account of a young boy who was possessed by a demonic spirit that made him mute, and caused him convulsions and foaming at the mouth, the boy’s father was moved by compassion for his son and asked Jesus to “take pity on us and help us.” Jesus responded, “All things are possible to him who believes.” The young boy’s father cried out, “I do believe — help my unbelief!” Jesus then rebuked the unclean spirit, and commanded him to come out of the boy and never to enter him again. As evidenced by this and other narratives, no believer has “perfect faith!” The wonderful news is that God graciously honors our “feeble and imperfect faith,” and rewards us according to His will (cf. Lk 22:31; Eph 1:11; Heb 4:15-16).

9:35 — Jesus said to the twelve, “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.” Jesus again presented them with another paradox — being great in God’s kingdom means being a “servant.” This was modeled by Jesus Himself: He washed His disciples feet, and humbled Himself to the point of death on a cross — the last thing Jesus was, was a proud man; furthermore, He always took the initiative to “serve.” What about us? Do you stoop to help and serve, or do you only like being served?

9:40 — Jesus said, “He who is not against us is for us.” Those who are for Christ, are against Satan; conversely, those who are for Satan are against Christ. Either we love to live in the light, or we love to live in darkness (the only two options). That which reveals who we are really for is “our fruits” (cf. Mt 7:16).

9:50 — Jesus said, “Salt is good, but if it becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves (emphatic), and be at peace with one another.” God expects Christians to exert a healthful, purifying influence in the world. Be intolerant of anything in your life that might lessen your effectiveness for Him.

10:2 — The Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife. He replied to them, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away; it was because of your hardness of heart that he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation God made the two ‘one flesh’ — what therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” Later the disciples questioned Him about this matter again, and He said to them: “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her.” By definition, adultery is the unlawful cohabitation of a married person with any other than his lawful spouse. Scripture says that when a man leaves his parents to be united in marriage, God mysteriously joins them together in such a way that the two become “one flesh.” Marriage is to be a lifelong commitment — that is the “divine ideal” — to break the union and marry another is to commit adultery. This is a difficult issue to fully understand in light of the fact that there can be many variables (are they both believers? is desertion, adultery, or abuse an issue?, etc.). Essentially, all theologians “stress” the importance of making one’s marriage work — not looking for an escape clause like the Pharisees. Though no marriage is perfect, because no human is perfect, remaining married and working through your differences is always the goal. Should a person divorce his spouse so that he can “marry someone else,” would clearly be an adulterous act, and lets one’s fleshly passions dictate what happens in his or her life. The apostle Paul gives his opinion (he stresses the fact that it is ‘his opinion’) on the subject of remarriage in his first letter to the Corinthians; he emphasizes the importance of reconciliation (if there has been a separation), and not giving up and simply look-
ing for someone else to marry. Obviously if one person opts out of a marriage and marries someone else, the other person is then no longer bound to his or her [former] spouse, and is free to remarry. Cross reference the following Scriptures — Mt 5:31-32; 19:3-9; 1 Cor 7:11-17, 27, 39; Deut 24:1-4.

**Mk 10:42** — Regarding “position” in the kingdom of God, Jesus said to the twelve, “Those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles ‘lord’ it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not to be so among you — whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” This was a revolutionary concept on greatness — service trumps arbitrary power. Jesus came to “serve you” (He gave His life for you on the cross); are you “serving Him” (giving your life to Him by serving others)? That’s what He is asking you to do.

**11:22** — Jesus said to the multitude — “Have faith in God…. All things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you (to better understand this principle, think of the antithetical position — asking and disbelieving that you will receive is an oxymoron). And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions; if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.” Believing in a loving, responsive God is the foundation of prayer (cf. Heb 4:16; 11:6)… and being merciful to others genuinely reflects our heartfelt appreciation to God for His abundant mercy toward us (cf. Lk 7:47; Jam 2:13).

**12:10** — Jesus often quoted Psalm 118: “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone” (v. 22). The cornerstone was considered the most important stone of a building; it was the stone upon which the entire building was designed. Essentially, the “stone of God” simply didn’t fit into the spiritual paradigm the Pharisees had designed; so they rejected it.

**12:25** — In response to the Sadducees trick question about marriage in heaven (they didn’t believe in a heaven or a hell), Jesus said: ‘When they rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.” Regarding the fact that “the dead rise again” (to counter their unbelief in the life hereafter), Jesus said, “Have you not read in the book of Moses where God spoke to him saying, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?” “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living! you are greatly mistaken.” Though believers will not be married in heaven, they will recognize one another and will not lose their distinctions as men and women. It should be noted: that there is no marriage in heaven directly contradicts the teaching of cults like Mormonism.

**12:28** — A scribe asked Jesus, “What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus replied, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord your God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart… all your soul… all your mind, and all your strength. And a second is like it — You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus then said to the man who had agreed with him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” God must have the supreme place in a person’s life; no other love can be allowed to rival love for God. Love for God is the chief aim of man’s existence… in loving others we show love for God (cf. Mt 25:40, 45; Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 4:7-8).
Mk 13:13 — Jesus proclaimed, “You will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end shall be saved.” The world “hates Jesus” because His message is an indictment against them — they are sinners in need of a Savior, and such thinking runs completely contrary to that which governs their lives; their proud hearts love darkness (cf. Jn 3:19), and light exposes the darkness; human beings don’t like being stripped naked in this world, and being revealed for what they really are. Though Christians are hated and persecuted for being children of light, those whose faith is truly genuine, ultimately persevere to the very end — and this they are able to do because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit… He never stops doing His transforming work in the believer’s life. An evidence of being a true believer is the never-ending work of God’s Spirit in his soul (cf. Ps 32:8; Ezek 36:27; Jn 6:39; Phil 1:6; 2:13).

14:27 — After sharing the Passover meal with His disciples the night before He would go to the cross, Jesus said to them later that evening in the Garden of Gethsemane, “You will all fall away, for it written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.’ After I have been raised, however, I will go before you to Galilee.” Though all the disciples would run, Jesus graciously assured them that He would not disown them, but would be waiting for them in Galilee. If you are a backslidden prodigal, return to Christ; He has not rejected you or written you off (read Lk 15:11-24 and Phil 1:6).

14:36 — The night before Jesus went to the cross, He poured out His heart to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee — remove this cup from Me; yet not what I (emphatic) will, but what Thou (emphatic) wilt.” The issue wasn’t a matter of physical possibility but of moral — there was simply no other way to save ungodly sinners. The Son of God had to bare the sin of all humanity (and be forsaken by the Father) that man might be freed from sin!

14:49 — The night Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said to His captors, “Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled” (cf. Ps 41:9; Is 53:7; Ps 22:12; Zech 13:7). After His arrest all of His disciples left Him and fled. In spite of all that was happening, God was still GOD, and still in control of all that was taking place (cf. Eph 1:11).

15:33 — In the sixth hour (12 noon) when Jesus was dying on the cross, darkness fell over the whole land for three hours… and at that point Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” When the sins of all creation were placed upon Jesus (1 Pet 2:24), God forsook Him; because of His holiness God had to disassociate Himself from His Son, who was bearing our sin (cf. 1 Pet 2:24). It was “this agony of separation” that was more than Jesus could bare — the absolute absence of His Father. The truth is, Jesus suffered this for you and me, while we were yet sinners! (Cf. Rom 5:8). Such love is simply unfathomable. With that thought in mind, Charles Wesley penned the words to that incredible hymn, “Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?”

15:38 — At that point, “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” This was an act of God indicating that by Christ’s death, access to God is now no longer through priests and the blood of bulls and goats; instead we now each are given the privilege of entering the holy place by the blood of Jesus (cf. Heb 10:19-22). A great new era was ushered in — it would be an era of nearness to God, not of distance from Him.
Mk 16:14 — After Jesus rose from the dead, “He appeared to the eleven as they were reclining at a table.… and He reproached them (not angrily) for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.” He then commissioned them to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” And shortly after Jesus spoke these words to them, He was lifted up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. In obedience to His command, the apostles then went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord confirmed their message with “signs and wonders;” the purpose of “miracles” was to substantiate God’s messengers, and thus authenticate their message; as such, they were called “signs” (cf. 2 Cor 12:12; Acts 2:22). God bore witness with signs and wonders and various gifts of the Holy Spirit. Mark’s narrative ends with Jesus in heaven and His followers being commissioned to proclaim the good news of salvation through Christ to the entire world (cf. Mt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

The Gospel of Matthew

Mt 1:1 — The genealogy of Jesus is traced through Abraham and David in the first chapter of Matthew (vv. 1-17). Genealogies were very important to first-century Jews; it proved one was an Israelite, and belonged to a particular tribe. Jesus’ genealogy showed that He was qualified to rule on the throne of David (cf. 2 Sam 7:12, 16; Is 9:6-7; Lk 1:32).

1:23 — The birth of Jesus was prophesied to Isaiah as follows: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.” (cf. Is 7:14).

3:1 — During those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”…. and when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’… the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” John was saying that a work of divine judgment was about to begin; those fruitless would be destroyed.

4:17 — After Jesus was tempted in the wilderness and settled in Capernaum by the sea of Galilee, He began to preach saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Jesus took up the message which John the Baptist preached — repentance is a necessary requisite for admission into the kingdom.

5:14 — Jesus said to His disciples, “You are the light of the world; let your light shine before men in such a way that they see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven.” As “lights” in the world, believers are to shine for Christ and exhibit His teachings.

5:17 — Jesus said, “I did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill it.” Jesus upheld the Law of Moses and insisted that it be fulfilled… not one jot or tittle (tiny little marks that distinguish certain Hebrew letters) would remain unfulfilled. Nothing in Scripture, not even the seemingly smallest stroke, is without significance.

5:20 — Jesus said, “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” The only righteousness that God will accept
is the “perfection” that He imputes to those who accept His Son as Savior (cf. Rom 3: 21-22; 2 Cor 5:21).

Mt 5:21 — Jesus said, “You have heard it said, ‘You shall not commit murder;’ but I say to you that everyone who is angry is guilty before the court. You have heard it said, ‘You shall not commit adultery;’ but I say to you that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery in his heart.’ You have heard it said, ‘An eye for an eye; but I say to you, whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other cheek also… and whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two miles.” Jesus expanded on the essence of what the Scriptures really mean.

5:43 — Jesus said, “You have heard it said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy;’ but I say to you, ‘love your enemies and pray for them’… demonstrating that you are sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” Such supernatural grace can only be manifested by those who have divine life.

6:1 — Jesus said, “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet… do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Likewise, when you pray, go into your inner room and shut your door, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. And when you pray, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.” This was a warning against the temptation to parade our piety before others, so that others may see it — the essence of a proud heart. If being noticed by the public is one’s motivating factor then that is the only reward they will receive; because God will not reward hypocrisy (cf. John 12:43).

6:19 — Jesus said, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth… but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven… where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Where is your heart? How do you measure it? By the way, there is no security in material things; only spiritual things; so make that your focus.

6:25 — Jesus said, “Do not be anxious as to what you shall eat or drink or wear…. for your heavenly Father knows that you need these things. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you.” Worrying about what we eat or drink or wear causes us to devote our finest energies to making sure we will have enough to live on. We are here on this earth for the expressed purpose of loving, worshiping and serving Christ. Once again, prayerfully think about that.

7:1 — Jesus said, “Do not judge lest you be judged… in the way you judge, you will be judged.” Jesus is not teaching us here to be “undiscerning Christians,” but to not have a spirit of being fault-finding, critical or condemnatory. Furthermore, we’re not to judge motives; only God can read them.

7:21 — Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven…. [If you do not do the will of My Father] I will declare to you, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’” False profession is worthless; only doing the will of the Father is acceptable. Beloved, for your sake, don’t treat this matter lightly.
Mt 9:35 — When Jesus was going about all the cities and villages, “teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness… seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.” Rather than being helped and cared for, the sheep of Israel were bullied, oppressed and denigrated by their religious leaders. Jesus sought to awaken a compassion in the hearts of His disciples for the lost sheep of Israel. Oh, that we might likewise know more of that yearning for the spiritual welfare of the lost.

10:24 — Jesus said to His apostles, “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.” Discipleship means following our Teacher, not being superior to Him, or expecting to be treated better than Him. Jesus wanted His disciples to understand the true cost of following Him.

11:28 — Jesus said to the multitude, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden (burdened with the weight of sin), and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon yourselves, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart (not a brow beater); and you shall find rest for your souls (such rest is realizing that Jesus completely finished the work of redemption on the cross). For My yoke is easy and My load is light;” again, what a striking contrast to that of the Pharisee (cf. Mt 23:4) — furthermore, we walk not alone; we are now yoked with One who gives sufficient grace for every time of need.

12:33 — Jesus said, “A tree is known by its fruit… the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart… I tell you, men shall render account for every careless word they speak in the day of judgment.” Fruit reflects the tree’s quality.

16:13 — Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” They responded, “Some say John the Baptist… Elijah… Jeremiah… one of the prophets.” Jesus then said, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Israel’s Messiah and God the Son). And Jesus answered him, “Bless are you, Simon, because My Father in heaven is the One who revealed that to you; and it is upon this truth (rock) that I will build My church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” We don’t arrive at the truth through our own intellect or native wisdom, we come to believe through supernatural revelation to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The truth is, God is building His Church on the person of Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone (cf. Eph 2:20), and nothing in all the universe will keep it from being built.

18:19 — Jesus said, “If two of you agree on earth about anything that you may ask, it shall be done for you by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.” The context of this particular statement is that of church discipline — it is a promise for guidance of the two or three who confront, that God would give them the grace to do His will in the matter.

23:13 — In the following verses, the Lord Jesus pronounces eight woes upon the proud scribes and Pharisees because of their outward opposition to the truth. Essentially, He called them “hypocrites” — they pretended to be what they were not (truly righteous)! They not only refused to enter the kingdom themselves, they aggressively hindered others from doing so… they took advantage of widows in order to obtain their property… they went to great lengths to convert someone to their way, thus making him twice as wicked… they built up a false system of reasoning to evade the payment of vows
(Jesus exposed their sophistry)... they meticulously tithed of the most insignificant herbs they raised, but were unscrupulous when it came to being just and merciful... they were careful to maintain an outward show of religious piety, yet their hearts were filled with extortion and self-indulgence... they were like whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside, but completely dead on the inside... and, last, they actually paid homage to the prophets (by adorning their tombs), yet it was their own ancestors who killed them! Jesus concludes his comments saying, “You brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell? O Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to you... your house shall be left to you desolate!” — it will not only be totally destroyed, but their enemies will rule over it again.

Mt 24:2 — Jesus said, “Not one stone shall be left upon another, which will not be torn down.” Jesus warned that the entire Temple in Jerusalem would be completely destroyed; not one stone would be left standing upon another. This judgment was executed in A.D. 70 when the Romans under Titus sacked Jerusalem. The devastation of the Temple was so thorough that the precise location of the sanctuary is still unknown to this day.

24:14 — Jesus said, “The gospel of the kingdom of God shall be preached in all the world for a witness to every nation, and then the end shall come.... then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of creation... false christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Just like the flashes of lightning, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be; all the earth shall see the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory... but of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven or the Son, only the Father.” Scripture clearly warns against “setting a specific date for His return,” as many cults have attempted to do, even though we are to be mindful of that season of time in God’s calendar when the end is drawing nigh. Most theologians believe the end is rapidly approaching.

24:45 — Jesus said, “Who is the faithful and sensible slave? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when He comes. Truly I say to you, He will put him in charge of all His possessions! But the evil slave will be assigned to the destiny of the hypocrites; that place where shall be weeping and the gnashing of teeth.” The wise servant will be found caring for God’s people — such a one will be “greatly honored” and given vast responsibility in the kingdom of heaven. The apostle Paul says that those believers who fail to invest their lives in the work of the Lord “will suffer loss,” though they will be saved (cf.1 Cor 3:14-15). The apostle John says the ill-prepared ones will “shrink away in shame from Christ when He does return” (cf.1 Jn 2:28); literally it says “they will not be able to speak or look at Jesus because of their shame.” Carefully reflect upon the plight of the “unfaithful servants” — though heaven is their destiny, they will not enter into glory until they have experienced “unimaginable humiliation.” So either we humble ourselves “now in this life” and serve with humility, or we will be “painfully humbled” prior to entering into glory — there is no escaping humility; either you embrace it now, or you will experience it when you stand before God in heaven. This isn’t some strange doctrine of which Scripture is silent. The truth is, “every believer’s work will become evident at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and he will be rewarded accordingly” (cf.1 Cor 3:8, 12-15; 2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:12; Eph 6:5-8). Beloved, please don’t take lightly God’s warnings! The end is near.
Mt 25:31 — Jesus said, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will then sit on His glorious throne, and all the nations will be gathered before Him… and He will separate them one from the other… He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. To those on the right He will say, “Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Then He will say to those on His left, “Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.” Jesus goes on to explain that the reality of genuine faith is demonstrated in love — which totally coincides with the “Great Commandment” (cf. Mt 22:36-40; Jn 13:34-35; Gal 5:6; 1 Jn 4:7-8, 11, 19-20). Genuine believers show their love for Christ by serving and loving others. Said Jesus, “In as much as you showed kindness to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you showed kindness to Me.” Conversely, “those who failed to show kindness to even the least of these, failed to show kindness to Me.” Therefore, “the unrighteous shall go to eternal punishment… and the righteous to eternal life.” Again, “love” is the chief character quality of the believer (cf. 1 Jn 4:7-8; Jn 13:35).

26:26 — The night before Jesus went to the cross He met with His disciples in the upper room to share the Passover meal with them; it was then that He instituted “the Lord’s Supper.” The bread He broke and blessed was “His body,” and the cup for which He gave thanks was “His blood” of the new covenant that was poured out for the forgiveness of sin. Some in Christendom (Catholics) believe the bread and the cup actually undergo a transubstantiation into the actual body and blood of Christ… some believe in co-substantiation where the body and blood of Christ spiritually accompany the bread and the cup… and still others (most protestants) believe the bread and cup merely symbolize the body and blood of Christ; that the Lord’s Table essentially is a ceremony of remembrance — which would be my position (cf. 1 Cor 11:24-25). Great men of faith hold all three of these positions — this issue is not deal breaker. I would simply say that the children of Israel every year celebrated “seven feasts” — the purpose of these feasts was to “celebrate and remember what God had done for them.”

27:11 — After Jesus was arrested and taken to Pilate, the governor questioned Him saying, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And Jesus said to him, “It is as you say.” After conferring with the Jewish leaders who insisted on putting Jesus to death, Pilate feared a riot, so he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude and said, “I am innocent of this Man’s blood — the responsibility is completely yours.” And all the people said, “Let His blood be on us and on our children!” The people shouted, “Crucify Him!” And crucify Him they did. The curse that was pronounced against the people of Israel is still upon them to this day (read the horrific account of Jewish history down through the centuries), and will remain so until they knowledge the rejected Jesus as their Messiah-King. The Lord prophesied through the prophet Zechariah, “They will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him…. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem…. And the land will mourn, every family by itself” (cf. Zech 12:10-12). Cross reference the following passages for a greater understanding of road Israel has traveled and the road that is still before them (cf. Zech 2:8-12; 13:1-2; 14:3, 8-9; Mt 23:39; 24:31; Rom 11:11-14, 23-36; Is 11:11-12; Jer 23: 3-8; Jer 31:1-40; 32:37-41; 33:1-26; Ezek 37:21-28).
Mt 27:50 — After Jesus yielded up His spirit on the cross, “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” and the earth shook… and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised… coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.” Now the centurion and those who were keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became “very frightened” (emphatic) and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!” (emphatic). The fact that the “veil was torn from top to bottom” means the humblest believer can now enter God’s presence in prayer and praise at any time… no longer is the Holy of Holies a place where only the High Priest of Israel can enter one day a year for the remission of sin — we now have access to God’s throne at any time. Let us not forget that this privilege was purchased for us at tremendous cost — the blood of the Lord Jesus.

28:16 — After the crucifixion, the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated… and when they saw Him, they worshiped Him. And Jesus spoke to them saying, “All authority (emphatic) has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you (emphatic) always, even to the end of the age.” It is important to remember that “The Great Commission” is not just one of evangelizing (as many tend to believe), it is one of “making disciples and followers of Christ,” which includes both baptizing (evangelism) and teaching (discipleship). The essence of becoming a disciple of Christ is becoming like Him. Without being taught (either through the spoken or written word) there is no discipleship or growth. So the Great Commission goes beyond evangelism; it is not enough to simply make converts and let them fend for themselves — they need to be taught! Incidentally, this appearance by the Lord Jesus is the same as that which is recorded by Mark (Mk 16:15-18) and by Paul (1 Cor 15:6). As the Head of the new creation, Jesus stood before the disciples in His glorified body and issued His Commission — it is “the standing orders for all believers until Jesus returns again.” Jesus concluded His charge to them by promising to be present with them until the consummation of the age — they would not go forth alone or unaided. In all their service and travel, they would know the companionship of the Son of God.

Now, with all of the foregoing in mind, prayerfully consider what God would have you do to help expand His kingdom, and minister to those within it.

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