
a *Grace Notes* course

Life of Christ 300

by Mark Perkins, Pastor
Front Range Bible Church, Denver, Colorado

Lesson 305

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The Remaining Parables

Matthew 13:33-35, “(33) He spoke to them another parable: the kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman after taking hid it into three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened. (34) Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the crowds and apart from parables He spoke nothing to them, (35) so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, ‘I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been hidden since the foundation of the world.’”

Mark 4:33-34, “(33) And He was speaking the word to them with many such parables as they were continuously able to hear. (34) But He was not speaking to them apart from the parable, but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.”

Matthew 13:44-52, “(44) The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure which has been hidden in the field, which a man after finding hid, and from his joy goes and sells all which he has, and buys that field. (45) Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant man seeking fine pearls; (46) and after finding one pearl of great value, after going forth he has sold everything which he had, and he bought it. (47) Again the kingdom of the heavens is like a dragnet which after being cast into the sea and after gathering [fish] of every kind; (48) which after it has been filled, after being dragged up on the beach and after sitting down they gathered the good into a container, but the rotten they threw out. (49) So also it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the evil from the midst of the righteous (50) and cast them into the furnace of the fire; in that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of the teeth. (51) Do you understand all these things?’ They said to Him, ‘Yes.’ (52) But He said to them, ‘For this reason every scribe after becoming a disciple in the kingdom of the heavens is like a man who is the head of a household, who casts out from his treasury new things and old things.’

An outline:

The parable of leaven.

Christ’s strategy for the parables.

As many as the people could hear.

A full explanation to His disciples in private.

The fulfillment of a prophecy.

The parable of the hidden treasure.

The parable of the pearl of great value.

The parable of the dragnet.

The parable.

The explanation of the parable of the dragnet.

Christ’s questioning of His disciples and their brief reply.

The last parable - the parable of the Scribe.

II. The exposition.

The parable of the leaven.

“He spoke to them another parable: the kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman after taking hid it into three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”

The leaven is the point of comparison; not the woman or the meal. The leaven is hidden into three pecks of meal.

ALEUROU is the wheat flour, or meal used in making the bread of the ancient world.

The word peck comes from the Greek SATA, interestingly enough.

The word itself denotes a certain measure of grain equal to about 12 quarts of dry measure. It was a pretty fair amount of grain, if you consider 36 quarts dry measure of meal. This is more than a bushel in our U.S. units of measure.

But its similarity to SATAN cannot be missed. It would be ludicrous and irresponsible to say that the kingdom of the heavens is placed inside of Satan himself. There is nothing personal in this paranomasia, or play on words.

But listen: here is a picture of how the kingdom of God influences the devil’s world.

The kingdom is the leaven, which operates through all believers with momentum, but is especially effective through mature believers.

When the word of God operates in the soul of a believer there is a strong dynamic toward affecting others.

As a growing and mature believer, you may have a profound affect on the world around you.

You may do so through your proficiency and integrity and courage in a job that could change the course of history.

(1) It could be in the area of technology; you may achieve a technological or perhaps a medical breakthrough that causes many lives to change for the better.

(2) It could be in the area of statesmanship; you may achieve diplomatic or legislative significance.

(3) It could be in the military realm. You do not have to be a high ranking officer or NCO to change the course of a battle or a war. God simply has to implement His perfect sense of timing for you as a soldier to change history.

You may do so by saying the right thing in the right way at the right time.

(1) You may be the cause of many becoming mature; you may be the cause of many who come to a belief in Jesus Christ.

(2) You may change the course of history because someone listened to your establishment viewpoint, and decided to stay the course with regard to marriage, family, and nation.

You may do so because God blesses you by association, and so your neighborhood, and your city, and your country might receive blessing because of your dogged determination to advance to spiritual maturity. Job 1:1-2:6 cf. 42:10-17.

(1) Those who love God the most cause magnificent blessing to distribute around them.

(2) Although few will realize it in the human realm, the angelic realm remains entirely informed concerning human affairs and human blessings.

God energizes change through the course of human events. He disciplines and blesses nations in the devil's world, but mainly through the existence and function of believers.

The blessings and disciplines are done through impersonal love, and designed to focus thought on the spiritual issues of a person's life.

The objective of divine intervention in human history and human lives is to change a life or

many lives by making people think about the spiritual issues of their lives.

But they must have influence from others in order to make the change. Someone must provide information so that the change is in fact available.

Christ's strategy for the parables. "And He was speaking the word to them with many such parables as they were able to hear, but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples. So that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been hidden since the foundation of the world.'"

Mark employs the Greek phrase TOIAUTAIS PARABOLOAIS POLLAIS - many such parables.

Christ spoke many parables just like the ones we have been sampling. As a matter of fact, Matthew's gospel makes the record complete.

This is a great example of why more than one gospel writer was an excellent idea on the part of God the Holy Spirit.

Had it been up to Mark, the parables recorded after this point would not have been a part of the canon of Scripture.

Whereas Mark decided to keep the narrative moving, Matthew thought it best to provide a complete chronicle of the information.

Next is the phrase KATHOS EDUNANTO AKOUEIN - just as they were continuously able to hear. This too is an important concept in this phase of Christ's ministry.

The imperfect tense of DUNAMAI shows an ongoing action. Christ wanted them to take in as much as they were continuously able to hear.

This is a stepped up operational pace for the ministry of Christ, and it sets a standard for every ministry in history.

The operational pace of a ministry should have the same objective as here.

Since soul rehabilitation is of paramount importance, and inculcation toward the fullest love for God, and since the means of these great things is the intake and application of God's word

- what is stopping any ministry from emulating this virtuous course?

To His disciples He explained the nature of these parables in private.

They were the ones with a heightened interest in the meaning of the parables. Remember, the crowd was fulfilling the prophesy of Isaiah about hearing and seeing and not understanding.

But His disciples had a deeper interest in the principles of the kingdom, and so they received the full explanation.

Until anyone from the crowd expressed a further interest, they would receive no further explanation.

Perhaps some of the crowd figured out the meanings of the parables for themselves. A parable may be deciphered without too much trouble...

Matthew is quick to point out that Christ's parabolic ministry is the fulfillment of a prophecy from Psalm 78:2: "So that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been hidden since the foundation of the world.'"

Matthew is often motivated to do this very thing, because he has a Jewish readership.

It is Matthew's objective to have his Jewish readers accept that Jesus was their Messiah.

By showing time and again that Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in Christ, Matthew leads them effectively to that conclusion.

With these parables, Christ is revealing things which have been hidden since the foundation of the world.

The kingdom of God is Jesus Christ's direct rule over mankind; it is His millennial kingdom.

There are two policies for that kingdom:

- (1) A spiritual code, which was unveiled in the beatitudes.
- (2) An establishment code, which was unhidden in the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount.

Those policies were conceived by God the Father at the foundation of the world.

(1) Matthew employs the phrase APO KATABOLES KOSMOU in order to do this - literally, 'from the foundation of the world.'

(2) KATABOLES is foundation, and it concentrates entirely upon the original creation of planet earth, some 4.5 billion years ago.

(3) God made this planet for the angels, Job 38:4-11. Long before the advent of man, while God was making this planet for a superior race of creatures, God conceived the plan of the millennial kingdom of His Son.

(4) Long before the fall of Satan, and long before the fall of Adam in the Garden, God wanted His Son to rule this planet in glory.

(5) Although the millennial rule of Christ will serve as the perfect counterpoint to the chaos of Satan's tribulation, it would have brought glory to God's name even without the fall of creatures.

The original context of the 78th Psalm adds further light to our passage.

(1) The Psalm is about the guidance of God even to an unfaithful people. At 72 verses, it is one of the longest of the Psalms.

(2) "(1) Listen, O my people, to my instruction; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, (3) which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us."

(3) But you can see there is a difference, because the Psalm seems to indicate that the information was well known to the people of Israel, while Matthews seems to say that it has lain hidden since the foundation of the world and only just then revealed in Christ.

(4) Verse five of the Psalm tells of the source of the information and thereby gives a clue: "For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children..."

(a) There are two beginnings to the revelation in this Psalm: the first is with Jacob, who became Israel. The second is with the Law, which came through Moses in 1400 BC

(b) These denote the beginning of a new dispensation - the dispensation of Israel.

(c) And here is what you should concentrate on: the information regarding the dispensation of Israel had lain hidden since the foundation of the world until it was revealed in Jacob and in the Law of Moses.

(d) For that reason, it was a parallel to the kingdom doctrines revealed by Jesus Christ.

(5) All dispensation information was conceived by God at the foundation of the world.

(a) It is only at the onset of that dispensation that the information is set forth to the world.

(b) So Matthew is saying that Christ is at the beginning of a brand new dispensation; that He is the Messiah, and that He has brought His kingdom.

The parable of the hidden treasure, Matthew 13:44, "The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure which has been hidden in the field, which a man after finding hid, and from his joy goes and sells all which he has, and buys that field."

Some time ago, a treasure was hidden in a field. Someone comes and finds it, and before he can claim the treasure he must own the property. So he goes and sells all his possessions so that he might buy the field. You have heard this story many times with many different variations.

In Perry Eberhart's classic book, *Treasure Tales of the Rockies* there are more 125 tales of lost mines and treasures centered in the state of Colorado alone.

Some treasure tales are true, a very few are enough to produce hundreds and thousands of stories of lost treasure.

So here is this nervous, nervous man, who finds a treasure which has been hidden in a field. So he hides it again, and then buys the field. Then the treasure is legally his.

Well, now, the kingdom of the heavens is like that treasure.

It is so valuable that it is worth more than everything you have.

And as a matter of fact, many people do give up all they have in order to purchase the field that contains that treasure.

The value of the kingdom of the heavens is beyond all worldly wealth. Consider:

The wilderness temptation of Jesus Christ.

(1) The three temptations of Christ in the wilderness follow the three failures of Israel in their wilderness journey:

(a) They failed the manna test, which was a rejection of the logistical provision of God.

(b) They failed the golden calf test, which was an embracing of idolatry. As a result, Moses broke the tablets of the Law which God had given.

(c) They failed the test of Aaron's rod, which was a rejection of divinely appointed authority.

(2) Christ was tempted after this same pattern:

(a) He was tempted with regard to the stones and the bread: Luke 4:2-4, "And He ate absolutely nothing during those days; and at the concluding of them, He hungered. And the devil said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, speak to this stone that it might become bread.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

· At the end of forty days of eating absolutely nothing, our Lord was very hungry. It was the kind of hunger where all you can think about is food. At forty days without food, even the healthiest of human beings is at the extreme limit of endurance.

· The temptation itself is related to the principle of kenosis; Christ does not have the authority to do this thing apart from the power and timing of the Spirit.

· The devil knows that the Divine Power is available, but that its use would invalidate the purpose of the incarnation. Again and again Satan says this about the stones; this temptation lasted longer than just a moment.

· In the later temptation His Scriptural reply is abbreviated, as though He is at the very end of His endurance, or because it is not necessary to repeat the whole thing.

· This test relates to the logistical test of Israel:

- The Israelites had something to eat every day. Manna was the world's greatest health food. It was the same thing, but it was something.

- Christ had nothing to eat for forty days and forty nights. Therefore, His test was far greater than what they endured. He ate the same thing every day: Nothing.

- Placing the manna inside the ark of the covenant foreshadowed this test of our Lord. It commemorated Christ's victory in the desert, and it looked forward to the redemption of this failure at the cross, as represented by the mercy seat.

- The essence of the temptation had to do with the temptation to use His divine attributes or rely on what God provided His humanity.

- The very reason for the incarnation would have been undermined and destroyed had Christ given in here. The cross and the Christian way of life would have instantly become meaningless.

- Note that Christ quotes from Deuteronomy 8:3.

- The context of this verse is Moses' final exhortation to the children of Israel before their occupation of the promised land.

- All three of Christ's replies will come from this speech.

- These three things denote readiness for the blessings of the land of milk and honey:

- First, there is worship of the one true God and abstinence from idolatry. This is personal love for God.

- Second, there is humble acceptance of the circumstances of your life, good or bad, and acceptance of delegated human authority, good or bad.

- Third, there is a devotion to the word of Truth, and acceptance of God's logistical grace.

- This scripture was originally learned and inculcated by Christ, probably at a very young age.

- At this appropriate time, the Spirit recalled this passage into Christ's spiritual frame of reference, His human spirit. Christ instantly understood the issue.

- Now the issue remained: Would He apply what had been recalled? The answer is of course. He even quotes the passage directly to the devil.

- Deuteronomy 8:1-10, "All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware to give to your forefathers. And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live on bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land where you shall eat food without scarcity, in which you shall not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you."

(b) Luke 4:5-8, "And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"

· There is only one instance of temptation here. The show occurred in one moment of time. Ahem, he did not want Christ to look too closely. Again the used car salesman analogy.

· Christ would be given delegated authority from Satan over all these kingdoms, along with the

glory of them. Let me point out that the glory of the devil's world is only a veneer.

- The enemy did not receive the kingdoms of the world because of meritorious service. He deceived Adam, and received the authority because of Adam's irresponsible sin.

- All of the kingdoms of the world would belong to Christ at the right time, and only when His chosen people would accept Him as the Messiah.

- This particular condition was not yet fulfilled, and in fact the early indicators were not looking good. In other words, this was attacking Christ at a potential weak spot. The greatness of the world made the temptation all the more agonizing.

- That Christ would continue in poverty for the rest of his life is a testimony to his fantastic resolve. Part of this test had to do with timing, and part of with idolatry. It harkens back to the failure of the golden calf.

- Christ's solution to this problem comes from Deuteronomy 6:13. Let's read that passage beginning in verse 10. "Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be satisfied, then watch yourself, lest you forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him, and swear by His name. You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth."

- Note that the blessings of the Promised Land are neither earned nor deserved. Yet they are given freely by God.

- The offer from Satan is something similar, but infinitely less because of the object of worship. The satisfaction that comes from a relationship with God is so great as to add to one's appreciation

and enjoyment of the attendant blessings. In the worship of idols, all the things turn to dust.

- Christ applies the perfect passage for this specific temptation, another great testimony to the work of the Spirit and the level of inculcation that Christ has reached.

(c) Luke 4:9-12, "And he led Him to Jerusalem and stood Him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, bear You up, Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'It is said, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

- Note that in this test the enemy is using Scripture against Christ. It is an oft-used ploy, and it seldom fails. This points out the necessity for a prepared pastor to prepare you.

- The enemy quotes Psalm 91 in the temptation. Verses 11 and 12 are quoted but taken out of context. The whole Psalm goes like this, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. If you make the Most High your dwelling - even the Lord, who is my refuge - then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. 'Because he loves me,' says the Lord, 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him

in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.””

- This Psalm is about trust in God, and how God responds to those who love Him.
- Especially pertinent is the conditional clause of verse 9: “If you make the most high your dwelling” This means that the following verses depend on the fulfillment of this condition.
- Christ could not demand that God send his angels to cushion up his fall... that would be putting God to the test, as what happened in the wilderness at the waters of Meribah.
- This test appears to be about the establishment of Christ's earthly authority. A good miracle in front of thousands of temple worshippers including the most important men in Israel would well establish Christ's authority among the Jews.
- How soon they forget. Christ was only forty days before the object of the triple miracle of His baptism. The heavens split open; the voice of God spoke; the Spirit descended in the form of a dove. Yet this miracle, probably in front of those same leaders who were now below in the temple court, did not convince the people to follow Christ.
- The spiritual gift of miracles would establish Christ's authority at the proper time. This was not that time. The gift of miracles functions under the sovereignty of the Spirit so that He chooses the time the place and the miracle to be performed.
- The devil is trying to promote Christ before God could promote Him. The devil is attempting to foist onto Christ an Aaron's rod that budded scenario. He is attempting to do so by quoting Scripture that sounds right.
- Christ rightfully sorts this one out, and quotes Deuteronomy 6:16. The full passage through verse 19 goes like this: “Do not test the Lord your God as you did at Massah. Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land that the Lord promised on oath to your forefathers, thrusting out all your enemies before you as the Lord said.”

- Again this is a quote from Moses final speech in preparation for the second generation to enter the promised land.

- This time it was done right by Christ. He passed the tests that Israel failed.
- In a completely appropriate way, the three items in the ark of the covenant represent both the failure of Israel and the triumph of Christ.
- Christ not only paid for our sins, but He also produced the righteousness which would be imputed to us at salvation.
- In producing that righteousness Christ established a way of solving problems which He would leave as a heritage for all church age believers.

(3) Christ's wilderness temptations are a reminder that He was offered logistics, prosperity, and success at the compromise of His integrity and relationship with God. This He could not do. But as a result of His faithfulness to God, there is reward.

(4) Philippians 2:5-11, “(5) Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, (6) who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. (8) Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (9) For this also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

(5) Hebrews 12:1-2, “(1) Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

1 Peter 1:7, "in order that your testing of faith, much more valuable than gold (which being refined even through the testing of fire) might be found unto praise and glory and honor in the revelation of Jesus Christ;"

We can categorize the treasure of the kingdom of the heavens in the following way:

Blessings for time:

(1) Spiritual Blessings.

(a) Spiritual blessing means maximum spiritual function and awareness. Spiritual blessing means maximum use of the problem solving devices provided by God for spiritual adulthood.

(b) Your relationship with God is fantastic and is based upon a tremendous confidence that, while you have never seen God, you know Him and understand Him as He has revealed himself in Bible truth.

(c) You have a relationship with self that is honest and virtuous. This means that your ability to evaluate yourself is functioning at its maximum potential. This means that you are able to recognize your own limitations and adapt your life to them.

(d) You have maximum production in Christian service.

(e) Maximum function of your spiritual gift.

(f) You have a fantastic personal sense of destiny, and you are able to related the events of your life to the angelic conflict.

(g) Maximum virtue and God-centered vindication instead of self-righteousness.

(2) Worldly Blessings.

(a) Establishment prosperity includes the blessings of privacy and freedom; the enjoyment of both life and property; protection from crime, reprisal, violence, and vindictiveness from others; contentment under national disaster; and acceptance by one's own peers, whether they like you or not.

(b) Professional prosperity is maximum success or efficiency in a profession, whether law, medicine, engineering, science, military, teaching, law enforcement, athletics, art, music, literature, etc.

(c) Business prosperity, means success in business as an owner or an executive of a large corporation; or where pertinent, success as a salesman, administrator, laborer, etc.

(d) Social prosperity is the possession of loving, faithful, reliable, and stable friends, and maximum enjoyment of your relationships with them. It is the ability to handle all sorts of social situations. Your great happiness and enthusiasm for life is expressed both vocally and in silence with friends.

(e) Mental prosperity is the ability to concentrate; to organize both your thinking and your life; to synthesize, to analyze; mental courage; the function of wisdom in the exercise of the intellect; the development of common sense; and an excellent sense of humor. Mental prosperity includes freedom from the mental sins of fear, worry, and anxiety. The development of normality in life comes from thinking objectively. You will become more observant and aware of others, and therefore not do the things that hurt them. You will have a relaxed mental attitude and a true sense of humor.

(f) Cultural prosperity is maximum capacity for good entertainment; the enjoyment of the best in music, art, literature, drama, history, and whatever your hobbies, from gardening to astronomy.

(g) Health prosperity is given to some mature believers. But if you have violated too many principles of health already, you may not have good health, but you will have the ability to cope with your lack of good health. This prosperity means nervous energy and nervous stability, though not necessarily freedom from pain. You can be in good health and have pain.

(h) Romantic prosperity can mean a wonderful relationship with a member of the opposite sex. It means freedom from mental attitude and verbal sins, which are the areas that destroy romance much more than the obvious overt sins of unfaithfulness and adultery. Romantic prosperity is perpetuated under all circumstances of life.

(3) Blessing by association.

(a) The spiritual periphery refers to those associated with the mature believer in the local church, prayer meeting, prep school, mission board, or in some Christian service organization.

(b) The family periphery refers to those associated with the mature believer as husband, wife, father, mother, children, relatives, and even pets.

(c) The social periphery refers to friends associated with the mature believer.

(d) The geographical periphery refers to those associated with the mature believer in his neighborhood, city, county, state, or nation.

(e) The professional or business periphery refers to those associated with the mature believer in business, in schools, on athletic teams, medical clinics, law firms, law enforcement organizations, engineering firms, banks, corporations, symphony orchestras, and military organizations.

(f) There is blessing by association after death. This is called heritage blessing. Loved ones who are left behind receive the greatest insurance policy which is provided by association with the mature believer after his death. Blessing by association continues after the death of the mature believer; it extends to the next generation, and sometimes to the third generation.

(g) National Impact of the Invisible Hero. The overflow of wisdom from the person in spiritual maturity often lands in the national arena. God has a way of placing mature believers in some rather spectacular places.

- Joseph, Moses, and Daniel are three very good examples of mature believers having national impact.

- In each case, God placed them where they had a direct effect on the Pharaoh or king.

(h) International Impact of the Invisible Hero. While mature believers live in client nations, client nations in time of spiritual prosperity send out missionaries.

- Missionaries evangelize foreigners in their native lands, and set up churches from those gospelizing efforts. Those churches grow and produce mature believers, so that there is now an effective basis

for impact within that country. Because of the missionary, there has been international impact.

- But statesmen and military men and businessmen may all also have impact by interacting with foreigners. You may also have international impact by evangelizing a foreigner on your soil; when they return to their native land, they bring the gospel and the plan of God with them. This was the international impact of Solomon on the Queen of Sheba, and Philip on the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts chapter eight.

(i) Angelic Impact of the Invisible Hero.

- By advancing to the witness stand in the angelic appeal trial, and giving an accurate testimony under demonic cross-examination, the mature believer has wonderful impact in the angelic realm.

- Angelic impact is the greatest category of blessing by association, and is fantastically rewarded in time and eternity.

Blessings for eternity.

(1) Many of the blessings for time may be transferred into eternity. When they are, they are greatly multiplied.

(2) The greatest blessing of eternity is the removal of the veil between the believer and God. 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

(3) And yet there are many more blessings that have to do with recognition: because you have been an invisible hero in this life, God makes you a visible hero in the next. Mature believers attain instant celebrity status in the eternal kingdom.

(a) As a result, they wear crowns and pure white garments; they have statues in the eternal temple and are presented to God by Jesus Christ in a special honors ceremony; they have special privileges to the paradise of God and the tree of life.

(b) And all of these things are eternal and never pass away. You have become a hero forever.

The parable of the pearl of great price, Matthew 13:45-46, " (45) Again, the kingdoms of the

heavens is like a merchant man seeking fine pearls; (46) and after finding one pearl of great value, after going forth he has sold everything which he had, and he bought it.”

This one is remarkably like the last, but is included by Christ in the same speech for emphasis.

One particular note is that the merchant goes to the point of no return; he has sold everything which he had. The perfect tense of PIPRASKO clearly demonstrates that he has irrevocably sold everything of quality in his possession.

The relative pronoun of quality is HOSA. It shows that he has not sold all in his possession but everything of quality. In reality, he has had the ancient equivalent of a garage sale.

The key note of these two parables strikes the same: something valuable must be exchanged for the greater gain. Let's examine the potential sacrifices related to the spiritual life.

Time. It does take a daily investment of time to study the word and pray. Furthermore, it takes time to operate in Christian service.

Sin. Since the realm of sin is forbidden, all matters of sin must be surrendered. In essence you must give up the devil's system in your life.

The laws of Christian behavior.

(1) Christians are called upon to have a higher standard of behavior when they are around other people. Two categories of human beings are affected:

(a) Unbelievers.

(b) Weaker believers.

(2) As ambassadors, we represent the kingdom of heaven to other human beings, who are not in the plan of God, whether believers or unbelievers.

(3) So that no ill might be spoken against our home country, the kingdom of heaven, we are asked to give up certain things while in their presence.

(4) So that no one outside of the plan of God might use our behavior as an excuse to stay outside, we are asked to give up certain things while in their presence.

(5) Although nothing specific is mentioned, anything that is not a sin, and yet may be considered objectionable are to be surrendered. Naturally sin should be avoided.

Loss of esteem in the world's eyes. Being a Christian means enduring ridicule for your faith. Especially during times when Christians have stained their own reputations through degeneracy. In times like these, Christians must endure prejudice.

Lifestyle versus priorities. There are certain legitimate functions of lifestyle that can be distracting to the priorities of the Christian. There are hobbies and recreational pursuits that can distract; there are career paths that are actually destructive to spiritual growth.

Even geographical factors may cause a legitimate distraction.

But in exchange for this, we may pursue a Christ-like life, and leave behind:

Guilt and regret with reference to sin.

Fear and worry from many causes.

The internalization of stress which leads to health and even mental health problems.

Anger and bitterness about your handicaps and difficulties in life.

Injustice, because of the guarantee of vindication which we have received from.

And in exchange for this we gain all of the rewards I have mentioned above. The relationship with God through Jesus Christ is a pearl of great price, but the price is much more than worth it.

The Parable of the Dragnet, Matthew 13:47-50, “(47) Again the kingdom of the heavens is like a dragnet which after being cast into the sea and after gathering [fish] of every kind; (48) which after it has been filled, after being dragged up on the beach and after sitting down they gathered the good into a container, but the rotten they threw out. (49) So also it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the evil from the midst of the righteous (50) and cast them into the furnace of the fire; in that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of the teeth.”

Matthew's employment of the aorist participle gives maximum dramatic effect. All of these participles (casting, gathering, filling, dragging, sitting) lead up to the main verbs, which are gathering and throwing out.

Matthew is repeating what He remembers from Christ's layout of the parable. It is in reality Christ's dramatization. All of the aorist participles are the every day details of the fisherman's life. And remember the setting of these parables - Christ is standing in a boat and preaching to those on shore. This parable is therefore an excellent match to the scene and to the audience.

So the fishermen cast a dragnet on the sea and gather fish of every kind. The net is then full and dragged up on the beach. The fishermen sit down and gather the good fish into a container but the rotten they threw out.

This parable reiterates the truth of the parable of the weeds, the interpretation of which occurs in Matthew 13:36-43.

But here is a strong reminder that there is a judgment at the end of the age, and that we will be responsible for our decisions. This is the flip side to the idea of reward.

Yes, there is reward for those who love God; but here is a strong warning from our Lord - that the unbelievers of the age are cast into the furnace of fire.

This is the end of the millennial kingdom, where all the unbelievers of the millennium are gathered up and judged.

They are cast into the furnace of Fire, where there will be [forever] the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But the righteous enter into eternal bliss with the Father; they will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of the Father.

Imagine the elect angels doing this thing. They have endured the prehistoric angelic conflict and seen billions of years of degeneracy; they have also endured the thousands of years of the angelic appeal trial in human history. They have always stood for what was right, and they are by the side of God always.

(1) But there is significance here; the angels have to do this, and it is not done directly by God.

(2) At first thought it seems a grim and even terrible duty. But whenever God gives a responsibility it is so that His creatures can gain an appreciation for Him. The angelic creatures will at this moment gain a great lesson in divine responsibility for creatures.

(3) The elect angels will know many of these unbelievers by name and by reputation. Perhaps they participated in their lives in some direct manner. There is no pleasure in this duty; the casting away represents no failure on the part of God, but rather the end result of a lifetime of negative volition. But God is not willing that any should perish, and is not pleased with joy when they do.

(4) It pleases God to do His duty, even when that duty is terrible. Our execution of criminals under the principle of capital punishment is the closest that we human beings will ever come to this responsibility.

(5) This also connects the judgment of humanity with the angelic conflict, and points to the stark reality of that conflict.

The Final Parable, Matthew 13:51-52, "(51) Do you understand all these things?' They said to Him, 'Yes.' (52) But He said to them, 'For this reason every scribe after becoming a disciple in the kingdom of the heavens is like a man who is the head of a household, who casts out from his treasury new things and old things.'"

Christ is very earnest to make His disciples understand these things, and in verse 51 He double checks their understanding.

He requires honesty about their spiritual growth, so that He can assess whether He needs to communicate more information on the subject of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The disciples evaluate themselves and all say that they know the information.

But their reply is so laconic that it seems a little suspicious. They use the one word answer NAI - 'Yes.' Like a teenager's one word answer, this could mean trouble. They understand, but they

have no great impulse to discuss the information. Hmm.

Strengthening this suspicion is Matthew's employment of the adversative conjunction DE. Since this immediately follows the disciples' answer, it seems that Christ is aiming this last parable at them and specifically their too quick and too short reply.

This parable concentrates on the Scribes; perhaps there were a few present in the small circle who listened to these parables.

A scribe who becomes a disciple is like the head of a household, an OIKODESPOTE. This head of the household is an ANTHROPOS, in contrast with Matthew 13:27, where the head of the household is the Son of Man, Jesus Christ (as interpreted in verse 37).

The OIKODESPOTE is the owner and ruler of the house. Although we have developed a negative way of thinking about a despot, that is not necessarily included in the original.

The owner of the house goes through his treasury, and casts out new things and old things. He is getting rid of everything. Perhaps if you supplant the word 'basement' or perhaps 'attic' for the word treasury, you will have a better picture of the idea.

10. The home owner just wants the attic or basement or storage area clean. This is human nature; suddenly it does not matter whether the thing in there is new or old; it MUST go! Even new things of value are tossed out for the sake of cleanliness.

11. Well now this picture describes the repentant scribe just right, and indeed any repentant person coming from a legalistic background.

12. In cleaning the attic of their soul, they are prone to discard the valuable things of old. Think of a moral scribe who casts out his morality as a part of the house cleaning of repentance; think of an expert in the Law of Moses who tosses out his knowledge of the Scriptures. Of course there are many valuable pieces of knowledge that the Scribe could safely retain as parts of his every day spiritual life.

13. The Scribe would need to switch his motivation, and make a few rearrangements with regard to doctrine; he would need to revitalize his spiritual walk so that he communicated to God much more often. But throw everything out? Not necessary; even foolhardy.

14. The Gentile, the one who is locked into the lascivious lawlessness side of the spiritual realm and who has little or no prior knowledge of God, this one must throw out much more.

15. Now how is this parable the response to Christ's disciples too quick reply to His question? They have responded too quickly, perhaps, for His taste, and He is unsure of the honesty of their statement.

He is obviously looking at some former Scribes and legalists as He makes this statement.

And this reply is like saying, "You think you know everything but you don't."

The former Scribes in this audience are prone to have thrown all their knowledge out of the attic of their brains. Therefore if they say they have understood anything, it is a danger that they have understood nothing. Christ wants them to think again.

III. A Summary of the Parables and Their Meaning.

The parable of the seeds. "An evangelist goes out to evangelize. Sometimes the gospel goes to those who are not interested, and refuse to perceive the information beyond the point of polite listening, if that. Soon they have forgotten they ever heard it, and refuse to listen any more. Sometimes the gospel goes to someone who immediately receives it with joy, but refuses to grow; persecution comes on account of their faith, and God allows the persecution because they have had a fair amount of time in which to prepare for it. Their persecution destroys their faith, and they are Christians who turn out to have no effect on the world. Sometimes the gospel goes to those who receive it and even grow in the initial phase of their walk with God. But later they become distracted by the many cares of this world, and so they fall away from their relationship with God. And then there are those few who take their faith

seriously and keep their priorities straight; these are the ones who fulfill the plan of God, and as mature believers have a tremendous impact on the world around them. Through them many come to believe and advance.

The parable of the growth of the seed. As givers of the gospel we do not have to know all of the details of someone's response. We are the workers, and we must do our duty unto God. The details of why one believes and another creates excuses should not matter to us. Don't get involved in excuses; just give the information.

The parable of the weeds. It is never the place of the gospel giver to judge the one who rejects. That will always remain the business of Jesus Christ, who is the only qualified judge for all men. We are never to cast final judgment over anyone's life as long as they are alive, for that life represents opportunity.

The parable of the mustard seed. From that obscure day when we receive the gospel comes great things. The gospel grows inside of us through the daily pursuit of the word, so that our relationship with God becomes very powerful. And our lives become restful places for many who are tired from living in the devil's world. They gravitate to us because of our love for God, and because we are a shady rest to them. From this powerful relationship with God comes much impact on the weary and heavy-laden of this world.

The parable of the leavened bread. We are in this world to give impact. It is the devil's world, but we have the possibility of changing history through the gospel. That is God's intent through our lives. The presence of even one mature believer can make a tremendous difference in the lives of many.

The parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price. We are asked to sacrifice much for the sake of our everyday walks with God. It is worth every bit of sacrifice that we have to offer, for what we have gained in salvation and what we will gain in eternal reward makes it worth it.

The parable of the dragnet. Be sober in regard to your spiritual walk, for you, too, will undergo judgment. The consequences of that judgment may be grave indeed.

The parable of the homeowner. Be careful that you do not throw out good things with bad when you enter the plan of God. As a believer from a legalistic background you may be tempted to throw out the good things from your heritage, but it is wrong to do so.

Calming the Storm

Matthew 13:53: "And it came about when Jesus finished these parables, He left there.

Matthew 8:18: Now Jesus, after seeing the crowds around Him gave orders to depart for the other side.

Matthew 8:23-27: (23) And after embarking with Him into the boat, the disciples followed Him. (24) And behold! A great shaking (SEISMOS) occurred on the sea, so as to swamp the boat by the waves, but He Himself was sleeping. (25) and after coming to Him, they woke Him saying, 'Lord, save! We are perishing!' (26) And He says to them, 'Why are you cowardly, little faiths?' Then after rising He rebuked the winds and the sea and there came about a great calm. (27) Now the men marveled, saying, 'What sort of man is He that the winds and the sea obey Him?'

Mark 4:35-41, "(35) And He says to them on that day, after evening had come, 'Let us pass through [the sea] unto the other side.' (36) And after leaving the crowd they [the fishermen] took Him along since He was [already] in the boat, and other boats were with it. (37) and there came about a great gale of wind and the waves were cast over into the boat, so as to almost fill the boat. (38) And He Himself was in the stern upon the pillow sleeping. And they woke Him and they said to Him, 'Teacher, is it not a concern for You that we are perishing?' (39) And after being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Hush, be silenced.' and the wind abated and there came a great calm. (40) And He said to them, 'Why are you cowards? Do none of you have faith?' (41) And they were afraid with great fear and were

saying to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?’”

Luke 8:22-25, “(22) And it came about in one of those days that He and His disciples entered a boat and said to them, ‘Let us go over to the other side of the lake.’ And they were launched out. (23) Now as they were sailing He fell asleep... [ominous musical theme] And a gale force wind came down into the lake and were continually being swamped and continually in danger. (24) And after coming [to Him] they roused Him saying, ‘Stand up, stand up, we are perishing!’ And after waking up He rebuked the wind and the wave of the water; and they stopped and it became calm. (25) And He said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’ And after being afraid they marveled saying to one another, ‘Who then is this man that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?’”

Outline.

The circumstances regarding their departure for the far side of the Sea of Galilee.

The pressure of the crowds.

The convenience of the boat.

The event of the storm.

The advent and danger of the storm.

Christ’s disposition during the storm.

The disciple’s reaction to the storm and rousing of Christ.

Christ’s response to their reaction.

The calm.

Christ’s rebuke of the disciples.

The fear of the disciples and their doubts.

Exposition.

Introduction.

This storm represents a great confused jumble of thoughts and ideas coming from three different sources, two of whom represent eyewitnesses and a third who interviewed other eyewitnesses for his story.

There is further confusion because Matthew has rearranged his material and departed from the chronological arrangement of the other gospels.

Because of this, his gospel records the events in three different places and from two different chapters. It is only because of the work of Mark and Luke that we can draw chronological order from the chaos of Matthew’s arrangement efforts.

In the midst of a crisis, even people who were only a few feet from the others may differ in the order of events and even the substance of the points of the crisis. The three gospels have some of those confusing elements, but through the miracle of inspiration, you can see that they harmonize into a cohesive account.

We can be thankful for the harmony, because it reveals the big picture, an advantage that a single gospel would not have.

A related principle is that every crime is a crisis, and the two-eyewitness system is necessary because of the frailty of human perception in the midst of the many confusing events of a crisis.

The circumstances regarding their departure for the far side of the Sea of Galilee.

The pressure of the crowds.

Christ finished His parables, from Matthew 13:53, “And it came about when Jesus finished these parables, He left there.” As you may recall, He gave these parables from a fishing boat just off the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The crowds were arrayed on the beach before Him. He finished His parables, and had to make a decision on what to do next.

Christ surveyed the crowds before Him, and determined that it would be best to leave for the other side, Matthew 8:18, “Now Jesus, after seeing the crowds around Him gave orders to depart for the other side.”

His exact words come from Mark 4:35, “And He says to them on that day, after evening had come, ‘Let us pass through [the sea] unto the other side.’”

(1) Our Lord gave a polite command in the form of the hortatory subjunctive verb *DIETHOMEN*.

(2) With this verb, Jesus Christ exhorted His disciples to undertake this course of action. He wanted very much to do this.

(a) But you should know that this does not represent a weakness or cowardice on the part of Christ.

(b) Christ did not make decisions based on weakness. He was not afraid of the crowd, nor was He tired of the crowd; they were simply in the way of what He wanted to do.

(3) Luke's gospel confirms the hortatory subjunctive in 8:22, "And it came about in one of those days that He and His disciples entered a boat and said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake.' And they were launched out."

The convenience of the boat.

In Mark's gospel there is a little mystery that tempts us to conclude that there is a contradiction. Verse 36 says, "And after leaving the crowd they [the fishermen] took Him along since He was [already] in the boat, and other boats were with it."

The verb PARALAMBANO means to take someone along with you on a journey of some sort. If you assume that the disciples have said this, then it appears that they are leaving at their initiative and not Christ's.

But the subject of the verb is not made clear by Mark - he left it out, because he thought it would be obvious to the readers. And indeed it should be - the owners of the boats are the obvious subjects of the verb.

The owners of the boats perceived that Christ was already in the boat, and that they were already going to the other side of the Sea, and so they decided to take Him along.

With this convenience at hand, the disciples then embarked into the boat and followed Him, Matthew 8:23.

The event of the storm.

The advent and danger of the storm.

As they were sailing, Christ fell asleep, Luke 8:23.

(1) Luke 8:23 has a premonitory genitive absolute. Here the genitive absolute functions as an ominous musical theme to tell us that something terrible is about to happen. PLEONTON DE AUTON APHUPNOSEN.

(2) Premonitory means that the grammatical structure functions as a premonition for the readers, warning them that in spite of the tranquility of the present scene, there is danger about. This was a common construction employed by Luke before the Pharisees and the Scribes would enter the scene.

Then a storm suddenly comes up, and remember, it was night. Weathering a terrible storm at night in a sailing vessel can be a terrifying experience.

Matthew 8:24 describes the surprising nature of the storm with a single word: IDOU. This was the Greek word which expressed surprise. It is translated 'Behold.'

Luke identifies the source of the wind as coming down onto the lake in verse 23 of the eighth chapter of his gospel. The verb KATABAINO means 'descend.' The wind swept down from the hills around the lake.

The wind itself was a great gale.

(1) Mark and Luke agree with reference to vocabulary: it is a LAILAPS ANEMOU in Luke, and a LAILAPS MEGALE ANEMOU in Mark. The LAILAPS is a gale. It would be mistaken to label this a hurricane or a tornado since neither of those phenomena occur in the region. It was a great gale of wind.

(2) Matthew says a great shaking occurred. Peter and Luke were used to boats, and they both knew how to describe this phenomenon with the correct vocabulary. Here Matthew identifies himself as a landlubber, because he employs the word SEISMOS to describe his own experience on the boat. SEISMOS means 'earthquake' in the Greek. Matthew experiences an earthquake at sea - of sorts. He has ridden out an earthquake before, and this storm at sea is the closest thing to that experience.

All three gospel writers agree that the boat was on the verge of being swamped by the waves of the sea. The waves were coming over the rail of the boat, and causing it to founder. Luke 8:23 adds: "[those in the boat] were continually in danger." The verb EKINDUNEUON is in the imperfect tense, portraying a past action in a continual state.

They were in a continual state of physical danger from the storm. The danger was real.

During the winter months on the Sea of Galilee, the owners of small fishing vessels did not often go very far out on the water. The storms could muster quickly and be quite deadly. There was a certain amount of lore regarding these storms and the men who had been lost in them.

Christ's disposition during the storm.

But Christ had fallen asleep, and even during the storm He remained asleep.

Christ was also a landlubber. Remember that He was a carpenter from the Galilean hill country to the west. He would not have been used to the boats at all, and yet He is completely relaxed during this calamity. Even with the boat rocking and the waves passing over the rails and swamping the boat, He was still asleep.

Mark records in 4:38 that Christ was in the stern. The preposition EN goes beyond a simple riding function as we understand it. Often in English in the stern means on the stern. Here it means in the stern in a more literal sense. There must have been a small cabin, or at least an overhang. From archaeology we know that a typical boat on the sea of Galilee during the time was about 27 feet in length. Hardly a large boat, but certainly enough length to accommodate a small cabin.

So there is Christ in the boat, and it is rocking and swaying violently, but His head is on a pillow or cushion, and He is still fast asleep.

The disciple's reaction to the storm and rousing of Christ.

Apparently, the disciples saw the situation as hopeless, and so they went back to the cabin or overhang in the stern of the boat.

There are three versions to what the disciples actually said:

(1) Matthew: "Lord, save! We are perishing!"

(2) Mark: "Teacher, is it not a concern for You that we are perishing?"

(a) This is arguably a funny thing to say, since it seems so dignified.

(b) Consider that the ultimate source is Peter, and he was easily the most excitable of all the disciples, this is interesting.

(c) Were it not for the fact that we know this to be inspired, we would question its veracity.

(d) But someone among them had a cool head.

(3) Luke: "Stand up, stand up, we are perishing!"

I would say that since all three are equally true, the scene plays like this: the disciples go in and rouse Christ; as He wakes, at least three of them blurt out these things at the same time. You can only imagine the confusion that was part of this scene.

Christ's response to their reaction.

Christ first has words for the disciples, "Why are you cowardly, little faiths."

(1) DEILOI is the first of the two descriptive terms that Christ inveighs against the disciples. It is the coward. The disciples are afraid that they might die, and this has affected their thinking.

(2) OLIGOPISTOI is the second. It is a derisive term that is literally translated 'little faith.' You should perceive this as an almost child-like word employed in a taunt. Christ is prodding His disciples with this word.

(a) This word also occurs in Matthew 6:30, "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you, little faith?"

(b) And again in Matthew 14:31, where Peter doubts as he is attempting to walk on the water like Christ - "Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, 'Little faith, why did you doubt?'"

(3) So you can imagine that this is in the middle of a great crisis and the boat is about to sink, and the storm is roaring and the boat is shaking, and the disciples are shouting altogether at Christ... and Christ takes time to rebuke His disciples for their lack of faith.

And then Christ has words for the storm. He rises then rebukes the storm.

(1) The verb is EPITIMAO, and it means to speak words harshly; to go beyond an honorable mode of speaking.

(2) The actual words that Christ spoke are contained only Mark's gospel, chapter four and verse 39: SIOPA, PEPHIMOSO. They are really quite close in meaning.

(a) The first is almost always spoken to a person, and it is designed to get them to stop talking. The present imperative here commands the person to stop talking, and to stay silent continuously.

(b) The second comes from PHIMOO, but is a command to a third party to silence a different person who is talking out of place. This is the perfect imperative, which is very powerful, and essentially comes to mean, 'stop forever.'

(c) The first is Christ talking to the storm like the storm is a person. The second is Christ commanding a third person to silence the storm. Herein lies some theological trivia.

· Storms can be the domain of God, if He chooses to intervene with testing by means of a storm.

- Listen to Psalm 148:8, "Fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word."

- Also Isaiah 28:2 has something to say, "Behold, the Lord has a strong and mighty agent; as a storm of hail, a tempest of destruction, like a storm of might overflowing waters, He has cast it down to the earth with his hand."

- Revelation 7:1 reveals that angels are the agents of the storm, "After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree."

· God also provides protection in the midst of the storm.

- Isaiah 4:6, There will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain."

- Isaiah 25:4 also testifies, "For You have been a defense for the helpless, a defense for the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a rain storm against a wall."

· But take note: this planet is the devil's world; the enemy of all that is good may cause harm through a storm. Listen to these passages:

- Job 1:12, "Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.' So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord."

- And now examine Job 1:18-19, "(18) While he was still speaking (the messenger to Job), another also came and said, 'Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, (19) and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'"

· So you can perceive that the weather on our planet is much more than just a system of random winds and precipitation; it is often bent to a purpose by angels, both fallen and elect. It is no wonder, then, that it is so difficult to be a weather man!

· Our Lord was cognizant of these facts, because He was a supreme expert on Old Testament doctrines. Based on this knowledge, Jesus Christ could sleep through a storm.

· The command was first for the benefit of the disciples - Christ was talking to the storm as though it were a person.

· And then the second command is directly to the elect angels in charge of the storm.

· This storm was certainly present for a spiritual reason, and the disciples, being ignorant of Old Testament doctrine, failed to understand that.

(d) This was a prayer; and commands in prayers are not all that uncommon.

· Consider the Lord's prayer, which has several commands.

· "Give us today our logistical bread..." This contains the aorist imperative of the verb DIDOMI. And this is how we are supposed to pray. In prayer you may command God.

· "Forgive us our trespasses..." This also has an aorist imperative, this time from APHIEMI.

As a result, a great calm came over the waters. Mark describes the happening with the verb GINOMAI, which tells us that the calm appeared out of nowhere (but we know the reason) What a tremendous contrast! First the storm and then the calm. No wonder it is described as a great calm. So there they were on the suddenly glassy sea, without a whisper of wind. The disciples would have been standing in front of Christ, bedraggled and dripping wet, and really appearing quite silly in sight of the circumstances.

The calm.

Christ's rebuke of the disciples.

Before the disciples could say "Holy Mackerel" or some other appropriate statement of utter surprise, Christ speaks.

He says, "Why are you cowards? Do none of you have faith?"

This is an appropriate reiteration of the statement of only moments before. So Christ says it while the storm is raging, then He calms the storm, and then He says it again in the silence. This was certainly a calculated strategy. How truly effective it must have been! What impact those words must have had!

The rebuke strikes at the faith of the disciples.

(1) Remember that faith is based on truth; you need information on which to place your faith, before you can exercise it.

(2) Had the disciples understood the principle of the storm, they would have been able to relax and sleep under the stern shelter with Christ.

(3) And this faith is supposed to replace fear. The juxtaposition of fear and faith shows that faith casts out fear.

(4) 1 John 4:18 says it in another way, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love."

(5) We should conclude then, that love contains faith; that is, love is a complex of truth in the soul. Metabolized truth directed toward God in a personal way. Our personal love from God is only developed through our study of the truth.

(6) 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 implies that love is the application of all truth in the context of personal love for God, "(1) If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. (2) If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. (3) And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."

But this rebuke bears no immediate results...

The fear of the disciples and their doubts.

The disciples failed to understand this prayer of Christ's.

They marveled, according to Matthew 8:27. The verb is THAUMAZO, and it means to consider something with a mental attitude of awe. Something has occurred here that gave the disciples an appreciation of awesome power at work.

Mark puts it a different way with his gospel; He says, EPHOBETHESAN PHOBON MEGAN, 'they were afraid with great fear.'

(1) This tells us immediately that they were failing with regard to faith and love, because faith and love drive out fear. Their fear was based on ignorance and failed application.

(2) Christ's exhortation went right over their heads, and the fear of the storm was transferred to a fear of Christ Himself, who to them had commanded the storm.

(3) Christ in reality had placed the situation in the Father's hands with great confidence, and the elect weather angels took care of the rest.

(4) Now the disciples ignorance about the storm has been compounded by their ignorance of Christ.

They say, "Who is this, then, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

(1) It is as if they no longer know Christ; as if this incident has confused them about Him completely.

(2) But something does not settle well with this conclusion: the disciples had already witnessed many miracles from Christ.

(a) He had healed and done miracles.

(b) He had even cast out demons, demonstrating His authority through the Spirit over them.

(c) So you have to ask, ‘What is the big deal about another miracle?’ Indeed, had they forgotten their own wilderness history? Wasn’t there a supernatural pillar of cloud guiding Israel every day on their way through the desert journey?

(d) There was. So this should be no surprise and certainly no cause for fear.

Some additional thoughts on application.

We do not have the authority to command angels. But we certainly have authority in prayer to call upon God, and to command Him in matters that we are certain.

Christ called upon God here; and God commanded His angels to stop the wind and the storm.

Christ in the state of kenosis could not employ His deity to stop the storm Himself. That would have been a breach of integrity with regard to the rules of the incarnation.

It is not we who command the weather angels. Rather, it is our responsibility to put things in the Lord’s hands.

When the inclement weather comes your way, you must remember that there is one of two possibilities:

It is your time to go home to heaven.

God will protect you through the storm.
