

Introduction: It is so important to grasp the big picture when it comes to our study of the Gospels. For example, while it is true that Jesus teaches *us personal lessons about human life*, He is concerned with more than meeting *our needs*. He also reveals to us the glory of the Kingdom of God, and the awesome character of His Father! To put it another way, *even before we learn to enjoy the personal benefits of salvation*, we are to learn to *glorify God just for who He is!* Have you ever thought of the greatness of God in this way? The main goal of our lives is to, “Glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” We glorify Him by worshipping Him for who He is – and not just for what He does for us! Our God is the Holy Creator and Sustainer of all things – and not just a Santa Claus figure!

Let us therefore start this week’s notes with this prayer: *“Lord Jesus, please rule over every aspect of our lives – including our relationships; our thought-life; our priorities and even our feelings. We would not trust ourselves to be in charge of our existence for even one day. Please keep your hand on us and teach us to love your Father as you do. Please enable us more and more to ask Him that He would glorify His Name in our lives. In your Name, Jesus, Amen.”*

Monday: read Luke 11:1-28. Jesus’ enemies were hateful enough to discredit His miracles as done by Satan’s power. “He casts out demons by Satan” is their claim (Luke 11:15). Jesus rejects such a blasphemous charge in two ways:

- 1) In teaching the disciples the Lord’s prayer (Luke 11:1-4), He claims that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are exalted when He casts out demons. God’s Name is to be “hallowed” in all His miracles. How could that happen if He used Satan’s power? *More than that*, how would Satan ever send Jesus to destroy his own evil kingdom? A kingdom divided against itself will not stand (Luke 11:17-18).
- 2) Instead of casting out demons by the power of Satan, which is illogical, Jesus claims that His exorcisms were proof that the Kingdom of God has arrived and that the “finger of God” is active through Him – see Luke 11:20.

This phrase, “finger of God” is interesting. When Pharaoh’s magicians were unable to imitate Moses’ miraculous creation of gnats in the third plague, (Exodus 8:16-19), they declared to Pharaoh that Moses’ plague of gnats was proof that God was with this prophet. “The finger of God” was with Moses to attest that the miracles he did in God’s name were real. In the same way, Jesus silences His accusers by showing that His exorcisms were real proof that God alone has power over Satan, and that this power was wielded by His Son, Jesus Christ.

Prayer: “Lord Jesus, thank you that you have real power over the evil one. Through your miracles, you showed that you alone wield the finger of God in this world. By your exorcisms, you showed that not even Satan himself could oppose you. You are the “strong man” who enters Satan’s centers of power and claim lost sinners like us for your salvation. By your resurrection from the dead, you destroyed Satan’s power over death – Hebrews 2:14-15. Give us grace to trust your power to defend us from all your and our enemies.

Most of all, help us to know that “all who belong to Christ have the Spirit of Christ” (Romans 8:9). Thank you, Jesus, for giving each one that believes in you the Holy Spirit forever! We are safe from the terrible end of the religious person who does not have Christ – Satan can never re-enter our lives to claim the home he left – because Christ is there already, there is no room for Satan to regain his old place! Amen! Hallelujah!

Tuesday: read Luke 11:29-32. Jesus was never swayed by the fickle popularity which the crowds showed Him (Luke 11:29). Because they would not believe in His power over sin and death by acknowledging His resurrection from the dead, (after three days in the ground), they were worse off than the city of Nineveh, which at least believed in the message of the prophet Jonah when he returned from the dead after three days in the whale (Luke 11:29-32). But now one greater than Jonah has arrived in the person of Jesus Christ! How shocking that the crowds will not listen to Him! But that is the measure of our blindness until the Holy Spirit opens our eyes: we will not listen to someone who rises from the dead – even if it is the very Son of God who speaks! Have mercy on us, Lord Jesus! Send your Spirit to make us listen to you!

Prayer: *“Lord Jesus, please give us the assurance that all your words and deeds in your Father’s Name were real miracles performed so that we might believe in you. Give us the assurance of real, listening faith in you. Help us to acknowledge the years we wasted when we would not listen. But most of all, help us to believe that, in the end, you will work all things out for our good (Romans 8:28). Amen.”*

Wednesday: read Luke 11:33-36. One of the great facts to rejoice in concerning *how* Jesus saves us is knowing *how much more He is than a powerful strong man*. Yes, in Luke 11:21-22, Christ shows power over Satan and saves us from bondage to this evil enemy. But what good would it be for Christ to outwardly save our bodies while leaving us with dark, benighted souls? The good news is that, when Christ saves us *out of* the kingdom of darkness, He also, over a lifetime, takes the darkness out of our *souls* as well! The new spiritual condition of our lives, when Jesus comes in, is that He makes us children of the light, not of darkness. I love the way Colossians 1:12-14 puts it – words which all of us would do well to carry around in our pocket on an index card, until these words are written on our hearts and minds:

Give thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Thursday: read Luke 12:1-12. We skim over the last half of Luke 11, since it is summed up by Jesus’ warning against the Pharisees’ and scribes’ hypocrisy in Luke 12:1. These enemies of Christ never change, even though Christ earnestly condemns them with multiple “Woes” in Luke 11:38-44.

But Jesus does not stay focused on His foes. Instead, He reassures His disciples about the precise care of the Father, (who counts even the hairs of their head – Luke 12:7), as well as the sure help of the Spirit, as He promises that they will be given words to speak when they are put on trial for their faith (Luke 12:11-12).

Reflect and Pray: Use this hymn about the Holy Spirit’s help and support of every child of God as your prayer today, (# 335 in our Red Trinity):

Gracious Spirit, dwell with me:
I myself would gracious be;
and with words that help and heal
would thy life in mine reveal;
and with actions bold and meek
would for Christ my Savior speak.

Truthful Spirit, dwell with me:
I myself would truthful be;
and with wisdom kind and clear
let Thy life in mine appear;
and with actions brotherly
speak my Lord’s sincerity.

Mighty Spirit, dwell with me:
I myself would mighty be;
mighty so as to prevail,
where unaided man must fail;
ever by a mighty hope,
pressing on and bearing up.

Holy Spirit, dwell with me:
I myself would holy be;
separate from sin, I would
choose and cherish all things good,
and whatever I can be
give to him who gave me thee!

Friday: read Luke 12:8-10 and Mark 3:28-30: We return soberly to one of the most difficult of New Testament passages, dealing with the unforgiveable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. We find Christ's warning against this sin in Luke 12:10, as well as in the other Gospels. The key parallel to help us understand what Jesus is warning about is in Mark 3:28-30:

Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. *Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.* (KJV)

Notice how Jesus identifies such unforgiveable blasphemy clearly in verse 30: It is because they said of Him, "He has an unclean spirit" that they sinned without hope of forgiveness. In other words, God will not forgive those who ascribe Christ's miracles to the indwelling power of Satan. To call Christ's *ministry* the work and product of Satanic activity is unforgiveable because it rejects in a final way the fulness of the Spirit of God with which Christ carried out His saving work.

Let this simple description of such an enormous sin set your mind at ease. No one who believes that *God* so loved the world as to send His only-begotten Son can fall into this sin. It is only those who believe Christ's mission to be *Satanic*; His motive for becoming man to be *evil* and His commitment to biblical truth to be a *lie* – They and they alone will not find forgiveness.

Meditate and Pray: It is heartbreaking for believers to sin against the deep love of God. Any of the sins listed in Scripture, including blasphemy, are almost unthinkable – until we see Peter deny Christ three times. But how reassuring that *there is no sin* that can separate those who believe in Christ's mission from His eternal love for them!