

RELIGION

Scripture of the Week

Matthew, Chapter 7

Insight On The Word: Winners and Losers: The Challenge of Following Jesus

BY MICHAEL LINDSEY
Dean of North Portland Bible College

The Bible text for next week's Sunday School lesson is Mark 6:1-13. We encourage you to study this Scripture before you read these comments. And then join with a Sunday School class in your local church to learn more about Jesus, the mighty Son of God.

The children at our church often sing "My God is so great, and so strong and so mighty, There's nothing my God cannot do!" But in today's Scripture, we find something our Lord Jesus could not do: "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them" (6:5). How could it be, that Jesus, with all the power of the Father at his disposal, found Himself so limited?

The answer is not hard to discover. In this case, Jesus and his disciples returned from the Sea of Galilee, where most of his ministry had been taking place, to his own hometown. Nazareth was the city in which Mary and Joseph raised him, though Mark does not name it here. Despite his birth in Bethlehem and his ministry center at Capernaum, the Lord was known throughout his earthly life as "Jesus of Nazareth."

Nazareth was a small town in the hill country of Lower Galilee, overlooking the main caravan route to the Mediterranean. Other larger and more important cities of Galilee are ignored by the Gospel accounts—cities like Sepphoris, Megiddo, and Tiberias, centers of trade and government, cities with strong cultural ties to both the Jews and the Greeks. But Nazareth, the childhood home of the Christ, has become far better known than any of those cities.

Once again, when the Sabbath came, Jesus and his disciples attended the synagogue services and Jesus was given permission to teach there. This was a common courtesy to visiting teachers (one that Paul later exploited in his missionary journeys). And in Nazareth, as in other cities, the people were "astonished" at his teaching (6:2; cf. 1:22, 27), because Jesus taught as one having authority in himself, not one who had to

rely on the authority of others.

The difference in Nazareth becomes apparent in our text. The people of Nazareth recognized Jesus as a local boy, a carpenter. They knew his mother and brothers and sisters very well. Since they do not mention Joseph, he may have been dead by this time. But it is very possible that the title "son of Mary" was meant as an insult, implying that he was an illegitimate child, conceived prior to Joseph and Mary's wedding.

In any case, the people of Nazareth thought they knew Jesus really well, and couldn't accept the idea that he was now some great religious teacher. They heard that he did miracles, and they could hear for themselves his wonderful teaching. I have no idea how they rationalized the evidence they could see, and the reports from Capernaum, but they "were offended" by him. This word in the original, *skandalizomai*, literally means to stumble over something. In regard to a person, it means to be so offended or repelled that one rejects that person's character completely (hence our English word "scandal"). In their case, the Lord's proverb about "a prophet without honor" holds true, as well as the other proverb in our tongue, "familiarity breeds contempt."

Jesus used this to teach the people, especially the disciples, a solemn truth. No amount of knowledge about Jesus Christ can substitute for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. If a person only has a head knowledge of Jesus, and of the Bible, the wonderful truths and the promise of eternal life will become boring or silly or childish in his mind.

Many of the young adults in our community today have a long history of Sunday School and church and revival meetings, but they are still living lives of violence and substance abuse and sexual immorality. Have they forgotten all they've learned? I doubt it. But it has never been taken to heart; there was never a mature decision to go all the way with Jesus. And as a result, many today "stumble" over Jesus. Despite their early training, their youthful decisions at the altar, or even baptism, they are still living the worldly life, separated from

God and his truth, and very likely they are still on the "broad way that leads to destruction" (Matt. 6:13-14).

Is that where you are today? Let me assure you, that saying a prayer every night or every morning does not give you license to sin all the day long. If you're serious about living for Jesus, you will strive to show love and respect to all humanity, and to live a life of personal purity. And you will also have the satisfaction and joy of knowing Jesus personally, through Bible study and prayer. It's no use talking about obeying the voice of the Lord, if your life is filled with the discordant sounds of sin and selfishness; you won't be able to hear what the Savior is saying!

But if you accept the challenge to live for Jesus, you will have peace of heart in the midst of trials, and a sense of purpose that will make the trials worthwhile. For the early disciples, the challenge was to go out in pairs and tell everyone in the smaller villages about the gospel (March 6:6-7). The excitement came as they would use Jesus' power to cast out demons, and to heal the sick (read also Luke 10:17-20).

They went out simply clothed and outfitted, but they accomplished much good among the people, and they taught the message they had received from the Lord. I believe that all too many Christians in our churches are missing the voice of the Lord, calling them to outreach ministries locally, nationally, and to other peoples around the world. And as a result, we are missing the greatest joy and blessing that God can offer us, in this life.

Jesus sent out the Twelve, and later the Seventy (Luke 10), on specific missions. To the church today Jesus has given a Great Commission, to make disciples of every people group in the world (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). And if you are a believer, and you're open to God's leading, he will have an exciting, challenging mission for you, as part of that Great Commission.

So get right with the Lord, get prepared, and listen carefully. The joy of serving Jesus is worth whatever it costs. Don't miss out!

PRAYER

Dear Lord
Hear us as we pray!
There are many
who need you this day.
But more than that
our Master and Friend,
Be a shield
around us each day.
Protect us
from the fiery darts
we pray.
In the Holy and
Precious name of Jesus.
Amen!

ODOT "Recycling" Helps Schools

Instead of destroying outdated versions of popular computer software, the Oregon Department of Transportation is "recycling" the software by donating it to schools.

To date, ODOT has donated 72 copies of Wordperfect and 59 copies of Lotus 1-2-3 to school districts now operating under "safety net" financing, according to David Dowrie, manager of ODOT's Information Systems Section.

"There is no cost to the department or to the taxpayer in any of these programs," said Dowrie, who negotiated the innovative recycling idea with the software manufacturers. "By license agreement, we would have had to destroy the programs. The great thing about this is that it gives students access to software that is currently being used in the business community."

Under the program, ODOT donates the diskettes, reference manual, workbook and template to a primary or secondary school. A new license is then issued for the software to the school. The school then becomes eligible to upgrade the software at discounted educational prices. "It's like getting a trade-in, free," Dowrie said.

The Department of Education provided information about which schools were in the safety net. Dowrie and his staff then contacted the schools to determine interests and ability to use the programs. At times, they have also handled the donation of outdated and outmoded hardware to the schools.

The Little Chapel of the Chimes



Sandra Jarrett

430 N. Killingsworth Street
Portland, Oregon 97217-2499
Phone (503) 283-1976 Fax (503) 283-1979



MT OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH

Has moved Sunday services to
**Stone Tower Church,
N.E. Sandy Blvd. & 30th**

Worship Services 8:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Church School 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
Bible Study, Wednesdays, 116 N.E. Schuyler
10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Radio Ministry each Sunday, 8:00 a.m. on KBMS

A Teaching Church With A Reaching Ministry
Dr. James E. Martin, Senior Pastor

Church Office 116 N.E. Schuyler St.
(503) 284-1954

MALLORY CHURCH OF CHRIST

3908 NE MALLORY AVENUE



Minister Gregory Fobbs

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
Bible Study
9:30 am.
Morning Worship
10:45 am.
Men's Training Leadership
Women's Bible Class
5:00 pm.
Evening Worship
6:00 pm.
Attended nursery for all
services
Wednesday prayer meeting
and bible study
7:30 pm.

Radio Ministry Each Sunday, 11:00 AM - KBMS
288-1092
RESTORING
NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY



DON'T GIVE UP!!

Guaranteed Results in 24 Hours

Rev. Cooper
Spiritual Reader & Advisor

Are you sick suffering with bad luck? Hair falling out? Loss of nature? Someone crossed you? Need help in any problem? My work is with God. Get rid of your problems. If I cannot do it, it cannot be done. Readings by phone or by mail. Also lucky numbers. Call for appointment or directions.

(215)333-5763 FREE READING BY PHONE

Advertise IN THE OBSERVER



Mallory Avenue Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

God's Presence promises
Power through Jesus Christ In
Good Times and Bad Times
Matthew 11:28

"Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest"

9:45am Sunday School
11:00am Morning Worship
7:30pm Tuesday Bible Study and Prayer

Inter-racial Congregation

126 N.E. Alberta + Portland, OR 97211 + (503) 288-5173



Denise A. Bell, Pastor

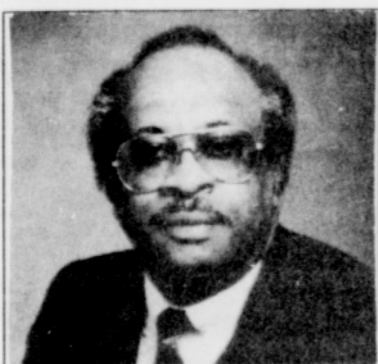
St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church

8101 N. Fiske Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97203

Church Phone: 289-0147

Study Phone: 289-1911

Sunday Service 10:45
Sunday School 9:30
Bible Study 6:00
Evening Service 7:00 P.M.



Pastor, Rev. James C.E. Faulkner

Theme: Whatever you're going to do for the Lord, do it now

I Peter iv.11

Jesus Loves You! Allen Temple CME Church

Psalm 34:3

4236 NE Eighth Avenue
(corner of 8th & Skidmore)
Portland, Oregon 97211
(503) 287-0261

Phillip S. Nelson Pastor

Jesus Christ Is Salvation Union Avenue Baptist Church

5029 N. E. MLK Jr. Blvd.
Portland, OR 97211
Telephone Number - 287-8344

He that is too good to realize that he need to be saved, cannot be helped. But he that recognize he has a need, can be helped.

What A Friend We Have In Jesus

Are you a friend of Jesus?
Do you want Jesus to be your friend?
We want to be your friend and would love to have you as our friend.

Everyone is welcome to this church, (the body of Christ).
There is a place and a work here for you.

Rev. A. G. May, Pastor

VANN & VANN FUNERAL DIRECTORS



Cleodius Vann

Family Owned and Operated
Since 1954
Serving the City of Portland
for over 37 years
In your hour of need
Vann & Vann are there to serve

503/281-2836

5211 N. Williams Portland, Or. 97217