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BROOKLYN TABERNACLE BIBLE-STUDY ON THE FRIEND OF SINNERS. Luke 18:9-14; 19:1-10—June 14.

THE parable of today's lesson reveals the heart attitude of some of the Pharisees and of the despised publicans. Two men went up to the Temple to pray. From God's standpoint both were sinners, and needed forgiveness of sins. But the Pharisee trusted in his own imperfect works, and asked no forgiveness; the publican, however, realized his base and prayed for mercy.

We must not get the impression that God is more pleased with those who live in sin than with those who strive to the best of their ability to live in harmony with His Law. On the contrary, we must all realize that we come short of perfection and need Divine mercy. The sinner who recognizes this fact is more pleasing to God than is the more moral person who fails to see his own sinfulness.

Jesus referred to this same error of the Pharisee at another time, saying, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." He thus sought to call attention to the fact that although the Pharisees claimed to be righteous, yet they were not so. Until they should learn that they and all other members of the Adamic race were sinners and needed the remedy which only the Redeemer can give, they were not in condition to come to Him for forgiveness.

Not realizing their need, the Pharisees did not become Jesus' disciples, and thereby missed a great blessing. On the contrary, the majority of His followers were publicans and sinners—people who had not been living properly, but who earnestly acknowledged their faults, turned from sin, accepted healing from the Good Physician, and became His followers.

A Little Man—a Big Heart. The latter part of our lesson relates to Jesus' journey from Jericho to Jerusalem, just prior to His crucifixion. Multitudes were journeying in the same direction, going up to the Pass-over. Zacchaeus, a rich man of that vicinity, was curious to see Jesus. He was not a Pharisee, he did not profess holiness of life. He was a tax collector for the Roman government—a publican. On this account he was despised, and desired to be disloyal to Judaism.

Small of stature, Zacchaeus was unable to see Jesus because of the crowd. Therefore he ran ahead and climbed a tree, to have a good view of Jesus as He passed by. When Jesus came near, He called to Zacchaeus to come down at once, for He was to be his guest. The summons was gladly received by Zacchaeus. But the whole circumstance greatly disgusted the Pharisees, who remarked that Jesus would become the guest of one not orthodox.

Fortwith Zacchaeus addressed the Master as though urging that the charges against him should not hinder the Master from becoming his guest, and as intimating his desire to do right. Jesus replied to Zacchaeus, "This day is salvation come to this house; forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." From the Lord's standpoint all Abraham's sons were eligible to discipleship. The one thing required was an honest confession of imperfection, an honest turning from sin, a hearty acceptance of Christ and an endeavor to walk in His steps.

Unquestionably this principle still applies, regardless of what men may think or say to the contrary. The Lord is willing to receive the repentant. The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile has been broken down, as St. Paul explains. All who have Abraham's faith may be counted in as Abraham's children by becoming related to the Divine Plan as Jesus' disciples—Galatians 3:16, 29.

"That Which Was Lost." Our lesson closes with Jesus' words, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Some who deny that Adam was created perfect, who deny his fall from Divine favor and who deny that redemption was necessary, have sought to sustain their position by saying that Jesus never referred to man's fall, although the Genesis account tells of it, and St. Paul and other Apostles particularly mention it. But in this text we have Jesus' own statement as to why He came into the world. He came to be man's Redeemer—to seek and to recover, restore, that which was lost.

Everlasting life was lost. Eden was lost, human perfection was lost, the image of the Divine character was lost. These could not be recovered by humanity, all of whom were under death sentence—the curse. But God's compassion arranged a Plan, whereby Jesus came into the world and gave Himself a ransom for all—to be testified in due time. The very fact that the Master speaks of His work as a ransom one (Matthew 20:28) corroborates the declaration that man needed to be ransomed from death.

BROOKLYN TABERNACLE BIBLE-STUDY ON DIFFICULTIES OF THE RICH. Mark 10:17-31—June 21.

IT must have been an enthusiastic sight for Jesus' disciples to see a rich young ruler run after the Master and kneel at His feet, saying, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The Great Teacher did not answer directly, but inquired why the title good was applied to Him. He would have the young man notice that everything really good must in some way be in accordance with God.

There were only two ways in which Jesus could be viewed. Either He was, as He claimed, the Son of God, come into the world on a special mission for humanity; or else He was a deceiver, misrepresenting Himself and deceiving the people. Jesus wished the young man to consider the force of his own expression and decide at once this important question.

Narrow Way—Self-Sacrifice. What did Jesus mean by telling the young man that the way to everlasting life was the keeping of the commandments? We reply that God's promise to Israel was, "He that doeth these things shall live by the doing of them." All Jews understood this; and this young ruler confessed that he had been striving to live according to this rule, and yet he was dying.

Like the remainder of the race, Jesus' answer signifies, "You should not only strive to keep the Law, but you must be a sacrificer; take up your cross and follow My example."

We are not hastily to suppose that Jesus meant that riches should be given away recklessly. Had the young man agreed to the terms and asked the Lord how best to distribute his wealth, doubtless the Lord would have said, "Give it all to God; and then as His steward distribute it according to the wisdom which He will give you." Even this full surrender of earthly possessions would not be sufficient. Whoever would gain a place in the Kingdom must become active in the Lord's service, and follow patiently in the narrow way of self-sacrifice, in the Redeemer's footsteps.

Sorrowful! For Very Rich. The young ruler's riches were not of themselves harmful. The difficulty was that he had set his heart upon them, so that when the test came he demonstrated that he loved God less than he loved his wealth. He missed the opportunity to do the greatest good, and thus turned his back upon membership in the Kingdom class. We are not, however, to understand that there is no hope for him. Even while missing the Kingdom opportunities, he may be one of those blessed by the Kingdom.

Few Rich in the Kingdom. The rich young ruler's failure to become a disciple on Jesus' terms furnished a text for Jesus. He said to His disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the Needle's Eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."—Matthew 19:24.

The Needle's Eye was a small gate or opening in a large gate in the city wall. The gates were closed at night for protection against robbers; and watchmen were on duty. An arrangement was made, however, for travelers who failed to reach the gate before it was closed. The Needle's Eye was just large enough to permit a camel to go through after having been unloosed.

Thus understood, Jesus taught that a rich man could enter the Kingdom of God only by giving up all to the Lord. The numerous disciples inquired, "Who then can be saved?" The rich seemingly had all opportunities of time, influence and money to enable them to give better service to the Lord than could others; and if they would have such difficulty in getting into the Kingdom, how would it be with those less favored?

Jesus answered, "All things are possible with God." That is to say, if a heart-beated and humble, and his riches alone stand in the way, the Lord would show him the Divine will respecting their use. If this did not avail, the Lord would know how to strip him of his wealth, even as the master would unloose the camel to permit it to pass through the Needle's Eye.

"We Have Left All." St. Peter seemed to get the thought that joint-ownership in the Messianic Kingdom would mean a full surrender to God. He said, "We have left all, and have followed Thee." Jesus did not fully endorse this statement. Judas had not nearly left all. In St. Peter himself some self-will still remained, and self-preservation would lead him to deny his Master, later on. But Jesus' answer fully covered the question, not only for the Apostles, but for all who have become followers of Jesus from that day until now.

Persecutions all His followers are sure to get; but everything sacrificed for the Lord is compensated a hundred-fold.

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