

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

RLJ-1946

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PART 47: JUSTICE AND PRAYER

THE LOST SHEEP

Jesus stated that He came to save people who were lost. **Matthew 18:11**

The disciples did not feel lost. After all, they were Jews, and Jews are God's people. This is how they still feel today.

Jesus had already affirmed that it is not enough to simply be a Jew. You must be born again. **John 3:1-10**

Jesus wanted the disciples to know He was concerned about individuals. The God-man cares deeply about every human being on the earth. In referencing the lost sheep, He wanted to convey the value that every man and woman possesses in God's eyes.

Matthew 18:12-14

SETTLING CONFLICTS

When it came to settling disputes, Jesus introduced a new concept for how they should be solved within the body of Christ.

The synagogue system evolved from Judaism and had its own laws dating back to the time of Moses. Over time this was blended with the Talmud. Jesus replaced the synagogue system with the New Testament church.

Jesus did not want His followers to use secular courts to reconcile conflicts. He was explicit that they should be resolved within the church. **Matthew 18:15-17**

1. If you have a dispute with a brother/sister in Christ, try to meet with them and mend the problem.
2. If that does not work, take one or two witnesses to a second meeting and try to come to a resolution.
3. If the problem remains, bring the case to the church membership. If the church rules against the offending person, and he does not want to repent, the offender is to be treated like somebody who is unsaved and a tax collector.

Essentially, they were to be shunned for their unrepentant attitude. Nobody respected the words of a heathen and the publicans were outcasts that were shunned by society.

JUDGMENT POWER

Jesus stated that a church decision would be sanctioned in heaven.

“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

(Matthew 18:18)



This is how the Greek reads:

*Whatsoever you shall have bound on earth,
shall already be bound in heaven,
and whatsoever you shall loose on earth,
shall already be loosed in heaven.*

This indicates if there is a conflict within the church between two parties, it is up to the pastor to call a meeting of the church members and hold an open trial to resolve the conflict. This proposed system was the forerunner to the jury system utilized in the United States. When the membership determines the verdict, it has already been seconded in heaven by God.

Some 60 years later in the church of Corinth, the apostle Paul admonished believers for utilizing secular courts and ignoring the instructions of Jesus. **1 Corinthians 6:1-8**

The church in Corinth had another problem. There was a man sexually involved with his father's wife – more than likely a stepmother since the text does not indicate it was his mother – and the church had failed to address this sin. Paul wrote to Corinth and told them that they were to turn the offender over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. **1 Corinthians 5:1-7**

ABUSE IN THE CHURCH

The system Jesus set up to regulate the church and its membership is perfect, but if the leadership is evil, it can become a nightmare. Roman Catholicism is responsible for the deaths of millions – all in the name of Jesus. The state churches of Europe have abused the system and caused much harm to those who do not line up with their political agenda.

CHAPTERS & VERSES

The New Testament was written in Greek. There were no chapter and verses in the original manuscripts; they just flowed from one story to another. It was a Roman Catholic named Stephen Langton (1207-1228) in England that created the chapter divisions we have today. When Matthew wrote his account of the life of Jesus, he simply moved in a timeline and recited stories and events as led by the Holy Spirit.

Since I am preaching from chapter to chapter, it is apparent that a chapter can contain a number of stories that have nothing to do with each other. Thus, the narrative of the lost sheep has nothing to do with the teaching on setting conflicts within the church. The next subject is not related to anything previous stated.

AGREEING IN PRAYER

Prayer is vital in the Kingdom of God, and even though Jesus was the Son of God, incarnated into a human body, the God-man spent long hours in prayer.

The night Jesus was betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, He wanted prayer support and took the inner core with Him for support. **Matthew 26:36-38**

Jesus went a little further and fell on His face as He started to pray. **verse 39**

The three men were asleep when He returned. **verses 40-41**

He left them to pray a second time, and upon returning, found them soundly sleeping again. **verse 43**

Jesus realized there would be no prayer support from these sleepy men and went to pray for a third time. **verse 44**

Lucifer knows that it means trouble when men and women pray to the Lord. Satan does not mind if Christians sing praises, read the Bible, and do good works, but he gets furious when Christians begin to pray. He hit Peter, John and James so hard that they could not stay awake. The struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane was spiritual in nature. Humanity has a free will and it was up to the apostles to resist Satan. The God-man could not fight for them.

When a pastor calls his congregation to prayer, it is like trying to squeeze blood from a turnip. The sad thing is that the vast majority of Christians will do all kinds of works for the Lord, but they have zero desire to pray.

Prayer meetings have the least amount of attendance in a church. Satan and his minions have prioritized their forces to derail, blind, and attack any Christian who is actively thinking about prayer. Few Christians have understood the Devil's strategy since they are ignorant of the spirit world.

POWER OF PRAYER

If two believers in Christ can come together and agree on a certain prayer request, it will be carried out by God the Father in heaven. **Matthew 18:19**

When two or three believers come together for prayer, Jesus will join them through the Holy Spirit. **verse 20**

Faith is the key to answered prayer. **Mark 11:21-24**

Harboring unforgiveness cancels the effectiveness of prayer. **verses 25-26; Matthew 6:14-15**

Jesus wants us to move in the supernatural and duplicate the same works He did. **John 14:11-18**

If you're living a sloppy spiritual life, there won't be a desire to pray, and therefore you won't have the faith to move in the supernatural.

Do you just live for the day and relinquish the future? Do you think about having a place to sleep, food to eat, what you're going to stream on Netflix, and the fun you're going to have on the weekend?

Seek the Kingdom of God and see what the Lord does in your life. **Matthew 6:33**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?