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"HIS SERVANTS SHALL SERVE HIM"

– *JANUARY 25.* – LUKE 8:1-3; 9:57-62; 10:38-42. –

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me." – Matthew 25:40. R.V.

THE opening verse of this Study furnishes us the key to all the preaching that Jesus did, so far as the record goes. His one Message was the Good Tidings of the Kingdom of God. This is still the Good Tidings, and any of the Lord's people who have not yet learned that the Kingdom of God is the very center and essence of the hope of the Church and the hope of the world, have not profitably read and believed the Bible. The Jews, not being ready for the Kingdom, were as a nation rejected from being Messiah's associates in that Kingdom. But not all were rejected; hence we read that to as many as received Jesus, to them gave He liberty to become sons of God – by the begetting and anointing of the Holy Spirit, which first came at Pentecost.

SURELY THIS IS GOOD TIDINGS

Those sons of God, if faithful, are to be with Jesus by and by – heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord in this Heavenly Kingdom. Their honor and blessing shall be great; for they shall be like their Master and see Him as He is and share His glory. But this will not be all. If they develop this spirit of love, they will thereby be qualified for association with the Master in His great work of blessing mankind, rolling away the curse and uplifting humanity out of sin and death conditions.

Surely this is Good Tidings, as stated in this lesson! And the same Good Tidings were heralded by those angels who proclaimed the Master's birth, saying, "Behold, we bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people!" Thus far it has been Good

Tidings only to God's servants and handmaidens, the Church. But it shall be Good Tidings to all when all the deaf ears shall be unstopped and when all the blind eyes shall be opened, and they shall see the glories of Messiah's Kingdom.

While Jesus was thus declaring the Kingdom, He was not begging His way. We have no suggestion that He ever took up a collection or in any manner solicited money. Many think that this is a suggestion that the followers of Christ should likewise make no appeals for money, but merely use of their own substance and such other moneys as shall voluntarily be given unto them. However, this is for each to decide for himself.

Amongst the healed ones was Mary of Magdala, out of whom the Lord had cast seven demons. In other words, the poor woman was in the condition in which many are who are in insane asylums. Her trouble was not organic, but caused by the harassing of the seven fallen angels who had taken possession of her. Whoever believes the Bible Message must believe that there are fallen angels – spirit beings who have a malevolent influence upon humanity to the extent that they can gain control, and who must be resisted by the will. Mary, apparently, was a woman of wealth. Released from the power of the demons, she was so grateful to Jesus that she did her best to serve Him on every occasion. Other honorable women are also mentioned as having contributed to the maintenance of the Lord.

"LET ME BURY MY FATHER"

Some were attracted to Jesus, evidently, with the thought that one so gifted and so well supplied with the necessities of life must be wealthy. One such said to the Lord, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." But apparently his ardor was cooled when Jesus informed him that He had no property, no home of His own, although there were numerous homes to which he was welcome. Foxes have holes of their own and birds have nests of their own, but the Son of Man had no home that He could call His own.

None but the very sincere would likely be attracted to follow a leader under such circumstances. Wealth attracts many, poverty few.

Another said to Jesus, in substance, Lord, you may count me as one of your disciples; but I have a father, and I feel as though I must stay with him until his death. **[R5371 : page 377]** The reply of Jesus shows us the importance He attaches to every service we can render to the Heavenly Father's Cause. He said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God."

IS IT NOT TIME TO AWAKE?

The whole world is already dead from the Divine standpoint. The sentence of death that passed upon Adam involved all of his children. The only ones whom the Scriptures recognize as possessed of any life at the present time are those who become related to the Life-Giver, Jesus. The Master intimates that all such should take a different view of life from others. There are plenty in the world who can attend to the earthly things; few who can attend to the greater and more important work of proclaiming the Kingdom and gathering the Kingdom class.

This is the most important work in the world, because it is God's work. And those who engage in it are co-laborers with God. Be it noticed again that it was the Kingdom of God that was worthy of this preaching and this sacrifice. Alas, how strange it is that so little of the preaching of later times is along this line! In other words, the Gospel Message that Jesus and His disciples delivered has been lost, forgotten, neglected. Is it not time for all Bible students to awaken to the great privilege of preaching the same Message that the Master and His appointed ones at the First Advent preached?

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Another came to Jesus, saying, I will follow You, but I wish first to go and bid farewell to those who are at home. I will spend a

little time with them; and before long I will be with You in the work. It was not heartlessness on Jesus' part that suggested the answer: "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." According to these searching words, who then, even amongst the Lord's consecrated people of today, is fit for the Kingdom?

We are not to judge others, but each to judge himself. **[R5371 : page 378]** And yet, in a general way, are we not confident that many not only are looking back and making special provisions for the social amenities of life, but additionally are plunging into many of the luxuries, pleasures and frivolities of the world? The question is a searching one. How many of us will the Lord consider fit for the Kingdom – fit for a place with Himself in that glorious Messianic Empire, which we trust is nigh – at the door? There seems to be a principle involved. Those who are not absorbed with interest in the Kingdom, desiring its blessings and desiring a share in conferring blessings upon others, would probably not be qualified by the resurrection change to accomplish the work which He has designed shall be done for humanity.

The story of Martha and Mary concludes the lesson. Both loved the Savior, but they manifested their love differently. Jesus did not disapprove of Martha and her carefulness as a cook in providing for His comfort; but He especially appreciated the spirit of Mary, which drew her to His feet to hear the wonderful words of life. Hers was the better part, Jesus said. So, then, in our service for the Master let us have this in mind, that He is especially pleased when we give earnest attention to His words and seek to be filled with and guided by His Holy Spirit.

Today's Study represents special services which were rendered at different times during our Lord's ministry. Acceptable service, like acceptable praise, must come as a fruitage of love to the Lord.

He who loves much will serve much. Salaries cannot purchase this kind of service, and persecutions cannot hinder it.

Whoever was privileged to serve the Lord Jesus personally was certainly highly privileged. And yet we may be sure of the general principle laid down in our text, that whoever serves any whom the Lord classes as His brethren is really serving Him. He accepts the same as service to Himself. How precious this thought, and how valuable it is! What wonder that all who truly believe the Lord's Word should be zealous in their service of their brethren! As the Apostle suggests, we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren, even as Christ died for all.

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