

The Sunday School Lesson

By Bessie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION:

Our world has standards by which it measures fame. Wealth is one of the most important of these, but we have others, political accomplishments, military leadership, literary contributions, theatrical and musical skills, athletic prowess. Jesus didn't mention any of these as important standards, to measure one's worth.

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Today's lesson finds Jesus already well along in the next phase of His ministry. Luke marks that change in 9:51: "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." The time of His popular ministry in Galilee was past, and with calm resolution Jesus turned to Jerusalem, knowing that only six months ahead lay the cross. In December, Jesus attended the feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) in Jerusalem. There He met increasingly bitter opposition from the religious leaders, so, He left Jerusalem and went to the area east of the Jordan River. There He carried on a teaching ministry for several weeks. Today's lesson has its setting during this period.

THE LESSON:

"A man in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide with me, the property our father left us.'" Jesus answered him, "Man, who gave me the right to judge or to divide the property between you two?" And He went on to say to them all, "Watch out and guard yourselves from every kind of greed; because a person's true life is not made up of the things he owns, no matter how rich he may be." Then Jesus said to the disciples, "And so I tell you not to worry about the food you need to stay alive or about the clothes you need for your body. Life is much more important than food, and the body much more important than clothes. Look at the crows: they don't plant seeds or gather a harvest; they don't have storage rooms or barns; God feeds them! You are worth so much more than birds! Can any of you live a bit longer by worrying about it? If you can't manage even such a small thing why worry about the other things? Look how the wild flowers grow? They don't work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you not even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. It is God who clothes the wild grass - grass that is here today and gone tomorrow, burned up in the oven. Won't He be all the more sure to clothe you? What little faith you have! So don't be all upset, always concerned about what you will eat and drink. (For the pagans of this world are always concerned about these things.) Your Father knows that you need these things. Instead, be concerned with His Kingdom, and He will provide you with these things. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the Kingdom. Sell all your belongings and give the money to the poor. Provide for yourselves purses that don't wear out, and save your riches in heaven, where they will never decrease, because no thief can get to them, and no moth can destroy them. For your heart will always be where your riches are." (Luke 12: 13-15, 22-34)

Jesus had been talking about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and warning His followers that they must expect persecution. He challenged them to remain faithful in the face of trials, assuring them that God would watch over them. Then a man in the crowd interrupted, asking Jesus if He would settle a dispute over an inheritance. Obviously the man was obsessed with the importance of material things, else He would not have interrupted Jesus discourse on spiritual things with his request. Just why the man came to Jesus we can only guess. There were legal processes open to him if he felt that his brother had unjustly deprived him of his inheritance. Perhaps he had tried those avenues and the judgment had gone against him. Now he wanted his case tried in another court.

Jesus refused to be a judge and then turned to the man's real problem - covetousness. He issued a double warning against it: **Take heed, and beware.** Greed is an insidious sin, coming quietly and often garbed in the cloak of respectability. It creates an appetite for more. Greed always wants more, more, more. Greed is wrong for at least two reasons: 1) It hurts others. Greed drives men to be dishonest or to bend laws to give an aura of honesty to their robbery. 2) But greed is also wrong because of what it does to the person who has fallen into its grasp. Jesus states this as a fundamental principle rooted in man's very nature. **A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.** Or, to put it another way, as Jesus did when Satan tempted Him with things: "Man shall not live by bread alone."

No other nation in all the history of the world has enjoyed the physical blessings that the United States has known. God, by giving us a wonderful combination of natural resources, climate, and freedom, has allowed us to create unparalleled wealth. But our true wealth is not measured in terms of these physical things. It is measured by how we use these things.

When we have physical possessions, we are tempted to trust in them for security rather than in God. But even a brief glance at these things should show us how fragile they really are. We need only to look at the volatility of the stock market, where fortunes can be made or lost in a matter of minutes. Or look at what has happened in those areas whose wealth was based on maintaining high oil prices.

Wealth also tends to make people arrogant. Great wealth and humility are rarely found in the same person. The pursuit of wealth turns men's talents away from the pursuit of God's Kingdom and its spiritual values. Millionaires are not often found leading prayer meetings or serving on missions committees. If anyone has any doubts about where America's heart really is, let him examine how we spend our money. We spend more for pet food than we do for foreign missions. We spend much more for tobacco products than we do for Christian education. In these, as in other areas, we reveal where our heart really is. This information is not reassuring.

"No man can tell whether he is rich or poor by turning his ledger. It is the mind that makes a man rich. He is rich according to what he is, not according to what he has."

- Henry Ward Beecher.

Father, teach us to use wisely what you have given us, that Your name may be glorified and Your Kingdom enhanced. Amen.

Obituaries

Continued From Page 3B.

patrick; mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Kirkpatrick both of Charlotte.

Mrs. Rosetta D. Witherspoon, of 501 N. Alexander St. died Jan. 25, 1989, at Mercy Hospital. Funeral service was held Jan. 31 at St. Paul Baptist Church. Burial was in Oaklawn Cemetery.

Survivors are her son, Mr. Johnny Lewis Witherspoon, Jr.; daughters, Ms. Peggy Holt and Ms. Helen Thompson both of Charlotte; brothers, Mr. James Dunlap of Detroit, MI and Mr. Johnny Dunlap of Flint, MI; sisters, Mrs. Mary Alice McClain of

Flint, MI and Mrs. Josephine Richardson of Winston-Salem, NC; stepdaughter, Mrs. Bernice McIlwain of Lancaster, SC; and 7 grandchildren.

ALEXANDER FUNERAL HOME

Rev. Ms. Minnie Ethel Davidson, of 304 Tuckaseegee Road died Jan. 27, 1989, at Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral service will be held Feb. 4 at New Emmanuel Congregational Church. Burial will be in Hopewell A.M.E. Zion Church. Visitation will be 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 3 at New Emmanuel Congregational Church, Beatties Ford Rd.

Mr. Joseph P. Goss, of Rt. 3 Commerce, GA died Jan. 31,

The Idol Of Self-Righteousness

By J. M. Little

The last idol that a sinner will give up before he is saved is self-righteousness. Every sinner by nature is deceived by his wicked heart (Jer. 17:9), and thinks he has some goodness that God will take notice of and usher him into Heaven at the very last. That is why it is so hard for a religious soul to get saved.

All your life you have prided on the fact that you don't live in sin as others. But when the blessed Holy Spirit awakens a religious sinner, he sees that all his righteousness is just filthy rags, according to Isaiah 64:6. God's word is very plain about the total depravity of man. And you are going to acknowledge that you are the totally depraved sinner that God says you are in His Word, long before He saves you, if you ever are to be saved.

The Lord is not going to save everybody. And once you get your eyes open to God's way of salvation, you'll wonder why you could have ever been so blind to think that you could be saved on a profession or a mental decision for the Lord Jesus Christ.

A self-righteous sinner is always looking down on others and patting himself on the back as did the old Pharisee. "And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14). The Pharisee patted himself on the back, he was a self-righteous devil but the Lord didn't save him. If you ever give up your idol of self-righteousness, you'll never get saved.

That's why multitudes of our church members are not saved and never will be. You are self-righteous to the core. You think you are better than others. If the sword of total depravity ever goes home to your heart, never again will you trust yourself and look down on others. The blessed soul who has come in personal contact with the Lord has a glimpse of himself as God sees him and you are humbled because you see your filthiness in the Face of Jesus Christ.

That is so. No proud soul walks with the Lord. He doesn't dwell with the high and mighty, but with that soul that is of a broken heart and contrite spirit. Where do you find souls truly broken and walking humbly before the Lord? You won't find them in our churches, as a whole. Our church members are so hard-hearted and cussed.

One night after a church service years ago a man came in from outside and told another man, "You better move that Buick out yonder if you don't want it to get hit!" I stood there and listened to his gruff voice and said within myself, "My, my, claiming to be saved and talking to a fellow church member like that." But the other man quietly responded to him.

Woman Of The Year Nominees

The International Women's Day Committee is searching for the 1989 "Woman of the Year"

They are looking for a woman who has not been previously recognized but who has improved the quality of life for others.

To nominate a local heroine call 597-7467 to request a nomination form, or write International Women's Day Committee, P. O. Box 31021, Charlotte, N.C. 28231. The deadline for nominations is February 15.

1989, in Brown's Nursing Home, Royston, GA. Funeral service will be held 3:00 p.m. Feb. 4 at Greater Mt. Zion F.B.H. Church. Burial will be in Beatties Ford Memorial Gardens. The family will be at the home of the son, Mr. Nelson Goss of 1015 Davenport St. Charlotte.

Mrs. Rosa Bell Mitchem Ingram, of 1801 Taylor Ave. died Jan. 31, 1989, at his place of residence. Funeral service will be held 2:00 p.m. Feb. 4 at First Baptist Church-West. Burial will be in West Pinewood Cemetery, Charlotte. Visitation will be 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Feb. 3 at the church.

Survivor is her niece, Mrs. Annie Mitchem.

I would not give you two cents a box car load for the clap-trap, tommy-rot in our church today! There's no love and compassion there! A deacon friend of mine told me he could find more compassion in a poker game than in a church. Our church members are cussed and hard-boiled. Why? Our preachers and religious leaders are that way. I've had preachers tell me they don't believe in tithing. The Lord tithed when He walked this earth. Now some of you preachers are all wrong on tithing! you preach that the tithe is 10 percent after everything is taken out; that is after taxes, insurance, etc., etc. But you are dead wrong; the tithe comes off the gross! Not the net as you preach. The reason you won't tithe is because you have a covetous heart. If you took 10 percent out after everything was taken off then you could have so much and so much taken out and 10 percent of what was left would be very little. And if you are preaching any less, then you are in rebellion against the word of God. God never calls a man to misrepresent Him.

We have never lived in a time of such ignorance and rebellion against the Word of God. I've wept in my heart over the spiritual decay abounding in the land today.

AMERICA WILL NOT REPENT! Therefore, there is nothing left for God to do but spue Her out of His Mouth. This is the Laodicean Age in which we live. A generation that has turned away from the body of Divine truth. And like the late pastor said, our churches have rejected the Holy Spirit, therefore, all you have is worldly wisdom and rationalism. Our churches are on the road to Hell. And if you remain in them you are going to Hell on that bandwagon. It is my prayer that one here and one there will receive the EFFECTUAL CALL and be brought to Christ. I'm not hoping to stem the tide.

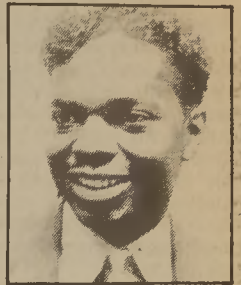
I praise the Lord I know, Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. Do you know Christ? How is it between you and the Lord? My dear, young woman, you must forget all about the opinion of others before you can be saved. May the Lord help you. Make it your business to come to know Christ, condemn every indifference and criticism. Look to Christ.

And continue to listen to our late Pastor, L.R. Shelton, with

THE VOICE OF TRUTH and at 8:00 over WAGL-AM. BROADCAST, each Sunday The Prophet's Column is a morning at 7:30 over WAGI-FM paid advertisement.

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The last game of the season was a real knockout.

Michael had to go for it. It was, after all, the deciding game of the city-wide Little League Championship. And trying to stretch his easy triple into what would be the winning run seemed like the odds-on move, given the scouting report on the right fielder's arm.

But the right fielder surprised everyone with a knee-high rocket to the catcher. Michael countered with his patented Pete Rose face-first slide. The dust cleared... Michael was safe!



But one of his front teeth was out by a mile. Serious problem? Not really. Dental research has developed a number of ways to keep even the most rambunctious young athlete's smile in all-star condition.

injury and the age of the patient, we might recommend a temporary or permanent crown, a bridge, or a new technique called bonding. Of course, we'd also make one other recommendation: Slide feet first.

For more information about crowns, bridges, bonding and other aspects of today's dentistry, phone for a consultation.

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