

Dartmouth Bible Church  
N. Dartmouth, MA

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 1, Nov. 30, 1986

EXPOSITIONS FOR THE LORD'S TABLE: "THE REAL JESUS"  
*"An Infant 'Christos Kurios'"*  
Luke 2: 15-24

Introduction: I would like to begin a series of messages that will be given on Sundays over the next several months when we celebrate the Lord's Table--usually, the first Sunday of the month. I am calling the series, "The Real Jesus" and we are going to look at certain aspects of the life of our Savior from the standpoint of someone discovering Him for the first time!

When I first came to Christ, there were certain things about Jesus' life that I already knew. Somewhere back in my clouded mind there remained a few things about the Lord that I had learned as a child, and had never really disgarded in my teen years of searching and skepticisms. Then when I came to Christ at 19, a whole new wonderful world opened up: the world of the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the Gospel records. And it was exciting to learn so many new and fascinating things about this God-man Jesus of Nazareth. So we will seek on these Lord's Table Sundays to rediscover again some things about the Jesus to whom we pray and on Whose finished work on Calvary we have come to totally depend for getting us to heaven!

It is only right then that we look this morning (some churches look on today as the first Sunday in "advent") at something that the physician Luke wrote in his historical account of Jesus' coming to earth. Let's look at Luke 2 and take up our reading in verse 8...

I think angels are an interesting phenomena. But it is not their pronouncements per se that I want us to consider this morning. Rather, let's look at what the "good ol' boys" have to say: the shepherds.

Now I do not think it is possible for an angel of the Lord to tell a lie or even to be wrong about something he might tell a man. But I DO THINK it is possible for a man to not believe what he is told! These angels put on quite the display for these shepherds. Notice that it was not King Herod or the Roman governor or the rich folks at the Jerusalem Bath and Raquet Club or the wise guys over at the university that God sends His messengers to, to announce the coming of Messiah. It is a crowd of common shepherds.

What does that tell you about God? It tells me that His ways are not man's ways. He does not have to make the "right connections" in order to accomplish His purposes--NOW THAT'S NOT TO SAY that the angelic display to these shepherds was wasted or pointless effort on God's part...

In fact, it seems to me that it may be a better way to work with every day working people, than to work with the cream of society.

For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe...but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong. (I Corinthians 1: 21,27)

So here we have these shepherds, these "animal husbandry technicians", standing around, probably in something of a daze...

"Did you see that?" "No. And neither did you!" might have been the first reaction...

But they said, "Let's go check it out," and off they went...

#### What The Shepherds Found (verses 16,17)

So the boys didn't pray about what to do. They didn't form a committee about it. They just "up and went out" to seek the Lord! They believed in what they had been told!

They went over to Bethlehem (which by the way was the town that the Old Testament prophet Micah (5:2) had said would be Messiah's birthplace) to check it out. And somehow, I am not sure how, except that when God leads, He guides...they found Mary and Joseph and this new-born, lying in a livestock feeding trough (a manger).

What wonderful and amazed feelings Mary and Joseph must have had at this point---these shepherds show up in the "recovery room" and start talking about angels and Mary and Joseph's own little boy! What a feeling of confirmation (which is one reason I think the Lord led them there) that this little baby boy was a man of destiny!

Now I have few mystical beliefs about the baby Jesus. I know of no reason to believe that He or His mom had glowing faces. I think He cried, slept and had to have the swaddling clothes changed. I am unsure as to whether the new-born was supernaturally cognizant beyond His maturity of His new life as a man. Only when we are with Christ will we know that. But a few hours previously there was no Savior among men. There was no mediator, and only a hope of one, looked for for centuries, and no word (that we know of anyway) had even come from God for over FOUR centuries after Malachi fell silent.

And now here in Bethlehem, in a feeding trough, surrounded not by angels (visible anyway), but by shepherds and a carpenter and "the little woman" is *CHRISTOS KURIOS*. I would like you to know those Greek words. They are from verse 11 and it is the title

ascribed to the baby. Verse 21 tells us that not until another eight days did the folks start calling Him, "Jesus." Until then, He is simply "paidiou", "child." And the bunch of good ol' boys had been given His REAL NAME: CHRISTOS KURIOS, "CHRIST THE LORD." I do not know if the angels spoke Greek, Hebrew ("Messiah-Adonai"), Aramaic, or some heavenly tongue. But the shepherds understood what they had been told, and they must have delighted in sharing it with Joseph and Mary:

"Wow! Hey, Rufus, look-a dis! Here's the kid! Ain't He beautiful!!? And those angels said this is Christos Kurios! Can you believe it? CHRISTOS KURIOS, man! That's the main man! This is the One who's gonna turn things around for us! This is the kid who's gonna make things right with God for us!

Uh, excuse me, ma'am...could I hold the kid just for a minute? Oh man...coochie-coochie-coo! Uh ma'am, and sir, you may not believe this, but me and the boys were out with the stock, just mindin' our own biznez, not lookin' for any trouble, mind you. And all these angels come streakin' through the sky--and, well, I mean, we're down on our faces doing some massive shakin', and they tell us CHRISTOS KURIOS is actually being born tonight! Well, ma'am, I mean, what's a broken down old redneck like me to think? So we fire up the truck and come on into town to have a look-see!

Ma'am, if you don't mind my sayin', that is one beautiful boy you have there! And I don't rightly know how to say it, but I've got this funny feeling that He knows who I am, and who all the boys here are, and who His daddy is, even though I'm eyeballing Him here, and I can see He's just a baby...well, would you mind if I came to see Him again--I just don't want to lose track of this one, He's just one special little lamb, ma'am...and well, those angels you know, they were mighty sure about what they said, and well, I wasn't inclined to argue the point.."

#### The Effect of the Shepherds' Testimony (verses 18-20)

God raises up some unlikely spokesmen sometimes. That's because when it comes from an unlikely source we are more apt to see the hand of the Lord in something.

Verse 18 says everybody was impressed. Verse 19 and also verse 51 tell us Mary took special note...I can't help but wonder if that is not another way of alluding to the fact that the Lord would bring some of these details to her mind later, some thirty forty or fifty years later when she was associated with the Apostle John...maybe she would tell these stories about Jesus' coming to earth then! Maybe verses 19 and 51 are meant to give us a little more than just Mary's sentiments as a mother!

I think there was a special encounter going on around the trough that evening. No one in the world knew it yet--just a handful...But CHRISTOS KURIOS had arrived. God had promised to Adam that He would send a redeemer (Genesis 3:15). God had promised a redeemer to Abraham, to Moses, to David, to Isaiah, to Malachi and to the whole nation of Israel. And folks we know that ultimately in the mind of the sovereign and all-kind God, that plan of redemption was much bigger than just for Israel! The work that CHRISTOS KURIOS would start and finish would extend in its sufficiency to all mankind of all ages.

No more would have to be added to the life's work of CHRISTOS KURIOS. No merit would yet need to be earned by any man, indeed no merit could be earned by mere men, on their own behalf or on behalf of others--so desperate was the need of men, that God could only come Himself, in the person of His only begotten Son, to pay the price. It only remains for men and women and children to flee to the cross of CHRISTOS KURIOS.

Dear ones, I have not given you the Greek name to be chanted, as many medieval churchmen did. It is a name to be loved and trusted in with all your dependence! Those shepherds, Mary and Joseph did not deserve to have it revealed to them in whose presence they were in. Yes, the real Jesus was a real baby. He was also the real God, come down in a most marvelous way! Let's love the Savior. Let's live for Him and make decisions which honor Him, even though we are tempted to disregard His ways. We cannot go wrong when we follow the leading of our own CHRISTOS KURIOS!

If you are with us this morning, and you have not yet trusted Christ in your heart personally to be your Savior, instead of partaking the Lord's Table with us, won't you receive a free gift? Trust Christ here this morning, in the privacy of your own heart, and you will see that He wasn't just a pretty child, but Christ the Lord!

Dartmouth Bible Church  
N. Dartmouth, MA

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 2, Jan.11, 1987

EXPOSITIONS FOR THE LORD'S TABLE: "THE REAL JESUS"  
*The Adolescent Savior*  
Luke 2: 40-52

Introduction: In this series it is my purpose to be drawing our minds to the Christ of the Bible; to the REAL JESUS. I think we are sometimes prone to imagining a Jesus different from the real Jesus. And if we fall into that, we are not alone: many followers of Jesus through the centuries have adopted an idea of what Jesus is like which does not exactly match the Scriptural record we have of His life. As we approach the Lord's Table, the regular reminder of what He did for us, it is profitable to work on having as accurate a view of Him as we can.

Last month we thought about Jesus as a real baby. In today's passage Luke tells us about an incident that happened when Jesus was twelve, and it is the only detail of Jesus' life that we have from His infancy to when He was thirty and began His ministry. Now twelve is not an easy age for most boys, and I cannot help but feel that part of Luke's motivation for including it is to show that THE REAL JESUS had some tension in His life at twelve too!

"Mile-Marker Verses": There are some "mile-markers" in Luke's record; that is, every so often Luke makes a comment, an EVALUATION, if you will, ABOUT Jesus' life. That's part of what makes the Book of Luke more than just history. It is INSPIRED history, and Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, made various comments which help us better understand what we are reading. Verses 40, 51 and 52 are three of these "mile-markers." When YOUR Savior came to the earth, He lived a real life. He was confronted with all the pressures, temptations and stresses that you and I are. But you can just see Him dealing with them perfectly! Your Savior is not intimidated by your problems: His life showed that He faced tensions squarely and lived through them. The promise for Christians is that He will help them face their problems squarely and survive through them!

The Adolescent Savior: Now Joseph and Mary would take an eight-day vacation to Jerusalem every year--It was about 65 miles south and many would travel each year for the one-day Passover, and then the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

First, we can take a lesson here FOR MARRIED PEOPLE. Joseph and Mary regularly honored God's appointed ordinances and they honored them together! The journey for low-income people from Nazareth to Jerusalem was a strain. to take two weeks off from your work was a real expense and no doubt required advance planning to be able to afford it. And when Joseph and Mary went up to the Feast in Jerusalem, they went up together. They had a

JOINT-COMMITMENT to obey the Lord together! Dear ones, that is the first point on the outline of marriage counseling! Commit yourselves together to do God's will, SIDE BY SIDE!

Now Mary and Joseph were raising a normal, healthy child. He did not run round wearing a halo, no matter what some artists from the Middle Ages may have thought. I don't think He looked like any of their ideas--He was just a normal boy.

In those days, for safety reasons, people travelled in companies. When the time came to travel back, the group probably agreed to gather at some small town just north of Jerusalem--that's how Jesus was left behind. One day out it occurs to either Mary or Joseph that Jesus isn't around...

You can just hear Mary say, "Joe, I thought he was with your folks (verse 44)!" And Joseph says, "I thought he was with YOUR folks!"

It took them 72 hours to find Jesus, after the one day back to Jerusalem, probably pretty much by themselves. Then they would have to make up the day on the road, and so that's FIVE days delay. How would YOUR boss feel if you showed up five days late from vacation?

When Joseph and Mary finally found Jesus (note that it is evident that the Temple was not the first place they looked!), Jesus is in the midst of the most learned doctors of the day. Notice also a small but not insignificant point: Jesus was a listener! I would love to know what some of the QUESTIONS Jesus asked were? My guess is that He was asking questions about the Old Testament prophecies of Messiah. I am sure He knew by now what His mission would be. He is training already for His ministry which would not begin for another 18 years.

Jesus spent four days out from under the gaze of His parents. I think it is not a bad thing to hold Jesus up to OUR twelve year olds as an example of being a responsible twelve year old.

When I was twelve years old, I very much wanted to own my own .22 caliber rifle. I was a good shooter and I was on a rifle team, but I always had to use the team's guns. My Dad knew how badly I wanted that gun, and I'll never forget when he told me "when you have learned to look ahead, and to PLAN AHEAD, then you can have that rifle." He wanted me to see the importance of not making foolish decisions about something as significant as owning my own rifle. He was the same way about my learning to drive.

Jesus was steady and trustworthy BEHIND HIS PARENTS' BACKS. He could be trusted to live responsibly. I think it irked His parents (as it might ANY parents when they realize that in this case the kid is right!)

There is a principle here I think in raising our children: adolescents WANT to be trusted. Some parent's attitudes are: "I will trust you when you EARN my trust", a standard maybe never achievable in the kid's mind. Rather, a more positive approach might be, "I will trust you until you prove yourself untrustworthy." Now that doesn't mean that the child is given no prodding in the right directions and no discipline, but it speaks to the attitude with which we should approach our kids.

Jesus was subject unto His parents. He lived within the ORDER of the family that He knew God had ordained. Today often times, kids are telling their parents, "Hey, you listen to ME, I'll tell you the way it is." The simple fact of the matter is that even when He was twelve, Jesus lived as a righteous twelve year old. He knew it all, and yet He had the HUMILITY of a twelve-year old who knew he DIDN'T know it all! He listened and asked questions--Dear ones, as parents, our most strategic times with our kids is when THEY ASK A QUESTION! For a moment or two, the door is open. We must be careful NOT TO LECTURE at that tender moment. But parents, when your kid asks you a question, you are in touch enough, aware enough and not TOO DISTRACTED, and that you can give the answer the child needs. They need the answer from you, not from teacher, not from school-yard chum, not from TV and not even from Sunday School teacher: they need it from you. I think all this might have been in Luke's mind a little when he gave us this (and he is the only one to give us this incident).

Verse 48 tells us something else about the REAL JESUS. When Joseph and Mary found Him "at church" they were astonished. The Greek has it "*exeplogesan*", "it struck out their senses." In short, they freaked!

How would you feel if you took a little trip to the North Shore with your twelve year old boy, and lost him and four days later found him at Gordon-Conwell Seminary talking about the things of the Lord with the Bible professors?

My friends, our Savior is so fresh! He is just like us in so many ways, and yet he handles life perfectly. Is it not an incredible privilege to know Him? Are we not so unworthy of being His sheep? As we consider the act of redemption which Jesus carried out and performed for us about 21 years after this trip to Jerusalem, let's fill ourselves with gratitude and determination to live FOR HIM!

Dartmouth Bible Church  
N. Dartmouth, MA

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lord's Table, 2/1/87 #3

THE REAL JESUS  
The Baptism of the King  
*Matthew 3: 13-17*

Introduction: I am persuaded that folks are restless in our country today. And they are especially restless about things religious! Thinking people have little tolerance for religious fakery, because they are growing more and more restless to know what the real story is...And there is a restlessness to know whether this thing called fundamental Christianity is the real McCoy, or whether it is basically just another passing trend. AND they want to know if the Jesus who occupies the preaching of so many radio and television preachers is REAL, or if they should look for something else...

I am burdened that each person in this fellowship KNOW CLEARLY and CORRECTLY exactly who the real Jesus is. You say you know Him personally. You say you have some kind of supernatural relationship with Him and that because of it you are going to heaven and live forever--"PREPOSTEROUS!", say some of your friends or family. You say that when you talk (pray) to Him, He hears you and that He is actually INTERESTED in what is on your mind; in the things you are dealing with today...We are doing a little series of messages on those Sundays (once/month) when we have the Lord's Table on "The Real Jesus." It is good for us to concentrate on who the Scripture says He really is; and to KNOW CLEARLY AND EXACTLY who our Savior is.

This morning we're looking at a very important event in the earthly life of our Savior: His baptism at the hands of His forerunner and herald, John the Baptist. The event is the DEBUT of the Messiah's ministry after years of silence, at least as far as recorded history is concerned. The year is about 26 A.D. The scene is the Jordan river and Jesus the carpenter has arrived at one of John the Baptist's baptism ceremonies. Perhaps He was last in line. As He steps into the water, John is taken back.

Verses 13-15 John is not ready to baptize Him though. He is confused. We know that his mother, Elizabeth, was well informed about who Mary's first-born son really was. Probably she had told John somewhere along the line who Jesus was, and now He presents Himself as an applicant for John's ceremony of repentance!

To most Christians the baptism of Jesus is as much an enigma [mystery] as it proved to be to John the Baptist. ...For example, in urging believers to be baptized as a testimony to their salvation, it is common to hear the expression, "follow the Lord in baptism," as if OUR baptism is a carbon copy of His. S. Lewis Johnson

It is not. But isn't baptism a symbol of the cleansing from sin that a person has experienced in trusting Christ? Why would Jesus participate in a symbol of cleansing? He sinned no sins and had no sin nature within Him...the ANSWER is that He DID have sin in Him: *our sins*. He was not bearing our sins at His baptism, but He bore them on the cross, and THAT is why He told John to baptize Him: as a picture of the atonement that He would make! In fact, *the cross casts its shadow over the ministry of Messiah FROM THE VERY BEGINNING!*

There were OTHER reasons for being baptized too:

- 1) His identification with Israel. He was the savior of the world but He was also the Savior of Israel!
- 2) It was the "inauguration" (just like that of our Presidents) into HIS office of Messiah.

Verses 16, 17 There is SO MUCH TO WONDER AT, in these two verses! Matthew wanted us NOT to miss the significance of what was happening: he wrote "Behold!" (LOOK!) Not many people have ever seen the heavens "torn open." EZEKIEL saw it (Ezekiel 1:1). About three years after Jesus' baptism, Stephen was given a look, just before he was killed (Acts 7:56). And years after that, when he was the last living apostle, John was given a look on the island of Patmos (Rev. 4:1; 11:19; 19:11). But the grandest and most excellent opening of the heavens is when *ALL THREE MEMBERS OF THE TRINITY ARE PRESENT!*

The next time you are faced with someone who denies the existence of a trinitarian God, you open your Bible to this passage and say, "My friend, would you please explain the nature of God using this passage?" They must squirm!

The Spirit comes down and rests on Jesus. Now no one has ever seen the Holy Spirit in physical form, except John the Baptist and anyone else who was looking on. It is an amazing thing, because the Spirit is NOT a physical being. But here, the Spirit takes on a physical appearance, as a dove. I am not sure why it was a dove: but it is fascinating to me that it was! Perhaps the intent was to burn into John's mind the PURITY of the Spirit. Or maybe it was a prefigurement of the SACRIFICE that the Son would become, since a dove was one of the sacrificial animals...

Then, as if that is not enough, an audible voice from heaven is heard, expressing DELIGHT in Jesus the Son. Do you notice that the Speaker is not named? But we know Who it is, for the One being baptized is His Son.

In the Greek, the pronouncement reads, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I am well pleased." The word for Beloved is "agapetos" a deep-seated love, "as great as the heart of God itself" (Hendriksen). He also says, "In the quiet recess of eternity the Son was the object of the Father's inexhaustible

delight." It is the "prototypical" and most excellent relationship in the universe. It had no beginning, no trial period, no periods of cooling off...

And dear ones, when Jesus came to John and expressed His intention to shed His blood for a world lost in sin, this did nothing to DIMINISH the Father's love for the Son! The Spirit fully cooperates with Jesus, and the Father pronounces delight with Jesus. All three are equally interested in our salvation, my friends! And all three are One!

Practical Applications:

1. Live your life in the knowledge that each member of the Trinity is on your side, if you are a Christian. You do not need to fear that Jesus is interested, but that the Father is angry with you and the Spirit is just doing His job! All of the Godhead loves you!
2. If you have not been baptized, do not hesitate. Jesus courageously faced the wrath of God so that you and I might have new life. Do not be afraid to publicly identify with that! There is no shame in saying to your family and friends, "Yes, Jesus is mine. His blood has cleansed me of the penalty and guilt of sin."
3. As we approach the Lord's Table when we remember what He did for us, take note that in a sense, the whole life of Jesus Christ was aimed at what He would do for you on Calvary. The cross was not a career change for Messiah. He lived His life in determination that everything would be fulfilled. Let's celebrate the Lord's Table with a determination on our hearts to always be faithful to Him!

Dartmouth Bible Church  
N. Dartmouth, MA

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
The Lord's Table, 3/1/87

#4

THE REAL JESUS  
God's Elect Servant  
Matthew 12: 15-21

Introduction: For several months now, on the first Sunday of the month when we celebrate the Lord's Table, we have been considering different aspects of Jesus' life. We are working on understanding WHO the real Jesus is, so that when we pray to Him, when we depend on Him, when we sing to Him and when we serve Him, we know WHO we are serving!

The passage I would like us to consider this morning is not one which often gets much attention from preachers. In fact, you are likely to sort of gloss right by it in reading Matthew's Gospel. But it is a passage which has some real food for us, as we seek to understand more about our Savior, and to know Him better!

In this passage, Matthew comments on the fact that Jesus was not concerned about making a great name for Himself. Matthew applies an Old Testament prophecy to Jesus' life at this time, from Isaiah 42. The Pharisees have just decided that this Jesus fellow has got to go: His teachings are too radical; His teaching METHOD too skillful, and He is upsetting people, making them think..."Let's rub Him out!"

Verses 15 & 16 Jesus did not come to earth to make a show of Himself--He wasn't seeking fame. His idea of SUCCESS was to accomplish the will of His Father; and His Father's will was for Him to give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, to raise up dead people and to proclaim the Gospel ("good news") to the poor. His will was ultimately that His Son should make atonement for all the sins of everyone who would ever trust in Him. Jesus wasn't much interested in being awarded an honorary doctorate for His accomplishments; He wasn't concerned about being publicly acclaimed as a great healer. He was just going about the business of being the Messiah, the Chosen One.

We can take a lesson here, dear ones. My hope is that our influence as an evangelical church in Dartmouth will increase. I hope that we will come to be thought of as a good thing to have on Morton Avenue. My desire is that we see more and more people touched with the ministry of the Scriptures. BUT I do not desire that we should become distracted by any successes we may experience! Let's just keep doing our job--let's shy away from anything which promotes vain glory, and let's maintain a simple kind of ministry for the Lord!

Notice that Matthew tells us that AS HE WITHDREW, He healed them all! God looks at people's hearts. He wants us to worship Him privately for what He has done for us. He is most glorified when we serve Him more fully, out of a genuine love because of what He has done--rather than in contriving *officially religious* activities and ceremonies. The life of His people is not so much in the Sunday

morning service or the Sunrise Easter Service or the newspaper article...its in the visit to the hurting made by two or three members of the Body, who, full of gratitude to the Savior for what He has done FOR THEM, seek more fervently to serve Him! Its in the invisible willingness of the members of the Body to forgive each other and to be patient with one another, because of a profound awareness of THEIR OWN NEED of forgiveness and patience by the Lord Jesus.

Matthew tells us that Jesus told those whom He healed to keep His identity secret. Have you ever wondered why that would have been? You might think that since He came as Israel's Messiah, He would want as much publicity as possible??!! Instead, even though He is doing some mighty powerful things, He hushes it up...Dr. S. Lewis Johnson offers this explanation (which seems reasonable to me):

The disciples and others in general still thought of Messiah as political deliverer who would free them from the Roman yoke. They had not yet come to understand that it was the primary purpose of His first coming to carry out the Messianic ministry of redemption from sins through the penal sacrifice. Thus, for them to publicize His healing ministry would no doubt excite false hopes among the [people]. The flames of enthusiasm might well have brought on an untimely end to the public ministry. Time was needed for teaching IN THE LIGHT OF His coming death, teaching that takes up the major part of Matthew 13-27, and teaching in the light of His coming absence from them in the coming age, teaching that is set forth primarily in John 13-17 in the Upper Room Discourse and High Priestly Prayer. It was for this reason that He charged them strictly not to make Him known. POINT: A falsely-based enthusiasm is always a handicap to effective ministry of the Word concerning Christ.

Verses 17-21 In verse 17 Matthew explains further that the reason Jesus wanted to keep His Messianic reputation quiet was because of something He knew Messiah would need to tie into, as spoken by the mouth of Isaiah the prophet about 700 years earlier!

Even though our Savior is the Creator; even though He is completely sovereign and has all power; even though He will yet judge the world; dear ones, your Savior was a humble man! He was concerned that Isaiah's prophecy about Messiah's humility and gentleness should not go neglected...even though there was opportunity for great personal recognition.

Do you see in verse 18 that Jesus Himself was "chosen?" He is the "elect" servant, proclaimed by the Father, encompassed by the Holy Spirit (ask your non-Trinitarian friends to explain the nature of God from this passage!), and with a burden to extend His ministry to Israel, but also to the whole world!

Jesus is the first one to have been elected by the Father. His being chosen ("elected") was done sovereignly by the Father, not just out of the Father's *knowing in advance* that Jesus would fulfill the requirements of Messiahship. Any view of election which states that someone's being chosen by the Father is because the Father *SAW IN ADVANCE* that they would obey, and then chose them based on that, is an anemic and (in this case) insulting view of election. The Savior was the first-born, the first-fruits, and the first-chosen by the Father. God consulted with no one as to who would be the Savior.

Verses 19-21 paint a wonderful picture of the REAL JESUS! These verses were no doubt on Jesus' mind as He disputed with the Pharisees. He would not quarrel with them, and they would not arouse His wrath here. They were consumed with "Is it lawful? Is it lawful?", rarely, if ever, saying, "Is it kind?" (William Hendriksen, Commentary). Jesus on the other hand, just went about healing people and prospering them in the lovingkindness of His nature! They were full of cruelty and He was full of kindness. They were full of vanity and He was full of reserve! They had a real love for display and He continually demonstrated meekness. What a Savior!

Verse 20 (Isaiah 42:3) is most interesting. Matthew applies the verse from Isaiah with a Greek figure of speech ("meiosis", or "litotes"; Bullinger, Figures of Speech Used in the Bible). One thing is lowered in order to INTENSIFY something else by way of contrast. Its like when Isaiah wrote at another place (40:15),

Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold He lifts up the islands like fine dust. --by contrast, the tremendous gulf between God's nature, and our world!

Not only does the REAL Messiah NOT go around trampling broken plants or snuffing out smoldering wicks...He treats whoever is near exhaustion with profound sympathy and real tender concern! Oh that those I know who have fainted in the Christian life through exhaustion might RECAPTURE the Biblical vision of the REAL JESUS!!!!

And our Lord Jesus will continue being just like He is until "He leads justice to victory", that is, at His Second Coming--then the justice of God will triumph completely!

The REAL JESUS gives strength to the weak, to all who pining away, ask Him for help. This is unlike us sometimes. It is almost ALWAYS unlike the world. Was a crueller doctrine ever espoused than, "the survival of the fittest?" Even Christians can fall prey to being selective in who they will fellowship with in their churches. Dear ones, may you and I be touched with the fervent desire to be like Messiah!

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

## SERMON NOTES FROM THE SUNDAY MESSAGES

Dartmouth Bible Church 52 Morton Avenue No. Dartmouth, Mass.

SERIES: THE REAL JESUS (Expositions for the  
Lesson 5 Lord's Table)

May 3, 1987  
Acts 20:35

### A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE IN MAY

Introduction The text we are going to look at this morning, in preparation for our observation of the Lord's Table, is the sort of text you might expect a preacher to bring in December--when there is a lot of thought and attention given to gift-giving. In fact, I've always thought Christmas-time messages on the ethics of gift-giving are sort of ill-timed. Just when you're looking forward to getting that whatever under the tree, along comes the preacher with his talk of giving and not getting! In other words, I would like to suggest that the ethics of giving are not just appropriate sermon material in December. We are going to consider a saying of our Lord Jesus that deals with ethics, as it relates to reaching out and helping the weak.

Few things make evangelical Christianity more attractive and really, more Christlike, than when we concern ourselves unselfishly with the needs of others. The Book of James tells us that this is what pure religion looks like, and the "real Jesus" was a man greatly concerned for the hurting of His day.

As we consider another aspect of the real Jesus, let's ask the Lord to show us how to please Him; how to apply His lifestyle to our own daily lives. When we partake of the Lord's Table together, and together declare His death and resurrection, are we not also saying that we are united to Him and to His commands? It is not enough, dear ones, to simply say that Jesus is in my heart. It is my calling to live like He lived, and to commit myself to make decisions on a daily basis that reflect His Lordship over me. Now, I don't know about you, but I am inclined naturally to be a little selfish. Sometimes I will opt to fulfill my own needs, rather than to decide in favor of the best interests of those around me. But I praise the Lord because He is very patient with me, and He is working in this area of my life. An encouragement to me, is the verse we want to look at this morning.

The Context of Acts 20:35 In Acts 20 the Apostle Paul is giving a farewell address to the elders from a church in which he ministered for three years, the longest he stayed in any church. It is a moving scene, as we read in verses 36-38. Paul knew that this would be their last meeting and there was some grief over it. His address to the elders is sober and serious. I think what Luke has recorded of that address (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) are the "bottom-line" things to remember, not only for local church leaders, but for Christians too.

He deals with about eleven topics (that Luke records, at least):

1. Paul's philosophy and practice of ministry (vss.18-20,25,31,34)
2. The importance of repentance (vs.21a)
3. The importance of faith (vs.21b)
4. Paul's course to come (vss.22-24)
5. Paul's comprehensive teaching ministry (vs.27)
6. The importance of the kingdom (vs.25)
7. Shepherding involves guard duty (vss.28-30)
8. Paul's own integrity in ministry (vss.31,33-35)
9. The importance of the Word (vs.32)
10. The importance of helping the weak (vs.35a)
11. Some important words of Jesus (vs.35b)

The last of Paul's words is what is called a "logion," or, a saying of Jesus Christ that is not recorded in any of the four Gospels. We must remember that Jesus said and did much more in those three years of public ministry than is recorded for us in the four Gospels. John himself says,

And there were also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that were written (John 21:25).

Probably there were certain sources that the four Gospel writers had available to them that were collections of the sayings of Jesus. Matthew and John knew Jesus, but probably Mark did not and surely Luke didn't. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel writers and others (here, Paul) would pass those sayings which were authentic on to later Christians, whether they were orally passed on, or passed on in some other written form. That is how Paul came to know probably, that Jesus had made this statement at some point. (Cf. also Luke 6:38; I Cor.9:14)

Acts 20:35 and God's Will For Us When Christians observe (or, celebrate) the Lord's Table, they are to have an openness to the Lord, and "ears which hear" about what He wants. It is to be a time when we humble ourselves and seek to adjust our thinking to be more in tune with the Holy Spirit.

While these words are recorded only here, and not in the Gospels, their meaning is surely present in the Gospels: Luke 6:38; 11:9; John 13:34. And Paul speaks the same idea to Timothy: I Timothy 5:18,19...

For the past year or so, I have been impressed that worship is not just something that Christians do together. That is much too limited an understanding of worship. In fact, corporate worship is a subject dealt with very little in the New Testament. But individual worship is a subject which receives A LOT of attention in the New Testament, and really, corporate worship is no more pleasing to the Lord Jesus than the "sum of its parts"--if you are at, let's say, 50% of your capacity to honor the Lord this past week, and I am at 60%, and this fellow over here is at 70%, and that lady back there is at 80%, but those guys over there were only at 25%--even if we have one awesome song-service, and a really moving prayer time, and an exceptional sermon...our worship is really only about 51% TOGETHER of what it can be--no matter how well we've imagined that we've worshipped!

What I am suggesting, is that worship is a seven-day activity, not just a one-hour/week thing we do together in this building, with "worship music" (whatever THAT is!), an "order of worship" and a nice, little 30 minute sermon.

In other words, when it comes to pleasing God in our hearts by fulfilling the "law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2), (and all worship IS, is pleasing God--nothing is more important than that!), Sunday morning is only as good as Sunday afternoon through Saturday night was, in total.

When we observe the Lord's Table, and dwell for a time on the real Jesus, who He really was and is, and what He really did for us, and how His life should really affect us...we worshipping Him at the level by which we are committed to Him the rest of the week.

Now, God's will for me is to help the weak. Am I doing that? Are you doing that? If an area of weakness in someone else's life crosses my path, do I look for a way to help the person or family?

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Notice that He did not say Christians should never receive--just that it is a happier state to be in, when you are giving out of what you have, than to be receiving. He also did NOT say that it is more noble to give than to receive, and He did not say (according to this verse, at least) that it is more holy to give than to receive. This is not a verse to get under a guilt trip about, because Paul did not intend to inflict guilt upon the Ephesian elders! But it is a verse to take to heart, when we consider the question, "What is God's will for me this week?", a question I hope we ask ourselves each time we observe the Lord's Table at least!

I like something John Calvin said, in commenting on this saying:

...the disciples of Christ must more studiously think upon this felicity (happiness), that abstaining so much as in them lieth (as much as they can) from that which is another man's, they accustom themselves to give. And yet they must not do this with an haughty (proud) heart, as if it were a miserable thing for them to be in any man's confidence; either through ambition, that they may bind other men to them; but only that they may exercise themselves willingly in the duties of love, and by this means make known the grace of their adoption.

My friends, if that is what Christians in America in 1987 would commit themselves to, the world would sit up and take notice--the world would not be able to help but be impressed! That's what real Christianity is all about! That's the kind of ethics and lifestyle that the Lord Jesus, through His Spirit, is working to bring about in each of our lives--not just giving of what we have through some collection plate or offering box--but giving of our energies to each other, and helping the weak, even when some risk may be involved.

Dear ones, that is worship! That is what the Lord Jesus delights to receive back from us! He has given Himself completely for us. He suffered unspeakable judgement and wrath for us. He gave Himself each day of His ministry, even when it wearied Him greatly. Ministry is hard work! May we consider this saying from Jesus, as we remember His death and resurrection and His claim upon our lives!

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

## SERMON NOTES FROM THE SUNDAY MESSAGES

Dartmouth Bible Church 52 Morton Avenue No. Dartmouth, Mass.

SERIES: The Real Jesus (Expositions for the  
Lesson 6 Lord's Table)

June 7, 1987  
John 1:29,36

### THE LAMB OF GOD

Introduction: In these messages before the Lord's Table, I have wanted to bring before you some aspect of the Lord Jesus' life or ministry which reveals Him more fully for who He really was! We have looked at His birth, His adolescence, His baptism, His office as God's elect servant and last month at one of his lesser known sayings, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

My burden has been to help you (and myself) to think of our Savior *as He really is*, because I think we can so easily FORGET His true nature, and we can fall out of touch with how He really is, and drift into imagination or fear--especially if we grew up with some distorted view of Jesus Christ.

#### Lamb Passage No. 1

Today I would like to look at another biblical description of the "real Jesus." Let's begin with a piece of Old Testament prophecy, written about 700 years before Jesus lived. Let's look first at **Isaiah 53:4-9**. In particular, consider verse 7. There, Isaiah likens the suffering Messiah to a sacrificial lamb.

Now the term "sacrificial lamb" is one of those Christian "buzzwords" that we are so familiar with--and because we are so familiar with certain theological or biblical terms, they tend to quickly zoom into our ears, and then to zoom right out again! So, think with me, as we see HOW the real Jesus was a lamb...

Quietness in the face of oppression is unusual. If I were oppressed I think my first reaction would be to get real angry. As Isaiah the prophet brooded over what Messiah's ministry was going to be like, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he thought of a little lamb being led off to be slaughtered. Now I can think of few things more *pitiful* than a little lamb going off to have its throat slit, can you? I can imagine a big, bad, smelly bull being killed a little easier. I can think of other animals easier too...But to imagine a little lamb--not even a full grown sheep--being put on a leash, or herded with a stick, prancing along, unaware that his death is minutes away--well, as Jerry Falwell put it last week, "that makes my blood boil."

Notice they don't slaughter the lamb "fully clothed." They shear it of its wool first. So there is this little lamb, female, stands there, denuded, looking around silently, if it was cold, shivering no doubt--awaiting the knife. And the lamb offers no protest...

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

## SERMON NOTES FROM THE SUNDAY MESSAGES

Dartmouth Bible Church 52 Morton Avenue No. Dartmouth, Mass.

SERIES: The Real Jesus (Expositions for the  
Lesson 7 Lord's Table)

July 5, 1987  
Ephesians 5:29,30

### JESUS CHRIST: THE MODEL HUSBAND

Introduction The verse we're looking at this morning, in preparation for our time around the Lord's Table is a verse which sits in the middle of Paul's encouragement about how a husband is to *view, treat, talk to, provide for and romance* his wife. That is the CONTEXT of this morning's meditation--and dear ones, always be aware of whether a preacher you are listening to is *preaching in context or not!* If he is not, then either call him on it, or do not listen to him.

But in passing, Paul mentions something about the *character and habit* of the Savior which we might just sort of glide by if we are not careful. It is something we may assume--and we may recite this truth to non-Christians often enough--but I would like for us to dwell on this little phrase this morning, and think about its application in our lives before we declare together His death, burial and resurrection.

It is true that Jesus was a single man. He never took a wife, and yet being who He was, He surely understands what it means to love a woman. Dear ones, Jesus loves His children so deeply. Yes, I have no doubt that there is a kind of affection that He has for the world too--after all it is His creation and the Creator does love His own creation. But He has a deeper and higher love for the Church. Let's consider the verses,

for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the Church, because we are members of His body. Ephesians 5:29,30

We hear the phrase "I love you" spoken so often...It has really become one of the most ineffective cliches, because we are not usually too sure what a person really means when they say "I love you." Do they mean, "You are important to me?"; "You excite me?"; "I guess I'll put up with you a little while longer?"; "I would rather be with you than with anyone else?"; or what??

One of my favorite Beatle songs when I was younger went like this: "I give her all my love, that's all I do. And if you saw my love, you'd love her too--and I love her. She gives me everything, and tenderly. The kiss my lover brings, she brings to me...and I love her..." The music to the song is nice, but it really says next

to nothing---

Some years later Paul McCartney wrote another song that went like this: "Some people want to fill the world with silly love songs. What's wrong with that, I'd like to know...so here I go again: 'I love you...'"

One of the most basic needs men and women have is the need for intimacy with God. People need to know, first of all, IF God loves them...then, if so, HOW does He love them--what proofs can we depend on that it is so, and then, WHAT PRACTICAL VALUE DOES IT HAVE FOR ME THIS WEEK?

Christians need to do a better job than just saying, "Smile, God loves you," and then leaving them with that...

#### THE BIBLE SAYS THAT THE REAL JESUS "NOURISHES" THE CHURCH

First, let's remember what Paul means by "the Church." He does *not* necessarily mean people who grew up in churches. He does not have in mind necessarily all those people who GO to church. When Paul uses the word "church" he doesn't have in mind necessarily people who know a lot about the Bible...

He means that *invisible* assembly of people around the world and over all time who have trusted personally in Jesus' finished work on the cross--who do NOT hope in their own imagined goodness, but who hope solely in Jesus' payment for sin on the cross, and in His promises. THAT is what the Church is, and it is made up of many different kinds of people. It is approximated by the people you see here today...a very accurate approximation, I hope, but still visibly only an approximation...

So, that is who the Bible says Jesus "nourishes." Now this word "nourishes" intrigues me. The word is *ektrephe*, and is used sometimes to mean nursing an infant. The connection is this: A man's care over his own body is that of a nursing mother over her child. The Christian husband is to love his wife in just that way (wives: if you have a Christian husband, you are supposed to be getting a great deal!)--the reason is, because JESUS LOVES US JUST LIKE A NURSING MOTHER. The word occurs again in Ephesians 6:4 where fathers are instructed to "bring up" or nourish their children in the Lord...

Speaking of his own and his colleagues' ministry among the Thessalonian Christians, Paul wrote (*I Thess.2:7*),

But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

Christ sees us in all our weaknesses and failures, and yet loves her as He loves Himself. He loves us NOT because of our beauty--but He loves us TO MAKE US MORE BEAUTIFUL.

What does this mean for Christians?

It means that Jesus, the REAL Jesus, will always seek your best interests. He will watch over you, meet your needs, and nourish you through His Spirit. When you seek to meet Him by spending time with Him in the Word and in prayer, He will ALWAYS feed you. You can depend on it, and not just think, "Well, Lord, I'll have a Quiet Time every day this week, but I know you've only got time to feed me on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday--I'll just do it out of duty on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday."

Paul's statement that the Savior nourishes His body, the Church, means that you will have no shortage of anything and everything YOU need to live as a healthy Christian. This smacks hard up against the flesh which sometimes says to us, "God will NOT supply what you need--you had better take it into your own hands, if you don't want to go insane."

#### THE BIBLE SAYS THAT THE REAL JESUS "CHERISHES" THE CHURCH

Now here is a word not often used in our vocabulary, "cherish". I remember it though, in the song sung by the same name by the group that was known as "The Association,"

"Cherish is the word I use to describe, all the feelings that for you I hide right inside..."

And my first pastor after I became a Christian named his first daughter, "Cherish," which I always thought was kind of special!

But it is an unusual word in today's M-TV, Scwazeneggar-Rambo, high-tech, impersonal, evolutionary culture. What does it mean to "cherish" something or someone. Even in biblical usage it is very rare, and again, it is used in combination with "nourish" in 1 Thess.2:7.

It has the idea of "keeping warm," and "comforting." Now that is HOW the Lord Jesus Christ loves us. He cares for us much more deeply than we tend to imagine.

We get some of our ideas and expectations for love from how our parents loved us, or from other family relationships, or from our spouses. We get some other ideas about love from the media. We might get a few other ideas from history or from reading novels. We learn some other things about love by observing it in varying degrees in Christian churches.

But the Bible tells us that Jesus loves His own by "cherishing" them, like the finest (yea, FAR ABOVE) the finest jewel! He knows, like an infant, we NEED His tender care and watchfulness, and He does not hesitate to hold us close to Him.

I depend on this. It is the most wonderful thing I can think about. As we share praise and prayer around His table, and dwell on who the Bible says Jesus Christ really is, let's love Him more because He promises to always nourish and cherish us!

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

SERMON NOTES  
FROM THE  
SUNDAY MESSAGES

Dartmouth Bible Church 52 Morton Avenue No. Dartmouth, Mass.

SERIES: The Real Jesus (Expositions for the  
Lesson 8 Lord's Table)

August 2, 1987  
Mark 14:22-26

## A RARE CEREMONY

Introduction People have the inclination to be mystical. Even Christians often want the religious activities of their lives to carry a mystical air to them. Somehow, if I feel ethereal, atmospheric or other-worldly about something I have done--especially a worship activity--then I am inclined to feel that it was more real, and in fact more pleasing to the Lord.

For most of the history of the Church, Christians have been this way. In many churches there are a lot of ceremonies, and complicated techniques that must be learned in order to feel like you are really a faithful church member. I do not have in mind just one church when I say that either--MANY churches, while different in how they arrange the furniture, share a common conviction, that to be real, worship must be complicated and mystical.

When I was in Junior High School, I was an acolyte in the Lutheran church in our town. I took my duties seriously, and learned them all perfectly. The service was a very "high" kind of a service, and the liturgy was fairly complex--but I grew to love it, and even when most Sundays my parents were not attending church, I wanted to be there, whether I was "on duty" or not. It was the sense that God must be hearing my worship, because it's all so beautifully mystical and complicated. And the robes were pretty impressive too! But it was a false sense. It was that tendency to think that God accepts my worship, not because I have personally trusted in Jesus' work on the cross--but because I was participating SINCERELY in the system of worship set up by the church...

In the 1600's in England, there were a growing number of simple, "meat-and-potatoes", Bible-believing Christians. They had rediscovered the wonderful promises of Scripture, and they wanted to be able to worship the Lord simply and purely. They didn't like fancy buildings. They hated the idea of the preacher wearing special vestments. They didn't like being told that they HAD to sing a certain approved liturgy in church. They just wanted to praise the Lord, simply, biblically, and freely. The State at that time controlled the Church, and deemed it

illegal to worship the Lord in any way other than that approved by the Church of England. But these Christians worshipped the Lord *anyway*, and sometimes they were severely persecuted. They were called "the Puritans" because their opponents sneered, "You people think you're so pure and unimpaired!"

Dear ones, when you and I celebrate the Lord's Table, it is a simple thing. It is a ceremony. It is one of only a very few that we recognize. Many churches have a whole calendar full of all kinds of various ceremonies and obligations. We have a much simpler kind of worship. We have the Lord's Table, believer's baptism, wedding ceremonies, and ordination vows for elders, and that's really it...

In verse 12 of Mark 14 we read that it is the season of Passover. The Passover ceremony, even for simple folks in their homes, was a more complicated event...it involved ceremonial washing (which John records in ch.13), it involved drinking the cup four times, and breaking the bread three times. The Lord Jesus was instituting a *new* ceremony, which should be honored and kept with equal devotion, but one which is more basic--and which really, Passover looked forward to. If you have trusted Christ personally, then your sins are washed away--you are completely "passed over" in regard to God's righteous judgement on sin. You do not have to atone for one single sin, if you have trusted Jesus personally and completely in your heart and mind!

Today, we're looking again at that very simple, but profoundly significant FIRST Lord's Table ceremony. I hope you will be refreshed and motivated as we look at it, as Mark recorded it. And, if this way of doing things is really new to you, won't you open your heart to what this ceremony, simple though it is, is really intended to do for us?

Mark 14:22 When Jesus first instituted His ceremony, it was not rushed. It DID occur, however during the Passover meal, and the disciples were all relaxed and reclining at the table. The Lord's Table should never be hurried. If you feel hurried, or worried about the time, it would be better to pass the elements by, rather than to have a feeling of "let's hurry up and get this over with." This is one reason why our brothers and sisters who attend "brethren" churches like to have a whole meeting devoted just to the Lord's Table--it is important not to rush it, but that the people are free to relax and to give some time to contemplating the significance of what they're doing!

The bread Jesus used was no doubt a flat piece of unleavened bread, and it interests me that He gave a blessing. Probably, He said something like,

"Praised be Thou, O Lord, Sovereign of the world, who causes bread to come forth from the earth." It was characteristic, then, for those present, to IDENTIFY themselves with this blessing by saying, "Amen." (The Mishnah, *Berechoth*, VI,I; quoted in Lane, *Mark*, NIC).

Then He distributed it to them. Isn't it wonderful that Jesus *HIMSELF* is involved here. He has not distanced Himself from His disciples in this, even though it is definitely a ceremony. He is FAR above the

people, but He doesn't act like He is above them. I can just picture Him at the end of the table, getting up, walking around and giving each person a piece of this bread, looking kindly into their eyes, and when everyone had a piece, He says, "Take it, this is My body."

Jesus wasn't referring to His physical body as such, but to His *person*. He was saying, "I am myself this (bread)" or "my person is this (bread)". He was *giving them a PLEDGE of His personal presence with them whenever they broke bread together*. The main point was the DISTRIBUTION of the bread.

As certainly as the disciples eat the bread which Jesus hands to them, so certainly will He be present with them whenever they gather together for fellowship [in His name]. Jesus' first gift to the disciples was the pledge of His abiding presence with them in spite of His betrayal and death. The first word thus anticipates the resurrection and the real presence of the Lord at the celebration... (Lane, p.506).

We may have some unlearning to do when we think about the ceremony of the Lord's Table. Its significance does not lie in the bread and wine (or, grape juice itself). If you think that you are sidetracked! The importance is the statement we make, and the special presence of the Lord when Christians make this joint statement. It is really of little significance where it is done, what kind of elements are used (although it is helpful to use the most appropriate symbols, because Jesus Himself did that!) It is not "Who is watching me?" It is not "what kind of points do I make with God because I'm doing this?"

It is simply the cry of a child of God, "Thanks Lord! I love you! I know you loved me first--I remember what you went through for me."

Verse 23 Probably there was an interval of time that passed between the bread and the cup, judging from Paul's account of the event (I Cor.11:23-25). When they had had sufficient time to digest the meaning of what He had said with the bread, He picks up a cup. Notice that He gives thanks--

Dear ones, never be ashamed because you give thanks for your food. Jesus Himself was thankful! He gave us the example of giving thanks, and we ought to not consider ourselves as less needy of giving thanks! When the leader up front gives thanks out loud, you do the same thing silently.

Do you see that they used a common cup? That tends to emphasize the fellowship end of it, and the bonds which all Christians share in Christ. That is important to God! Unity among Christians is not something that man dreamed up--

Now, the important thing, again, is not the FORMS that we use, although they can be helpful, and should be appropriate--and folks are SO apt to get lost in the forms, and to think that in the forms they have a blessing--the important thing is the ATTITUDE and what we're thinking about when we're doing it!

It is *NOT THIS CEREMONY* which effects, ratifies, brings into play, makes real, gives the benefit, brings the blessings-- it is *WHAT JESUS DID FOR YOU AND I* (if we have trusted Him) which brings the blessings!

It is good to do this regularly, not because going through a ceremony every so often keeps your tank gassed up with some sort of mystical fuel, but because it is HEALTHY to regularly pull aside, and count your blessings--and that is really all that the Lord's Table is meant to be!

Verse 24 You and I need to focus in on the fact that our God is a covenant MAKING and a covenant KEEPING God. It is His very nature to enjoy making promises to His people, and then in honoring them. He doesn't age, and He doesn't get tired of keeping His promises!

Jesus said that when He would go to the cross, it would be because He and His Father had made a promise ages before! Because of man's sinful state, man needed a redeemer who would atone for sins with His very blood--even to THAT DEPTH! This redeemer's very life would be required of Him, so distant and fallen had man chosen to become...

Notice that the atonement He is picturing is on behalf of many.

He was no doubt thinking about what Isaiah (53:12) said 600 years earlier, "Therefore, I [the Lord] will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.

Jesus' death would be sufficient to redeem as many millions and billions of people over time, as would trust in it personally! Its benefits will not run out, and the bottom of the well cannot run dry. Indeed, many billions of people make up the Body of Christ...from every tribe and nation on the earth, and all kinds of people! Praise God, the Gospel applies to all, not just a select kind of people. That is the good news!

Verses 25, 26 Jesus seldom spoke about His death without looking beyond it. He strengthened Himself at this last meal of His, (before His resurrection) by thinking about the future. Paul told the Thessalonian believers the same thing. After he told them some of the details about the future, as they would happen, he told them, "Therefore comfort one another with these words" (4:18).

The Bible teaches that after Jesus comes back, and takes care of everything here on the earth, that there will be a magnificent feast--not a gluttonous, lustful affair--but a holy and joyous time when He will be with the Bride, the Church. At that time, Jesus was saying, He will again raise the cup and celebrate His being with us.

Dear ones, Jesus Christ loves to be WITH His people. He delights to fellowship with us, and to refresh us and rejuvenate us--that's why that new wine will be so wonderful! That first swallow will be exquisite as we sit with the Sovereign Creator, our Savior, our Lord, our friend!

Finally, they sung a hymn, probably one of the Hallel (praise) Psalms, maybe Psalm 118. That was the end of the first Lord's Table. It wasn't a complicated ceremony. The disciples probably were a little confused by the simplicity of it. Don't you be confused by the simplicity of those few ceremonies we celebrate...Remember that these simple ceremonies just POINT to a deeper reality. The Lord's Table is a memorial of what Jesus Christ did for us. Have you trusted in that? If you are unsure, just ask Him into your heart to be YOUR Savior. And, talk with one of us about it. Bob Whitlow will be around and you can speak him today if you would like to! May God help you to seek Him, and may we all love Him more for the shed blood of the Lamb!

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

SERMON NOTES  
FROM THE  
SUNDAY MESSAGES

Dartmouth Bible Church 52 Morton Avenue No. Dartmouth, Mass.

SERIES: The Real Jesus (Expositions for  
Lesson 9 the Lord's Table)

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
October 4, 1987

*THE WAY JESUS WAS: WHAT YOU MIGHT NOT EXPECT!*  
Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45

Introduction It is one thing to say that I know Christ personally. It is another thing to be a real disciple of Him. Society is quite full of all kinds of people who profess that they have had an experience with Christ... It is interesting to me that in this part of the country no one wants to be thought of as *godless*. In other areas of the nation, people are quite proud of their dislike of Christianity. But around here, when that is evident in someone, or a group, the general public seems to find it distasteful. Hardly anyone wants to be thought of as "non-Christian." There are a whole lot of people who say that they own Christ in their hearts. It is still popular to go to church once in a while, to belong to some nice religious organizations and to keep up on one's dues. In fact, some folks are proud of their standing in their churches. Their names are engraved on the church furniture; they hold all kinds of various ecclesiastical titles; they exert no small influence in the lives of their pew-neighbors. If you are thought of as a "great churchman" (or churchwoman), this is one of the finest kinds of prestige there is! In New England, with all its spiritual coldness, some of the most powerful politicians; some of the most brainy scholars; some of the wealthiest businessmen, still attend church on occasion.

In Mike Ponte's Sunday School class last week, I was intrigued by one of the discussion questions, which asked, "*Why do we fear being ORDINARY or AVERAGE?*" Because we think greatness is pretty neat! We esteem those who are profoundly successful in what they do.

But how would you feel if I had a crystal ball, and I could look into it and tell you how prominent a life you are going to have in the next ten years? Let's say I could pinpoint exactly how "high" in the church you would stand; how much influence over people you would possess; maybe I could tell you too how successful you are going to be in ten years in terms of your work and the money you bring home. Would that interest you?

Needless to say, I have no such ball. And I do not know how "great" you are going to be, as you do what you do with your life...

Dear ones, Jesus has not left us without a word from Himself on this matter. But it cuts across the grain of what the world tells us greatness is; it may cut across the grain of what your *own desires* tell you greatness is... What Jesus had to say about greatness flew right in the face of His own disciples even; right in the face of two of His closest disciples! The "real Jesus" surprises us sometimes!

Today we are looking at what I think is the greatest text ever spoken by the Lord about the meaning of His life and death. It defines "greatness." It is that of which true greatness consists. As we move towards the Lord's Table together today, I pray you and I will be touched with the truth that **IF WE TRUST IN HIS DEATH** (as probably all of you would profess) **THEN WE ARE TO IMITATE HIS SACRIFICE** (Maclaren).

This is what we are looking at today--those who really have entrusted their debt of sin to the death of Christ will reflect that fact, in choosing to be servants of one another.

Jesus knew that His church in the first decades of its history would have many, many slaves in it. Slavery was as common in the ancient world as automobiles are today! Probably somewhere around one in three people in Jesus' time either were or at some point had been slaves. So as Christians knew well what slavery was, so Jesus told them that they should imitate His example of being a servant, and sacrificing His life.

This is hard for us to grasp, I know. We are conditioned and influenced by OUR society, which tells us we are slaves of **NO ONE**, and the most important master is **ME!**

But dear ones, part of the Lord's Table is to call us back to today's verse! If we trust in His death, we are to imitate His sacrifice! Now, let's look at what Jesus said in some detail...

#### James and John Want Some Recognition (Matt.20:20-24)

If you ever feel defeated by the great victories for the Lord by some of the apostles, you have to be encouraged by the real blunders of others! Of course all were fallible, but it warms my heart to read in Scripture that sometimes they too could really "miss the boat", or get off the track!

This reading is interesting because the parallel passage in Mark 10 (vs.35, in particular) doesn't mention the mother of James and John. Mark says that these two "sons of thunder" wanted to be preeminent in the future Kingdom of Christ. Matthew says it is their mother who asks for them. I take it from this that these two "senior apostles" put their mother up to it! In fact, since the Lord's reply is really directed to them, it would seem that He sees right through the little plan--so did the other disciples (vs.24)!

Ambition can be a good thing. It is good to be driven by the conviction and desire to be the best at whatever you're doing. I have ambitions. I want us to have the most theologically

balanced and evangelistically alive church in the area. I also am driven by the desire to see this church fully functional internally; that is, every person fulfilling God's ministry for them--with an absolute MINIMUM of bureaucracy! I feel that doing things with excellence honors the Lord--and so, I do have ambitions. BUT, ambition can also be destructive if it is motivated by pride or selfishness. People can really grow to enjoy the admiration and respect of others. People in ministry especially must be careful to monitor their motivations!

In this passage Jesus asks James and John if they were "able to drink the cup that I drink?" They must learn that the cross precedes the crown! He is asking them, "ARE YOU WILLING TO IMITATE MY SACRIFICE?" My friends, are you willing to imitate His sacrifice, *as the natural consequence of having trusted in His death?* Well, what does it look like in real life? What does "imitating His sacrifice" have to do with me in MY particular set of circumstances? Jesus tells us specifically what He has in mind:

We are to "Enslave" Ourselves To Each Other (vss. 25-27)

In verse 25, Jesus draws their attention to the way powerful non-Christians use their power and influence: they "lord it over" people and really flaunt their authority. This has always been the case when people are motivated by the flesh; in political, social or even religious circles...

Leadership in the Body of Christ is to be quite different, Peter wrote (*I Peter 5:2,3*). And Jesus told them also in Matthew 20 that:

- a. Greatness is proportional to how much a person is a servant of others, and,
- b. Being the "greatest of the great" (first) is proportional to how much a person enslaves himself to others.

Now Jesus is not calling us to be stupid. He doesn't ask us to intentionally make our families miserable so that we can have ministry.

I can think of no more distasteful example of twisted Christianity than the church or movement that would encourage a man or woman to do something, either IN the ministry or OUT, that would undermine the health and growth of that person's own family.

So, Jesus does not want us to so become involved with ministry that our families pay the price. But my friends, after your family there should be few barriers to your pressing on and discovering HOW you can minister, and doing it with a vigor and zeal for Christ!

I am anxious that we are more and more becoming a group of organized people who go out of their way to help each other. THAT WE DO NOT BECOME COMPLACENT and satisfied with maintaining a deacons' fund, or organizing meals for folks sometimes.

You may not like everyone in this Body with the same enthusiasm, but one of the signs that you are growing is that you LOOK FOR ways to minister WHEREVER THE NEED EXISTS. Are we doing this? That is what a Spirit-filled church looks like.

It may involve attending a ministry meeting at a time not completely convenient for you. It may involve making a visit to someone you don't know real well. It may involve being involved in some ministry you are not naturally excited about. It may involve giving more of a financial gift than you are accustomed to giving. It is one thing to SING a "praise song" which repeats the phrase "I love you, Lord" numerous times...it is another step to practice it outside this building! The bottom line is not the how much of your time, self or money, but the condition of your heart as regards servanthood, because THOSE WHO HAVE TRUSTED IN JESUS' DEATH, WILL IMITATE HIS SACRIFICE!

#### WHAT THIS HAS TO DO WITH THE LORD'S TABLE (vs. 28)

The example <sup>be</sup> Jesus was, was as a sacrificer to the maximum! He did not come to ~~served~~ (though He could have). In His first coming, He did not come to be recognized with grandiose titles (NOTE: here He uses His favorite title, "Son of Man.") The word used for "serve" is *diakoneo* from which we derive "deacon."

His life was a ransom--a substitute price for a very real debt! He did it without RELUCTANCE, and "the sweep of His service embraced all who came into contact with Him..." (S. Lewis Johnson)

We remember and reflect on that ransom payment when we have the Lord's Table. Have you personally committed yourself to it, by faith alone? Do you depend on Jesus' having paid a terrible ransom price for you?

May God help us to perceive the reality of His payment more fully in our daily walk with Him and in our service of one another, because we more passionately desire to imitate His sacrifice--out of our love for Him!