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### “The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 31”

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#### Luke 17:7-10

**7 And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’?**

**8 But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’?**

**9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.**

**10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’ ”**

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

In our last lesson, we discussed the concept of submission. The life of Jesus Christ is the paradigm for submissiveness, in that Jesus submitted Himself to the plan of God, and submitted to the most intense and hideous of torture as He took on the punishment for the totality of all sins that have ever been and will ever be committed in the entire history of the world.

The Jewish chief priests and Pharisees sent guards, led by Judas, to the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. While Jesus was prepared to submit to the administration of the guards, one of His disciples was not so sanguine about the situation. **Matthew 26:51** records: **51 And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.**

Jesus responded to his friend that was defending Him, in **Matthew 26:52-53**

**52 But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.**

**53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?**

So, all Jesus had to do to avoid His arrest and abuse at the hands of the Jews, His crucifixion at the hands of the Romans and His three hour separation from God, was to pray. He did not have to call upon His disciples to defend Him, or call down fire to consume the ones that had come to take Him as the record records that Elijah had done. Jesus only had to pray, and the proof of the power of His prayer would have been that ten legions of angels would come to defend Him. Understand that two angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah as though they had

never been built, so it is pretty clear that ten legions of angels could certainly have defended Jesus' position.

So why was Jesus talking to Peter rather than praying? Jesus said, in **Matthew 26:54: 54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"**

Jesus' arrest and passion, the mocking, the beating, the crown of thorns, the rejection by the Jews, the crucifixion by the Romans and the three hour separation from God Himself were part of God's plan for the salvation of man. God made it clear that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was required in order for mankind to be forgiven of sin and regenerated into that which God originally intended that we be.

God says, through the prophet Jeremiah, in **Jeremiah 31:31-32:**

**31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—**

**32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.**

The covenant to which God refers in **Jeremiah 31:31** is the Mosaic covenant, including all of the animal sacrifices that the Jews were to perform to show their remorse for their sins. The Jews broke the covenant in that they performed the sacrifices only in order to keep the letter of the law. Even as they performed the sacrifices, the Jews did not actually have remorse for or repent of their sins, which was the spirit that the performance of the sacrifices according to the letter of the law was supposed to symbolize. In the "b" portion of **Jeremiah 31:32**, God equates the faithlessness of the Jews with that of an unfaithful wife, who not only has marital relations with her husband, but with other men as well. But then, God goes on to say, in **Jeremiah 31:33-34:**

**33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**

**34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."**

The Mosaic covenant that called for the sacrifices for sins is being changed by God from one in which we are personally responsible for our sins to one in which the responsibility for our sins has been charged to the One who made the New Covenant possible, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our Savior as He both saved (past tense) and saves (present tense) and will save (future tense) all of us from the consequences of our sins.

Let us suppose that this book that I have in my hands is a detailed account of my life. Every thought that I have ever had, every deed that I have ever done, and every word that I have ever spoken is recorded in this book. We all have books like this one, and the Bible says that a day is coming in which we are going to be judged according to the contents of this book.

**Revelation 20:12 says:**

**12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.**

The Lord Jesus Christ will be doing the reading, as the “a” portion of **1Corinthians 4:5** says:

**5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.**

Luke 12:2-3 tells us:

**2 For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known.**

**3 Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.**

So, there is a comprehensive record of my life upon which I am going to be judged, and I can tell you now that if I have to stand on the contents of my record, I am doomed to hell, because there is a great deal of sin in my book. Things that I have thought, said and done that I ought not have are written and recorded in the book of my life, and the “a” portion of **Romans 6:23** tells me:

**23 For the wages of sin is death.**

But, out on Calvary’s Hill, Jesus Christ hung on the Cross while God opened all of the books of all of the sinners that have ever lived since the foundation of the world and will ever live until the time of the Great White Throne judgment, including mine. God then developed a punishment great enough to atone for all of those sins, and poured it down on Jesus Christ. **Luke 23:44-45** tells us:

**44 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.**

**45 Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two.**

The veil of the temple separated the Holy Place, in which only the Jewish priests could go to prepare sacrifices, from the Most Holy Place, into which only the Jewish high priest could go, and the priest could only enter once a year of the Day of Atonement, and only to offer the annual sacrifice for the sins of the people. However, with the tearing of the veil, this Most Holy Place in which the sacrifices for sins was made was no longer Most Holy. The annual sacrifice for sin was no longer necessary, because, as **Hebrews 10:14** tells us:

**14 For by one offering [Jesus Christ] has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**

So, I have been perfected. This does not mean that I have lived a perfect life, but that when Jesus Christ opens up my book at the Judgment, my record will be clean; there will be no sin recorded in my book, not because of my goodness, because all my sins were cleansed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, because He paid the penalty for them on Calvary’s Cross. God explains, in **Hebrews 10:11-12**:

**11 And every [Old Testament] priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.**

**12 But this Man [Jesus Christ], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,**

And once Jesus Christ rose physically from the dead, He sent us the Holy Spirit to witness His covenant and His laws to us, as **Hebrews 10:15-18** tells us:

**15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,**

**16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,”**

**17 then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”**

**18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.**

So, the day of sacrifices is over, and the day of the Holy Spirit has come. The administration of the Holy Spirit is designed to change our hearts and minds so that we will follow God’s laws, not because of external enforcement, but because we agree with God’s laws internally. We are no longer to perform the sacrifices in the ceremonial Law of God; we are now to be changed by the Holy Spirit so that we are in personal agreement with the moral Law of God. The Law of God is no longer commandments on tablets of stone as they were in the days of Israel, but they are now in our hearts and minds.

This is true of everyone that is saved. If you are a true believer in Jesus Christ, you have a new heart and a new mind, that is, a new way of thinking inspired by the Holy Spirit which enables you to follow the Law of God. The cowardly disciples who ran and denied Jesus Christ when He was arrested received the Holy Spirit, who changed their minds and so that they decided to become bold witnesses for Him. Peter, who denied Jesus Christ in the very shadow of the Cross, became a great evangelist, as **Acts 2:1-4, 14, 22-41** records:

**1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.**

**2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.**

**3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.**

**4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

**14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.**

**22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—**

**23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;**

**24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.**

**25 For David says concerning Him: ‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.**

**26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.**

**27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.**

**28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’**

**29 “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.**

**30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,**

31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

34 “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand,

35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

That was Peter’s first sermon, but it was not his last. Peter preached the gospel until his death. History records that Peter was crucified because of his devoted preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but was given the option to recant his belief in Christianity in order to avoid execution. Rather than denying Christ as He did outside Calvary, Peter responded that he wanted to be crucified upside down because he was not worthy to hang on the Cross in the way that Jesus did. This was the same Peter that denied that he even knew Jesus just before Jesus was crucified.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of submission to God’s will. **Romans 8:13-14** records:

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Jesus Christ is the paradigm for being a Son of God, because He said, in **Matthew 26:39**:  
39 “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

It is important for us to understand that although God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit, we still have the responsibility to agree with Him and say, “**nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will**”, as did Jesus. **Romans 8:13** says “if” you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. “If” means that after receiving the Holy Spirit, we still have to choose to follow His direction. After receiving the Holy Spirit, we still have our free will. Paul instructs us, in **Ephesians 4:30-32**:

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.



**31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.**

**32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**

And Paul also admonishes us, in **1 Thessalonians 5:19**:

**19 Do not quench the Spirit.**

The function of the Spirit of God is to make us submissive to the will of God, but we still have the ability to choose to live according to the flesh. As **Ephesians 4** and **1 Thessalonians 5** tell us, we have the capacity to disregard, or quench the influence of the Holy Spirit, causing Him grief. So the Apostle James tells us, in **James 4:7-10**:

**7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

**8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

**10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**

**Ephesians 4:31-32** describes that which God means when He tells us to humble ourselves. When we humble ourselves, we put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking and malice. We become kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving to one another, even as God in Christ forgave us. The focus of submission to one another is love for one another. Thus, the key concept around which the idea of submission is built is marriage. **Ephesians 5:20-21** begins: **20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**21 submitting to one another in the fear [meaning respect] of God.**

We are to submit to one another in the fear of God because our submission is our emulation of Christ, who submitted to God as He sacrificed Himself on the Cross. Christ submitted because He knew that God loved Him, and that God loved us, and that God sent Him to demonstrate His love for us. The foundation of submission is mutual love, which is why the next verse, **Ephesians 5:22**, says:

**22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.**

In order for submission to be in order, a loving relationship must first be established. When Jesus came into the world, He was not called upon to give His life on the Cross on the first day. Jesus lived for thirty-three years on this earth wielding the power of God. He healed the sick, raised the dead, cast our demons and cleansed lepers. Jesus spoke a word and the sea calmed, touched blinded eyes and they opened, and healed a woman with an issue of blood without any overt act on His part, as she just touched the hem of His garment. All power on earth was in Jesus' hand, because it was given to Him by God, because God loved and trusted Him.

The key to the marital relationship is love. Wives should only submit to husbands that love them. As a matter of fact, let me go back. Women should only marry men that love them. The purpose of courtship is to give the man the opportunity to prove his love for a woman. Women, it is your responsibility to do your due diligence to make sure that the man that you marry loves you. **John 3:16** tells us:

**16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

Love means giving. In the normal case, a man should be able to provide for his wife and his future children before he asks a woman for her hand in marriage, and he should be able to prove it. And the Bible tells us that we have the responsibility to mutually give ourselves to one another as husbands and wives. We are to build a relationship with our spouse that is unique among all of our other relationships in that we are to totally give ourselves to one another and intertwine our lives with one another. We have difficulties in our marriages when we allow situations and circumstances to draw us away from one another.

Any relationship that draws us away from one another is a breach of our vows. **Matthew 13:22** tells us:

**22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.**

James has already told us that the devil is our adversary. Just as God tells us that love and happiness comes to us as we devote ourselves to one another, the devil works to convince us that there are things in life besides our marital relationships that are more important. The devil uses the excitement of the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches to draw us away from one another. The things of this life are intended for our pleasure, as **1 Timothy 6:17** tells us that God has given us all things richly to enjoy, but our acquisition and enjoyment of things is not intended to replace our prime relationship, which is our submission to God and to one another in marriage.

So the cementing of our lives together in marriage is the most important human relationship that we can have, and it is designed to be a relationship of submission and love. But God does not rely on a strictly intellectual relationship to cement us together; as the two do not become one simply because of an agreement on paper. Marriage is more than a state of mind; marriage is a mutual act, and I don't mean the act of acquiring possessions. **1 Corinthians 7:2-5** says:

**2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.**

**3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.**

**4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.**

**5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.**

Sex is the glue to the marital relationship. The real reason that a man marries a woman is to have sex with her freely, and on a regular basis. Paul admonishes husbands and wives to not deprive one another sexually, and Paul makes this statement because sexual deprivation is a potential issue. God gives us commandments because we have a penchant to disobey them.

**1 Corinthians 7** tells us that that Satan is the one that tempts us to deprive one another. God wants us in love with one another, and Satan wants us divorced from one another. The one who sows the bad seed is the enemy. God tells wives to submit to their husbands' sexual needs, God tells husbands to make sure that their wives feel loved by taking the time to make sure that

their wives enjoy the sexual experience as well, and Satan does all that he can to seduce men away from their wives while simultaneously tempting wives to deprive their husbands.

But the key to marriage is for each partner to give the other partner what they want, sexually. God has designed human sexuality much like ballroom dancing in that each gender has a different part to learn, and both genders have to learn how to do it. A loving marital sexual experience requires time and effort on the part of both husband and wife, and we can improve our lovemaking skills over time, if we learn our partner's preferences and practice the proper techniques, including, wives, submit to your husbands and husbands, love your wives.

Without the glue of sexuality, it is much more difficult for us to keep our marital commitments, and much easier for Satan to tempt us because of our lack of self-control, which is exactly why God gave us commandments to exercise our sexuality within our marital relationships, and only within our marital relationships.

So, sexuality is the command from God, and we are to fulfill it. We read last week that a man can only lead in God's church if he is faithful to one wife and has successfully raised children, which requires this sexual commitment be met. And Jesus gives us a parable about submission in our text, which is found in **Luke 17:7-10**:

**7 And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'?**

**8 But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?**

**9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.**

**10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' "**

We are God's servants. As we follow God's admonitions and keep His commandments, we are only doing our duty. If our work is hard and our relationships are difficult, we have to understand that we are only servants. Now, we are blessed servants, because God makes our servitude as pleasant for us as we will allow it to be, but I'm here to tell you that the day is going to come in which our servitude will become difficult.

Part of the marriage vow says, "for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, and in sickness and in health". It is very likely that we are going to have to minister to our husbands and wives during days in which they are not going to be in very good shape. It is not always going to be exciting sexual intimacy and economic prosperity. Some days things are going to be difficult. But the marital vow and the enjoyment of our relationships because of the goodness of God gives us the responsibility to hang in there during the difficult times because first of all, we are God's servants, and secondly, as we gain longevity in our relationships, we become role models for the next generation. Our children and grandchildren see the way that we behave and learn from it. It would be wonderful if they followed the admonition of the Scripture as well, our influence on the next generation is great as they observe us during times of trouble. And God wants is to influence them positively.

I thank God for my Dad, who personally, in the most hands-on manner possible, attended to my Mom throughout her final illness, and was at her bedside, holding her hand, when she died. I found out from Dad exactly what "until death us do part" means. Dad never complained



or played the martyr role, because he and Mom had their good years, traveling around the world and living the good life. In the end, Dad recognized, as he took care of Mom, that he was just doing his duty, as a servant of God.

As we go down from this place, let us consider our duty to our spouses, as servants of God. Let us not allow the devil to tempt us and to talk us out of the joy that God has ordained for us as husbands and wives, the joy of the intimate relationship that we can have with one another if we give ourselves to one another as Christ gave Himself for us. Let us be physically affectionate with our spouses; let us be emotionally supportive to our spouses, and let us submit to and love our spouses sacrificially, just as Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us.

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