



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 42”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



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Matthew 21:42

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’ ?

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.

People find it extremely difficult to do something that they don’t want to do. We human beings are born helpless and cute so that our parents will care for us, regardless of how inconvenient they may find the duties of childcare. As infants, our metabolic rate is growing, our ability to store sustenance is limited and we have no capacity to prepare food for ourselves. When we get hungry, be it in the middle of the day or at two am, there isn’t really much that we can do about it personally, and so our recourse is to cry out for help. In the normative case, within a few minutes, someone brings us sustenance that we can suck in to cure our hunger problem.

To have people waiting on us is intoxicating. It doesn’t take us long to get used to it. Self-centeredness is one of the foundational human characteristics. Psychologists say that human babies see their mother’s breast as an extension of themselves, which is why they are so perturbed when “their” breast is not instantly available. It takes several months or maybe a couple of years of development before a baby can see the breast as belonging to his or her mother rather than to themselves.

One of my parents’ good friends was a pediatrician in Chicago. For some reason, this lady never had children, but, at an advanced age, after establishing her medical career and the affluent lifestyle that went with it, she adopted a little boy. She happened to be in Lansing one day, and she and little Frank, who was about three years old at the time, stopped by to visit. When little Frank came into our house, he saw something on the coffee table that attracted his attention. He walked over to it, picked it up, looked at me, and said, “Mine.”

Paul hadn’t been born at the time, and I didn’t have any experience parenting toddlers. So, I was immediately struck with the presumptuousness of this little boy. “Frank”, I said to him and his mother, “you don’t know me all that well. How can you possibly come into my house, in which you’ve never been before, see something that you’ve never laid eyes on before, pick it up and say “Mine”? How in the name of good googlely moogly does this get to be yours?”



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But Frank was an immature human being, being raised by a well-to-do mother. At his tender age, his perception was that the world was his, and that his mother was responsible to get him anything that he wanted. Of course, that's not necessarily a good way to raise a child. The story is told of a young queen that had a child, and then called upon a young woman to be the royal nanny. "My son is the future ruler of the kingdom", she told the nanny, "and he is to have anything that he wants."

The young woman said, "Yes, ma'am" and proceeded to tend to the little boy. As the young queen left the prince's chambers, she heard a loud scream followed by crying, and immediately went back to see what was the matter. When she reentered the room, she saw the young prince holding his hand and crying. "What happened?" she asked the young nanny, "Why is he crying?"

"There was a wasp in the window", the young nanny replied, "and he wanted it."

The moral of the story is that everything that is good to you is not good for you.

We are born with the immaturity of self-centeredness, but a good parent will raise us in such a way that we develop the capacity for personal responsibility and the ability to put our wants and needs aside in order to take care of our responsibilities.

Some people never learn this. Some people never mature past the entitlement mentality with which they are born. To be catered to when born helpless is the infant stage of spiritual development, but the Lord tells us, in **Proverbs 22:6**:

6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

What does this mean, exactly? **Proverbs 22:15** tells us:

15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

Think of how foolish it was for little Frank to come into my house, pick something up from my coffee table and claim it as his own. The only reason that Frank got away with it was that he was three years old, I saw him do it, and he couldn't get it out of the house. Had Frank actually stolen an item from me, I would have expected his mother to return it to me, and then give Frank the correction that the Bible proscribes for foolishness.

Little Frank was not a unique child. The Bible teaches us, in **Proverbs 22:15**, that we are all born foolish. Foolishness is a universal condition; that is why God admonishes us, in **Proverbs 22:6**, to train our children. The reason, however, that God has to command us to do this training is that everyone does not want to do the required training. Remember the young queen. She wanted her son to have whatever he wanted, to be happy all of the time. This may seem like a benevolent way to raise children, but if we do not drive the foolishness from



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our children's hearts, they become monsters. **Psalm 14:1** tells us:

1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

The Scripture equates foolishness with wickedness by giving both the characteristic of being ungodly, as **Psalm 10:3-11** tells us:

3 For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire; He blesses the greedy and renounces the LORD.

4 The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.

5 His ways are always prospering; Your [God's] judgments are far above, out of his sight; As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.

6 He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity."

7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity.

8 He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the secret places he murders the innocent; His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless.

9 He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; He lies in wait to catch the poor; He catches the poor when he draws him into his net.

10 So he crouches, he lies low, That the helpless may fall by his strength.

11 He has said in his heart, "God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see."

We need to understand that self-centeredness, foolishness and wickedness are the natural states of man. We are born self-centered, foolish and wicked, and if we are not raised properly, if effective measures are not taken to make us wise, we will remain fools all of our lives. Our prisons are full of fools that were never effectively taught that acting according to the Word of God was preferable to indulging their emotions and desires.

Foolishness is, however, not relegated to the secular world. Foolishness can exist in people, whether they are secular or religious. The Bible tells us about foolish religious teachers that do not teach according to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, in **1 Timothy 6:3-5**:

3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,

4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,

5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

There is great problem in the Church when Godliness gets mixed up with



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foolishness. Godliness is about the further extension of the great work of building the Kingdom of God, and about persuading men to follow the Divine dictates of the Most High God as they make their own daily personal decisions about their lifestyles. The devil, on the other hand, tempts men into the foolishness of perverting the things of God into that which will increase their own self-centeredness, even as the devil tempted the woman in the garden to eat of the fruit which God told her to not eat so that she could be like God.

Children are born into this world by the gift of God and parents; parents are admonished to train children out of self-centeredness into maturity so that the children can eventually raise their own children even as their parents raised them. Sometimes, people choose not to do the parental work required to instill wisdom in their children, the innate self-centeredness is not trained out of them, and they grow into adults that feel entitled to that which they want, which is an especially poor mentality for leaders in the church of God. Many of the Jewish teachers of the law at the time of Jesus had this entitlement mentality because they considered their leadership positions a birthright rather than a position to be earned. Let us briefly look into the history of Israel to see why.

In the episode of the Exodus of the Children of Israel, when God called Moses to intercede with the Pharaoh, Moses protested that he could not speak well. **Exodus 4:10-16** records:

10 Then Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

11 So the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?”

12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

13 But [Moses] said, “O my Lord, please send [word to the Pharaoh] by the hand of whomever else You may send.”

14 So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: “Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

15 Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do.

16 So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.

After the Children of Israel reached the Promised Land, God ordered Moses to count the number of men in the tribes to ascertain the size of the army that was to conquer the Promised Land. God, however, called for one tribe to be



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omitted. **Numbers 1:1-3, 47-53** records:

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying:

2 “Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, every male individually,

3 from twenty years old and above—all who are able to go to war in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

47 But the Levites were not numbered among them by their fathers’ tribe;

48 for the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying:

49 “Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor take a census of them among the children of Israel;

50 but you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall attend to it and camp around the tabernacle.

51 And when the tabernacle is to go forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it up. The outsider who comes near shall be put to death.

52 The children of Israel shall pitch their tents, everyone by his own camp, everyone by his own standard, according to their armies;

53 but the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the Testimony, that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the children of Israel; and the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony.”

So, before the Promised Land was conquered, God designated the tribe of Levi as the tribe in charge of worship. Aaron, the first priest, was a descendant of Levi, as were Aaron’s sons, grandsons, and their successors in religious leadership down to Jesus’ day. The rest of the tribes had secular professions, but the Levites were the religious class. Interestingly, Jesus was not a Levite, but was of the tribe of Judah, the tribe from which David came, and that was known in Israel as the tribe of kings.

In Israel, there was a separation between the king and the priest, in the same way that, in our country, we have the separation of church and state. King Solomon did not officiate over the sacrifices in great Temple that he built, because he was not a Levite. God’s pronouncement to Moses gave the Levites charge of the things of God, and they jealously guarded their birthright as the religious leaders.

However, a religious leader is called by God to teach the things of God as well as perform ceremonies, just as Moses was called to minister the Word of God to Pharaoh. I have established a certain teaching format in our church; people don’t have to bring Bibles to follow the proof texts that I quote because I



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prepare a powerpoint presentation containing the Scriptures for to follow as I teach, and I print the Scriptures and sermon notes in the bulletin for your reference. After I present the sermon, I take questions about the sermon so that you can obtain clarity about any point that I make. I then post my sermon audio and text on the www.familylifebc.com website so that you can read and listen to the sermon after the sermon is presented at the church. I believe that clear teaching is the duty of every religious leader that is charged to minister the Word of God.

In some churches there is less teaching and more ceremonies and rituals, which are designed to bring the things of God to our memories through our emotional reaction to the ceremonial activity. While obtaining an emotional reaction may increase our feelings of devotion to God, it is my opinion that teaching more effectively changes our thinking and behavior than emotion.

During the days of Jesus' earthly ministry, the Jewish religious leaders were caught up in the emotion of their ceremonies and in the maintenance of their positions of religious leadership, which they guarded jealously. They forgot their purpose, and focused their leadership on the maintenance of the rituals rather than actually serving God. Although they spoke the name of God in their ceremonies, their thinking and behavior did not reflect devotion to the things of God. When Jesus entered Jerusalem during this last journey, He made this point to the multitudes, in **Matthew 23:1-5, 25-28, 37-39**:

- 1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,**
- 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.**
- 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.**
- 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.**
- 5 But all their works they do to be seen by men.**
- 25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.**
- 26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.**
- 27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.**
- 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.**



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Matthew 23:1-5, 25-28, 37-39:

37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

38 See! Your house is left to you desolate;

39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ ”

After Jesus denounced the Jewish religious leaders, He did the works of God in their presence to give credentials to His teaching, which drove the Jewish leaders to anger, as **Matthew 21:14-16** records:

14 Then the blind and the lame came to [Jesus] in the temple, and He healed them.

15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that [Jesus] did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant

16 and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise’?”

The accolades being given to Jesus were not blasphemous, but descriptive. By becoming indignant with Jesus, the Jewish leaders rejected the power of God. Jesus denounced the religious leaders in a parable, in **Matthew 21:33-41, Mark 12:1-8 and Luke 20:9-16:**

Then [Jesus] began to tell the people, “Listen to another parable. The master of a house planted a vineyard and put up a fence around it, dug out a wine press, and built a tower. Then he leased it out to vine growers and left the country for a long time. When harvest time approached, he sent a servant to the vine growers to collect his fruit. But the vine growers beat the servant and sent him away without any fruit.

“Then he sent them another servant, but this one they beat and [stoned and] gashed his head. After tormenting him, they sent him away without any fruit. The master sent a third servant, and they wounded him and threw him out as well.

“Again he sent many others, and they did the same things to them—beating some and killing others.

“The owner of the vineyard said, ‘What should I do?’ He had an only son, whom he dearly loved, and at last he sent him. ‘I’ll send my dearly loved son,’ he said. ‘Perhaps they will respect my son when they see him.’ But when the vine growers saw the son, they plotted with each other and said, ‘This is the heir! Let’s kill him so the inheritance will be ours.’ So they seized [the son], threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.



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Matthew 21:33-41, Mark 12:1-8 and Luke 20:9-16:

“So then, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine growers?”

They replied, **“He’ll put those wicked men to an agonizing death and then will lease out the vineyard to other vine growers who will pay him his share of the crop at harvest time.”**

Jesus said to them, **“He will come and kill those vine growers and then give the vineyard to others! I’m telling you, in the same way the kingdom of God will be taken from you and will be given to a people who will produce its fruit.”**

When they heard this they said, “May it never happen!”

In the parable, the vineyard represents the worship of God in the Nation of Israel. The master of the house represents God, the tenants represent the Jewish religious leaders, the servants sent by the owner represent the prophets that God sent to Israel, and the son is the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather than being grateful to the owner and giving him his due, the tenants are jealous of the fact that the owner actually owns the fruit. The tenants feel entitled to keep the fruit, just as the Jewish religious leaders felt entitled to occupy their positions in God’s house. Remember Frank, who said, “Mine”? That is exactly the thinking of the tenants and the Jewish religious leaders. In **Matthew 23:34-35. Jesus says:**

34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,

35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

There is a long history of the unrighteous killing the righteous because of jealousy. The first murderer, Cain, killed his brother Abel over an offering made to God. When God accepted Abel’s animal sacrifice and rejected Cain’s sacrifice of produce, Cain became jealous and killed Abel. But, although the tenants rejected the servants, the son is the one of whom they are really jealous.

Herod was really jealous when he heard of the infant Jesus being born King of the Jews. The Jewish religious leaders were really jealous when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in their very backyard. When the son shows up, jealousy goes into overdrive, as Jesus explains, in **John 8:42-44:**

42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.

43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.



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John 8:42-44:

44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

It has been the fondest wish of the devil to control the worship of God, even back to the garden, and he does so through us by exercising our jealousy, because he is jealous.

The devil, at one time, was in charge of the worship of God. Ezekiel refers to the devil as the “king of Tyre”, in **Ezekiel 28:12-17:**

12 “Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre [the devil], and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created.

14 “You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

15 You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.

16 “By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones.

17 “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you.

The devil has been rejected, and he hates the son because the son is accepted as the heir. When the devil sees the Son coming with power to His Kingdom, he becomes jealous and says, “Mine”, just like Frank. The devil tempted the woman, creating jealousy in her, ‘You can be like God, knowing good and evil.’ You can say, “Mine”, just like Frank. When God sends His Word to be taught to the people, the devil sends a counterfeit word to counteract the teaching of God, as Jesus says, in **Matthew 15:3-9:**

3 [Jesus] answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?

4 For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’



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Matthew 15:3-9:

5 But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"—

6 then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.

9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' ”

But, after the son in the parable is killed, meaning, after the devil has his victory, after the Jewish religious leaders have their triumph, and after Son of God dies on the Cross of Calvary, the landowner in the parable sends troops to kill the murdering tenants and take back the land. God will take the jealousy of the Jewish religious leaders and use it to produce an outcome that is literally life from the dead, as the Apostle Paul tells us in **Romans 11:7-12, 15:**

7 What then? Israel has not obtained [the salvation that] it seeks; but the elect [of God that believe in Jesus Christ] have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

8 Just as it is written: “God has given [the Israelites] a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, To this very day.”

9 And David says: “Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always.”

11 I say then, have [the Israelites] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

12 Now if [the Israelites'] fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

15 For if [the Israelites'] being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

All of the efforts of the devil and the Jews to kill Jesus ultimately cause life, and bring both the Jews and the Gentiles closer to God. Jesus' disciples were all Jews, the multitudes that followed Jesus were primarily Jews, the majority of the early Christians were originally Jews, and Judaism was torn asunder by the advent of the Christian Church.

Our text, **Matthew 21:42**, quoting **Psalm 118:22-23**, says:

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’ ?



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Jesus Christ is the stone that the builders rejected, who, by not being jealous of His prerogative as the Son of God, but humbly sacrificing Himself on Calvary's Cross rather than saying "Mine", has become the chief cornerstone of the worship of God. Through the humility of Jesus Christ, the jealousy of the Jewish religious leadership has been exposed and finally rejected. Through the humility of Jesus Christ, the works of the devil are finally defeated, and the power of God is made manifest in the earth.

Jesus Christ teaches us to be humble rather than to be jealous. Jesus Christ's death on the Cross teaches us that He recognizes that all things, even His very life, belong to God, and that He does not and we ought not say, "Mine". Unlike the jealous tenants in the vineyard, we have to humbly recognize the true owner. Even though God may give us the riches, power and prominence of Solomon, we must always recognize that that which we have is ours because God has leased it to us, that all things belong to God, that we are simply tenants in God's vineyard, and that we ought not be jealous of the owner or possessive of the fruit, but always ready to give Him his due. It is not ours to jealously say, "Mine", but to emulate the example of Jesus Christ to humbly give, even as the owner has given to us, as **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.

Let us recognize the difference between jealousy and humility, and emulate the example of the humility of Jesus Christ, not saying "Mine", but willingly giving the owner his due.

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis
Family Life Baptist Church