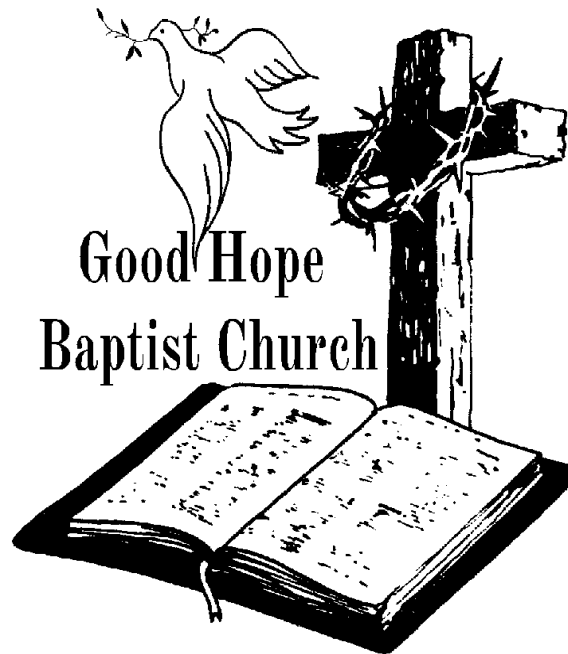


# The Kingdom Of God Is Within You

Part One

Luke 17:20-21



Good Hope  
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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**FOCAL Read Responsively** Luke 17:20-21 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! **for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.**

When the Pharisees asked the Lord Jesus a question, they were not looking for an answer or for wisdom from God. They were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, to entrap Him. There were a *few* Pharisees who were reasonable. **Nicodemus, the Pharisee who came to Jesus at night (John 3:1)**, who helped in the burial of Christ. There was also the great Rabbi **Gamaliel, (Acts 5:38-39)** who encouraged his brother Pharisees to "**leave these Christians alone. If they are backed by God then you can't stop them, but if not, then they will die out**". Gamaliel was a wise man.

Most of the Pharisees were not wise. They were *petty, vindictive*, and looking to destroy Jesus. They wanted to accuse Jesus of *treason*, and so have His ministry end.

When they asked "**Jesus, when is the Kingdom of God coming?**" they were hoping Jesus would say "**I'm the Kingdom of God. I'm the Man Who is going to bring 'hope and change' to the world.**" When He said that they would immediately run to Herod and to Pilate and say "**This Jesus is trying to overthrow Rome - He's a traitor! You need to imprison Him**".

Now the Pharisees didn't love the Romans, nor did they love being under Roman rule. They hated the Romans - but they hated Jesus *more*. The average Jew of that day hated Rome. They hated having to pay taxes to Rome. They hated the Pagan Temples that were tolerated throughout the land. Though Herod had built them a beautiful Temple to worship God in, they hated Herod. Herod was a puppet King put in place to govern Israel under the oversight of Pilate. The Jews *despised* Rome, and wanted it gone.

The Jews - and the Pharisees - were where they were because of their *own disobedience to God*. They were subjected to a Roman King because they themselves rejected the **King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Timothy 6:15)**.

The Lord Jesus throughout His ministry taught this great truth. God loves His people, and wants the best for His people. But His people *must follow Him and His Word* if they expect to *receive God's best* in their lives.

Our Lord Jesus preached *two kingdoms*. He preached the **Kingdom of Heaven** which was future, and the **Kingdom of God** which is right now. When Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven He spoke of a place not on this earth - a beautiful place where there was no sickness, no sadness, no pain, a Kingdom that every child of God would one day enjoy. But when Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God He taught that this Kingdom should be sought *right now*. In His first sermon Jesus told His listeners:

**Matthew 6:31-33 {Stop worrying about tomorrow, asking yourselves} What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

**Seek God's Kingdom - the Kingdom of God *first* and God will provide your earthly needs.** This was a radical message to the Jews, especially to Jews who were under Roman rule.

The *political* Jews were looking for a King, a Messiah, Who would overthrow Rome and return Israel to its past glory. The *poor* Jews were looking for a King, a Messiah, Who would overthrow the rich and distribute food and clothing equally among the people.

Everywhere Jesus went He "**preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God**" (Mark 1:14). Yet people didn't understand.

On one occasion Jesus finished preaching and healing, and "**went up into a mountain with His disciples**" (John 6:3). Jesus wanted to see if His disciples understood what He had been teaching, so He asked Phillip, "**How are we going to feed all of these people?**" (John 6:5). Philip said, "**Lord, if we had eight months worth of wages, we couldn't feed these people** (John 6:7). You see, the disciples had been

listening to Jesus preach for a while now, but that preaching had not gone into their hearts.

Another disciple named **Andrew** chimed in. **"I've found a boy that has a few fish, and five small loaves of bread - but that's certainly not enough for everybody to eat!" (John 6:9)**. Jesus heard all He wanted to hear. He said to the disciples, **"Make everybody sit down" (John 6:10)**. You can't do much sitting down on a mountainside. Sit down - relax - trust God. Five thousand men, and an unknown number of women and children all sat down that day, and *waited on God*. Jesus began to pray. And as He prayed, the Father took those two fish and five small biscuits and, multiplying them, began to fill basket after basket with food. The disciples distributed the food, feeding every person on that mountainside that day. But Jesus wasn't done. He said, **"Gather up the fragments, so that none is lost" (John 6:12)**. The Bible says that they filled **twelve baskets with the fragments of leftovers that they gathered up (John 6:13)**, more than enough to feed everyone.

No one heard Jesus that day. He preached by word, and preached by action, but no one heard. Dear friends, you hear - not with your ears - but with your hearts!

How did the Jews apply Jesus' sermon of the fish and bread? The Bible says:

**John 6:15** **When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself**

alone.

**"Here is our solution. Here's what will fix Israel's problem, and remove Rome. Here's Jesus! If we make Him King over us then He can feed us, heal us, and overthrow Rome all at once. Let's get Him and put Him in charge"**. When Jesus heard that He did what any sane Person would do. **"He departed again into a mountain Himself ALONE"**.

In 2008 the American people went through an election. They were mad at what seemed to be the excess of government, so they responded to a politician who promoted **"Hope and Change"**. That year we heard a speech in which we were told:

**"Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America. For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act - not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. And all this we will do."**

There were a lot of promises made, but they were

promises that could not be kept. Why? Because, as Jesus told the Pharisees in our focal text today,

**FOCAL** Luke 17:20-21 The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

**Word Study** The Kingdom of God cometh not with **OBSERVATION**. The word translated "observation" is the Greek PARATERESIS (παρατηρησις pronounced par-at-ay'-ray-sis), which means "with an outward show or fanfare, to see it with the eyes". The Kingdom of God doesn't come with marching bands, and tooting horns, nor with great swelling words spoken by a politician. Listen to me, Beloved. God bless you all. God bless the Democrat, the Republican, and the Libertarian. May God bless each of you richly. But listen to me!

You cannot legislate the Kingdom of God into existence, nor can you bring Nirvana or Paradise to this earth by human effort. **The Kingdom of God is not you but it is within you if you are a Christian.** God lives in the hearts of His people. When His people *submit to Him, letting Him rule in and through them* then great things happen. The Promised Land belonged to Israel, but Israel rejected God's leadership. "We will not go", they told the Lord. "We will not submit", they stubbornly said. So they died in the wilderness, when glory was just within reach for the obedient heart.

America is a great nation, but what made it great was

that - once upon a time - our leaders understood that **the Kingdom of God is within you**. What made America great was that - once upon a time - people had a respect for the God of the Scripture. People came to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith as little children, trusting Him, and were changed.

What makes a Church great is not it's programs, but it's people *obediently following the Lord*. **The Kingdom of God is within you!**

**Mark 10:15** Verily I say unto you, **Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.**

You *cannot enter* the Kingdom of God unless you first **receive the Kingdom of God as a little child**. Put aside your preconceived notions, opinions, and ideas - and embracing what the Lord tells you. The beginning of a Christian's salvation comes when he or she accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The continuance of a Christian's salvation comes when he follows the Lord day by day, placing Him and His Word above all.

### **1. The Kingdom Of God Is Within You: We Must All Have Forgiving Hearts**

**CONTEXT** Luke 17:3-4 **Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.**

Word Study "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him". The word translated "rebuke" is the Greek Aorist Active Imperative verb (επιτιμαω pronounced ep-ee-tee-mah'-o). This is actually a *compound verb* composed of the *preposition* EPI + the word TIMAO. EPI means "**before or against**" and TIMAO means "**that which is honorable**". The word literally means "**to explain how it is against honor**".

When a fellow Christian sins against another fellow Christian, he or she is showing dishonor to both that Christ as *well as unto the Lord and unto the Gospel of salvation*. Jesus told us before:

**Matthew 12:25 .... Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:**

**A house divided shall not stand.** In a marriage, bickering between the partners will soon lead to divorce. In a Church, bickering amidst the congregation will soon lead to division. In a nation, bickering amidst the citizenship will soon lead to civil war. A house divided shall not stand.

Jesus said "**If your brother trespass against thee**" the first thing to recognize is that **he is your BROTHER**. We as Baptists believe in the Doctrine of Eternal Security. We believe that "Once a person is saved by faith in Christ, that this salvation stands forever". We believe the Scripture that says:

**Romans 8:38-39 ... I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

If *nothing* can separate us from the **love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord**, then I am secure in my salvation - and so is my brother and sister in the Lord. We are all bound to God in Christ by the same undeserved Blood bought salvation. You are my Brother. You are my Sister. If you offend me, we are all still part of that same great Commission *forever*.

The word "**brother**" draws a boundary line. If you offend me, I must still treat you as a brother. If you have sinned against me, I must go to you and you alone and work it out *in love*. We're going to be in Heaven one day together - I need to settle that in my mind right now!

If offended, I am to go to you and explain how I dishonored you and the cause of the Lord. I need to explain to you why what you did was a violation of Scripture. The Bible says:

**Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:**

and

**Romans 12:17-18 Recompense to no man evil for evil.**

**Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.**

**"The Kingdom of God is within me"**. If God is my King and my Ruler then I will not carry grudges, but I will go to those who have offended me and explain how they dishonored me. I will - gently and as to a brother or sister - show them in the Scripture how they have hurt me and the cause of Christ. I will do this understanding that I am not doing it so I can walk away with the smug satisfaction of knowing I was right. I will do this because it is the Godly and righteous thing to do.

**ILLUSTRATION** This is a true story that an Ophthalmologist (an Eye Doctor) told me. He said, **I was performing a visual acuity test. I placed the patient twenty feet from the chart and began, "Cover your right eye with your hand." He read the 20/20 line perfectly. "Now your left." Again, a flawless read. "Now both," I requested. There was silence. He couldn't even read the large E on the top line. I turned and discovered that he had done exactly what I had asked; he was standing there with both his eyes covered. I was laughing too hard to finish the exam.**

The Lord tells us "take your offenses - in love - to your brother and sister. Tell them - talk it out!" Many times we will not do this because - quite sadly - we *might discover the fault was ours all along* - and this pride rebels against! Do not cover both your eyes. Open them. **The Kingdom of God is within you.**

**CONTEXT** Luke 17:3-4 .... and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

**Word Study** The Lord says **"if he REPENT, forgive him"**. The word translated **"repent"** is again a Greek Compound METANOEO (μετανοεω pronounced met-an-o-eh'-o). It is composed of the *Preposition* META, which means "to change" + the *Noun* NOEO, which means "the mind". Literally this would read **"if he changes his mind"**, or turns from the dishonorable way he was going and goes toward the honorable way.

The same God Who occupies YOU also occupies YOUR BROTHER in the Lord. Many times disputes within the Church can easily be handled by remembering that **"the Kingdom of God is within you"**. Take the matter in love to your offending brother or sister, and trust that God will work the matter out.

If the Kingdom of God is within you, trust God's methods and rely on God for the results. Make sure you keep God in the middle of the dispute, and handle it according to His Word.

**Question and Answer:** The question now is **"How many times should I forgive my brother?"** Jesus was very plain about this. He said:

**CONTEXT** Luke 17:4 .... **if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn**

**again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.**

Now Jesus didn't mean to keep count on offenses. He uses the number *seven* because this is the *number of God*.

**If my brother offends me, and the Kingdom of God is within me, then I will forgive him like God forgives!** God forgives me more than seven times in a day - so I will be generous in forgiving as well for God's sake!

Aren't you yourselves glad that God forgives you more than seven times in a day? As God is gracious, we who are His should be gracious.

**Question and Answer:** "But what about the person who *won't repent*? What if the one who is doing evil to me keeps on doing it? What should I do? Jesus addressed this in another place in the Scripture.

**Romans 12:19-21** Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Do not avenge yourselves - **the Kingdom of God is within you.**

If you have an enemy who is content to be an enemy, and who will not repent, **hold your tongue and hold your hand. Do good to them.**

Jesus said "If he's hungry, feed him. If he's thirsty, give him something to drink. **DO NOT BE OVERCOME OF EVIL, BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.**"

We have heard these words of Jesus so often, but do we apply them? **If the Kingdom of God is within me, I must do good *even to my enemies*.** Jesus said:

**Matthew 5:43-48** Ye have heard that it hath been said, **Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**

God doesn't shut the sun off over His enemies fields. The Atheist **Richard Dawkins** continually writes books (like "The God Delusion") attacking Christ and Christianity. It is he who said:

**"What has 'theology' ever said that is of the smallest use to anybody? When has 'theology' ever said anything that is demonstrably true and is not obvious? What makes you think that 'theology' is a subject at all? "**

yet God makes His sun to rise and set on this man. He still - though a voluntary and self cursed atheist - receives the wondrous benefits of life that all of God's creatures enjoy.

God blesses the atheist, the agnostic, the ungrateful. He blesses enemies of the Cross along with its friends. God offers salvation to those who spit on it - and on Him. Hitler could have been saved if he had called upon the name of the Lord Jesus. Stalin could have been saved if he had **"confessed with his mouth Jesus is Lord, and believed in his heart that He rose from the grave"**. Mao Zedong could have been saved if he had heard the glorious Gospel of salvation **"that God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"**. God blesses the good with the evil.

**If the Kingdom of God is within you** then you are to let God reign in your interpersonal relationships. Let love be your standard, and goodness your output.

**ILLUSTRATE** Rudyard Kipling, the author of "The Jungle Book" (also made by Disney into a movie) wrote one of the most interesting poems I've ever heard called **"If"**. Listen to this poem:

**If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;**

**If you can dream and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with triumph and disaster  
And treat those two imposters just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools;**

**If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breath a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on";**

**If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch;  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run -  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,**

**And - which is more - you'll be a Man my son!**

Was Rudyard Kipling a Christian? I don't know. I do know this, though. Shortly after writing this poem Kipling married **Caroline Balestier** and settled down in Vermont. His **brother-in-law, Beatty Balestier** became his best friend. Kipling bought some land from his friend on the understanding that **Beatty** would be allowed to *harvest the hay* from the field. One day Beatty came by to see Kipling and found him laying out a *flower bed* on the edge of the field. Beatty had a fit, and Kipling gave as good as he got. A few days later Kipling was out riding his bike. His brother-in-law drove a wagon so close to Kipling that he fell off his bike. Kipling didn't let it rest. He had Beatty arrested and charged with assault, and a sensational trial was reported in newspapers all across America. The uproar became so disturbing that Kipling and his wife had to leave their beautiful home forever - all over a field of hay.

If you are a Christian, **the Kingdom of God is within you**. You have the power to forgive, and the power to live, within your grasp. We are bound together as one family in the Lord - if you are in the Lord. **The Kingdom of God is within you.**



**FOCAL Read Responsively** Luke 17:20-21 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! **for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.**

## Part One of the Message

**John 3:1; Acts 5:38-39; 1 Timothy 6:15; Matthew 6:31-33**

The *political* Jews were looking for a King, a Messiah, Who would overthrow Rome and return Israel to its past glory. The *poor* Jews were looking for a King, a Messiah, Who would overthrow the rich and distribute food and clothing equally among the people.

**Mark 1:14; John 6:3; John 6:5; John 6:7; John 6:9; John 6:10; John 6:12; John 6:13; John 6:15; Luke 17:20-21; Mark 10:15**

**Word Study** The Kingdom of God cometh not with **OBSERVATION**. The word translated "observation" is the Greek PARATERESIS (παρατηρησις pronounced par-at-ay'-ray-sis) \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. The Kingdom Of God Is Within You: We Must All Have Forgiving Hearts

**Luke 17:3-4; Matthew 12:25; Romans 8:38-39**

Word Study "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him". The word translated "rebuke" is the Greek Aorist Active Imperative verb (επιτιμαω pronounced ep-ee-tee-mah'-o). \_\_\_\_\_

The word "**brother**" draws a boundary line. If you offend me, I must still treat you as a brother. If you have sinned against me, I must go to you and you alone and work it out *in love*. We're going to be in Heaven one day together - I need to settle that in my mind right now!

**Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:17-18; Luke 17:3-4; Luke 17:4; Romans 12:19-21; Matthew 5:43-48**

**Word Study** The Lord says "if he **REPENT**, forgive him". The word translated "repent" is again a Greek Compound METANOEO (μετανοεω pronounced met-an-o-eh'-o). \_\_\_\_\_

# The Kingdom Of God Is Within You

Part Two

Luke 17:20-21



Living Together In The Love Of God

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**ILLUSTRATE** During the Civil War some of Lincoln's friends were denouncing his enemies. Abraham said, "You have more of a feeling of personal resentment than I have. Perhaps I have too little of it; but I never thought it paid. A man doesn't have the time to spend half his life in quarrels. If any man ceases to attack me, I never remember the past against him."

This morning we began this great subject on the Kingdom of God. Tonight we're going to continue studying this passage in Luke 17. My prayer is that God will show us what He means by "the Kingdom of God is within you".

## **2. The Kingdom of God Is Within You: I Am To Have A Faithful Serving Heart**

**CONTEXT** Luke 17:5-10 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. 6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. 7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? 8 And will not rather say unto him, Make

ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? 9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. 10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

When Jesus finished telling the disciples that they were to be forgiving, no matter what a brother or a sister did to them, they asked the Lord Jesus a very profound thing. They said:

**Lord, increase our faith!**

Word Study The word translated "**increase**" is the *Aorist Active Imperative verb* PROSTITHEMI (προστιθημι pronounced pros-tith'-ay-mee), which means "**to give additional**". They literally *commanded* our Lord by saying "**Lord, give us more faith right now!**".

This is how many people within Christ's Church in America are. Many come to Church on Sunday morning - if then - get a 30 minute sermon - and expect Jesus to pour faith into them. But faith doesn't work this way.

True faith is always accompanied by an action. True faith hears, and then does.

The day that you were saved God called to you, whispering to you through His Spirit and His Word. You heard God say "**All have sinned, and come short of My glory. You are a sinner headed toward eternal**

damnation. But listen, My Child, it doesn't have to be this way, for I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If you come unto God by Me believing that I paid for your sins, you shall be saved. You must come to Me, turning from your old life, and give yourself to Me. I love you - do this - and you shall be saved".

Grace is what saves us. Grace is a gift from God that brings salvation to all who believe. The Scripture says:

**Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

There is no law, no work, no good deed, no righteousness that you must do to be saved. You *repented* and *turned* from being your own god, and began to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what brings salvation.

Just as Israel followed the Pillar of Fire and Cloud that was God and walked away from Egypt, the Christian follows the Pillar of the Gospel and walks away from this world. The saved do not languish in Egypt!

This disciples are following Jesus, standing before Him, and say "**Lord, increase our faith!**". Jesus responded to this in two very picturesque ways. He said:

**CONTEXT** Luke 17:6 ... **If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.**

**a** **IF you had faith as a grain of mustard seed.** A tiny bit of pure faith can do tremendous things. Not because of the faith itself, but because of *Who the faith is in*. A tiny bit of faith in me does nothing. A tiny bit of faith in God does everything - because God is able! The disciples came to Jesus and said "**Lord, increase our faith**". Now listen to me carefully. When Jesus Christ walked this earth, He was indeed God in the flesh (see **John 1:1-3, 14**). But the reason He walked this earth for three years ministering before He went to the Cross to die for our sins was to *visibly show us the Christian Way of life*. While He walked this earth He walked it as Perfect Man, and did His miracles through the Holy Spirit of God (see **Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20**).

Jesus Christ visibly lived the kind of surrendered, faith in God life He wanted His disciples whom He was mentoring to live. He did not want them coming to Him and saying "**Lord, increase our faith**". He wanted them to **have faith in God**. Put your faith in God.

In a similar text and a similar sermon Jesus told His disciples:

**Mark 11:22-25 ... Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have**

**whatsoever he saith. 24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. 25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.**

Jesus said **have faith in God**. Believe that He is able. A small amount of faith in God can move mountains. But how to *increase my faith*? Look at the second part of the text in Luke:

**CONTEXT** Luke 17:7-10 **But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? 8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? 9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. 10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.**

**b** The first step in growing faith is to *put it in God*. The second step in growing faith is to **do your duty to God**.

**Faith will not grow unless you put it into practice. Faith without works is dead!**

Jesus illustrates this in a very vivid way. He says **"If you had a servant who just came out of the field, would you say "You go sit down while I wait on you, then I'll get my meal?"** Jesus said **"Would you thank the servant for doing his duty?"**. The answer to both of those questions is NO! If you are paying a man to do a job his wages are all the thanks he needs to expect. He is to do his duty.

Many Christians do not grow in faith because they do not *do their duty to God*. If you are saved, then God is your Father. You are to do what He tells you without argument *because He said so*.

**CONTEXT** Luke 17:10 **So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.**

**Word Study** When God commands us to do something, we are to do it as **unprofitable servants**. Wow! People get mad at preachers for preaching the truth - they must have stayed mad at Jesus all the time. The word translated **"unprofitable"** is the Greek ACHREOS (αχρειος pronounced akh-ri'-os), which literally means **"useless, good for nothing"**. That seems so harsh! Jesus said **"After doing your duty - doing ALL the things that are commanded you - say 'We are good for nothing servants' "**.

Jesus often used very strong language to illustrate Bible

truths.

Compared to God, we *are* "good for nothing". Move over Prosperity Gospel Preachers, and get out of the way Joel Osteen. We're not doing God a favor when we do our duty!

Listen Beloved, God doesn't need us - He wants us. He doesn't have to have us do anything in order for time to march on. We aren't doing God a favor when we do what He says. When we do what God says we are exercising our faith, and increasing our own blessing.

**ILLUSTRATE** Abraham was about 100 years old when his son Isaac was born (**Genesis 21:5**). Abraham circumcised his son when he was eight days old, just as God told him to do (**Genesis 21:4**). Things were great. This was the Child of Promise. This was the Seed through whom the blessing of God would come. Life was good, and Abraham was blessed. Then one day God came to Abraham. **"Abraham"**. Yes Lord? **"Take your son, your only son Isaac, the Isaac you love so very much, and go to the land of Moriah. There's a mountain there. I want you to offer up your son as a burnt offering to Me on that mountain"** (**Genesis 22**).

This could have went a number of different ways. Abraham could have done like many modern Christians do. He could have ignored God's specific request, and gave God a *near sacrifice*. Abraham could have said, **"Well, Ishmael is kind of like a son. I had him through Hagar, with Sarah agreeing to it. Hey Ishmael, come on - we've got a trip to make"**.

Or else Abraham could have ignored God. "I know what I heard, but I must have misunderstood it." Too often we ignore the Word of God to our detriment. "God said homosexuality and sexuality outside of a one man one woman monogamous marriage is sin. I don't believe it! That must have been for back then, but not for today."

Or else Abraham could have modified the Word of God. "Burnt offering. No, God must have meant to offer Isaac as a *heave offering* instead. That type of offering doesn't have to be killed - just tossed."

Or else Abraham could have procrastinated - put God off - hoping that He would forget all about it. Abraham could have went to his friends and asked them what they thought of it. But Abraham didn't do any of these things.

Abraham didn't offer God *Ishmael instead of Isaac*. He didn't *procrastinate, debate, ignore, or modify the command* of God. Abraham didn't go to his friends and get their opinion on the matter What did Abraham do? He did his duty.

The Bible tells us in **Genesis 22:3 and following** that Abraham - without a word of debate to God - got up early in the morning, "saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering and rose up, and went into the place of which God had told him". The Bible tells us that:

**Hebrews 11:17-19** **By faith Abraham, when he was**

**tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.**

Abraham's faith was in God and in God alone! Abraham knew that God had promised to bless him through Isaac. When God Abraham to sacrifice Isaac he didn't worry and he didn't fret - he did his duty.

Partial obedience to God is disobedience. Delayed obedience to God is disobedience. A fully obedient David defeated Goliath. A partially obedient David murdered Uriah after sleeping with his wife Bathsheba. A fully obedient Israel crossed the depths of the Red Sea on foot, but a partially obedient Israel drowned on dry land under waves of unbelief because they would not - in faith - follow God across the more shallow Jordan.

Doing your duty to God is not always easy, nor comfortable - but it is what the Lord calls us to do if we are going to grow in Grace and in Faith.

**ILLUSTRATE** Philip James Elliot (October 8, 1927 – January 8, 1956) was an Christian missionary to Ecuador who, along with four others, was killed while attempting to lead the Wuaorani people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Wuaorani were called by those who knew them as "Auca" or "Savage", and Elliot was warned by his family not to go to the Aucas. Elliot

responded to his family with a letter, saying:

**"I do not wonder that you were saddened at the word of my going to South America," .... "This is nothing else than what the Lord Jesus warned us of when He told the disciples that they must become so infatuated with the kingdom and following Him that all other allegiances must become as though they were not. And He never excluded the family tie. In fact, those loves which we regard as closest, He told us must become as hate in comparison with our desires to uphold His cause. Grieve not, then, if your sons seem to desert you, but rejoice, rather, seeing the will of God done gladly" .... Consider the call from the Throne above, 'Go ye,' and from round about, 'Come over and help us,' and even the call from the damned souls below, 'Send Lazarus to my brothers, that they come not to this place.' Impelled, then, by these voices, I dare not stay home while Quichuas perish."**

James Elliot and his team died doing their duty for the Lord, pierced through by Wuaorani arrows. Did the mission stop here? No, for his wife and widow **Elizabeth Elliot** went to those same people and continued to witness Christ. Today many Aucas are Christians, and they no longer murder missionaries.

Elizabeth Elliot could have harbored hatred for those who murdered her husband. Instead she chose to *forgive and do her duty.*

Elizabeth wrote:

**"To love God is to love His will. It is to wait quietly for life to be measured by one who knows us through and through. It is to be content with His timing and His wise apportionment. It is to follow in the steps of the Master, as did Paul, who was able to say that he had learned contentment no matter what the circumstances. His circumstances when he wrote that? Prison. No easy lesson, but great gain which is the sum of godliness plus contentment (I Timothy 6:6)."**

### **3. The Kingdom Of God Is Within You: A Whole Faith Displays A Thankful Heart**

**Luke 17:11-19** And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. **12** And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: **13** And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. **14** And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. **15** And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, **16** And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. **17** And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? **18** There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. **19** And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

**ILLUSTRATE** Many years ago I preached this text at a small Church on the outskirts of Valdosta, Georgia. When I was done preaching the sermon I stood at the door as is my custom to greet people as they left the Church. One old lady - quite bitter looking - came up to me and said, **"I didn't like the way you preached that sermon. You know, the nine lepers were just being obedient to the Law!"**

The nine lepers were being obedient to the Law. But as Jesus told the Pharisees one day, **"these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone"** (Matthew 23:23). The *Samaritan* leper - now healed - realized the importance of thanking God for blessing him. If you have been born again by faith in Christ, God has healed you from a worse disease than leprosy. God has healed you from *sin and death!* You should have a thankful heart.

We are rapidly approaching a time season we call *Thanksgiving*. Unlike most holidays, Thanksgiving is one of the few days that are definitely Christian. The first "Thanksgiving" was celebrated by Pilgrims, who were Christians who came to America to escape religious persecution. **During the first winter in 1621, 46 of the 102 pilgrims died.** The following year resulted in a plentiful harvest because of the help they received from the nearby native American Indian tribe. **Benjamin Franklin** wrote of these Pilgrims, saying:

**"In a time of great despondency among the first settlers of New England, it was proposed in one of**

**their assemblies to proclaim a fast. An old farmer rose, reviewed their mercies, and proposed that, instead of provoking Heaven with their complaints, they appoint a Thanksgiving".**

That was the first *Thanksgiving* celebration. The Pilgrims invited the 90 native Americans who helped them survive during that first winter. The writer **H. U. Westermayer** said:

**"The Pilgrims made seven times more graves than huts. No Americans have been more impoverished than these who, nevertheless, set aside a day of thanksgiving."**

Dear friends, **the Kingdom of God is within you.** If you are born again by faith in Christ then you have many things to be thankful for. **Pastor & Bible Teacher John MacArthur** said:

**"Thanksgiving is not an act, it is an attitude. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful (Colossians 3:15). Gratitude fills the soul with the sunshine of God. Ingratitude keeps the soul's windows darkened, shutting out the light of God, turning life into a fog. For the Christian, every circumstance should be a cause for thanksgiving. Like the Prophet Habakkuk you may not understand, but you praise God anyway."**

You may be asking **"What am I to be thankful for?"**

**1** **First, be thankful that you are saved.** Remember that **you are unprofitable servants**. The Lord did not need to save you nor more than He needed to save me. Yet He saved us by Grace anyway. The Scripture says:

**Romans 6:17-18** But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

**ILLUSTRATE** Like the **ten lepers who came to Jesus for healing** the Lord didn't have to do what He did. Throughout Scripture leprosy is often used to illustrate the separation and destruction that sin brings to the life. The lepers who came to Jesus were separated from their family, their friends, and even the Church. When Jesus healed them He restored them to *everything*. Your salvation is a great gift from God!

The salvation the Lord gave you through faith in Christ delivers you from sin and the Law, and brings you into the eternal Family of God!

**2** **If you are saved, be thankful that death has no hold on you.**

**ILLUSTRATE** I watched a martial arts movie once where the hero was being beaten up by several men. At one point they tossed him into a barrel of oil that overturned. You could see the light bulb come on over

his head. This fellow rolled around in that oil, then got up and continued to fight. Since they couldn't grab him he won the battle. He just kept slipping out of their hands. The Bible tells us:

**1 Corinthians 15:54-57** ... **Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

You have victory over death. Your victory, dear Christian, does not come from the medical doctors nor the hospitals. It comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has conquered death and hell. The Lord says:

**Revelation 1:18** **I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

Jesus Christ met death face to face, and whipped death! Because you have believed on Him death has no hold on you. It just can't grab you!

**3** **If you are saved, be thankful for God is always with you.** The Bible says:

**Psalms 75:1** **Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.**

God is never far from His people. King David praised the

Lord in Psalm 139, saying:

**Psalms 139:1-14 .... O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. 3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. 7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. 13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.**

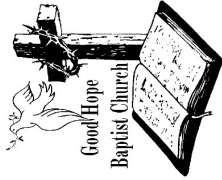
God is with His people. He never leaves us. He never forsakes us. It is God Who **leads us in triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14)**. It is God Who **hears our every request unto Him (Philippians 4:6)**.

God did not save us to abandon us, nor did He save us to serve us. God saved us to glorify Himself, and to manifest Himself through us to a lost and dying world.

God has given each of you the great gift of salvation, and great gifts in this life and in the life to come. **William A. Ward** said "**God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say "thank you?"**". **G.K. Chesterton** said, "**When we were children we were grateful to those who filled our stockings at Christmas time. Why are we not grateful to God for filling our stockings with legs? "**

God has been good to all of us. We should have thankful hearts - and express our gratitude to Him at all times.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



Good Hope  
Baptist Church

4038 Graham Sherron Road  
Wake Forrest, NC 27587

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Living Together In The Love Of God

## Part Two Of The Message

**FOCAL Read Responsively** Luke 17:20-21 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! **for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.**

### **2. The Kingdom of God Is Within You: I Am To Have A Faithful Serving Heart**

**Luke 17:5-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; Luke 17:6; John 1:1-3, 14; Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20; Mark 11:22-25; Luke 17:7-10; Luke 17:10; Genesis 21:5; Genesis 21:4; Genesis 22; Hebrews 11:17-19**

**Word Study** The word translated "increase" is the *Aorist Active Imperative verb* PROSTITHEMI (προστιθημι pronounced pros-tith'-ay-mee), \_\_\_\_\_

**a** IF you had faith as a grain of mustard seed.

Jesus Christ visibly lived the kind of surrendered, faith in God life He wanted His disciples whom He was mentoring to live. He did not want them coming to Him and saying "**Lord, increase our faith**". He

wanted them to **have faith in God.**

**b** The first step in growing faith is to *put it in God*. The second step in growing faith is to **do your duty to God.** \_\_\_\_\_

Many Christians do not grow in faith because they do not *do their duty to God*. If you are saved, then God is your Father. You are to do what He tells you without argument *because He said so*.

**Word Study** The word translated "unprofitable" is the Greek ACHREOS (αχρηιος pronounced akh-ri'-os), which literally means \_\_\_\_\_

### **3. The Kingdom Of God Is Within You: A Whole Faith Displays A Thankful Heart**

**Luke 17:11-19; Matthew 23:23; Romans 6:17-18; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Revelation 1:18; Psalms 75:1; Psalms 139:1-14; 2 Corinthians 2:14**

**1** First, be thankful \_\_\_\_\_  
2 If you are saved, be thankful that \_\_\_\_\_

**3** If you are saved, be thankful for \_\_\_\_\_