

March 6th II Kings 1:1-18

It would be so easy to discard these verses as some primitive superstition or legend but to his generation Elijah was the Word of God. The king and his officers tried to silence the Word of God; they thought they could order the prophet about and subject him to their military power. As many others also have learnt, they discovered that it is a dangerous thing to tamper with God's Word or with those whom God chooses as God's most high servants.

March 7th II Kings 2:1-18

Here is another chapter that sounds strange to modern ears. Yet, if we Christians believe in the resurrection and ascension of Christ, why should such an event as this seem so impossible? Elijah's work was over, but his work was to be continued by Elisha. Those whom God's Son chose as His apostles have long since gone the way of all flesh, but the work they were commissioned to do still continues. We are their successors. We too, like Elisha, have inherited the mantle of divine service.

PARABLES OF JESUS

March 8th Luke 15:11-32

This is surely one of the best known parables Jesus ever told, but in reading these verses do we just hear Jesus telling a story about one particular delinquent? Is Jesus not also saying something about the condition of those who turn away from their heavenly Father's presence? When a person turns away from God, he or she turns to his or her own ultimate destruction. His or her only hope is to turn back home. How wonderful to know that our God is ever waiting to welcome and to restore!

March 9th Luke 12:13-21

A man complains that he is being cheated out of property that is legally his. Jesus replies with a story of a man who planned for himself a future of luxury and comfort, but completely forgot that his future lay not with his possessions but with his God. God had blessed him with business success and wealth. How he could have used his blessings to help others, but instead he thought only of himself. His god was his money, but such a god cannot transcend the barrier of death.

March 10th Luke 8:4-15

How strange that His disciples had to ask Jesus what this parable meant! The seed of God's word has been sown in our heart, but what has resulted from that sowing? Did we fail to notice it entirely? Did we start off with a great burst of feverish activity in all the organisations and then dry off? Did we start off on our spiritual pilgrimage with good intentions but somehow became overwhelmed by all the other demands made on us? Or are we going on in the faith full of noble deeds and godly influence? One day we shall stand before the judgment seat of God and then we shall know how we have responded to the seed of God's Word.

March 11th Luke 10:25-37

"Who is my neighbour?" The answer Jesus gave in parabolic form is simply that my neighbour is whoever needs my help, irrespective of race, nationality, creed, or even their ability to repay. In these days when modern advances in communications and travel have made the world a smaller place, then my neighbour may be a leper in India, a starving orphan in Africa, or a political refugee in South America.

March 12th Luke 14:15-24

The key phrase here is “*The feast in the Kingdom of God*”. Jesus is teaching about life in God’s eternal presence in heaven; a life that all of us hope to share one day by the grace of Christ. As the great day drew near, many of those invited declined for a variety of reasons. Note the anger of the master; note also the awful judgment. Those who declined lost any hope of ever sharing in the great feast. What a terrible punishment for those who treat God’s call so lightly!

March 13th Mark 12:1-12

This is perhaps the greatest parable Jesus ever told. God created the universe and placed people in it, but people shun the One to whom all tribute and honour is due. God sent His prophets but they were despised and rejected. God finally sent His own Son, and the unruly inhabitants of earth killed Him. Here we have the whole divine history in a nutshell. Look at the fate of those who rebelled against the owner of the vineyard. Our personal attitude to Christ determines our ultimate fate.

March 14th Matthew 13:24-30, 36-40

Once again we note the difficulty of the disciples in understanding what the parable meant. In this parable Jesus is teaching not only the reality of evil in this world, but goes on to say that this evil has its source in one who is an enemy of God. How can any normal man or woman be so blind as to not see both the terrible warning and the great hope in these words?

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

March 15th John 9:1-34

The main interest in this long passage is not the healing of the blind man but the astonishing reaction of the Pharisees. There were two indisputable facts – a) the man had been born blind; b) he can now see. The neighbours and those who had known him previously as a beggar asked how it happened. The Pharisees ask – v. 9; they ask again – v. 17; they ask his parents – v. 20. They ask the man again, this time under oath – v. 24. They do all they can to break him, but he holds fast to his basic theme – “One thing I know. I was blind and now I see.” – v. 25. If any miracle could have been disproved, this was it, but the two facts of former blindness and present vision remain unshakeable.

March 16th Luke 8:40-48

The disciples were surprised when Jesus asked who in the crowd had touched Him, but He knew that one touch had been special. The healing was not some magic touch, but power – power that went out to heal and to forgive and to save. How that power is needed today!

March 17th John 6:1-14

There is much here that is hard to understand, yet the central figure, apart from our Lord, is surely the boy. In view of the large number present, his gesture was ridiculously futile, yet Jesus could use such a gesture and effect the feeding of the five thousand. This is perhaps the real miracle – that Jesus can take our puny efforts and so bless them in a quiet breathtaking way. When a person offers their all to Christ, the results are beyond our wildest dreams.

March 18th Mark 4:35-41

It is possible for this miracle to be *explained away* – but one cannot *explain away* the effect it had on the men in the boat. From crying in terror they are transformed into men who gaze in awe and wonder at their passenger. The great miracle is not what Jesus can do with things like waves and winds, but what He can do with sinful men and women.

March 19th John 2:1-12

Jesus did not perform miracles merely to help out in some moment of domestic difficulty, but to teach hidden truth about the nature and will of God. John later records Jesus as saying “I have come that they might have life, life in all its fullness”. Here is Jesus demonstrating that He can take dull, ordinary routine life and give it a quality that wins the admiration of those who taste it.

March 20th John 11:17-44

We have already seen that Jesus used miracles to demonstrate God’s power and God’s love. It is a power and a love that goes far beyond our normal and natural limitations. For natural man death is the end and it cannot be avoided or overcome. Jesus is demonstrating that what is impossible for man is well within the capability of God.

March 21st Mark 5:1-20

For some time many people have regarded demon possession as some primitive superstition that modern man has outgrown, but gradually we are rediscovering that, whether we like it or not, demon possession is a fact. We may not understand what happens, but we must accept this fact. Miracles such as this, which were so long ignored and discounted, are being accepted again as proof that the power of Christ which can overcome death, can overcome the power of evil as well.

PEOPLE JESUS MET

March 22nd John 3:1-17

Today we read of a visit by a Pharisee. In general the Pharisees were critical of all that Jesus was and did. The Pharisees recognized that there is something of God in Jesus. Nicodemus had been so long accustomed to Pharisaic thinking that he found it difficult to grasp the fullness of the truth Christ taught, but he recognized that the truth lay in the direction of Christ and nowhere else.

March 23rd John 4:5-26

From a Pharisee we move now to a foreign woman of somewhat doubtful morality. Notice again how Jesus treats her with courtesy, and also how He guides the conversation to that point when she refers to the coming Messiah, and then He reveals “*I am He*”. Jesus is teaching us here that any conversation must lead to this point when the Christ is recognized and declared. How did He know her moral background? In exactly the same way, He knows you and me.

March 24th John 4:28-42

There must come a point in the personal faith of each of us when we must pass over from believing what others tell us about Jesus to a personal commitment of our own. “*We believe now, not because of what you said, but because we ourselves have heard Him, and we know that He really is the Saviour of the world.*”

March 25th John 7:32-46

Today we read of ordinary soldiers sent to arrest Jesus. They returned without their prisoner, and when asked for an explanation could only reply, "*No man has ever talked like this man.*" They had no theological training, but even they could see that there was something special, something unique, about Jesus.

March 26th Luke 10:38-42

Martha was not afraid to complain to Him because her sister was leaving her with all the work to do. This is the wonder of Jesus. To Martha Jesus could be one of the family, like a brother. No one need be afraid to approach Jesus.

March 27th Luke 18:18-30

This man was a leader, respectful in manner, morally beyond reproach, but there was one flaw in his character and Jesus spotted it. His wealth had such a hold of him that he could not yield himself unreservedly to Jesus. Jesus does not trim his demands to suit our convenience. He demands our total obedience – nothing less will do.

March 28th Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus was also rich and in an executive-type position. He had discovered that wealth and position do not satisfy man's inner hunger, and so he gladly and willingly casts both wealth and position aside that he might have the joy of Christ's presence in his home.

TEACHING OF JESUS

March 29th Matt. 5:21-30

Jesus makes quite clear here that He is not so concerned with what we do, as what we are.

March 30th Matt. 5:43-48

We have all been hurt or disappointed in some kind of way. How do we react to those 'enemies'? Do we hate the very thought of them? Or do we love them in the name of Christ and hold out the hand of reconciliation? There is no doubt what Christ would have us do.

March 31st Matt. 6:5-14

What could be more natural than talking to our Heavenly Father? Yet many of us would have to confess we find prayer difficult. So Jesus teaches us how to pray. How simple and natural it is!