

Matthew 13: 52; “The Parable of the Householder”, Session # 7 – “The Scribe’s Looking & Washing”, Presented by Pastor Paul Rendall on November 12th, 2023, in the Adult Sunday School.

Matthew 13: 52 – “Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.” (NKJV)

Review –

1. The Primary Responsibility of the householder, scribe, pastor, is to bring forth the treasure of old things and new things.

2. A faithful minister will be teaching himself and others to put away all sin and become a doer of the word.

3. Looking into the mirror of the word of God will lead you to the Laver, of washing; cleansing yourself from all defilement of flesh and spirit.

Exodus 38: 8 – He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.”

Question # 1 – Why do you think these women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting wanted to give up their valuable bronze mirrors to make the bronze laver for the priests?

Ans. Evidently there were large numbers of women who would assemble at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, who came there for the purpose of devotion and prayer to God for His blessing on the ministration of the priests and the people at the tabernacle. They saw that there was a great need for bronze in the making of the bronze laver, and so they decided together to bring their own personal bronze mirrors to contribute to the cause of holy worship and service to the Lord. These highly polished mirrors were probably plate sized and they were either melted down and the laver cast from this liquid bronze, or they were somehow affixed to the outside of the laver, or both. But these women’s actions showed that they considered it to be of utmost importance, that they made this public statement of their giving away these mirrors, to make the laver.

This shows us two things.

1 – They believed that the worship and service of the temple was worth this self sacrifice of their giving up their mirrors. It would show both the Lord, and the priests and other Israelite people, that they thought the worship of the Lord to be of more importance, even, than their own having these fine mirrors to gaze at themselves in.

2 – They also knew that the priests, when they would come to wash their hands and feet in the laver, they would be able to see themselves more clearly. They would be able to see where their spots of uncleanness and defilement really were. And so, this was a good work on their part in every way. So, I am trying to show you, that the mirror of the word of God, which show us ourselves, and shows us also the glory of Christ, the One whom we would become more like, looking carefully at ourselves in this mirror, should lead us to the laver, so that all of our spots and sins would be washed away.

Exodus 30: 17-21 – Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the Lord, they shall wash with water, lest they die.

Question # 2 – Why was it so important that the priests wash before their ministered at the altar?

Ans. In doing so, they were keeping the ceremonial commandment of the Lord that would represent their cleansing themselves of all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. (2nd Corinthians 7: 1)

Question # 3 – How important is it for any New Covenant, New Testament minister, the scribe and the householder, to wash himself by regular confession of his sins, and prayer to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, and the Spirit's cleansing him from all defilement?

You see from these verses how essential it really was, ceremonially, for the priests to wash before their ministered at the altar. They would die if they did not do so. How important it is for any New Covenant, New Testament minister, the scribe and the householder, to wash himself spiritually by regular confession of his sins, and prayer to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, and washed with the pure water of the Holy Spirit's cleansing him from all defilement.

John 13: 8 – “Unless I wash you, Jesus said to Peter, you have no part with Me.”

And John 13, verses 12-17 – “So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you?’ ‘You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you says well, for so I am.’ ‘If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.’ ‘For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.’ ‘Most assuredly, I says to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.’ ‘If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.’”

Question # 4 – How important is it for every New Testament minister (and all Christians, really) to think of Christ's example of love and servanthood if he would become a faithful minister of Christ Jesus?

Answer: It is very important, if that Christian minister is to be a godly man. If Christ washes him and he learns to serve others, even as Christ did, all the people that he ministers to will come to realize that he is becoming more like Christ. And they will see He can teach them many good things about Christ and His great salvation, and lead them into the truth of the Bible because he is a faithful scribe, a faithful householder.

4. Looking into the Mirror of the Word will transform us from one degree of glory to another by the Spirit.

2nd Corinthians 3: 17 & 18 – “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Question # 5 – What does Paul mean here when he says that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty?

Ans. It is the Holy Spirit who gives the Christian liberty because of what Christ has done for them in fulfilling the law, and going to the cross, and rising from the dead. We are freed from bondage and condemnation, and now have the freedom and the power to do what is right and to go about to keep all of God's commandments.

Question # 6 – When we behold in the mirror of God's word, the glory of the Lord, what is that glory?

Question # 7 – When it says here that we are being transformed from glory to glory, does it mean that we will continue to be transformed, to be changed to become more like Christ in righteousness, holiness, and become better people, morally speaking, in our speech and conduct?

Ans. In the process of time, by the Spirit's working in our heart and life, we will be transformed into Christ's image from glory to glory by the His precious and powerful working, as we seek God's face and seek to be faithful to His word. Christ is the mirror of the Essential Word of God, now glorified as a Man in heaven at the right hand of God. When we behold His glory in all that He has said and all that He has done, and all that He is doing for us now that He has accomplished redemption and is applying it to us by His Spirit, we are transformed by means of the communion that we hold with Him in our hearts, over the truth of Himself which we find in the Bible. In doing this, we will be transformed from one degree of glory to another to become more like Him.

The Pulpit Commentary – The sight of God is ever a transforming sight. It is seen to be so in the case of the transfiguration. The disciples saw our Lord's very raiment white and glistening, and glory all overspreading his frame. When a man sees God there is an inner change, of which that is the symbol. Illustrate by the way in which a close and trustful friendship makes the friends grow alike. As the Christian man maintains his daily relations with Christ the mirrored God, as he "dwells in the secret place of the Most High," he finds a transforming and transfiguring work is being carried on: the mind of God is coming to be his mind; the work of God is coming to be his work; the very life of God is coming to be his life. And this further result comes. They who are changing into the likeness of God are gradually reflecting the glory of God out upon men. They are becoming themselves, in turn, mirrors of God, glasses in which men may behold the glory of the Lord. We hardly know which is the more gracious and surprising—the change that is wrought in us by the constant communion of God and our souls, or the infinite condescension which permits us, in our earthly lives, to be light bearers for God, mirrors to reflect the glory and attraction of his saving grace, so that men may be won to him.

Alexander MacLaren –

The metaphor of a mirror does not wholly serve us here. When the sunbeams fall upon it, it flashes in the light, just because they do not enter its cold surface. It is a mirror, because it does not drink them up, but flings them back. The contrary is the case with these sentient mirrors of our spirits. In them the light must first sink in before it can ray out. They must first be filled with the glory, before the glory can stream forth. They are not so much like a reflecting surface as like a bar of iron, which needs to be heated right down to its obstinate black core, before its outer skin glows with the whiteness of a heat that is too hot to sparkle. The sunshine must fall on us, not as it does on some lonely hill-side, lighting up the grey stones with a passing gleam that changes nothing, and fades away, leaving the solitude to its sadness; but as it does on some cloud cradled near its setting, which it drenches and saturates with fire till its cold heart burns, and all its wreaths of vapor are brightness palpable, glorified by the light which lives amidst its mists. So must we have the glory sink into us before it can be reflected from us. In deep inward beholding we must have Christ in our hearts, that He may shine forth from our lives.

And this contemplation will be gradual transformation. There is the great principle of Christian morals. 'We all beholding . . . are changed.' The power to which is committed the perfecting of our characters lies in looking upon Jesus. It is not the mere beholding, but the gaze of love and trust that moulds us by silent sympathy into the likeness of His wondrous beauty, who is fairer than the children of men. It was a deep, true thought which the old painters had, when they drew John as likeliest to his Lord. Love makes us like. We learn that even in our earthly relationships, where habitual familiarity with parents and dear ones stamps some tone of voice or look, or little peculiarity of gesture, on a whole house. And when the infinite reverence and aspiration which the Christian soul cherishes to its Lord are superadded, the transforming power of loving contemplation of Him becomes mighty beyond all analogies in human friendship, though one in

principle with these. What a marvelous thing that a block of rude sandstone, laid down before a perfect marble, should become a copy of its serene loveliness just by lying there! Lay your hearts down before Christ. Contemplate Him. Love Him. Think about Him. Let that pure face shine upon heart and spirit, and as the sun photographs itself on the sensitive plate exposed to its light, and you get a likeness of the sun by simply laying the thing in the sun, so He will 'be formed in, you.' Iron near a magnet becomes magnetic. Spirits that dwell with Christ become Christ-like. The Roman Catholic legends put this truth in a coarse way, when they tell of saints who have gazed on some ghastly crucifix till they have received, in their tortured flesh, the copy of the wounds of Jesus, and have thus borne in their body the marks of the Lord. The story is hideous and gross, the idea beneath is ever true. Set your faces towards the Cross with loving, reverent gaze, and you will 'be conformed unto His death,' that in due time you may 'be also in the likeness of His Resurrection.'

In reference to Exodus 38: 8, Joseph Parker D.D. says – In many ancient religions women took a leading part in some of the ceremonies. This was so in Egypt. Each woman had a looking-glass made of polished brass, and that mirror was used in some way in connection with idolatrous practices. When the Tabernacle was being built the women gave up their mirrors and so contributed to the formation of the laver, which was made of brass, and the foot of it of brass. Thus we have old things turned to new uses, and it is for us to say whether we shall regard this incident as a piece of ancient history, or whether we shall enter into the spirit of it and realize the action in our own day and on a broader scale. How came the women to give up their looking-glasses to assist in constructing the laver? Because a superior spirit had taken possession of them. That is the philosophy and that the explanation of the case. What then is the spirit that is to enter into us? None other than the spirit of Christ. We might use many words in describing the spirit, but all the words would focalize themselves at last in this sublime expression—"For Christ's sake." The highest personality is Christ. We follow Him, and in proportion as we follow Him all things we possess are His.

There is room in the sanctuary for everything. This is the point we have so often missed in our Christian teaching. No punishment is burning enough for the men who would belittle God's house. What have you? You have nothing that cannot be used in the building of God's house and kingdom. Have you nothing but the little looking-glass? It can be used. Is yours, on the other hand, but one small flower which a child could pluck? It was God's flower before it was yours, and He will never consent to lose a flower; it cost Him thought and care and love; He dressed the flower as Solomon never could dress himself. Blessed will be the day when the breweries of the country are turned into mechanics' institutes, great sanitary establishments for the washing and cleansing of the people. Blessed will be the day when the rich man's saloons shall be thrown open to the poorest neighbors, *and he has who will come to look at his articles of vertu, (meaning – force, strength, and vigor; his productions of art or antique nature)* who will turn over his curiosities and examine them with honest fingers, and so admire them as to be touched, into desire for broader life.

Joseph Parker goes on to say – Blessed, bright will be the day when in that sense we shall have all things common; when the strong man's strength shall be the weak man's refuge; when the homeless shall have a large home in the charity and love of his richer brother; when the one object of every heart will be to extend the happiness of mankind—the one question in the morning being, What good can be done to-day? and the one question at eventide, What good has been accomplished? My persuasion is that if ever that time is to be brought about, it can only be by the extension of the spirit of Jesus Christ. Taking the Christian view, all becomes larger still and brighter, and the hope is given that one day everybody will be in the kingdom, and every man, woman, and child, will be doing their very best to make that kingdom what God means it to be. The great men, by heroic strength, by dauntless valor, will carry on their sublime occupation; the patient women—gentle souls, having the genius of sympathy and the faculty of interpreting by suffering—will contribute their important, their ineffably valuable share; and little children will make up the sum total of the consecration.

