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PARABLE OF THE SOWER

(episode 068)

theme: We should preach the word of God to all men, though not all men will receive it. **scripture:** Luke 8:5-8 **quote:** “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season.” II Timothy 4:2 **summary:** In this parable of the sower we find that not everyone who hears the word of God will receive it. This is sad, but it’s true.

Some who hear the word have it snatched from their heart by the devil. Others will receive the word initially with joy. But it doesn’t take root in their hearts and in time of temptation they fall away. Still others hear the word but the worries, riches and pleasures of this life chokes it off and they do not yield any fruit.

But there are those who hear the word and hold it fast in their hearts, persevering through trials and temptations and bring forth fruit.

If the word of God has been sown in your heart, be vigilant to cultivate it. Grow in the faith. Don’t let the things of this world distract you or steal your heart away from pursuing God. Let your words and actions be good fruit that is pleasing to God and useful for the advancing of His kingdom.

SALT OF THE EARTH

(episode 070)

theme: Christians should help preserve the world around them. **scripture:** Matthew 5:13 **quote:** “You are the salt of the earth.” Matthew 5:13a **summary:** Salt has been widely used throughout the ages as a preservative. It helps to keep meat from rotting, holding at bay the natural effects of putrefication.

Jesus used salt as a way of describing the church. We are to be the salt of the earth. Man’s natural state is one of bondage to sin. Sin leads to death and brings destruction as it does. The gospel of Christ brings new life. It breaks the stranglehold of death. A world without the power of the gospel would be one of misery, rottenness and death. Christians, as the proclaimers of God’s word, are like salt in a world that is decaying.

But we must never stop the work of preaching the gospel nor of holding fast in obeying the law of God. If we do we will become like salt that has lost its savor. If that were to happen we would be good for nothing.

Let us continue to walk in the Spirit, neither neglecting personal holiness nor the preaching of the gospel. The world is depending on it.

CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD

(episode 071)

theme: God knows what we need and how to provide it for us. **scripture:** Matthew 6:25-34 **quote:** “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be

added to you.” Matthew 6:33 **summary:** From this report by Nit Whitley we learn a valuable lesson from observing a lily. Lilies grow in fields. They don’t work to produce anything to wear, yet God clothes them. Even King Solomon himself, with all his wealth, was not clothed like one of these.

Now these flowers aren’t around very long. They are here today and tomorrow are thrown into the furnace. If God clothes these lilies, which are not as valuable to God as we are, so well, doesn’t it stand to reason that He will take care to provide for us?

Jesus told us not to be anxious saying things like “What shall we drink, or with what shall we clothe ourselves?” We should not be overly concerned with these things. Those who are not Christians may be consumed with them and pursue them very determinedly, thinking about them all the time. God knows we need these things, and if we focus our attention on Him and pursue the things important to His Kingdom, He will give us just what we need.

Remembering that our real treasure is not the things of the earth, but the things of heaven, will help us to keep our affections on things above, to the praise and glory of His name.

JASPER & BUSTER & I CORINTHIANS 12:11-20

(episode 072)

theme: We should be who and what God created us to be. **scripture:** I Corinthians 12:11-20 **quote:** “Now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He

desired.” I Corinthians 12:18 **summary:** Jasper was happy being a mouse. He enjoyed all the pleasures a mouse might enjoy. Buster, on the other hand, longed to be a lion. They are the king of the jungle and that position gives them an authority and respect that he wished for himself.

So, one day, Buster decided he was no longer going to be a mouse, but a lion. He went about proclaiming to everyone of his change. Unfortunately for him, no matter what he said, he was not a lion but still a mouse. No one took him seriously. His insistence made no difference and, in the end, got him into trouble.

It’s easy for us to see qualities or abilities in others that we would like to have, and it’s not a bad thing to want to become more like them and emulate those things. We may admire someone who is physically strong, and start exercising to become more so ourselves. We may admire someone who is honest and work to become more honest ourselves.

But there are some giftings or abilities that God has simply not given us. We may admire someone who can sing very well, but if God has not given us a good singing voice, we will never be able to sing quite like they do.

God has given us abilities and gifts that are specific to us, and He has done that for a purpose. He has a calling and a plan for us that is unique to us. Rather than try to be someone we’re not and try to do things we’re not gifted for, let us discover what gifts and abilities God has given us and seek Him as to how we can most effectively use them.

Our lives are to be lived for God’s glory, and when we keep that end in mind we will be more satisfied in being what He created us to be.

THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

(episode 076)

theme: Saying “no” to God, then repenting and doing what He commands, is better than saying “yes” and then not doing His will. **scripture:** Matthew 21:28-32 **quote:** “Which of the two did the will of his father?” Matthew 21:31a **summary:** Jesus told this parable of two sons. Their father went to the first son and told him to work that day in the vineyard. The son said he would, but did not go.

The father then went to the second son and told him the same thing. The son said he wouldn’t go, but later regretted it and went and worked.

Jesus asked which of these two did the will of his father. The answer, of course, is the second son. Many of us have done what the second son did. We refuse to obey God and go our own way. But, thankfully, there is room in God’s heart for forgiveness. If, after we regret having disobeyed God, we repent, ask for forgiveness, and then fulfill God’s command, those actions are pleasing to Him.

On the other hand, if we tell God that we will obey Him, and then don't do it, that is displeasing to God.

The path to obeying God may take a long way around. But if, in the end, we do as He commands, we find acceptance and forgiveness with Him. But saying we will do as He commands and then walk away from our commitment is sin and makes us a hypocrite or a liar.

If you have said "no" to God today about something. Don't wait. Repent, ask for His forgiveness, and go out and do as He has commanded.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

(episode 077)

theme: We must let the light of the Gospel shine in a dark world. **scripture:** Matthew 5:14-16 **quote:** "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:16 **summary:** Those of us who are Christians have a very great privilege and a great responsibility. The gospel is good news that transforms men into new creatures. It gives light and life to all who receive it. Those who are walking in slavery and bondage to sin are in darkness. We, who know the gospel and have experienced its power, are called to live our lives in that power. So much so that God working in us becomes evident to those around us, those still in living darkness. The light within us should shine so brightly that they will see our actions, our manner of life, and give glory to God.

Jesus told us that we are the light of the world. No one would light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand so that it would give light to all who are in the house. The way we live our life is a very useful tool in advancing the Kingdom of God. Let's strive to live our lives in such a way that we are lights in a dark world, and we cause those around us to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

GOOD SHEPHERD - BAD SHEPHERD

(episode 093)

theme: Jesus is the Shepherd of our souls, like no other could be. **scripture:** John 10:6-15 **quote:** "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

John 10:11 **summary:** Jesus called Himself the good shepherd, and He does for us many similar things that a shepherd does for his sheep.

Just as a shepherd protects and defends his flock, Jesus cares for us and defends us against our enemies. A shepherd makes sure that his sheep are well-fed, So too, Jesus, provides us with what is necessary to be healthy, not just physically, but spiritually as well. Jesus was even willing to lay His life down for our sake.

A bad shepherd, such as one who is merely hired to watch the sheep, does not take that kind of care. If a wolf attacks the flock, the bad shepherd won't defend the flock, he'll run away to protect himself. He doesn't particularly care what happens to the sheep.

Jesus also said that, as the good shepherd, He knows His sheep and they know Him. This is what makes our relationship with Jesus so wonderful. Not just that we know about Him, but that we actually know Him, and He knows us and He cares for us. We can put our confidence in His shepherding of our souls, now and for all time.

FISHERS OF MEN

(episode 095)

theme: When Jesus calls, we should be willing to give up everything to follow Him. **scripture:** Matthew 4:18-22 **quote:** "And He [Jesus] said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of

men.'

And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him." Matthew 4:19,20 **summary:** Nit Whitly takes to the sea to give us this report on the calling of two sets of brothers, Peter and Andrew, and James and John, by Jesus to be His disciples. They were fishermen, and they were working on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus walked by each set of brothers and called them to follow Him. All four men left their work to be with Jesus.

How about us? Are we willing to leave everything to serve Jesus? It's a hard question to answer. Most of us will never be required to give up all we have and all we are familiar with in service to Jesus, but we certainly will have to give up somethings.

To those called to be missionaries, they must give up a home and surroundings they know to live in a different place. Those called to service ministries must give up some comforts and advantages they have at Christ's call.

We will all be called to lay down some thing in or some part of our lives as God requires. We should be willing, if He calls, to give up everything. Remembering that there is no greater reward than to be found faithful by Jesus, and no greater peace than to be in the center of God's will.

PRAYER, BREAD & STONES

(episode 117)

theme: We must be persistent when we pray. **scripture:** Luke 11:9-13 **quote:** "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray

and not to lose heart." Luke 18:1 **summary:** This episode of "Radio Theater of the Air" deals with prayer and our need to be persistent.

When a son wants something from his father he sometimes needs to look all over for him, and then when he finds him he may have to work to gain his attention. Prayer is similar in a way to this. It's not that God is hiding and we have to find Him, or that He is preoccupied and we have to get His attention. God is everywhere and His attention is never off of us. Rather, this "seeking" to find Him and "knocking" to get His attention is designed for our benefit. Good qualities are developed in us when we persevere in prayer.

Also, if a son asks for a fish which father would give him a snake? Or a scorpion instead of an egg? Most fathers desire to give good things to their sons. If this is true, then how much more so can we suppose God desires to give good things to those who ask Him?

When we pray we can know that God hears us and that He desires to give us those things He knows are good for us. We can also know that if we do not receive the answer we want as soon as we would like, we need to not lose heart, but to persevere and keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking. Let us pray always, persistently and fervently, and God will make His answer known at the proper time.

JASPER & BUSTER MEET MR. P

(episode 124)

theme: We should make good use of the gifts God has given us. **scripture:** Matthew 25:14-30 **quote:** "For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have in abundance, but the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."

Matthew 25:29 **summary:** Jasper & Buster are two mice who are given a great opportunity by Mr. P. Mr. P owns a chicken farm. He is going away on a trip, but before he goes he entrusts Jasper & Buster each with a chicken. They are to care for them and utilize them while he's gone. When he returns he will see which used the gift they were given best.

Jasper sets out to ensure his chicken is well taken care of. He builds a fine coop for it and feeds and cares for it. When the chicken begins laying eggs, Jasper collects some of them to sell. The others he allows the hen to set on to hatch. After a short while he has increased the number of chickens he has.

Buster is less ambitious. In fact, he's not ambitious at all. He ignores his chicken, not worrying even about where it sleeps.

When Mr. P returns he is pleased to see what good use Jasper has made of his chicken. He's not very pleased with Buster. Buster returns the chicken after having done nothing with it at all.

God has given each of us talents and gifts which we are to use in service to Him. Let's imitate Jasper. Let's take those talents and gifts and develop them, and use them for God's glory as we dedicate them to the Kingdom of God. Let's avoid imitating Buster. Let's not ignore our talents and gifts and, in a sense, bury them in the ground. Let's use what God has given us for His purposes and His glory.

JASPER & BUSTER & FORGIVENESS

(episode 130)

theme: We need to forgive as God has forgiven us. **scripture:** Matthew 18:23-35 **quote:** "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful...Forgive and you will be forgiven."

Luke 6:36,37 **summary:** This episode of "Radio Theater of the Air" is based on a parable Jesus told in Matthew 18:23-35. A king was settling his accounts. A man was brought before him who owed him a large sum, which he couldn't pay. The man pleaded with the king asking for more time to repay the debt. The king felt compassion toward the man and forgave him the huge debt.

That same man, when he had left the king, met someone who owed him a small debt, quite a bit smaller than the debt he had owed the king. The man demanded payment, but his friend could not pay. The friend pleaded with the man to give him more time to pay back the debt, but the man wouldn't. He threw his friend into prison until he should pay back what was owed.

When the king heard of this he summoned the man again. "Should you not have had mercy on your friend, even as I had mercy on you," he asked the man? The king was angry and handed the man over until he should repay all he had owed.

This story gives us something good to think about. God has forgiven us so much, and yet we are sometimes unwilling to forgive others, and for things which are much less important or less serious. Let's learn a lesson from the ungrateful man and practice forgiving one another, just as God, through Christ, has forgiven us.

THE DRAGNET

(episode 131)

theme: At the end of our lives all that will matter is how we responded to Jesus. **scripture:** Matthew 14:47-53 **quote:** "So it will be at the end of the age, the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous." Matthew 14:49 **summary:** On board a fishing boat, Nit Whitley illustrates this parable told by Jesus. He compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a dragnet that is cast into the sea. It gathers fish of every kind. When it's filled it is brought up onto the deck of the ship where the fishermen separate the good fish from the bad ones. The good ones they keep while the bad ones are thrown away.

The fish in this parable represent people. The sorting represents what will happen at the end of the age. The good fish are those who will go to heaven, while the bad fish are those who will not. But what makes a person "good" or "bad" in this illustration?

Many people, since the creation of the world, have lived on the earth. Some for a long time and others for a very short time. Some were very talented or intelligent, while others were not. Some possessed great wealth, while others were very poor. Some enjoyed good health, while others suffered with health problems. But in the end they all have had one thing in common. They were all people.

So what determines if a person is "good" and will enter heaven? It's Jesus. No one can be truly "good" by his own efforts. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There is not one of us who, on our own, can merit heaven. We can only gain heaven through the blood of Jesus.

He came to earth and suffered and died, taking the penalty for our sins upon Himself. It is through His sacrifice that we can be made fit for heaven.

So in the end, when all is said and done, the only thing that will really matter is Jesus. Did we accept Him as our Lord and Savior, or did we reject Him. Nothing else, no accomplishment or accolade, no fame or fortune, not even any good deeds will make a difference. It is Jesus, and Him alone.