



Luke 18:31-34

"They Understood None of These Things"

31 Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.

32 "For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon.

33 "They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

34 But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.

The idea that someone would know the Gospel, and know Jesus Christ, who is at the heart of the gospel, and then never desire to make Jesus and His gospel message known to others is an idea that is simply alien to the Bible. Even in the midst of the first terrible persecution that fell on the church, scattering the believers to the four winds, we read "Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." These believers, even though they were under constant threat of being thrown in prison went out εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν λόγον. Literally proclaiming the good news of the Word – that is Jesus Christ. That methodology still operates today, as persecuted believers bring the gospel with them, wherever they are driven.

But as you do go out into the world witnessing for Christ, and I hope that you all are – lets not have any excuses, if humble Chinese believers can do it, even though they are blessed if one in six of them has a bible, and who have hardly any trained pastors, and who face imprisonment in a labor camp if they are caught, what is stopping you? You have more materials available to you than you can possibly ever read, you have email and the world wide web, and what's more it's still legal in this country. The only things that hold us back from witnessing – ***are all here*** (in the heart).

Anyway, as you go out and talk to people about Jesus, you inevitably find that people have developed some pretty funky ideas about who Jesus and the Gospel. I was recently speaking with someone who said they believed that Jesus wasn't a person who had really walked around in Palestine in the first century. Rather they said "***Christ is a concept that lives in all of us, and we all have the potential to achieve that concept***" Now maybe its only because I'm not very bright, but I just don't know what that even *means* and certainly that isn't what the bible teaches about Jesus.

But why is that, why are there so many odd and conflicting ideas about who Jesus is floating around out there? Why is it that people can be surrounded by bibles that tell us about the real Jesus, and yet be much more willing to believe and accept the testimony of a loopy popular novel like "The Da Vinci Code?" Well I can't give you an explanation for all of them, but I think one of the biggest reasons is that people believe what they want to believe, so they believe in a Jesus of their own making that they want. But that is almost always not the Jesus of the Bible, you see the Jesus of the Bible is not the Jesus men ***want***, He is the Jesus people ***desperately need***.

Now even the Apostles who walked with Jesus had the same problem. They had an idea of a Messiah they desperately wanted. He was someone who would with divine power restore the Kingdom of Israel, remove the Romans and collaborators like the Herodians. He would restore the throne of his father David and then Israel would once again be God's kingdom on earth, and they Apostles themselves would have exalted positions in such a kingdom. That was what Jesus the Messiah was going to do. ***But was that the Messiah the disciples really needed?*** No, it was the Messiah they wanted.

Jesus hadn't told them what was going to happen, again and again he had told them:

Luke 9:22 "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

Luke 9:44 for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

But that didn't fit their expectations or their desires. It just didn't make sense to them, there wasn't any problem in the information, Jesus has just been about as straightforward as he can be. Right down to how he is going to be mocked, insulted, and spit upon. ***How can someone not understand that?***

Well you can just imagine the Apostles saying to themselves, ***"he must mean that metaphorically, perhaps our cause after we enter into the city will appear to be failing for three days, and then just when the cause seems to have died, the kingdom will be triumphantly restored."*** It sounds silly but *that kind of thing happens all the time, how many times for instance have you shown somebody an obvious passage of scripture, for instance they are claiming that Jesus never said he was the only way to God. So you take them to John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

And you look at them like, <there it is!> and then they simply say "well that's your interpretation!" I'd love to see them try that with a traffic cop... Is the material cryptic? No, not at all, but accepting it at face value is simply impossible for them ***"No, that cannot be right, I cannot, and I will not believe it"*** The problem once again isn't <out here> it's in here.

They Apostles don't believe it, but Jesus really is going up to Jerusalem to be taken by lawless hands, delivered into the hands of the Romans, mocked, insulted, and spit upon, whipped and then killed. Why was that going to happen? Why was he going there? Well friends, here is the gospel plain and simple. Because that is the only way that God could save you and me. And if there was any other way to accomplish that goal, then you can be sure he would have done it. If he could have saved his people and spared his only begotten son, don't you think the God the father would have done that? But that was the only way. Now a lot of people will say that's ridiculous, the crucifixion of Jesus was a tragic accident, an unintended consequence. God never planned to have his Son die at the hands of his own chosen people.

No, that is why Jesus stressed to His Disciples that in his death *all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.* We'll look at perhaps the greatest example of that principle in the OT in just a moment. But first, lets talk about why Jesus needed to die on the cross:

Let's talk about divine Law. ***What is God's Law in it's essence?*** It is an application of the perfect holiness of God to the life of man. It is divided into two tables: the first 4 commandments expressing man's duty to God, and the next 6 expressing man's duty to his fellow man. We see this division spelled out by Jesus in his summarization of the commandments into two laws: " 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. "And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

The particular commandments themselves answer the "how" question, "how do I love the Lord my God in regard to my use of his name?" (see Commandment 3) or if we were to ask "how do I love my neighbor in regards to whether to lie or tell the truth?" (See commandment nine). To obey the commandments was to obey God's laws for the life, faith, and practice of man and thus live a life that reflected the image of God and obeyed His commandment to "Be holy, for I am holy."

In his original unfallen state in the Garden, man was able to do this. Adam was originally capable of obeying the law perfectly. But unlike God, who does not change (he is immutable) Adam was created mutable, and by his choice he chose to sin by disobeying God. After he sinned, he fell, was cursed and became dead in sin (Eph. 2:1) and after that it became impossible for men to perfectly keep the Law of God (Rom. 8:7). The Bible talks about the universality of Sin: Romans 3:10 "10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one"

Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

"I admit fully that man has many grand and noble faculties left about him, and that in arts and sciences and literature he shows immense capacity. But the fact still remains that in spiritual things he is utterly "dead" and has no natural knowledge, or love, or fear of God. His best things are so interwoven and intermingled with corruption, that the contrast only brings out into sharper relief the truth and extent of the Fall. That one and the same creature should be in some things so high and in others so low; so great and yet so little; so noble and yet so mean; so grand in his conception and execution of material things and yet so groveling and debased in his affections; that he should be able to plan and erect buildings like those at Carnac and Luxor in Egypt and the Parthenon at Athens, and yet worship vile gods and goddesses and birds and beasts and creeping things; that he should be able to produce tragedies like those of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and histories like that of Thucydides, and yet be a slave to abominable vices like those described in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans—all this is a sore puzzle to those who sneer at "God's Word written" and scoff at us as bibliolaters. But it is a knot that we can untie with the Bible in our hands. We can acknowledge that man has all the marks of a majestic temple about him, a temple in which God once dwelt, but a temple which is now in utter ruins, a temple in which a shattered window here, and a doorway there, and a column there, still give some faint idea of the magnificence of the original design, but a temple which from end to end has lost its glory and fallen from its high estate. And we say that nothing solves the complicated problem of man's condition but the doctrine of original or birth-sin and the crushing effects of the Fall." – JC Ryle

What is sin? Disobeying God's law either by commission or omission. The wages of Sin is death - in other words, God's righteous judgment for disobeying his law should be death, both physical and eternal. God would have been justified by condemning all men to hell at that point. But God instead of giving all men perfect justice, elected to give some mercy instead of the justice they deserved. In order for this to happen, someone would have to stand in the place of fallen man and pay the penalty for their transgressions, and not only that but keep the law on their behalf. Only God Himself could offer up the perfect sacrifice necessary to atone for the sins of man, and only he could keep the law on the behalf of fallen sinners and give his own righteousness to them as a gift. Which is exactly what the Bible tells us that Jesus, the Second person of the Trinity came into the world to do:

1 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."(Mat. 1:21)

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (1 Tim. 1:15)

NKJ Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

9 And they made His grave with the wicked -- But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

It's so clear there even a child could perceive the connection between the Man of Sorrows and what happened to Jesus in Jerusalem.

That is the Gospel. *Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness*

But what of you? Is this a truth you believe, and you have hidden in your heart, that is a cause for you to rejoice? Or is all of this still hidden from you. Are you even now saying, well... That's your interpretation. Is your heart crying out "*No, that cannot be right, I cannot, and I will not believe it.*"

I hope that isn't the case. Because someday all of you will have to cross that river that no mortal man passes over twice. And there is only one person who can safely guide you into the land that lies on the far side of the river – and that is Jesus. Put your trust in him, and just as he died and rose again, so will you. He leads his disciples into and through death and out from the shadows into the light of eternal life. **NO MAN COMES TO THE FATHER BUT BY HIM.**