



Where Else Would We Go?

John 6:67-68: (NKJV) ⁶⁷Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

All of us who claim to be Christians would probably agree that Jesus is the centerpiece of our lives and that following him is our most important task. If we were to leave the conversation there, then it would seem to be a clear and easy conclusion. However, there is so much more to this story! What does it mean to truly follow him? What are "the words of eternal life" to which Simon Peter referred? Are they easy to find? Are they easy to follow? Are they available anywhere else? Stay with us as we look into these words of eternal life and example of Jesus to see if we are truly following him and no one else!

Questions for consideration:

1. Why would people have wanted to go away from Jesus?
2. What are "the words of eternal life?"

1. Why would people have wanted to go away from Jesus?

First, let's establish the context of our theme text. We will review John 6:25-70 in pieces.

John 6:25-28: (NKJV) ²⁵And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?" ²⁶Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on him." ²⁸Then they said to him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"



Observations:

- Jesus had just finished feeding the five thousand with five barley loaves and two small fish;
- Jesus knew that many had crossed the sea to follow him for free food;
- Jesus called them out and admonished them to seek true nourishment from heaven;
- Jesus proclaims that he is the source of that food;
- Those present, therefore, ask him what to do. How sincere were they?

John 6:29-31: (NKJV) ²⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." ³⁰Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? ³¹Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

- Jesus' answer is simple - believe in ME;
- Now it begins to get interesting because they ask for a sign and works "worthy" of their belief; (as if the miracle of feeding wasn't enough!?)



- They cite Moses and the manna as their standard of comparison (below).

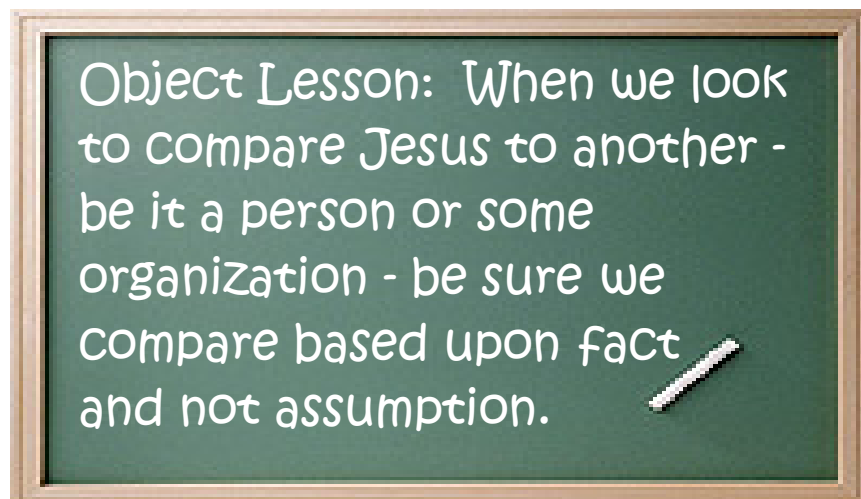
Exodus 16:6-8: (NKJV) ⁶Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt. ⁷And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what are we, that you complain against us?" ⁸Also Moses said, "This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD."

So, the gauntlet has been cast down and Jesus is "on the spot." Sure, he fed a mere five thousand with the already existing bread and fish - the question is, can he prove himself greater than Moses?



John 6:32-33: (NKJV) ³²Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

- Jesus corrects their understanding - It was God, not Moses who provided the bread!

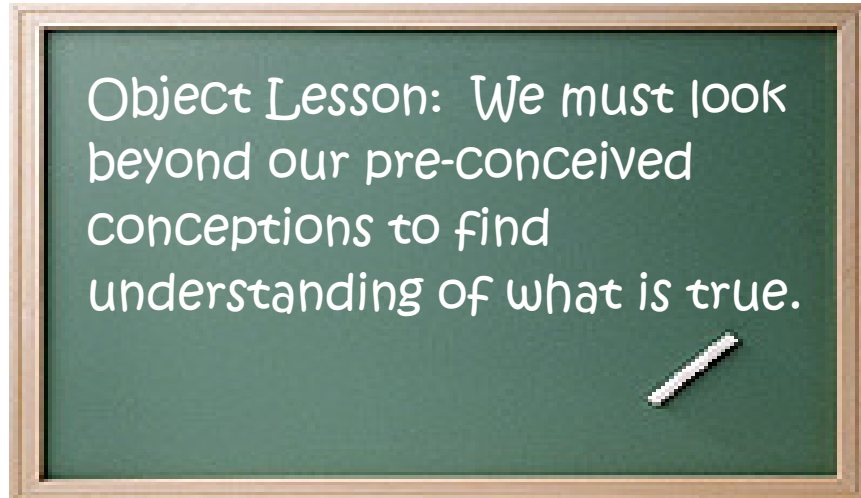


- Jesus tells them plainly that this bread (the manna in the wilderness) was a picture;
- Jesus reveals that picture as one who comes from heaven to give life to the World. (It had been a foreshadowing that he would be the spiritual manna!)

John 6:34-40: (NKJV) ³⁴Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." ³⁵And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all He has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."



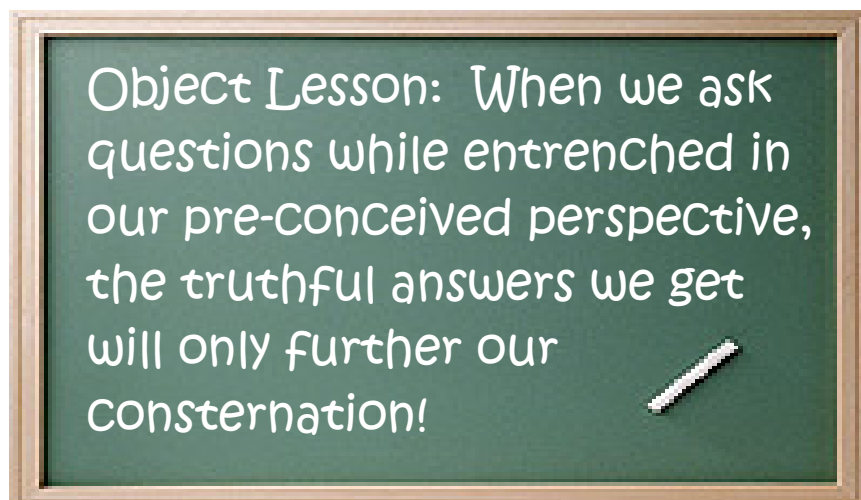
- Their response shows that they didn't listen to Jesus' teaching. (verse 34)



- Jesus then fulfills their request and describes the "hunger and thirst" (in spiritual terms) that he came to satisfy; (verse 35)
- Jesus reminds them of the opportunity that they have and are missing by their not believing; (verse 36)
- Jesus then gives the assurance that those who are his by way of his Father will find acceptance and everlasting life; (verses 37-39)
- Jesus furthers his assurance that ALL who will see and believe will be given life. (verse 40)

John 6:41-42: (NKJV) ⁴¹The Jews then complained about him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." ⁴²And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

- This is NOT a surprising reaction!
- Their focus on Jesus as the son of Joseph and Mary may have been an allusion to the "questionable" conception of Jesus.



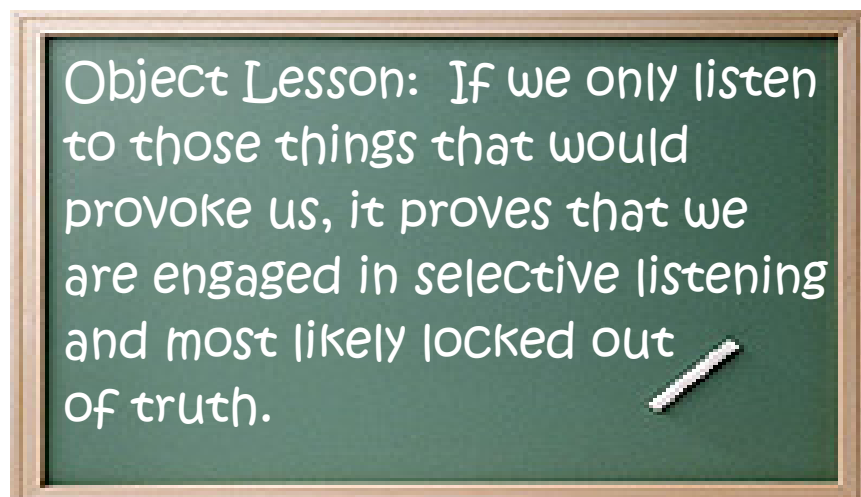


John 6:43-51: (NKJV) ⁴³*Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. ⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."*

- Jesus tells them to stop the "murmuring", the quiet complaining;
- Jesus repeats his answer about God doing the drawing and the reward of that drawing; (verse 44)
- Jesus subtly points out the consequences of their lack of willingness to truly hear; (verse 45)
- Jesus raises the stakes by further separating his own life from theirs; (verse 46-47)
- Jesus further proclaims his position as the bread from God that brings life in contrast with the manna which only sustained life temporarily; (verse 48-50)
- Jesus bluntly states that his flesh is given for the life of the world. (verse 51)

John 6:52-58: (NKJV) ⁵²*The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."*

- Now the Jews resort to arguing amongst themselves as they seem to be finally listening;





- Jesus now presses their tolerance with some seemingly outrageous statements; (verses 53-57)
- Jesus reminds them of the comparison that *they* originally made and emphasizes his role as the life-giver. (verse 58)

(Source: Jamison, Fausset and Brown Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible): ...it must have been pretty plain to candid hearers that he meant something above the gross idea which the bare terms expressed. And farther, when he added that they "had no life in them unless they thus ate and drank," it was impossible they should think he meant that the temporal life they were then living was dependent on their eating and drinking, in this gross sense, his flesh and blood. Yet the whole statement was certainly confounding, and beyond doubt was meant to be so.

Jesus meant to confound some during this weeding out process.

John 6:59-65: (NKJV) ⁵⁹These things he said in the synagogue as he taught in Capernaum. ⁶⁰Therefore many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" ⁶¹When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples complained about this, he said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶²What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where he was before? ⁶³It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. ⁶⁴But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. ⁶⁵And he said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to me unless it has been granted to him by my Father."

- All of this conversation took place in a crowded synagogue - not in quiet;
- Jesus' own disciples had a hard time with these things; (verse 60)
- Jesus, knowing this, reminds them of things even more difficult to comprehend; (verse 62)
- The identity crises persisted until Jesus ascended to heaven. Even though they saw tangible miracles, there was a lingering doubt about his identity, because events didn't happen as they would have expected;
- Jesus gives them the key to understand! (verse 63) He tells them that this is not literal; rather, it is a figurative teaching.

Matthew 13:10-16: (NKJV) ¹⁰And the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; ¹⁵For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.' ¹⁶But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;

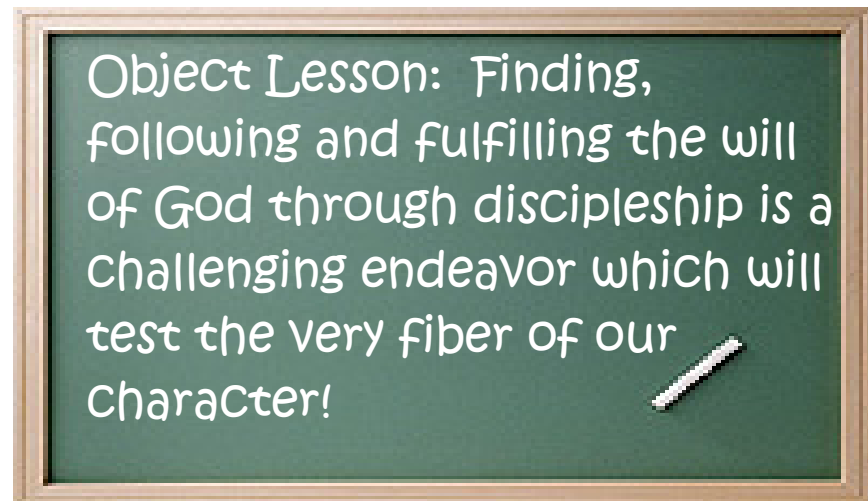
- Jesus, knowing that there were some following only for "dinner and a show," taught these things to reveal their true form. Unfortunately we see this in Christianity today, where you can get the "show," but they aren't willing to speak the things that might be difficult, that draw out



true followers of Christ. There was a sifting work going on to find those that really wanted to follow him, and that same work is going on today.

John 6:66-70: (NKJV) ⁶⁶From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. ⁶⁷Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸But Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹Also we have come to believe and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ⁷⁰Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

- Jesus' boldness chased away many who were disciples in name only;
- When confronted with this dilemma, the twelve respond in faith realizing that there is no other option through which they can follow the Messiah.



2. What are "the words of eternal life"?

Matthew 16:13-19: (NKJV) ¹³When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."



*We must recognize and confess that Jesus is The Christ;
There is NO other foundation upon which to build.*



Matthew 16:20-28: (NKJV) ²⁰Then he commanded his disciples that they should tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ. ²¹From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. ²²Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord; this shall not happen to you!" ²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an offense to me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each according to his works. ²⁸Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

*Understand and accept the pathway of sacrifice;
Deny yourself daily;
Be willing to suffer ignominy;
Be willing to be "worldly poor"
all for the sake of Christ!*



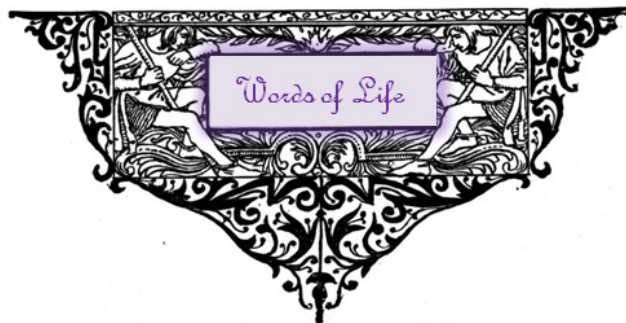
2 Timothy 3:10-17: (NKJV) ¹⁰But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer



persecution. ¹³But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Matthew 5:1-12: (NRSV) ¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: ³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. ⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ¹⁰"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:3: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



Blessed: Strong's #3107 makariov mak-ar'-ee-os; supremely blessed; by extension, fortunate, well off



Matthew 18:1-3: (NRSV) ¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ²He called a child, whom he put among them, ³and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Children are:

TRUSTING
TEACHABLE
INNOCENT
ENERGETIC

We are "well off" if we can become like children in these ways.

Proverbs 16:19: Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

James 4:10: Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Matthew 5:4: (RSV)

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.



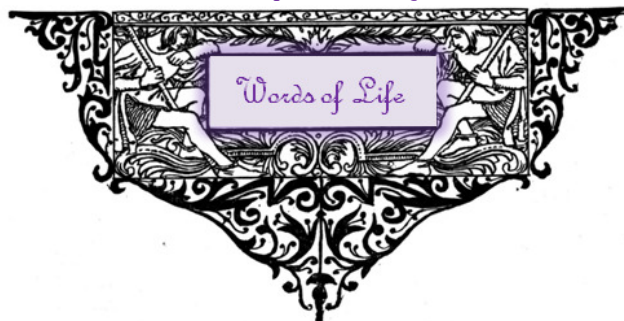
Mourn: Strong's #3996 penyew pentheo pen-theh'-o; to grieve (the feeling or the act)

Psalms 40:1-3: (NRSV) ¹*I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. ²He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. ³He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.*

Isaiah 61:1-3: (NRSV) ¹*The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion--to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.*

Matthew 5:5: (NRSV)

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.



Meek: Strong's #4239 prauv praus prah-ooce' mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness

1 Corinthians 13:4-5: (NIV) ⁴*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

2 Timothy 2:24-25: (NIV) ²⁴*And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. ²⁵Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth...*



Summary of Caller Comments: Continue to study and do it in the context of fellowship. The bias of the Pharisees that kept them out of true spirituality can happen to us as well.

The Meek inheriting the earth:

Psalms 2:7-8: (NRSV) ⁷I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have begotten you. ⁸Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession."

Matthew 5:6: (NRSV)

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.*



Psalms 42:1-6: (NRSV) ¹As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. ²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? ³My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, "Where is your God?" ⁴These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. ⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help ⁶and my God...

This gives us a picture that out of necessity of our desiring with everything within us to follow after God, truth and righteousness. We have to hunger and thirst for it, and Jesus will fulfill that hunger and thirst.

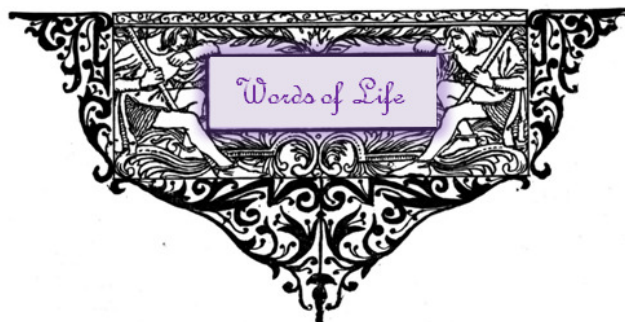
Romans 6:11-14: (NRSV) ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹²Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. ¹³No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

We have a choice if we want to live under sin or righteousness. The Apostle tells us to make that choice for righteousness.



Matthew 5:7: (NRSV)

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.



There is an important principle for us to treat others the way we want to be treated. Mercy triumphs over judgment if we want to live the words of eternal life. Justice matters in the context of compassion and mercy.

Matthew 7:1-7: (NRSV) ¹Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. ²For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. ³Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye. ⁶Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you. ⁷Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.

James 2:12-17: (NRSV) ¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. ¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Matthew 5:8: (NRSV)

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.



What would seeing God be like? The prospect is amazing!



Psalms 24:3-4: (NIV) ³Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? ⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

Hebrews 10:21-25: (NRSV) ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Matthew 5:9: (NRSV) Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.



Are we living this or do we have an agenda behind our actions?

Romans 8:35-39: (NRSV) ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christianity in its truest, purest form is difficult, challenging, and not natural; but the words of eternal life tell us to take up our cross, deny ourselves and follow him to be Overcomers. This is not because of what we have to offer, but what Jesus gives us through God's spirit and our fellowship one with another.

*So where else would we go?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!*