

Lessons From The Sheep And Goats Parable
George Tabac 11-15-98

For our study today we would like to consider the doctrinal lessons contained in the Sheep and Goats parable, as well as the lessons regarding Sins of Omission that we can apply to ourselves.

Matt 25:31-36 (KJV)

- 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:
33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.
34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Matt. 25:36-41

- 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.
37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?
38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?
39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?
40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.
41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Matt. 25:42-46

- 42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:
43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.
44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?
45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.
46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

(Don't read)

Matt 25:31-38 (KJV)

- 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and **all the holy angels with him, THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:**
32 And before him shall be gathered **all nations:** and he shall separate them one from another, **AS** a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

First of all we recognize in verse 32, that this is a parable about mankind's final judgment that will take place during the Kingdom, and the Little Season.

Verse 32 - "before him shall be gathered all nations: (literally referring to the judgment of all people) and he shall separate them one from another, AS a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

The separation we realize is not of literal sheep and goats, but of individual people who will be judged or divided AS a shepherd divides sheep and goats.

It is primarily referring to the final judgment of each individual that will take place during the little season, based upon what they did or failed to do during the Kingdom, and the character they developed as a result.

The sheep class picturing those who will go on to receive everlasting life, and the goat class those who will die the 2nd death in the little season.

The opening verse (31) shows us the time element as to when this parable begins, which is the start of the Mediatorial reign.

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, - referring to our Lord when he comes in glory **"WITH ALL THE HOLY ANGELS WITH HIM,"** - that is the Church is then complete, and the Mediatorial reign begins.

The Ransom merit has been applied to release the death sentence thus allowing the raising of the dead and mankind's judgment processes to begin.

Next we notice it says, "THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

That is, up until this time our Lord would have been sitting on the Fathers Throne, now at the start of the Mediatorial reign with his church complete we're told, "THEN he will sit on his own throne of glory."

Even as we read in the Reprints.

Reprint 4784

Matt. 25:31-46 This parable of the sheep and the goats belongs, not to this age - the Gospel Age - but to the coming age - **during the Messianic reign**. The introduction of the parable (vs. 31) shows this, saying, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy messengers with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory," ... **The Saviour has not yet appeared in his glory**, and the promise is that "When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye (the church, the sheep of the present age) also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:4

Also in reprint 5830 we read:

Reprint 5830

The exalted Jesus is a spirit being of the very highest order--"of the Divine nature" --who sat down at the Father's right hand, on the Father's Throne, **waiting for the time when He would take His own Throne, establish the Millennial Kingdom and associate the Church with Him in His Throne as His Bride**. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne."--`Revelation 3:21`.

Next we would like to note a distinction as to who is NOT pictured in this parable. In Reprint 5530 in referring to the parable of the sheep and the goats Bro. Russell brings out:

Reprint 5530

“The knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth. Some there will be who, resisting this knowledge, will decline to accept Christ and will not come into this judgment; but after a hundred years of resistance these will be destroyed.

Those in the parable are such as have accepted Christ's terms and desire to be on judgment, or on trial, for everlasting life.”

In other words this parable is not dealing with those who are cut off after 100 years for absolutely refusing to obey, but rather It is dealing with those who will accept Christ's terms, make a consecration to righteousness, with a desire to strive to pass a trial for everlasting life. They will live through the Mediatorial reign and have their final judgment given during the test of the little season.

Next we would like to consider what will be the basis of the test. In verses 34 to 36 our Lord speaking to the sheep class says:

Matt 25:33-40 (KJV)

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an **hungered**, and **ye gave me meat**: I was **thirsty**, and **ye gave me drink**: I was a **stranger**, and **ye took me in**:

36 **Naked**, and **ye clothed me**: I was **sick**, and **ye visited me**: I was in **prison**, and **ye came unto me**.

Then to the goat class in verses 41 to 43 he says:

Matt 25:41-46 (KJV)

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an **hungered**, and **ye gave me no meat**: I was **thirsty**, and **ye gave me no drink**:

43 **I was a stranger**, and **ye took me not in**: **naked**, and **ye clothed me not**: **sick**, and **in prison**, and **ye visited me not**.

The question that comes to mind is, how does this final test involve people who are sick, hungry and in prison during the Millennium, for we realize other scriptures bring out these conditions will literally be done away with in the kingdom?

Reprint 5531

The meaning is plain. With the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom all who come into harmony with it will have the great privilege of **doing something to help others**. The world is blind and starved now, for lack of spiritual food and the anointing eye-salve

of the Truth. While the Millennial blessings will be showered upon those who accept the Lord's terms, **there will be others who will need assistance.**

Reprint 5531 (Continued)

Those who have the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Love, will be glad to carry the Heavenly Message of reconciliation to all humanity, glad to apply the eye-salve to the blind, glad to unstop the ears of the deaf, glad to help the sin-sick back into harmony with God--to the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom, to the way in which these may be obtained--helping them to cover their nakedness with the merit of Christ.

Reprint 5531 (Continued)

All who will take pleasure in this work will thus be manifesting that they have God's Spirit and are co-laborers with Him. All these will be the Sheep. On the other hand, those who will be **careless in respect to their Vow**, and merely enjoy the Millennial blessings themselves, will be of the goat-class and will thus be marking themselves as "goats," and correspondingly will be out of favor with the great King of kings, their Judge, the Lord of Glory.

Thus the sheep class demonstrate the love in their hearts by helping others. The goat class on the other hand fail their test, not because of outward sins they committed, but because of selfish tendencies failed to help others who were in need of assistance.

The prison house referred to in this parable is the prison house of death. Matt. 20:16 tells us mankind will come out of the prison house of death in reverse order to that in which they entered.

Matt 20: 16 (KJV)

16 So the **last** shall be **first**, and the **first last**.

We see the practicality of this, for during the Kingdom, the awakening from the sleep of death will be by divine power, but in addition we believe it will be in answer to prayer.

Try to envision the events awaiting those who live through the time of trouble. After being instructed by the Ancient Worthies as to the new Kingdom arrangements, as fast as they are able they will prepare housing and provisions for their family members and friends.

Then as soon as the provisions are made, the family and friends will gather for a resurrection prayer meeting. Can you just envision the sheer joy when suddenly their loved one appears in their midst in answer to their prayers!

Thus the last ones to have died will be the first ones to be awakened from death, and will be immediately surrounded with their family and friends they loved.

Throughout the Kingdom it will be the sheep class that will be especially interested in using their time and energy in doing everything possible to assist others to walk up the highway of holiness.

While the goats will primarily be interested in their own comfort and enjoyment.

Next, - we notice each class was **oblivious** to what they had done or failed to do.

SHEEP:

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, **when saw we thee an hungered**, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?
38 **When saw we thee a stranger**, and took thee in? or **naked, and clothed thee?**
39 Or **when saw we thee sick, or in prison**, and came unto thee?
40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

GOATS:

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, **when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?**
45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.
46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The Sheep class was oblivious of anything special they did , WHY, because for one who develops perfect love in their hearts it just becomes automatic to do everything possible to help others around them, they don't even think about it, it's as natural as breathing.

The goat class also was oblivious, to what they could have done but failed to do, because they were so concerned with self comfort and enjoyment that they never even noticed others needed help.

As a result we note the Judges verdict is indicative of the fact, that no one will ever receive everlasting life unless they have come up to the standard of perfect love.

A love that is always concerned with helping and blessing all of God's creation in need. They will be blessed as the King says to them:

Matt 25:34, 41 (KJV)

34 Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you from the **foundation of the world:**

The righteous will go on to receive everlasting life in the kingdom that God originally gave to Father Adam which he lost through disobedience. But to the Goat Class he says:

Matt. 25:41 (KJV)

41 Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

In addition we can envision the Lord saying to the goat class, as in reprint 5531.

Reprint 5531

"Depart, ye accursed ones [doomed ones], into everlasting punishment."...you indeed render an outward obedience, but at heart you have not come into harmony with God. I cannot recognize you as My sheep. I cannot present you to the Father blameless and irreprovable. You must be destroyed; the punishment is the Second Death, **"everlasting destruction."** The penalty upon you is an everlasting one because there will be no further provision made for your redemption or for your resurrection from the Second Death. You will be as though you had never been. You have failed utterly to appreciate the goodness of God and to copy His character-likeness.

Next we would like to consider some additional details of verse 41:

Matt 25:41 (KJV)

41 Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

First we want to consider what is meant by Satan's angels.

The Greek word for angels means messengers. Most often the word refers to spirit beings but it could also refer human messengers as well.

However in this case it must refer to the fallen angels. For the context is telling us that all the **human** messengers that are in harmony with Satan, are the ones our Lord is here talking to, he's sentencing them to death, they are the goat class. Thus the only other angels or messengers of Satan that could be referred to are the spiritual fallen angels.

As Bro. Russell brings out in the Sermon Book page 230 where he is considering this parable.

Sermon Book 230

Concerning the wicked, our parable says, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." Fire always symbolizes destruction, and everlasting fire would mean an everlasting destruction. What about its being prepared for the **Devil and his angels?**

I answer: The Devil is the father of lies, a murderer from the beginning, the one who "abode not in the Truth." (John 8:44.) **He has some assistants, "the angels that kept not their first estate." (Jude 6.)** Instead of remaining holy angels, they became demons, associated under Satan. Their final penalty is to be quite appropriate for them—fire, the fire of God's anger, the fire of God's opposition.

Sermon Book 230 (Continued)

And because the goat class of mankind manifest the spirit of Satan, the selfish spirit, contrary to the Divine spirit, they will be classed in with Satan and his angels; they will have their portion with Satan and the fallen spirits. **They will all be destroyed in the Second Death.** This will **cleanse the Universe** and **have everything pure. Not a sinner will be left in it.** Thenceforth all will be governed by Love.

(Don't Read)

Matt 25:41 (KJV)

41 Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Next we would like to consider the time element when it says, "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

First we realize **overall** that this final judgment as to who will receive everlasting life, or 2nd death is in the **little season**.

But secondly, we want to note that this 2nd death judgment of the goats is **BEFORE** the destruction of the devil and his angels. For our parable is referring to this as something yet future.

The goat class is cast into everlasting fire PREPARED for the devil and his angels. That is, Satan's destruction its something yet future. This is logical for we realize Satan is released from his 1000 year binding in the little season, for the very purpose of allowing him try to deceive mankind one final time.

So it would only be logical that Satan and his angels would not be destroyed until all those who could be influenced negatively have died the 2nd death. Thus Satan and his angels are the last to be destroyed in the little season.

The next point we want to emphasize is who is doing the Judging of the goats in the little season? In verse 41 we read:

(Read 41 only)

Matt 25:41 (KJV)

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, **Depart from me**, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Matt 25:31-32 (KJV)

31 When the **Son of man** shall come in his glory, and **all the holy angels with him**, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

We realize that when it says "depart from ME," the word ME must refer to our Lord, and the church as his body. For our opening verse identifies them. 31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.

Thus we see that it is our Lord with the church as his body, that are the ones who will judge mankind.

Other scriptures tell us they will judge both mankind as well as the angels.

John 5:22 (KJV)

For the **Father judgeth no man**, but hath committed **all judgment unto the Son**:

- 2 Do ye not know that the ^{1 Cor 6:2-3 (KJV)} **saints shall judge the world?** and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?
- 3 Know ye not that **we shall judge angels?** how much more things that pertain to this life?

When it mentions the world and angels will be judged by the saints, we realize it will be as part of "The Christ" head and body.

Thus in these verses we're told that Jesus with the Church will be the judges of mankind and the angels. But it doesn't directly tell us who will carry out their actual destruction

(Don't read)

Matt 25:41 (KJV)

- 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the **devil and his angels.**

Verse 41 of our parable doesn't spell it out exactly either, however it does imply rather strongly that it will be the Christ that will destroy all the evil ones, when it says "Depart from ME , ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

However we do have scriptures which positively tell us that Jesus and the Church as his body will be the ones who will destroy Satan.

Hebrews 2:14 in referring to Jesus says:

Heb 2:14 (KJV)

- 14 He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death **he might destroy him** that had the power of death, that is, **the devil;**

In addition Rom. 16:20 tells us the Church will participate in Satan's destruction. In speaking to the brethren in Rome Paul says:

Rom 16:20 (NAS)

- 20 And the God of peace will soon **crush Satan under your feet.**

The meaning of the Greek word to crush, is to crush completely, in essence meaning to destroy. Thus we see that Jesus and the Church as his body will destroy this arch enemy of man and God, Satan.

Thus we see that the purpose of the Kingdom and the reign of Jesus and the Church is to bless all the willing and obedient as SHEEP with everlasting life, and removing with everlasting destruction all the enemies of God in the entire universe. Which includes the GOAT CLASS, the fallen angels and **SATAN** himself.

Then it will be that:

Phil 2:10-11 (KJV)

- 10 That at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, of things **in heaven**, and things **in earth**, and things **under the earth;**

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In reprint 1057 Bro. Russell refers to Satan and the goat class, as the enemies of God.

Reprint 1057

...”Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom (of earth) prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matt. 25:34

That there will be some who after being forced to bow in submission will remain **enemies at heart** and require finally to be destroyed, is evident from the words, “**He must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet.**” (1 Cor. 15:25) That the significance of this expression is **not conversion, but destruction see Rom. 16:20. (And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.)** The same lesson, **that all who will not conform willingly to the law of love to God** and man during that age of fullest knowledge and ability, and help, will be counted **enemies against God**, and against the law of his empire, and no longer coerced, but *destroyed*, is taught in the symbolism of Rev. 20:10 heretofore explained and also in the sentence of the “**goats (“enemies”)** in Matt. 25:41, 46.

Thus we see how 1 Cor. 15:24-28 ties in with our parable of the sheep and the goats.

1 Cor 15:24-28 (Revised Standard Version)

24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father **after destroying every rule and every authority and power.**

25 **For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet...**

28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that **God may be everything to every one.**

Christ reigns until he has **destroyed** every opposing rule, authority, and power. Until all enemies of God in the universe are destroyed both in heaven and on earth, including the greatest enemy of all time Satan himself.

There is only one being in the universe who will not be put under the subjection of our Lord, which is our heavenly Father. Then the kingdom is turned over to God that God may be **everything to everyone else in the universe.**

As we consider this scripture however, I want to mention that Bro. Russell has expressed two differing opinions on it. One is as we have expressed thus far, that the kingdom is turned over to the father after the little season is over and Satan has been destroyed.

The second is that the kingdom is turned over to the Father before the little season.

Let me give you the history regarding these two views.

After looking up every single reference to 1 Cor. 15:24-28 in the indexes of all the writings of Bro. Russell I found the following.

In the 6 Volumes Bro. Russell is 100% consistent in 14 places he applies these verses to the end of the little season as we have done today.

We'll quote only one. Vol. 4 page 644

Vol. 4 Page 644

Thus shall **the Christ reign** as the Father's vicegerent until he shall have put **down all antagonistic** authority and power, and caused every knee to bow and every tongue to confess the Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power of God the Father. And finally, having manifested, by **the last crucial test at the close of the Millennium**, all who have even a sympathy for sin, though outwardly obedient; **and having destroyed these from among the people (Rev. 20:9)**, he shall surrender to the Father the vice-royal dominion...Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [the Father] which did subject all things under him **[for the thousand years]."** 1 Cor. 15:24-28

In the **reprints**, Bro. Russell is 100% consistent with this same thought up until till reprint 3470.

After this we find in the articles written between R-4263 (Oct. 1908) to R-4974 (Feb. 1912) that he refers to the Kingdom being turned over to the Father, before the little season.

Then in Feb. 1912 he goes back to his first original view on R-4974

Reprint 4974

Thus the Kingdom will be spreading for the thousand years,...It will conquer everything before it. Nothing shall stop it. **Every evil thing having been destroyed**, every creature **in heaven and on earth** and under the earth will be heard praising God. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess; **and His Kingdom will be without an opponent** "from the river unto the ends of the earth"--having accomplished its purpose. **The Kingdom will then cease, in the sense that Christ will deliver the authority over to the Father. (I Cor. 15:24-28.)**

In April 1913 Bro. Russell has another article as this first original view.

Reprint 5210

The Scriptural proposition is that at the close of the Millennial Age, when Christ shall have **conquered sin and Satan, when Satan shall have been destroyed**, and when the Kingdom of the Universe shall be in absolute harmony, **then God will be all in all. (I Corinthians 15:28.)** To all eternity there will be no opposition to His will.

Then in June and August of 1913 he went again to the second view that the little season was after the Kingdom was turned over to the Father. After this there are no more **REPRINT** articles on the subject, and would thus appear at first, that this 1913 thought was his latest.

However in the Convention Report Sermons book we find Bro. Russell giving a final mention of the subject in a talk he gave in 1915 on page 479, where he goes back to his original first view.

Convention Report Sermons Book Page 479
Talk given by Bro. Russell in 1915

At the conclusion of Christ's Millennial Kingdom when all the willing shall have been perfect, and **all the willfully wicked shall have been destroyed, Christ will turn over the Kingdom to the Father "that God may be all in all."** 1 Cor. 15:28

Thus we have the history of Bro. Russell's view of 1 Cor. 15:24-28. However we might just mention in passing that when Bro. Russell wrote the 1916 forwards to the Volumes were he corrected items that he had a clarified view on, that he never changed any of the 14 references to 1 Cor. 15:24-28. This would seem to confirm that it was his final view along with his final talk on the subject.

SINS OF OMMISION

Now we would like to look on the parable of the sheep and the goats from another stand point.

Let's consider again why the Goat class failed:

Matt 25:41-46 (KJV)

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:
42 For I was an **hungered**, and ye **gave me no meat**: I was **thirsty**, and ye **gave me no drink**:
43 I was a **stranger**, and ye **took me not in**: **naked**, and ye **clothed me not**: **sick**, and in **prison**, and ye **visited me not**.

We see in this parable the principal of why some will fail their test in the little season.

It wasn't outward sins that caused their fall, but it was because of what they could have done, but failed to do. It was because of what we might call SINS OF OMMISION!

These same principals will be part of the test involved with those who are running for the prize of the high calling.

We believe that those who will fail to win the prize because of outwardly manifested sins will be relatively few in number, - as compared to those who will miss the prize because of **what they didn't do**.

Because of what they originally covenanted to do, they failed in doing.

We see this thought brought out in other scriptures.

James 4:17 (NAS)

17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, **to him it is sin**.

This scripture is telling us that when deep inside we know what the Lord would be pleased to have us do in any given situation, and we don't do it, He is telling us it is a sin. A SIN OF OMISSION!

The question presents itself, if we knew something was the Lord's will, why wouldn't we do it?

We realize there could be many reasons, but perhaps the greatest is the battle of the flesh and the New Creature.

In our minds we have a constant struggle in differentiating between what is a suggestion from our flesh or New Creature.

I've often thought it would be interesting to compile a list of all the reasons (Or perhaps we should say all the EXCUSES) that the flesh has used as to WHY one shouldn't participate in any given opportunity of sacrificial service?

The flesh has absolutely ingenious lines of logical sounding excuses to present to us, as to why it would be better to allow someone else to have this opportunity of service, what ever it might be.

Take it easy, your tired, you need the rest, others are more qualified than you, that's a Elders type job, or that's a deacons job, or a sister would be more qualified, your not smart enough, you don't have the talent, you don't have the education, others have more time than you, you have an obligation to your family, that isn't the most important work for the church now, it would be good to let others have the opportunity of service, and the list could go on and on!

This is not to say that at times some of these thoughts may truly apply to us, but how careful we must be to judge what is truly a correct caution from our New Creature, and what is just an excuse our flesh comes up with to justify it's desire to hold us back from a life of sacrificial service.

It would seem that most "Sins of Omission," are caused by the excuses that our flesh comes up with, than from any other source.

Before we continue in our considerations, we want to emphasize that none of us should be judging others except ourselves. For we realize that what the Lord expects of each of us is different for each individual, depending on their circumstances, degree of health, their age, their talents and abilities, their financial position, their obligations to family members etc.

What one is capable of another may not be, - but what God does expect and desire from each of us, is to do ALL that each of us are capable of in our present set of circumstances.

This is what each of us must analyze regarding ourselves, AM I in my present stage of life, with it's present set of circumstances, doing all that I am capable of in the fulfilling of the consecration vows that I have made, to serve the Lord with every fiber of my being, to know his will and to follow in it.

Bearing this in mind we would like to reflect on the words of our Lord In:

Luke 9:24 (KJV)

24 For whosoever will **save his life shall lose it:** but whosoever will **lose his life** for my sake, the **same shall save it.**

Jesus here is talking to the consecrated. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it." The natural tendency of our flesh is to save it's life. The flesh hates sacrifice, work, - it wants to relax, enjoy it's self, be comfortable, to preserve it's life at any cost. It does not want to wear itself out in sacrificial service, it would rather coast into the kingdom on beds of ease.

At the slightest hint of weariness to the flesh, the flesh will encourage us to curtail all further activity in the Lord's service suggesting after all what is **most important** is to keep our bodies well, don't overexert them! But is this what is MOST IMPORTANT? We echo the words of Jesus, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

This is not to imply that we are not to be concerned with taking reasonably good care of our bodies for we realize they are the temple of the Holy Spirit, BUT at the same time we realized we have made a covenant to **present our bodies a living sacrifice.** Jesus is telling us that we are to "lose our life," in his service, not to save it,

The Lord has promised to watch over us and to overrule every aspect of our lives to his glory. He is able and willing to shelter us in the hollow of his hand and keep us immortal until our trial is finished.

The Lord wants to see how much we love and are willing to fulfill our covenant of sacrifice, to keep giving as long as we can. As long as we are able. Even while it hurts.

This reminds us of the poor widow we read of in:

Mark 12:42-44 (NAS)

42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.
43 And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;
44 for they all put in out of their surplus, **but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.**"

I can't help but feel that the Lord looks on our sacrifices as he did with the widow who cast all that she had into the contribution box. You would think the Lord would have reprimanded her for going to an extreme, for she gave every thing she had, she had nothing left to live on.

BUT NO, the Lord didn't reprimand her for giving too much. For he realized that very few of mankind have the problem of giving or sacrificing TOO MUCH!

He realized the flesh's tendency IS TO SAVE IT'S LIFE. Relatively few will go to such an extreme that the Lord would have to reprimand them for loosing their life in His service too strenuously.

We read in:

Rev 3:14-16 (KJV)

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;
15 I know thy works, that thou art **neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.**
16 So then because thou art **lukewarm**, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

This is a message of our Lord to the last stage of the Nominal Church. Because her works were neither hot or cold but were lukewarm, she was cast out of favor.

Why would the Lord say he would rather they be cold than lukewarm? At first this sounds strange, for it wouldn't it be better to have a little vitality than none at all?

We think not. For we read in:

1 Tim 4:12 (KJV)
12 Be thou an **example** of the believers.

All of us in the truth are to be an example to one another of a true Christian life fully committed to the Lord. A life filled with love, humility, devotion, sacrificial activity in the Lord's service.

The fact that we are to be **examples** to one another is why we believe the Lord would rather we be cold than lukewarm.

For when one is cold, it is rather obvious to all, that that individual is not even trying to live a Christian life.

But when one is Lukewarm the effect on other brethren is to think that that evidently is all the Lord expects or requires of a consecrated life.

EXAMPLES OF LUKEWARMNESS in other words - HAS THE EFFECT OF BEGETTING LUKEWARNESS IN OTHERS.

We begin to think lukewarmness is the accepted level of Christian Vitality, and before long if not careful, one can begin to SLUMBER to the same level of lukewarmness of the examples of those one is associated with.

What often follows in this state, is the flesh will be quick to pat oneself on the back with reminders of how great they are doing, for we're very similar to the zeal of the others.

Thus what a blessing it is to us, when we can be associated with brethren who are NOT Lukewarm - BUT are on fire with a zealous Vitality of serving the Lord with every fiber of their being.

On page 127 of the 6th Volume, Bro. Russell is referring to the Great Company class when he says:

Volume 6 - Page 127
"However, it is not enough that they (Great Company class) consecrated fully; it must be **demonstrated** that they at heart love the Lord and would not *deny him at any cost*, even though **not faithful enough to court sacrifice in his service.**"

The Great Company are not faithful enough to Court Sacrifice In His Service.

The thought of courting sacrifice seems to be referring to a deep seated longing desire to sacrifice our lives in God's Service.

The desire will be so strong as to prompt a continual desire to look, inquire and search after avenues of sacrificial service.

Perhaps contrasted with an attitude of one who rarely gives thought of how they could serve, or one who just passively accepts an opportunity of service because it's kind of expected of them.

The attitude of courting sacrifice is what is brought to our attention in the Morning Resolve. "My earliest thought I desire shall be, what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me."

This thought of the Morning Resolve implies we will be constantly on the look out for ways we can serve the Lord, the truth, and the brethren each day.

We shouldn't be satisfied in just waiting until someone asks us for help to assist in some activity, BUT we believe our Lord is pleased to see his children looking, investigating, devising, searching out means and ways to further glorify our heavenly Father's name and serving his people.

WE believe our growth as new creatures, our love, our zeal our intensity of desire to serve God will become manifest in the degree of cheerful aggressiveness in which we court sacrifice in God's service.

For sacrificial service really is an expression of ones love, it's an outward evidence of the love in ones heart for the Lord and what he has done for us, and to show how truly with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, we want to spend and be spent in his service.

Truly it is one of the greatest privileges of our life.

WE would like to conclude with reading a paragraph from Reprint 5413. It is part of an article on the scripture of 2 Tim. 3:4

Reprint 5413

In the last days men shall be ...lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

"The Lord's people spend and are being spent in His service--by volunteer work, by attending meetings, by holding meetings and in various ways, according to opportunity. They are living separate from the world--distinct lives, lives of consecration. The world now has an eight-hour day. **The Lord's faithful people would, on the contrary, make theirs a sixteen-hour day.** But all these present-day conditions constitute perils. For us to do what others do, and to devote to the Lord's service only what the world considers a reasonable day's work, **would not be fulfilling our Covenant of Sacrifice at all.**"

R-5413 (Continued)

"Those who seek merely to do right, and to put in eight hours or so a day faithfully, after the manner of the world, will be judged from this standpoint; and they will merely obtain a place in the Great Company. They are not fulfilling the conditions of the Covenant of sacrifice.

But the little flock will serve the Lord with such delight that they will scarcely know how to cease their efforts.

They recognize that their bodies are fully consecrated to the Lord, and they are daily putting them to death in a reasonable, rational manner. In view of these perilous times, let us each ask himself the question, To which class do I belong?"

