**WHAT IN THE WORLD DOES A CHRISTIAN DO? Part ll**

**Worshipers: Listening to the Lord (Luke 10:38-42)**

Worship is at the heart of all that we are and all that we do in the Christian life. As we learned in the last few weeks, we have found:

1) It is important that we take the roll of ambassadors, taking the message of the Gospel to lost souls.

2) It is also essential to be merciful Samaritans, seeking to help exploited and hurting people who need God's mercy.

But before we can represent Christ as we should, or imitate Him in our caring ministry, we must spend time with Him and learn from Him. We must "take time to be holy."

**Sisters**

Mary of Bethany is seen three times in the Gospel record, and on each occasion, she is in the same place: at the feet of Jesus.

1) She sat at His feet and listened to His Word (Luke 10:39),

2) Fell at His feet and shared her pain (John 11:32), and

3) Came to His feet and poured out her worship (John 12:3).

**38 Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.**

**39 She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.**

**40 But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."**

**41 But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;**

**42 but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."**

Charles Wesley, the hymn writer of the Wesley Brothers, placed a perfect understanding of the sisters within the words of a hymn, Lo! I Come With Joy to Do

*Faithful to my Lord's commands,*

*I still would choose the better part;*

*Serve with careful Martha's hands,*

*And loving Mary's heart.*

It seems evident that the Lord wants each of us to imitate Mary in our worship and Martha in our work.

**Consider Martha's situation.** She received Jesus into her home and then neglected Him as she prepared an elaborate meal. Certainly a meal was appropriate, but what we do with Christ is far more important than what we do for Christ. Again, it is not an “either/or” situation; it is a matter of balance. Mary had done her share of the work in the kitchen and then had gone to "feed" on the Lord's teachings. Martha felt neglected after Mary left the kitchen, and she began to complain to suggest that neither the Lord nor Mary really cared!

**Few things are as damaging to the Christian life as trying to work for Christ - without taking time to commune with Him.** "For without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Mary chose the better part, the part that could not be taken from her. She knew that she could not live "by bread alone".

Whenever we criticize others and pity ourselves because we feel overworked, we might take time to examine our lives. Perhaps 'in all of our busy-ness, we have been ignoring the Lord.

Martha's problem was not that she had too much work to do, but that she allowed her work to distract her from the “important work”. She was trying to serve two masters! If serving Christ makes us difficult to live with, then something is wrong with our service!

The key is to have the right priorities:

1 Jesus Christ first, then

2 others, then

3 ourselves.

It is vitally important that we spend time "at the feet of Jesus" every single day, letting Him share His Word with us. The most important part of the Christian life is the part that only God sees. Unless we meet Christ personally and privately each day, we will soon end up Like Martha: busy but not blessed.

According to John 12:1-2, Martha must have learned her lesson, for she prepared a feast for Jesus, the Twelve, and her brother and sister - that's fifteen people - and did not utter one word of complaint! She had God's peace in her heart because she had learned to sit at the feet of Jesus.

**We are ambassadors, neighbors, and worshipers, and the greatest of these is worshipers.**

This wonderful narrative leads in to another fine teaching.

**The New Prayer**

**11:1 It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."**

**The Priority of Prayer**

We usually think of John the

Baptist as a prophet and martyr, and yet our Lord's disciples remembered him as a man of prayer.

John was another of God’s "miracle babies," filled with the Holy Spirit before he was born, and yet he had to pray. He was privileged to introduce the Messiah to Israel, and yet he had to pray. Jesus said that John was the greatest of the prophets, and yet John had to depend on prayer. If prayer was that vital to a man who had these many advantages, how much more important it ought to be to us who do not have these advantages!

John's disciples had to pray and Jesus' disciples wanted to learn better how to pray. They did not ask the Master to teach them how to preach or do great signs; they asked Him to teach them to pray. We today sometimes think that we would be better Christians if only we had been with Jesus when He was on earth, but not so!

The disciples were with Him and yet they faded many times! They could perform miracles, and yet they wanted to learn to pray.

But the greatest argument for the priority of prayer is the fact that our Lord was a Man of prayer. Thus far we have seen that:

1) He prayed at His baptism (Luke 3:21),

2) Before He chose the Twelve (Luke 6:12),

3) When the crowds increased (Luke 5:16),

4) Before He asked the Twelve for their confession of faith (Luke 9:18), and

5) At His Transfiguration (Luke 9:29).

The disciples knew that He often prayed alone, and they wanted to learn from Him this secret of spiritual power and wisdom.

**2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.**

**3 'Give us each day our daily bread.**

**4 'And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"**

**Pattern for prayer Luke11:2-4**

**We call this "The Lord's Prayer," not because Jesus prayed it (I don’t believe He ever had to ask for forgiveness), but because Jesus taught it.** There is nothing wrong with praying this prayer personally or as part of a congregation, so long as we do it from a believing heart that is sincere and submitted. How easy it is to "recite" these words and not really mean them, but that can happen even when we sing and preach! The fault lies with us, not with this prayer.

This is a "pattern prayer," given to guide us in our own praying. It teaches us that true prayer depends on a spiritual relationship with God that enables us to call Him "Father," and this can come only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Luke 11:2-4

True prayer also involves responsibilities: honoring God's kingdom and doing God's will. It has well been said that the purpose of prayer is not to get “man's” will done in heaven, but to get God's will done on earth. Prayer is not telling God what we want and then selfishly enjoying it. Prayer is asking God to use, us to accomplish what He wants so that His name is glorified, His kingdom is extended and strengthened, and His will is done.

**5 Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;**

**6 for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';**

**7 and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'**

**8 "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.**

**Persistence in Prayer**

**Luke 11:5-8**

**In this parable, Jesus did not say that God is like this grouchy neighbor. In fact, He said just the opposite. If a tired and selfish neighbor finally meets the needs of a bothersome friend, how much more will a loving Heavenly Father meet the needs of His own dear children! He is arguing from the lesser to the greater.**

We have already seen that prayer is based on son-ship ("Our Father"), not on friendship; but Jesus used friendship to illustrate persistence in prayer. God the Father is not like this neighbor, for He never sleeps, never gets impatient or irritable, is always generous, and delights in meeting the needs of His children. The friend at the door had to keep on knocking in order to get what he needed, but God is quick to respond to His children's cries.

Why does our Father in heaven answer prayer? Not just to meet the needs of His children, but to meet them in such a way that it brings glory to His name. "Hallowed be Thy name." When God's people pray, Gods reputation is at stake. The way He takes care of His children is a witness to the world that He can be trusted. Phillips Brooks said that prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness. Persistence in prayer is not an attempt to change God's mind ("Thy will be done") but to get ourselves to the place where He can trust us with the answer.

**9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.**

**10 "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.**

**11 "Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?**

**12 "Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?**

**13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"**

**Promises for Prayer**

**Luke 11:9-13** The Greek tenses of the verbs are important here: --"Keep on asking ..

-Keep on seeking ..

-Keep on knocking."

In other words, don't come to God only in the midnight emergencies, but keep in constant communion with your Father. Jesus called this "abiding", and Paul exhorted, "Pray without ceasing". As we pray, God will either answer or show us why He cannot answer. Then it is up to us to do whatever is necessary in our lives so that the Father can trust us with the answer.

Take note that the lesson closes with an emphasis on God as Father. Because He knows us and loves us, we never need to be afraid of the answers that He gives.