**OUR ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE MISSION**

***1 Thessalonians 2:1-12***

Sunday School Lesson

*Understanding Missions*

Week 10 – 6/30/2018

**Introduction:** Over the last several weeks, we have closely examined our individual responsibility to the Gospel. In this final lesson on missions, we will turn our focus back to our overall responsibility to the Gospel. We must recognize that the Lord expects us to fulfill the mission, and we can anticipate that the Lord will hold us accountable for what we have done with the Truth that He has given to us. In I Thessalonians 2:4, we see Paul telling the church how he and others had been trusted with the Gospel. This was not a responsibility that he took lightly. As a result, he preached the gospel unto them boldly in spite of much contention (verse 2). In I Corinthians 9:16, Paul reiterates the necessity of sharing the Gospel and the peril to those who do not. He clarifies in verses 17 and 18 that he does not share the Gospel because he has to do so, but he does it willingly. If we do it just out of service, then we act as slaves to the Gospel. We are not slaves to it. It has brought us freedom! Consequently, we ought to desire to share it. However, if we are struggling with that desire, we should look at these principles to remind us of our accountability to it.

1. WE ARE REQUIRED TO GIVE IN RETURN FOR WHAT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN (LUKE 12:35-48)
2. **Notice that this principle was given to the disciples from Jesus (Luke 12:41).** Jesus told the multitude that they should be watchful for the Lord’s return, as He cometh at an hour when ye think not. When Jesus was finished speaking, Peter wanted to know if this message was for him and the disciples or just for the crowd that He was speaking to. Jesus continues answering Peter through the illustration. He tells Him that the servant who knows God’s will and does not do it will be held more accountable than the person who is ignorant to God’s will. Ultimately, all will be held accountable, but Jesus’ expectation is that we will carry out His Father’s will. We know that God’s will is that none should perish. Further, we have God’s complete will spelled out for us in His Word. In reality, we have been given more than any generation before us!
3. **Notice that giving back the much that we have been given requires continuous service (I Corinthians 4:1-2).** The Bible tells us that it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. It is not enough to just share the Gospel once or even on occasion. It must be a daily and ongoing task. Consider this thought: Every day we are being given more by God. He gives to us in abundance (Matthew 13:12). How great is the disparity growing each day between what God is giving to us versus what we are giving back to Him? We could never give back enough to catch up with what God has given us, but that should not be for a lack of effort on our part!
4. WE DO NOT HAVE ANY VALID EXCUSE OR ANSWER. (ROM. 1:20; MATT. 25:24-28)
5. **Notice that the slothful servant placed blame on the difficulty of the task (verse 24).** In this parable, the Lord confronts the servant regarding his lack of fruit. The servant’s answer was to blame the difficulty of the task. He knew that the master reaped where he had not sown and gathered where he had not strewed. In other words, the Lord found productivity in the most difficult and unlikely places. This is the power of the Gospel. It reaches through to the most vile and sinful of hearts. The servant was not willing to brave the task of confronting those hearts. He was too afraid of the potential backlash and persecution that he might face. (Luke 9:26)
6. **Notice that the slothful servant just had no desire to do anything (verse 27).** After the servant gives his excuse to the Master, the Master challenges the truthfulness of his reasoning. If he was afraid of the difficulty of the work, why didn’t he at least take the money to the exchangers? This would have resulted in an easy return on the investment. He would have at least had some basic fruit to show for his efforts. The reality was just that the servant did not want to do anything with the talent. He thought that he could just hide it, and everything would be okay. He was reckless with it. Ironically, it would have been easier for him to take it to the exchangers than take the time to bury it.
7. **Notice that the slothful servant claimed a lack of opportunity (verse 37-39).** Jesus goes on to explain His parable. He speaks of those who are the righteous (self-righteous). When Jesus demands an answer of them, they will have nothing to show for it. Their answer will be that they never even saw the opportunities to serve Christ. Jesus will point out the countless opportunities that were there all around them in the people that they interacted with. They will have no answer to give back to Him.
8. **Notice that the slothful servant represents a false Christian (verses 30, 32, 41).** The end result for the slothful servant is that he is cast into Hell. Of course, this is not teaching a works salvation or a potential to lose salvation. What it is showing is a picture of a false Christian. He did not do anything with the talent that he was given because he never truly accepted it. He just hid it away. As Christians, if our light is totally hidden from the world, that should cause us to pause and strongly consider the reason for it. Serving in the church is not the same thing as having fruit. There are plenty of false teachers who are serving in churches. The question is whether you are sharing the Gospel with others?
9. WE ARE BEING COUNTED ON AS WATCHMEN FOR THIS WORLD. (EZEKIEL 33:1-9)

1. **Notice that Ezekiel took personal accountability for delivering God’s message (Ezekiel 33:1-9).** In this chapter of Ezekiel, he receives a message from God. The message was a reminder to him that he was supposed to be a messenger for Israel. If he did not warn them of impending judgment and danger, then God told him that He would require the blood on his hands. This was to show the significance of the job of being a watchman. While some look at this Scripture and suggest that we will have blood on our hands when the unsaved stand before God, this is not clearly outlined in Scripture. We can though make the application that we are responsible for the lost. We are to be watching for Christ’s return and pleading with the unsaved to trust Christ before it is too late.
2. **Notice that the disciples were reproved for watching without speaking (Acts 1:11).** After Christ ascended into Heaven, the disciples all stood around gazing into Heaven. Two angels had to come to the disciples and remind them that they had work to do. While we gaze up to Heaven with hope and joy for what’s to come, we must not be selfish by enjoying our salvation yet keeping that joy from others. Also, that joy will be maximized when we share the good news. The more people that we are able to lead to Christ the more people we are able to fellowship and glorify God with. Also, the greater the meeting with Christ will be if we spend out tine here sharing His Word.
3. WE ARE THE ONLY ONE’S ABLE TO CARRY OUT THE GOSPEL. (LUKE 16:19-31)

1. **Notice that there were none able to go back for the rich man’s brothers (Luke 16:27-31).** When the rich man was in Hell, he had a couple of requests. First, he wanted Lazarus to bring a drop of water to him. When he was told that this was not possible, he had one more request. He wanted Lazarus to go back and share the Gospel with his brothers. Again, his request was denied. Abraham tells the man that his brothers have the Bible and those who proclaim it. If they will not believe them, then they wouldn’t believe Lazarus either. There’s a truth here for us. This world is counting on the living to share the good news of the Gospel. There is no one else that God has designed to take the message out to the world. We have been made for such a time as this.
2. **Notice that there is a finality to the judgment that the unsaved face (Luke 16:25-26).** As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the rich man begged for just a drip of water. Not only was he denied this, but he was left in an eternal torment and judgment. There is absolutely nothing that can be done at that point. We must have a sense of urgency in sharing the gospel with others. Every day, the clock strikes midnight for some, and their opportunity for salvation is gone for all of eternity. That thought should motivate and encourage us to be active in the fulfillment of the mission. The world is condemned, and they desperately need the hope of salvation.

**CONCLUSION**: As we conclude our series on missions, let’s push to do more to fulfill the mission this year than we have ever done before. While we cannot do anything for those whom we have already missed, we can press forward and find those who need salvation today. God has trusted us with the salvation message. Let’s not be irresponsible with what He has given to us. Remember that to whom much is given, much is required….and we have been given much!