

## Message #89

## Luke 18:31-34

There was a woman who was between flights at an airport, who went to a lounge and bought a small package of cookies. She then sat down and began reading a newspaper, waiting for her flight. Gradually she became aware of a rustling noise and from behind her paper she was flabbergasted to see a well-dressed businessman helping himself to her cookies. Not wanting to make a scene, the woman leaned over in front of the man and took a cookie herself. A minute or two later, she heard more rustling and sure enough the man was helping himself to another cookie. By this time, she had come to the end of the cookies in her package. She was so angry but she decided not to say a thing. Then when it came to the final cookie, the man broke it in half and gave her half. Just about that time her flight was announced and the woman opened her handbag to get her ticket. To her shock and amazement, there was her package of cookies, unopened in her purse. This woman had become so emotional that she lost sense of all reality. The man wasn't eating her cookies, she was eating his cookies. That is what losing track of truth will do. It will blind you. You will not see clearly or think accurately.

The disciples of Jesus Christ were listening and learning. They apparently were losing sight of some reality pertaining to Jesus Christ. **They could not grasp the fact that the whole program of God was contingent upon Jesus Christ going to the cross and dying as a sacrifice for sin.** Even the best of disciples can get very confused. Certainly they loved the Lord, but they did not see things accurately.

What we clearly see here is this:

**IT IS POSSIBLE FOR EVEN THE CLOSEST DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST TO MISUNDERSTAND AND MISINTERPRET THE WORD OF GOD AND WILL OF GOD IF THEY DO NOT STAY FOCUSED ON THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.**

The death of Jesus Christ was one of the most predicted and critical prophetic moments in the entire program of God. This was not some small point of Biblical prophecy and eschatology. The death of Jesus Christ is the whole reason Jesus Christ came to this earth. It is the only way a sinful nation may be saved and it is the only way a sinful individual may be saved.

These disciples were apparently so caught up with themselves that they actually did not or could not see and understand the whole truth of God.

This is a critical point. We must always be about carefully and accurately understanding the whole counsel of God. No matter how long we have known the Lord, without a precise understanding of God's word we may be very distorted in our understanding of God's will.

Let me cite a good example of this very point. When many people refer to the last book of the Bible, they call it “Revelations.” It is not Revelations plural; it is Revelation singular (Rev. 1:1). That is important. Because what that means is the book of Revelation is one single prophetic revelation that God expects His Church to know. He wants His people to understand that the Church will end at the Rapture and then after that there will be Great Tribulation and after that there will be 1,000 year Millennium and after that there will be a New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem. Now if you do not understand this entire book, you can be very distorted in your view of prophecy.

That is exactly what happened to these disciples. There are two specific points to observe in these verses:

**POINT #1** – Jesus Christ informs the twelve of the specific word and will of God. **18:31-33**

It is interesting to see the first word that shows up on **verse 31**, “then.” We may recall the context of this. The disciples are questioning the value of their commitment to Jesus Christ. They said, “we have left our own and followed You.” Well whoopty doo. Jesus says it is time I lay out for you what I have come here to do for you.

In fact, this is one of the most explicit list of details given in the Bible. This point could not be any clearer. Jesus Christ, who is God, takes His twelve disciples aside and specifically communicates God’s word to them about God’s will and program in great detail. In other words, you think you have given up so much, well let’s put this in some Biblical perspective.

**Verse 31** is careful to point out that He is revealing this to “the twelve.” These are His own hand-picked, best men. These are the cream of the crop when it comes to serving the Lord. They had given up many things to follow Him and at this point they have been with Him for three years. He had given them special powers at times to minister to people in dramatic and even miraculous ways. These guys are not novices.

If ever there were a group of men who should have been tuned into the word and will of God, it should have been these twelve. He had been telling them that was God’s plan multiple times prior to this (Luke 9:22, 44-45; 12:50; 13:32-34; 17:25). They knew Jesus better than anyone else. But the sad reality is, they had not been paying careful attention to everything Christ was saying and, as a result, their understanding was greatly lacking.

**Do not ever make the mistake of equating knowing Jesus Christ for many years with accurately knowing God’s word and will.** These are two distinct issues. Just because one has known the Lord for many years, does not mean that person really knows God’s word well.

Now Jesus specifically identifies Himself as “the Son of Man.” Jesus Christ is identifying Himself as the Messiah/King of Israel. This is a prediction of Daniel and it refers to the Divine Person who will establish a Divine Kingdom on earth and rule over all people (Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus is identifying Himself as that Divine Person.

It was time for the Ancient of Days Divine Person to fulfill certain specific prophecies that are all part of the sovereign plan and program of God.

In these verses, Jesus Christ specifically states the fact that it was time to fulfill the will of God. There are two specific events He states:

**Will of God Event #1** - It is time to go to Jerusalem. **18:31a**

Probably when they heard Jesus say this, they were thinking it is time to march into Jerusalem so He can reign as King (19:11). It was time for Him to take over the world.

**Will of God Event #2** - It is time for the Son of Man to fulfill all O.T. suffering prophecy. **18:31b-33**

Now I want to point out a key grammatical point here. Before the noun “written” and before the noun “prophets” there is an article “the.”

**What that means is it was time for Jesus Christ to fulfill specific things that are to be specified and identified written by the prophets.** The reason this is important is because this fulfills “all things,” which refers to very specific things Jesus Christ must fulfill. This phase of things refers to the suffering aspects that were written in the inspired Scriptures and predicted by the O.T. prophets.

The disciples were hoping that He would go to Jerusalem and fulfill some things such as take over the world. But His statement is I must fulfill “all things” which first means I must go there and suffer.

What you will not see here is any reference to it being time for Him to reign as King. He does not state that. It was time for Him to go to Jerusalem and fulfill prophecy, but the specific prophecy fulfillment at this point would not include Him setting up a Kingdom and reigning as King. He was going to fulfill all predicted suffering prophecies. There are seven specific prophecies He would fulfill.

**(Prophetic Fulfillment #1)** - It is time for the Son of man to be handed over to the Gentiles. **18:32a**

It was clearly predicted in Psalm 2:2 that the Gentile rulers would take counsel together against the Lord’s anointed. It was time for that to be fulfilled. He would go to Jerusalem and fulfill this very prophecy. He would appear before Pilate who would be turned over to Roman soldiers for crucifixion.

This of course was unthinkable to the Jews. They could not conceive of the fact that their Messiah would allow Gentiles powers to have the upper hand over Him. Of course the reason why they couldn’t conceive of this is because they did not know the word of God.

**(Prophetic Fulfillment #2) - It is time for the Son of man to be mocked. 18:32b**

It was clearly predicted that the one who would deliver people from sin would be despised and sneered at (Ps. 22:6-7). Isaiah said He would be despised and forsaken of men (Is. 53:3). People would actually see Him and mock Him and laugh at Him. He would not be respected by any one.

**(Prophetic Fulfillment #3) - It is time for the Son of Man to be mistreated. 18:32c**

He was abused in every way. Darrel Bock, in his commentary, said Jesus would “receive shameful treatment” (*Luke 9:51-24:53*, p. 1497). Even His beard was predicted to be ripped from His face (Is. 50:6).

**(Prophetic Fulfillment #4) - It is time for the Son of man to be spit on. 18:32d**

Again Isaiah specifically predicted that the One who could save people from sin, would be spit on (Is. 50:6). Jesus is pointing out the minutia of the prophetic things He must fulfill.

**(Prophetic Fulfillment #5) - It is time for the Son of man to be scourged. 18:33a**

Isaiah predicted that He would be so beaten that His appearance was worse than any man ever seen (Is. 52:14). He also said that the Messiah would give His back to those who would strike Him and scourge Him (Is. 50:6).

**(Prophetic Fulfillment #6) - It is time for the Son of Man to be killed. 18:33b**

It was clearly predicted that the Son of Man would be killed. He will not just appear to be dead, He will be dead. In fact, it was specifically predicted that He would be crucified and have His hands and feet pierced (Ps. 22:16). Isaiah said He would allow Himself to be led like a Lamb to slaughter (Is. 53:7).

**(Prophetic Fulfillment #7) - It is time for the Son of Man to be resurrected. 18:33c**

This would be a defining moment in identifying the God/Savior/Messiah/King. He would be raised from the dead on the third day (Ps. 16:10; 49:15; 86:13 = Acts 13:34-38).

Just recently an evil, arrogant, homosexual news reporter mocked Jesus Christ by saying Jesus was not perfect. Well we can prove He was perfect. The resurrection proves He was perfect. The fact that no other person today is raised from the dead proves everyone else is not perfect.

It was time to go to Jerusalem to fulfill every one of these prophecies. Everything about to happen was no accident; this was all a part of the sovereign plan and program of God.

**POINT #2** – Jesus Christ’s disciples are completely ignorant of this specific word and will of God. **18:34**

Luke was a medical doctor and it was easy for him to spot ignorance. These twelve disciples and apostles don’t have a clue as to what Jesus is talking about. It wasn’t that they hadn’t heard this news before because Jesus spoke of His upcoming suffering and death many times (Luke 5:35; 9:22, 44-45; 17:25). They had heard of this, but they could not understand and grasp it.

It wasn’t that the language was not clear and understandable; it was that they could not grasp how their Messiah/King would have to go through what He just described.

There are three specific facts brought out here about them:

**Fact #1** - They did not understand God’s word and will. **18:34a**

They did not understand any of these things. Trent Butler, in his commentary on Luke, says the “repeated passion predictions by Jesus did not penetrate the dense, stubborn predispositions of the disciples” (*Luke*, p. 301).

**Fact #2** - They could not understand God’s word and will. **18:34b**

Why didn’t they understand these things when it appears to be so plain to us? The reason is because understanding was hidden from them. Their inability to understand was, as Alfred Plummer said, “Providential.”

**Fact #3** - They did not comprehend God’s word and will. **18:34c**

They did not grasp one single word Jesus had just spoken to them. As Richard Lenski said, “they did not grasp one single item on the list.”

We need to see something here about understanding the word of God. It is possible to read the words and understand the words and have no clue as to what they actually mean in the scheme of things as it relates to the program of God.

So what we have here is the fact that Jesus Christ is the only Person on this earth who actually knows the will of God. He is the only Person on this earth who actually understands the totality of His salvific assignment.

Thank God that the fulfillment of prophecy was not left to His disciples. They were probably thinking about the rewards they could receive (18:29-30) and were missing the entire program of God.

But we need to understand this text and not just see words. Jesus Christ is the only Person who can save us from our sins. We cannot save ourselves because we are all sinners.

The reason why Jesus Christ left heaven and came to this earth to go through all of this is because this is the only way we may be saved. If you will place your faith in Him, He will save you.