

THE EARLY PARABLES OF JESUS

Message 10

Passage: Luke 7:36-50

Words: 6331

INTRO: We have three parables left and only two messages. It may be questioned if the next two directly relate to the transition from the OT to the NT, or from Israel to the Church, but most certainly they are both applicable to the Church age and I will include them. However, there is some indication at least that these may be related to our subject. The previous parable we looked at took place after John's disciples came to ask Jesus this question in Matthew 10:14:

14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"

Jesus answered in verses 15-17 like this:

15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

16 "No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.

17 "Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

Most clearly Jesus is speaking to the age into which they are now beginning to enter and they are in transition. We turn now to Luke 7:41-43 for the parable of the two creditors.

X. THE PARABLE OF THE TWO CREDITORS

A. The Parable

This parable is found in Luke 7:41-43 and it says:

41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

42 *"And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"*

43 *Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."*

B. The Setting

We want to look at the setting of this parable to see why Jesus gave it. We begin in verse 36:

36 *Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.*

37 *And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil,*

38 *and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.*

39 *Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."*

40 *And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it."*

41 *"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.*

42 *"And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"*

43 *Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."*

44 *Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water*

for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

45 *"You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in.*

46 *"You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.*

47 *"Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."*

48 *Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."*

49 *And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"*

50 *Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."*

Now here is an interesting setting for a parable. A Pharisee has invited Jesus for a meal. Verse 36 says:

36 *Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.*

This could be costly for the Pharisee with his peers. But I expect that he may have been a true Christian. The reason I say that is because Jesus indicates he has been forgiven little. So while Jesus is there a very embarrassing situation takes place for the Pharisee. We find it in verse 37:

37 *And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil,*

Now let me ask you a question. How would a woman of promiscuous character dare enter a holier-than-thou Pharisee's home? Let me tell you how. Notice that it says this woman was a sinner. The verb 'was' is in the imperfect tense. That usually indicates a past tense but it views the past action in its ongoing state. She was once for some time a sinner. She lived in deep sin. I

expect everybody knew her. I expect that one look at her and you would have known what she was even if you didn't know her. But how did she dare enter this home? Jesus was there and she had repented of her sins and she had been set free from sin. She would be a promiscuous woman no more.

Now she brought an alabaster flask of perfume. I expect it was the best she had. It would have had altogether other purposes until she got saved. And she brought what she had and we go to verse 38:

38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

Now here is a woman from Israel. She has heard of Jehovah God. Jesus is in the Galilee area. She may have been a Gentile woman, but she may have grown up in a Jewish home and may have been taught from the OT. Regardless, she would have been familiar with what God thought of the sins she had been living in. We do not know how she met Jesus. We do not know all of what took place, but we do know that she had met Him and she had come under deep conviction of sin and that she had repented, as we saw in the verb 'was' earlier. And now she is clean. She has never felt life like it was now. She was forgiven of her sins.

And it says, "Behold, a certain woman in the city..." when she heard that Jesus was in the city and when she found out where He was, she knew she could safely go into the Pharisee's home because Jesus was there. And her gratitude knew no bounds.

A while ago we considered the conclusion of the book of Habakkuk. And when Habakkuk comes to the third chapter, having seen what would befall the nation, he said in chapter 3 verse 2:

Hab 3:2 O LORD, I have heard your speech and was afraid; O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.

Oh that the Lord would send us revival. If that should happen we would see a lot of what we see in this woman. But at the time Jesus came, neither He nor John the Baptist could turn the religious world around. They were too far gone.

We go then to verse 39:

39 *Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."*

It seems to me that this Pharisee had invited Jesus because he was wondering if Jesus might truly be the Messiah. But now he has concluded that if Jesus was a godly man at all, He would have been able to recognize what kind of woman this was. And the fact that this woman was touching Jesus would make Jesus unclean.

Now the Pharisees had some major problems, a problem that wants to plague the conservative mindset. The first is a holier-than-thou attitude. In my view, it is hard to stay out this mind-set for conservatives, and it is very hard to detect. Luke 18:9-14 gives this account:

9 *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:*

10 *"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.*

11 *"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.*

12 *'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'*

13 *"And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'*

14 *"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself*

will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The root of the holier-than-thou sin is pride. The Pharisee, in his prayer, exalted himself. He felt he was worthy to come into God's presence to pray. Now I suppose that even Pharisees would not say words like this to other people. Before other people they present themselves as very humble persons. But it is easier to be a Pharisee in one's mind and in one's attitude.

The tax collector, on the other hand, knew he was not worthy to come into God's presence in prayer. He stood far off. He did not feel worthy to lift his eyes to heaven, and his prayer was this: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" In the original the wording is even stronger. It says, "God be merciful to me, THE sinner!" I am the sinner. Like Paul, he felt himself the chief of sinners!

The second major problem of the Pharisees is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is a sin that occurs in the presence of other people. Hypocrisy is the desire to appear to be holy, or to appear to be something others will admire, when in fact it does not present a true picture.

And now a Pharisee has invited Jesus. They will not all have been equally hypocritical, but you most certainly get the holier-than-thou picture from this Pharisee. He was certainly much holier than this woman, but he was also holier than Jesus. He said, "If this Man were a prophet He would know what kind of woman this is." If Jesus was truly a godly man, He would have shooed this woman out of the house. Simon knew that.

But there she is carrying on, pouring perfume on Jesus' feet. She is washing them with her hair. Her tears are streaming down her cheeks and falling on Jesus' feet. What a scene. Surely Jesus cannot be who people make Him out to be because if He was He would not put up with such nonsense! Why she wipes His feet with her hair and kisses His feet, and anoints them with her perfume. What a disgusting scene for a Pharisee. Maybe it was not such a good idea to invite Jesus over after all. He has no sense of what is proper.

Well, Jesus is sitting there. He knows exactly what is going through Simon's mind. Listen to verse 40:

40 *And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it."*

And what we have up until now is the setting for this parable and what follows is the parable. So we go to verses:

41 *"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty."*

42 *"And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"*

43 *Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."*

This is the parable and we want to look at the interpretation:

C. The Interpretation

I class parables into two types: parables to teach and parables to trap. This is a parable to trap. This kind of parable begin with a question to which the answer usually is very simple. The answer is obvious but the immediate application to Simon is not. That is the trap. Simon has set himself up for just such a trap. He has wanted to check out Jesus, but he will find out that Jesus is checking him out.

So he gives the story of a creditor. A creditor is one who lets you have things without immediately paying for them. By the way, let me just mention something here. There was a popular Bible teacher years ago, and he is still teaching though his life is very highly questionable at best. His name is Bill Gothard. And he taught that it is wrong to borrow money. A man wrote me and he was wondering about borrowing money but he had heard this teaching. I researched the subject. I cannot find that teaching in Scripture. I won't take time to explain other than to say if you come across this teaching, check it carefully before you accept it as biblical.

At any rate, Jesus gives a parable here of a creditor who had two debtors. One owed him 500 denari and the other 50. Now you see, it is within the power of a creditor to drop the debt or retain it. And this creditor, when both could not pay him, forgave them their debt.

Let me just point out here that when a creditor forgives a debt the debt is payed for, but he ends up paying the debt. A debt must be paid. That is why the Lord can forgive our sins. He paid the debt.

Well, having given the story Jesus now sets the trap. The bait is in. So here is the trigger to the trap. Jesus asked Simon, "Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" Well the answer is not, as they say, rocket science. And Simon said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And Jesus said, "'A' plus to you Simon. You are quite bright." Now look at verse 44:

44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman?"

Now I think Simon might have said to himself, "Listen, this woman is all I have been able to see since she came in. She shouldn't be here. Do you not see what kind of woman she is?" But Jesus did not give him time to answer He continued:

...I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

Now there was a common courtesy in Israel, and that was to offer a guest water to wash their feet. Many walked bare feet or with sandals and it was very refreshing to wash one's feet after walking some distance. But Simon did not offer this common courtesy. Then Jesus said:

45 "You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in.

A common greeting was a kiss. But Simon had not done that. I understand that to kiss the feet was the practice of supplicants, that is such as had an important request

to make. The book, "Manners And Bible Customs" also says, "Kissing the feet of princes was a token of subjection and obedience." Jesus said further in verse 46:

46 *"You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil."*

Albert Barnes says, "The custom of pouring oil upon the head was universal among the Jews. The oil used was sweet oil or oil of olives, prepared in such a way as to give an agreeable smell. It was also used to render the hair more smooth and elegant."

One wonders how Simon felt by this time. But Jesus then makes application to Simon.

47 *"Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."*

48 *Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."*

49 *And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"*

You see, Simon had a question in his mind, "If this man was a man of God, he would know what kind of woman this is." But Jesus knew not only what kind of woman this had been, but what kind of a man Simon was. Simon's whole display of himself when Jesus came in had clearly shown Jesus what kind of man he was. And the woman's gratitude showed Him how real this woman's conversion had been.

Jesus said something like this: "This woman had a very big load of sin and that load is gone. It is clear by the fact that she loves much. Her every action shows it." Then Jesus turned to the woman and said, "Your sins are forgiven." The tense of the verb is perfect. It is a done deal. Your sins are gone.

Now it says that those Pharisees who sat at the table said, "Who is this that even forgives sins?" You see, if someone has sinned against me, I can forgive that person if

that person repents. And those sins will be gone. But if another comes to me with sins he has done against others, those I cannot forgive. This is a fallacy we sometimes fall into.

Let me quote here from the messages I did years ago on forgiveness, and I quote:

I want to show you just how far astray we have gone. In an article in the Wall Street Journal, dated December 15, 1997, Dennis Prager, a Jewish writer wrote an article titled, 'The Sin of Forgiveness'. I want to read some of that article for you. He writes, "The bodies of the three teenage girls murdered by a fellow student at Heath High School in West Paducah, Ky, were not yet cold before the students of the Christian prayer group that was shot at announced, "We forgive you, Mike," referring to Michael Carneal, 14, the murderer.

"This immediate and automatic forgiveness is not surprising. Over the past generation, the idea that a central message of Christianity is to forgive everyone who commits evil against anyone, no matter how great and cruel and whether or not the evildoer repents, has been adopted by much of Christendom.

"The number of examples is almost as large as the number of heinous crimes. But one other recent example stands out. In August, the pastor at a Martha's Vineyard church service attended by the vacationing President Clinton announced that it was the duty of all Christians to forgive Timothy McVeigh, the murderer of 168 Americans. 'I invite you to look at a picture of Timothy McVeigh and then forgive him,' the Rev. John Miller said in his sermon. 'I have, and I ask you to do so.'

"The pastor acknowledged: "Considering what he did, that may be a formidable task. But it is the one that we as Christians are asked to do."

"Though I am a Jew, I believe that a vibrant Christianity is essential if America's moral decline is to be reversed and that despite theological differences, there is indeed a Judeo-Christian value

system that has served as the bedrock of American civilization. For these reasons I am appalled and frightened by this feel-good doctrine of automatic forgiveness.

"This doctrine undermines the moral foundations of American civilization because it advances the amoral notion that no matter how much you hurt other people, millions of your fellow citizens will immediately forgive you. This doctrine destroys Christianity's central moral tenets about forgiveness - that forgiveness, even by God, is contingent on the sinner repenting, and that it can only be given to the sinner by the one against whom he sinned.

"These tenets are unambiguously affirmed in Luke 17:3-4: 'And if your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if seven times of the day he sins against you, and seven times of the day turns to you saying, I repent, you shall forgive him.'" End quote.

The Jews that were wondering here about Jesus understood that not just anyone can forgive a woman like the one that came to Simon's house that day. But Jesus went even further. Look at verse 50:

50 Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Let me briefly mention two things here. When John the Baptist came preaching repentance and the kingdom of God, for the most part it was the outcast who repented such as harlots and tax collectors. The Jews who were very religious refused John's baptism. And the gratitude of some of the vile sinners when they got saved is shown in our parable. The gratitude of the Jews who may have been saved, like the man in our parable showed almost no gratitude at all. Could we have a picture here of why God turned from Israel to the Gentile world at the birth of the Church? If so, this would give a connection of our parable to the transition age.

There is raised in this parable a question that has made ministry difficult for me in some ways. It would

appear to me that the Pharisee in our story was a believer. It was an usual thing for a Pharisee to invite Jesus for a meal. And an invitation like this could have been costly for this Pharisee because of how his peers would react to him.

But here is the difficulty. It is the difficulty of second and third generation Christianity. When they come for baptism, how do you know they have really understood their own sinfulness and have sincerely repented? Many have been spared from a lot of sin because of their Christian parents, and because they are forgiven little it is often hard to tell if they are truly saved. There is often little gratitude and little recognition of the magnitude of sin.

So we ask, what was the overall meaning of this parable? Well first, it is well possible that this is a Gentile woman. The setting is in Galilee of the Gentiles. It is the Gentiles to whom God will turn when the Jews have rejected Jesus. So it is possible that we may have the indication of a transition from Judaism to the Gentile world.

D. The Application

But how may this apply to my life? Well, let each one of us ask ourselves: do I have Pharisaical tendencies? How would we see it if there is such a problem. We might ask, "Lord, reveal to me if I have such tendencies." Then third, we might ask, "How grateful am I for forgiveness of sins?" Maybe I grew up in a Christian home and I do not recognize what all I have been saved from. We need to look around and see sin for what it is, and then be grateful that we did not live in such sins as this woman did.

XI. THE HARVEST

A. The Parable

We want to then briefly look at the parable of the harvest. For this parable, turn back to Matthew's Gospel. We go to chapter 9 and we begin in verse 35:

35 *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

36 *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.*

37 *Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*

38 *"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

Again, it may be questioned if this is a parable that gives a transition from the OT to the Church age or not. As I began to work on it, I began to see that it is possible that it fits into our subject. You may judge for yourself if you think it does or not. But since the parable we have seen before and the last parable indicate such a transition, I expect that these two might well indicate that as well. However that may be the subject matter is relevant to us in our age and has been throughout the Church age.

The parable is of a plentiful harvest but there is a shortage of workers.

B. The Setting

This parable and the previous one take place between Jesus' fifth and sixth trip to Jerusalem. He spent most of His time in northern Israel, around the Sea of Galilee. In my reckoning, this parable takes place just a little later than the previous one. This parable takes place on Jesus' third preaching tour of the Galilee area. So our parable says:

35 *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

Now it says Jesus went about all the cities and villages. And He taught in their synagogues and he preached the Gospel of the kingdom. And what was the gospel of the kingdom? Repent and believe. This kind of ministry is different from anything you read in the OT. We are in a transition from the OT to the NT. And the key things preached were repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But Israel, by and large rejected Jesus. Jesus found more acceptance farther away from Jerusalem, where He should have been received with open arms. And though the cities of the Levites, teachers of the Word of God, were scattered out among all the Jewish places, the spiritual condition of Israel was very sad. And so we read verses 36-38:

36 *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.*

37 *Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*

38 *"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

C. The Interpretation

Now let me interpret this in light of our subject of transition from the OT to the New. Turn to Numbers 31 When Israel conquered Canaan God divided the land among eleven of the twelve tribes. The Levites, since they would have the spiritual responsibility of the land, did not receive any land. Numbers 31:1-8 says this:

1 *And the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho, saying:*

2 *"Command the children of Israel that they give the Levites cities to dwell in from the inheritance of their possession, and you shall also give the Levites common-land around the cities.*

3 *"They shall have the cities to dwell in; and their common-land shall be for their cattle, for their herds, and for all their animals.*

- 4 *"The common-land of the cities which you shall give the Levites shall extend from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits all around.*
- 5 *"And you shall measure outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, on the south side two thousand cubits, on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits. The city shall be in the middle. This shall belong to them as common-land for the cities.*
- 6 *"Now among the cities which you will give to the Levites you shall appoint six cities of refuge, to which a manslayer may flee. And to these you shall add forty-two cities.*
- 7 *"So all the cities you will give to the Levites shall be forty-eight; these you shall give with their common-land.*
- 8 *"And the cities which you will give shall be from the possession of the children of Israel; from the larger tribe you shall give many, from the smaller you shall give few. Each shall give some of its cities to the Levites, in proportion to the inheritance that each receives."*

So you see that scattered throughout Israel were 48 Levitical cities. The Levites served at the temple in Jerusalem for one week twice a year and on the seven feasts of Israel. The rest of the year they were in their cities. And what did they do? It was their job to see to the spiritual well-being of the people. They would instruct from the Word of God.

But the spiritual teachers had failed. We see this in Jerusalem. Jesus chose most of His disciples from the Galilee area. It seems to me that this area, the farthest removed from Jerusalem, was the most on track spiritually. Corruption came from Jerusalem.

Now listen to our verses again:

35 *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

36 *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.*

37 *Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*

38 *"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

Jesus went throughout all their cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. He is doing the job of the Levites. Where were the Levites? One can see a similarity between the Levites of that day and many of the pastors of our day. By and large we have abandoned the pure teaching and preaching of the Word of God.

Jesus looked at all the people and said, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few." First Jesus sent out the 12 and later He sent out the 70. What I see is that a transition is taking place. The Levites will no longer be the teachers of the law.

Turn now to Matthew 28. After Jesus was crucified, He sent the disciples to the Galilee area where He Himself would come. We begin in verse 16:

16 *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.*

17 *When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.*

18 *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

19 *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

20 *"teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

The teaching of spiritual truth has now been removed from the Levites and has been given to the Apostles. And they are to go, not throughout Israel, but throughout the whole world.

Now go to Acts 1. We'll read 1-9:

- 1 *The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,*
- 2 *until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,*
- 3 *to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*
- 4 *And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me;*
- 5 *"for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*
- 6 *Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"*
- 7 *And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.*
- 8 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Now what was to happen was that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to take place and the believers were now to be witnesses in Jerusalem, then move out to Judea and Samaria, and from there to the ends of the earth. The task that the Levites had in Israel would go to the Church and it would be a universal ministry, which is also what happened.

Well, Jesus was crucified on the feast of Passover. He was raised from the dead on the feast of First-fruits. And then 50 days later, a world changing event took place. So we go to Acts 2. We begin in verse 1:

1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.

6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"

8 "And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?"

9 "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling

in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

10 *"Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya
adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and
proselytes,*

11 *"Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues
the wonderful works of God."*

12 *So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one
another, "Whatever could this mean?"*

13 *Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."*

So the transition begun in the ministry of Jesus Christ is complete. For the past 2,000 years the Church has been God's primary work on earth.

D. The Application

Well, the application is quite plain. It is the task of the Church to see to the conversion of unbelievers and to nurture them spiritually. May I ask you, what effort do you put into bringing others to the Lord or in guiding them to deeper spiritual understanding?

CONCL: So we conclude. We have looked at two parables. The first was of Simon the Pharisee who, though he may have been a believer, carried the diseases of the Pharisees; a holier-than-thou attitude and hypocrisy. This was Judaism, but it is just as easy to fall into this in the Church. It is a danger, in my view, that conservatives are the most susceptible to.

Further, it is very difficult for second and third generation Christians to be thankful for deliverance from sin or to be thankful for having been spared from living in deep sin because of their Christian background.

And as to the parable about the harvest and the shortage of workers, may I ask you, when did you last bring the message of the Gospel to an unsaved person? How long ago? And, how long ago is it since you challenged a Christian to a deeper walk in the Lord?

Daniel 12:3 says, "Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever."

And James 5:19-20 says: "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins." Work, for the night is coming!