

7306

SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1994

I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES

Speaker: Bro. Dev Ramcharan

Study #3

For a Penny a Day

Reading: Matthew 20:1-16

There's an offering of food to angels (Genesis 18:6); Abraham sends his wife to go and prepare three measures of meal and other things. So, there's an offering made by a man to God's representatives, and the surrounding circumstances involve the promise of a child, of a son. A man makes an offering of meal, there's fellowship with God's representatives, so he has fellowship with God and in the process there is the promise of a son through whom redemption will come. That's interesting isn't it? So, there we have three wonderful elements in the offering of three measures of meal.

The next time you see that is in Judges chapter 6 and verse 19, there we have the narrative of the life and labour of the man Gideon. Now, Gideon's name means 'warrior'; he's a warrior. Three measures of meal are offered by him in a situation where there is starvation in the land of Israel, and he offers 3 measures of meal to God's representative, an angel. So, there's some kind of fellowship implied, well, you ask yourself, where's the son? Much is made in that chapter of Judges of the fact that Gideon is the son of a man named Joash, the Abiezrite. And Joash means 'Yahweh fired' somebody who is on fire for Yahweh, somebody who Yahweh has set on fire, and Abiezrite means 'father of help', and through that warrior, who is Yahweh fired, and whose father is a father of help, through that warrior Israel is saved from her enemies. So there's a form of redemption, through a son, and surrounding those circumstances, is a meal or the giving of 3 measures of meal to God's representative and some kind of fellowship. Wonderful isn't it? A meal involving fellowship with God, through God's representative, and salvation through a son.

Now the third place that we see that measurement of 3 measures of meal is in 1 Samuel chapter 1 and verse 24, where a woman named Hannah, her name means 'grace', God's goodwill, God's kindness, God's unmerited favour. And what does she do? She brings 3 measures of meal to Eli, God's representative, and what does she do? She offers her son, and her son becomes priest, high priest and ruler of Israel, and through him there is a form of redemption that Israel experiences, because Israel is turned back into the right worship of Yahweh. Now, isn't that wonderful those three things together like that, where that measurement of 3 measures is used. And doubtless there are all kinds of connections and deepening of those lessons that those

of you who are deeper bible students will be able to 'mine out of the rich ore' of those 3 connecting links.

But, in the simplicity of the exhortation of the woman with that meal and the leaven, why is 3 measures mentioned? Well, the leaven involves the truth. The woman is Christ Himself. She leavens the entire lump, all of it, all three measures. So, what we've got is the gospel truths, which enters into mankind as 3 measures of flour, and leavens everything. Right now it's small in its effect on the earth, but it will leaven all of mankind in 3 stages. 3 stages. First of all, there were those that came before Christ, and looked for Him, so they manifested God as best they could, looking forward to the Redeemer who would come. And then, those who knew Him, those who knew and saw Him, and those who came after including us. We're the second group of people. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself manifested God fully, those who were before Him, were that part of humanity that had exposure to the gospel through the promises made to Abraham and to David, and they sought to manifest God. So, there was a leavening of their lives with the truth and the gospel. And then, those who were with Christ and those who came after Christ, in our age before the kingdom begins, this is the second section of mankind who is being leavened by the truth, by the gospel. And then, at the end of the kingdom age, there will have been those who lived in the kingdom and who had the opportunity to manifest Yahweh likewise. So there's the third section of all of humanity that will have been leavened by the gospel, so that in the end, Yahweh will be all and in all. You know when you talk to those in the brotherhood who say the name Yahweh is fulfilled in Christ, say, yes, you're absolutely right, that's true, but the word that you should use is through Christ, because it is not completed in Him. He is the beginning and through Him that name comes to fulfillment, just as there is a continuous, historical interpretation of prophecy in Revelation, there is a continuous, historical development of the manifestation of the name Yahweh. Same way they're connected to each other. They can't be separated. It's logical and the 3 measures of mankind, through all of the stages of their history, before Christ, during and after Christ, during the kingdom. Those are the 3 measures that will be leavened, is the truth leavening your life? Is the gospel truth that we have had exposure to, leavening our lives? Or, is it something that has little or no effect on us as individuals? Is it something that has entered into our lives as something small, and grown and grown, so that it's changed and transformed every aspect of who and what we are as people? Well, it must, and it can, if we will let it; if we will let the Word of God make an impact on our minds and our lives.

Well, brethren and sisters, we are going to lead right into the next section that we are going to be dealing with today, For a Penny a Day. Now, there are surrounding circumstances that have an effect on the giving of the parables. Every parable that's given at any point in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, was given in a certain time in His ministry, and in the midst of certain circumstances. You know, there was a problem that the disciples had, they misunderstood what the kingdom was all about. They didn't really realize what it would really be. They had some kind of idea of what it might be, but what they thought it would be would be a fleshly, materialistic, humanistic, rejuvenation of an independent Israeli kingdom. That's what they thought; they thought they were going to have something like they have in Israel today. That's what they thought they were going to set up, and the disciples assumed this is the leader who is

going to do it. He's going to have the multitudes follow Him and we are going to be next in command. Lieutenants as Bro. Ullman said a couple of days ago, they thought they would be His closest government officials, but of course, every president must have a vice-president, and so they were working out with each other, competing, vying, 'who is the greatest in the kingdom next to Jesus?' Who is going to be His right hand man? Now, who would have priority over anybody else? well, obviously the people He called first, not the ones He calls last, well, they would say, we were His disciples first. Now, the ones who were called first, there were men who were related to Him and there were men who were not related to Him. There were Peter and Andrew that weren't His relatives at all, and then there were John and James Boanerges, sons of thunder. They were His cousins, they were related to Him, so who do you think would assume that they had the right to be His next in command? And of course, some would say well, Peter has more leadership ability. I'm with Peter! I think that they are the ones that should be next in command. And there would be others who would say, No, No, John and James are related to Him, they are the ones who should be greatest in the kingdom. I'm with them, because like any men anywhere they thought according to their own ambitions. If I choose the right party that's going to make it into power, I'll be with them, I'll be promoted over the others who chose the wrong party. They completely misunderstood what the kingdom is really all about.

Now, they'd left everything behind, brethren and sisters, because they expected they'd get so much in return. That's what they assumed, and that's exactly what they thought would happen, and you know, it's really interesting because something happens that makes them panic in Matthew chapter 19 right at this time. Matthew chapter 19 beginning at verse 16, and 'behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Which ones? Which commandments shall I keep? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. We're told that the man that came to Him was a rich, young ruler. Now, here the disciples are fighting about whose the greatest, who's going to assume positions of authority to gain wealth and power, and wield their authority over the nation, and here comes a rich, young ruler. Have you ever noticed, God gives your ecclesia the trials that are exactly suited to it, and its weaknesses and its circumstances? Have you ever noticed that God gives you the trials that are perfectly suited to you and your weaknesses? Well, this young man was perfectly suited to the weaknesses of the brethren at that time. He's a rich young ruler, so he represents a class of the nation that would be the ones to put Christ to death, because you ask yourself, why does Christ select these particular things? Now, look at what He says to him; He says, 'which ones, Jesus tells him, 'thou shalt do no murder'. That class of men in the nation, the rulers, would murder Christ. They would murder Him. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery', they, they part of Yahweh's bride, would in their adulterous behaviour, crucify His Son. They would be adulterous completely, unfaithful to their husband, Yahweh. 'Thou shalt not steal', they would steal the kingdom from Him in their mind. They would steal what was rightly His. That's what

this class of men would do. 'Thou shalt not bear false witness', they would commission false witnesses to lie about Jesus and what He had said and done. 'Honour thy father and thy mother', who was their father? Abraham, a man of faith who believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. They didn't believe. They were unbelieving in hearts. Stony hearted men. 'Honour thy father and mother' Sarah, they didn't honour them at all. They were dishonourable children. 'And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', the hatred that they would have for Jesus, the jealousy and the envy, would be the motivating emotions, that would lead to His death, so everything that Christ says to this rich, young ruler, was perfectly suited to the class of men in the society that he stood for. That's why He selects these specific commandments and then the young man says unto Him, now, just look at youth, brethren and sisters, look at the pride and the inexperience of youth. 'All these things have I done from my youth up', what am I lacking? what am I missing? He believed that he had actually done all of these things. Now, any of us looking at a man like that would disrespect him, because we would think of him as prideful and foolish, but you know, the record says, in one of the other gospels (Mark), 'Jesus, beholding him, loved him', because Jesus doesn't see you and me for what we are only, He sees us for what we have the potential to become. He sees what's in you and what is, but, He sees what can be, and He looked in that young man and He saw what could be. He saw that underneath all of that brazen, foolishness of youth, there was material that He could work with. And He loved him, and Jesus was the kind of man, when He was feeling an emotion, people knew. Because it was honestly and openly shown, and His disciples who had just been fighting with each other, about whose's the greatest, see that He loves him. They see that He loves him. He has this rich young ruler. Look, at how He's talking to him! Look at the affection He has for him! and they become a little nervous, and Jesus says to him, verse 21, 'if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me'. Thou shalt have treasure in heaven? What would the disciples understand by that? They understood that He was talking about the kingdom of the earth that they would be in, so, here's this young man who comes out of nowhere, Johnny come lately, and Jesus in their mind, irresponsibly, flippantly, says to him, 'give what you have away and I will give you treasure'. Now, imagine how they felt brethren. Imagine how they felt! But, of course, that's not what Jesus was talking about at all. 'The young man went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions', he goes away sorrowful, brethren, and then Jesus says unto his disciples, 'Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.'

Now, brethren, we like to look at that passage and we like to twist it down so that it is more comfortable and palatable. We like to say, 'well, there was a gate in the wall of Jerusalem, the city, which was called the Needle Gate, yet a camel could get through but it would have to get on his knees and the burden would have to be taken off it, so that it could get through that gate. That gate has never been found. There never was such a gate. Jesus is saying exactly what He's saying, 'it is impossible for a rich man to make it into the kingdom'. You can't buy your way into God's kingdom, that's what He's saying, and they're shocked, they're astonished, 'why are they shocked and

astonished? well, don't think of these as humble little peasants who are poverty stricken and uneducated and untutored. They're not! They are hard nosed business men, some of them. There they were out on the Sea of Galilee, in the richest territory of all of the land of Israel, and they were involved in the most lucrative of businesses, because they were fishermen, and fishing, fishing brethren, was hard work and extremely lucrative because fish was a delicacy throughout the land of Israel and the Sea of Galilee was teeming with fish. Now, when Peter and Andrew and James and John are on the waters, they are in a partnership, they are in a business. They're hard nosed businessmen, use to competition, use to being out there competing with the other fishermen, so that their business will beat out the others. They're use to that, they brought their business practice right into the ecclesia. We can do the same. We can run our ecclesias like our businesses, and that's what these men were doing. The competition they had out in the marketplace they brought in, in their wrestling with each other, and here they are fishermen, and if you think they are poverty stricken just think of this. When John and James leave the ship, they leave it with their father, he's in the business too, right? And they leave it with their father and the servants. So that means that these are people who have employees. So they're not poverty stricken, they are not people walking around in robes speaking quaintly. They're hard nosed businessmen like you might be. And also it says, John's family was known to the High Priest; the High Priest didn't know poor people, he would have nothing to do with the poverty stricken. He'd have nothing to do with those that were lowly. He knew the best, and the brightest and the richest, and so John and James come from a notable family and they're well off. So if you look at these people as people you can't relate to because they're poverty stricken. Don't! they're people like you and me. They're men just like you, just like me, and they have to learn what the truth really is and they have to learn that the ecclesia is not a business place, and the decisions that are made, are not business decisions. They are decisions that are based on God's principles, and they are life changing and life preserving decisions. So, there they are and this rich young ruler. He's got 3 things going for him, brethren and sisters, he's rich, it means he is use to handling money; he's use to responsibility, he's well educated. He's wealthy, so there's something that makes him take stock of who he is and the fact that he could be a genuine competitor, and he's young which means he has ample, ample time to develop, to become somebody whose even more capable than he already is. But, he's a ruler, so he's use to authority, he's use to rulership, and when Christ looks at this rich, young ruler, and loves him so, obviously, those men look at him and think, 'we can lose everything, look! he just came out of the blue, johnny come lately has come at the eleventh hour, and Christ is offering him treasure'. And they panic, brethren and sisters, when they hear what He says, look at what they say in verse 25, 'When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved then if nobody who's got money or is well off, who can look after themselves financially, if nobody can be saved? And Jesus looks at them and says, 'Of yourselves it is impossible, but with God all things are possible'.

And then Peter, Peter! Peter, the man who burst out with everything that everyone else was thinking but wouldn't say; this is the man who loves his Lord but wants to be right in there as His right hand man, and obviously he's been wrestling with the sons of

thunder, because they are the ones who are the main competitors for the position of greatness in the kingdom. And they scull all these rank and foul feeling inside, all of the competitive instinct, all of the anguish, and he sees this young man and the way the Lord sizes him up. So Peter's problem is even worst than he thought, 'Well, I thought I had the Sons of Thunder to worry about; look what I've got now to look after'. And Peter says to Him, 'Look, we have forsaken everything and followed you, we left everything behind'. Same words as used earlier in the record when it says, 'They left their nets behind them, they left everything'. We've left it all, we've forsaken everything', and he said, 'What shall we have therefore?' Jesus sees right into his heart, right after what he says, right into his question, he's really asking, 'What am I going to get? What am I going to get? This man comes out of the blue and you're offering him all these things, what am I going to get for everything that I left behind? That's what he's asking. And Jesus said unto him, 'Look, I say unto you truly, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, (that's families) or brethren, or sisters, or fathers or wife or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.' Peter, whatever you have left behind, I will give you in the regeneration, is that enough for Peter to hold on to? Is that enough for the Sons of Thunder to hold on to? Well, we'll see what their reaction was a little later on.

In the regeneration, the time of the restitution of all things, Jews of this time understood that to be the time of Israel's greatness. Christ was talking about that, He's talking about the time after the resurrection, when the whole earth would be regenerated, when the kingdom would be established and the whole earth would be under its sway. When God's righteousness would flow forth from Zion and all the nations would be instructed. That's what He's talking about. They didn't understand that! They didn't comprehend those things. Do we? Do we comprehend that everything that we know today is going to be wiped out? That everything we want today is going to be as nothing in the kingdom. That everything that we labour for, are ambitious for, everything that we want to buy and possess, all of these things will be nothing. Wiped away, the dust of the earth, when God's kingdom is established. Do we know that? We look at these men and we say how could they not realize that? DO WE REALIZE THESE THINGS? We've got to realize these things, brethren and sisters, 'many that are first shall be last', well, that's what they were quarrelling about. That was the basis that they were trying to work out who was the greatest, but of course, Peter and John, James and Andrew, these four people, well, these are the ones that are called 'first'. Andrew, John, and then Peter and James; they were first. 'Many that are first shall be last', so that in all of this emotional temptest, in all of the turmoil, Jesus gives them a parable of the kingdom.

He says, 'Look here you, (Matt.20:1-16) 'the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. When he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is

right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen'.

Brethren, there's a householder, a ruler of a house, ruler of a house. He's talking about Himself; He is the ruler of the house. They agree to the wage of one penny a day, a denarius. So, these men that were called at the beginning, early in the morning, are given a single penny a day in their wages. That was the normal wage at the time, for a man who worked for a day, he received a denarius, a penny, one penny for his day's labour. And they agreed to this it says, they agreed to this. 'When he had agreed with the labourers', so they knew what they were going to get. There was no question in their minds, they are going to get a penny, that's what they agreed to. The third hour, brethren, is nine a.m., verse 4, 'he says to them, go ye also into the vineyard', this is another group, 'and I will give you what's right', the word means 'just'. So he's the one who decides what is their just payment, this householder. It says, 'he went out again, the sixth, the ninth hour, that means at noon and three p.m., and he brings more people in. So there are people being brought in, in the midday and afternoon to work in this vineyard. You notice brethren, they are brought in to work in the vineyard, they are not brought in to sit down in the vineyard, they are brought in to work in the vineyard. And they have their wage they agreed to. Then, he goes out at the eleventh hour, that's just before the end of the day, and he calls in them whom he chooses. He makes the choice. They come in and he agrees with them that he will pay them likewise 'what is just'.

Now, verse 11, brethren, when those that had supposed, they assumed based on their logic, 'Well, I worked harder, I should get more. I was there longer, I should receive more. I was called first, I should get more than the last. I was called first and therefore I deserve a position higher than those that came in at the end.' That's what they think, that's what they believe, and they murmured against him. Verse 11, 'they murmured (they complained) they began to grumble about this goodman of the house'. And what do they say?

'These last have wrought (they've worked) but one hour, and thou hast made them

equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day'. What did they carry? Well, they carried the labour. They laboured for the entire day. And what's the heat of the day, brethren? What's the heat of the day? What was the sun, the sun that rose on the seedlings that were in shallow ground, stony places? PERSECUTION, TRIBULATION, So Christ is saying, 'Look, I know what you disciples are like. You say, we've been here working all along; we've had to put up with persecution and tribulation, the sun, the heat of the day, and we've had to bear all the burden of labouring to teach these multitudes, feed them, go everywhere with you, leave everything behind, and try and keep our families going at the same time, without any understanding of where we're going to be rewarded, and what we're going to get'. So, He's telling them this parable all about them, that's what he's saying. The heat of the day and the burden, means to carry something heavy, there's a difficulty for us, brethren, of hard, ecclesial labour, that's what it is. Not standing around, not warming seats in the ecclesia, not filling space in the meeting, labouring, carrying the burden.

Now, just as an additional exhortation, let's go to Luke chapter 17, brethren and sisters, and verse 7. Now this is for 'heavily burdened labourers in the truth', those who take on the work and the labour willingly. Luke 17:7, 'But which of you having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do'. And so, when you're burned out or you feel like you're burned out, and you feel resentful because others are not helping with the labour, and you're working and labouring, and you feel as if, because of that, you should have some kind of special place in the ecclesia, you should be specially respected by the brethren, please remember, brethren, that you are only doing what you are supposed to be doing. You're an unprofitable servant. You haven't done anything more than you were asked, commanded, to do. The labour we do in the truth is not labour that we do for thank you's and compliments. It's not labour we do for any kind of reward from our brethren; it's not even labour that we do for appreciation from them, because sometimes there is none forthcoming, only criticism and backbiting and false finding. But, we do it because it is our duty to do it, and it is our responsibility to do it, and to keep our ecclesias living and active and in the truth. That's our duty, so the brethren back in Jesus's day, had it all wrong. They thought that, well, because I have given up something, because I have sacrificed and left behind something, I've got to get something which equals what I have given up. Because I have laboured to exhaustion and carried burdens for this householder, I should get in return, retribution for exactly what I've given him. EXACT or superior retribution, and Jesus is saying 'no, you're absolutely wrong. The reward you're going to get is the same from beginning to end. Whoever was called first, it doesn't matter, they'll be like the last. Whoever was called last, they shall be like the ones who were called first, because the reward is all the same. It's all the same'.

Verse 13, 'He answered one of them. Why is He talking about answering one in the



parable? because one of the disciples came to Him with the problem. One represented all the others in speaking his mind, and so that one is Peter. He answered one of them and said, 'Friend'. Why does He say that? Well, you might think in our common parlance today and the way we speak today, 'buddy, that's not what I'm talking to you about'; He's not saying 'buddy' at all, He means 'friend'. You're my friend, and you should know me, you should know the kind of man I am. You should know what kind of householder that I am, you should know the kind of employer that I am. 'Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny'. When we came into the truth, what was the reward that we were looking for? Was it notoriety, was it to be well-known? Was it respect? Was it the admiration of men and women? That's not what we came into the truth for, we came into the truth for eternal life; it grew to be the desire to manifest Yahweh, and it grows from there to love our brethren and sisters, no matter what, according to the principle of 'agape love'. Love that chooses it's object with decision of will, not because the object is deserving of love, but because you choose to love it whether it loves you or not. I love you whether you love me or not, that's how God loves us! That's what Jesus did; He loved us even when we didn't love Him. That's what we came into the truth for, the hope of eternal life, manifesting Yahweh perfectly in the kingdom. And that's what these men were being brought to understand. They never understood it before Christ died, and when He came back, when He was resurrected, then they began to understand. There they are, human beings, He says, 'Look, you agreed, didn't you agree with me for a penny? Well, take that which is thine, go thy way, I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with mine own? Is your eye evil because I am good? So, the last shall be first, brethren, and the first shall be last. For many are called, but few are chosen. What is He talking about?

What's the calling? Many were called to work in the vineyard. Many were called to work in the vineyard for a penny a day. You notice what they agreed to was, a penny a day. It doesn't say they agreed to be paid a penny for that day, that's not what He's saying. The key to the understanding of this parable is that phrase, a penny a day. What was He looking for? He wasn't looking for people to work in His vineyard for one day, He was looking for full time employees, that's what He wanted, and their reward, their payment, would be a rate of a penny a day, for every day that they worked. And when He says to this man in the parable, 'go thy way', He saying to him, 'I don't want you to work for me anymore. Go, your whole attitude is wrong, you don't deserve to be my servant'. Many are called to work for me on a full time basis, but few are chosen to work for me on a full time basis. Many are called to be brethren and sisters in the ecclesia, to work in this ONE day, this period of time before the kingdom comes. We are called upon to labour, to get up off our seats, and see the needs which exist around us, not to sit back and be entertained from the platform. But to know what our bibles are saying and to labour to keep our brethren and sisters alive. We've been called to work, not to sit back, not to take it easy in the truth. To labour and we're called to labour today in preparation for labour for a thousand years. What do you think we're going to do in the kingdom? LABOUR, what do kings and priests do? They work. What do rulers do? They work! They work brethren, they work sisters.

Yesterday we saw in our little time together with sisters, that there is work that even sisters have got to be doing. It's not a case of looking after our children and our husbands, we've got to look after the ecclesia. It's our responsibility. The brethren have to keep the ecclesia alive, we are the floor that the ecclesia must walk on to stand erect. We are the pillars that those who are broken-hearted must lean upon; we have to keep our ecclesias believing the truth as it is 'truth'. We have to keep our families in the truth and raise them up in the 'fear and love of the Lord'. We have to make sure that what we believe is indeed, the truth, and that it's not corrupted. We have to be preaching the truth, ecclesially and individually. You see, there's a lot of work that we've got to be doing. Labour in the truth involves taking on the burdens that these men had to take on. It involves tolerating the heat of the day, which means whatever difficulties and personal trials, tribulations and persecutions, may result from the labour and commitment that we are involved in. And so, when these men were wrestling for who was the greatest, we do the same thing in our ecclesias. We've got power groups within the ecclesias, who fight against each other, and one group wants to go in one direction and other wants to go in the other direction. Consider the loneliness of Jesus! This is His bride, and she is selfishly fighting for herself. She's concerned and wrapped up in her own needs and desires. She only wants to know where she's going to be headed and what she's going to get. And she doesn't understand Him. She's not looking at what He is going through. She couldn't be bothered at what He is going through, because she is all wrapped up with herself. That's His bride. Consider the loneliness of Jesus.

He had His Father. He certainly didn't have His bride to support Him, and in all of the grief, the looking forward to the most devastating pain and anguish and torment on the cross, and all the whippings He would receive, the beatings, the ripping of His face. He had that to look forward to; she didn't even understand what He was going through. She was concerned with other things, like we are concerned with other things, when we forget what that man went through for us, as an example to us. Did they understand what He had told them? Look at Matthew chapter 20, verse 17, 'Jesus was going to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, (so there He is, He's taken His wife aside and He says, Look, I want to talk to you. I want you to understand something,) and He says to her, 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man (your husband) shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again'. Now, they hear these things brethren, what's the impact that it makes on them? What's the impact that the parable made on them? Verse 20, 'Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children (so they've sent mom because they know the compassionate heart of Jesus. They know that she's an elderly woman and that out of her own pocket she has contributed to keeping Him fed, and they know that she's His aunt, so they send mom in to do their dirty work). 'Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.' We want a certain thing, we'd like to ask you something, so they're preparing Him for an absolutely selfish request, and He said unto her, 'What wilt thou? She said unto Him, Command (not grant, brethren) Command, that's what the Greek says, Command that these my two

sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom'. How would you feel brethren in His place? But Jesus answered and said, after the most insulting request, what kind of ruler did they take Him for? Did they think that He was so corrupt that He would promote them over everybody else? Did they have so little respect for Him and for their brethren that they'd come and do something like that? You or I would lash out in anger, and say, 'Look, don't talk to me like that, you can't ask me to do something like that for you'. What does Jesus say, 'You don't know what you're asking, Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able'. (They would have said anything, yes, to anything, because they have no idea what He is talking about. Of course we will, yes, we're able) And He saith unto them, 'Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father'. And then, brethren and sisters, the rest of the brethren hear about it, and they are ripped to pieces with anger, resentment, and bitterness towards the Sons of Thunder, and Jesus called them all aside and pushed them down together and says, 'Sit down and listen to me, I want you to listen to something.

Verse 25, 'Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles well, they lorded over the people that they rule and they that are great exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you: (No man is greater than anyone else, nobody is going to be an authority who weals power over anybody else) 'It will not be so among you: whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister'. You want to be great in the ecclesia, you want to be great, well, then look after people's needs. Be a servant, the word 'minister' means 'to run to serve somebody', not to run away from work, but 'to run' to serve. That's what the word 'minister' is based on, and 'whosoever will be the chief among you, let him be a slave', let him be the absolute bottom of the ecclesia, who will do any labour that comes to hand, who will look after everybody's needs, who will have no time for himself or herself, because the needs of the ecclesia are the needs that that person ministers to. That's what you do if you want to be great, why? verse 28, 'Even as the Son of man (you, my bride, look at me, you know this is what I'm like), didn't come to be served by anybody, but to serve to minister, and to give His life, to give His life, a ransom for many'. They still didn't understand, you know, brethren and sisters, and yet we take comfort from that fact, because of men who were so foolishly deaf and stony hearted and selfish, could become the giants of faith that they became, then, little you and little me, with all of our problems and all of our failings and all of our weaknesses, can be changed by the Word of God likewise.

Let us all be ambitious to be great ones in God's kingdom, by being servants and ministers to the needs of our brethren and sisters, today.