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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1994

I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES

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Study #6

The Lord Cometh And Reckoneth With Him

Reading: Matthew 25:14-46

Well, brethren and sisters, we're almost at the end of a truly lovely Bible School. It's been a wonderful Bible School hasn't it? Wonderful to come to a Bible School where there is no controversy, where everyone thinks in the same way, where there is variety within healthy borders for the good of everyone. It's been wonderful to see a Bible School where everybody works together, wonderful! Thank you everyone who put this school on and worked within the school so that it might be something that we all benefitted from. And, on a personal note, thank you, all of you, who helped with the little challenges and the character building experiences that our little family has had in the last few days. There are too many of you to thank by name; thank you, very, very much.

This is the last of the parables that the Lord Jesus Christ ever spake in his life, so this is a day of last things. Later on, he'll be in the Upper Room with them; now, he finishes up the last parable.

The parable really comes in two parts. We look at it as two separate parables, but it's really one parable in two sections. There's, first of all, the parable of the landowner, the man who goes on a journey in a far country and leaves his servants in charge of what he owns; and then, follows through into a section involving the separation of the sheep and the goats; and, that is rightly interpreted by our community, by our traditional writings, as referring to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory, to inhabit the throne of his glory, fully known by all of the nations of the earth. And then he will separate the nations between those that are obedient to him, when he calls of them to be obedient; and, those who are disobedient, that will have to be disciplined. So, that is the basis for this second part of this parable, but we shall look at it on an exhortational basis, applying it to ourselves as individuals, and looking at it as if it were, even though it isn't, the judgment seat involving ourselves as individuals, because there is much that we can gain by looking at the parable in that way.

So, we begin, brethren and sisters, the last of the parables, verse 14 of Matthew 25: 'For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.' The man travelling into the far country is

the Lord Jesus Christ who has ascended to heaven, the far country. And it says that he 'gives his own servants his goods'; he delivers them into their hands, so he's giving them something that belongs to him, and he's giving it into their hands for safe keeping, for care but also for increase. Notice it says 'his own servants' why doesn't it just say, 'his servants', that would have been adequate? What is implied is that there is a special relationship between this master and his slaves. It's not like the regular relationship that use to be between masters and slaves, where the slaves had to be kept down, they had to be crushed, they had to be under the heel of the master; they were not trusted, they were dangerous to the life of the master. This master trusts his servants, but they're slaves. Another remarkable thing about slaves, brethren and sisters. In the Roman Empire, slaves laboured all their lives that they might put together enough money to buy their way out of slavery, so that they might become 'self employed', so they might hire themselves out as servants who could negotiate the terms of their contract, and leave or stay, depending on the agreements they made, so that they were in charge of their lives, not the master. Remarkable thing about us as Christadelphians, we are people who find ourselves in the world we are living in, in charge of where we work, where we live, what we do, on a daily basis, and our life in the truth, unlike the life of somebody who tried to free himself from slavery in the Roman Empire, is the life of bringing ourselves into slavery. So, we bring ourselves out of our independence, out of our self reliance, and it's a lifetime activity for us to bring ourselves into complete submission, service as a slave, so that all of our time and all of our thoughts, all of our labours, all of our possessions, all of our money, are directed towards the needs and the goals of our master.

Well, here he gives his goods into the hands of his servants, and it says in verse 15: 'and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one.' Now, what is a talent? We think of talents as 'abilities', that's an unfortunate association, it's got nothing to do with abilities whatsoever, at least not that part of the verse. A talent, a 'talanton', was a measure of money; it was a certain amount of money. Remember the men who worked in the vineyard worked for a penny a day, a denarius a day, one denarius. Well, a talent was 6,000 denari, 6,000 denari! so that is 6,000 days wages! One talent was a vast amount of money. This is the kind of trust that this master has for the slaves that work under him. He gives the least of them 6,000 days wages, and just gives it to them and leaves, and goes to a far country. And he gives to another 5 talents, that's 30,000 days wages! Now, just think of yourself if you received, all of a sudden, 30000 days wages. You'd be set up for the rest of your life, you'd be able to retire. Well, this is his money and they're expected to do something with it. Now, look at what it says about the basis on which he gives different quantities of money to the different individuals.

It says that he gave them, verse 15, 'to each man according to his several ability'; that means, to each man according to his own ability. He knew each one intimately, brethren and sisters, he was fully aware of the abilities of each one and the strong implication, (although it isn't said in words), is that they are to do something with that money. We'll find out later on that that's exactly what he expected of them, and they knew that. They had to do something with it; they couldn't just leave it inactive, they

had to do something with it. It was his money, in other words, they had to do with it what he would have done with it himself, if he had stayed there. They were looking after his money, on his behalf, as he would have done. That is what the Lord expected of them.

Well, the parable continues, 'and straightway he took his journey', (verse 16), 'then' (the word really is 'immediately'), 'Immediately he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.' This man doesn't wait around! Look at the kind of slave that this is; it's a man that takes his responsibilities seriously. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is talking to his brethren; he's talking to the disciples. Brethren and sisters, all of us together, he's talking to us. He's talking about a slave who is commended because he has taken his duties seriously. The first thing he does immediately, he doesn't wait around, he doesn't lag about, he's not one that has to be asked to do something, he knows what he has to get done, and he does it immediately; he goes out and begins to invest the money that he has received that it might yield an increase. That's what he does.

And then the one that received two: it says, 'and likewise', in other words, in like manner. So, once again, the one that received two went out straightway, he goes out immediately; he's not a lazy slave, he's an active slave who is looking after the interests of his master with what belongs to his master, 'and he goes out and he gains other two. 'But he that had received the one', why is this so sad? Because he is the one who had received the least amount of money. He had the least amount of money. There he has a small quantity of money, so really he doesn't have a great deal of money to worry about compared to the one who received five and the one who received two. He's only got one talent. It's still a great deal of money. The least he could do is do something with the one talent he received. What does he do? Well, we know the story, 'he that had received the one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.' His lord's money, brethren and sisters, not his money, his lord's money! This was money that he was responsible to do something with. And where does he dig and hide this? Does he put it in a box and hide it in the wall? He digs in the earth, so it was his fleshly, what is of the earth, that's where he digs and hides what belonged to his lord. His responsibility goes right down into the ground, into the earth, that's what he does. Well, it says in verse 19, 'After a long time, the lord of those slaves cometh, and reckoneth with them.'

The word 'reckoneth' was a commercial term, brethren and sisters, it meant to 'compare accounts'; it's a business term. Right, I've given you money, I'm coming back now, let's open the books and see what you've done with what you've been given. Verse 20, 'And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant'. 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant'; that was the same phrase, the same terminology that was used of the faithful servant over the lord's household who looked after his fellow servants and kept them fed in due season, as was necessary. And remember, that was the Word of God that was broken up and distributed accurately so that it could

be digested to the people that he was responsible for looking after, and shepherding, and encouraging, that they might yield growth in their lives in the truth. So, it's the same kind of people that are being talked about, and what he's doing is he's exhorting the brethren that he's talking to in this parable to get active and to be the kind of individuals that go forth immediately to look after what belongs to the Lord. He wants them to be the kind of individuals that showed an increase. So, this man takes five and he makes five more, right? up to 30,000 day of wages. Now he's got 60,000 to give back to his lord. Remarkable man, this slave. And his lord says to him, 'Well done thou good and faithful slave'. Now, the word 'faithful' means 'trustworthy'; he's trustworthy and he's demonstrated his trustworthiness in that he has yielded increase with what the lord has given him. And it also means that 'he is one who trusts', so part of the yielding of increase means that he trusts in the Son of God, that he trusts in Yahweh to help him in making the increase come about.

And then the next thing that happens is that he says to him, 'thou hast been faithful over a few things'. Isn't that remarkable! All of this vast amount of money, in the mind of the master, is just a few things. Then he says, 'I will make you ruler over many things'. What's he talking about? The few things that we have to labour in today, brethren and sisters, administering to the needs of the ecclesia, are but little paltry labours compared to the work that we shall do in the kingdom when the Son of Yahweh shall return to the earth. And so the labour that we do today, no matter how much increase there may be in our fleshly eyes, is as nothing; and, these are a few things, but they are pleasing to the Lord. He says, 'Well done', and he says, 'enter thou into the joy of thy lord.' 'Enter thou into the joy of thy lord', What's the joy of the lord? Well, it could refer to the joy that involves the joy that was set before the Lord Jesus Christ, which strengthened him to go through what he went through on our behalf, and in obedience to his Father. The joy that he experiences now, that he is a fully redeemed man; he's a man out of whom human nature has been removed, has been taken away from him, and so he is fully perfected. He doesn't have human nature anymore, that perfect mind is complimented by a body that is likewise. This could refer to the fact that we shall enter into that joy of our Lord and be given eternal life, but it could be referring to something else. That word 'joy' is understood by many of the lexicographers to refer to a 'feast', a 'meal'. 'Enter thou into the 'meal' of thy Lord', and that's what the people did: the virgins, and the man who had a wedding garment on, together with all those without a wedding garment, and all the others that had their wedding garments on, they were at a marriage feast. That, of course, points forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb, where the bride of the Lamb, together with the Lamb, will have their union; their nature will then be the same. There will be a perfection of relationship. We will be made perfect.

There's even a third way of looking at that 'joy' of the Lord. It is also understood to be 'Enter thou into the joy of 'lordship'. So this is a man whose been a slave - A slave! He's been a slave following according to what his lord required of him, in service to him. And one day, his lord will make him a lord, will make him an individual who's a king = priest, in his kingdom. So, he shall enter into the 'joy' of lordship; not the joy of lording it over other people, but the joy of being what his Master has been: a nurturer, a teacher, one who instructs, one who disciplines, one who loves. That's what his Lord

has been, that's the kind of Lord he has. Is it altogether a remarkable Master that this slave has? Now, that's what happens with the man with the five talents!

Then it says, verse 22, 'he also that had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents. Behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.' And his Lord says to him exactly the same thing that he says to the one with the five talents. He says, 'Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord'. So, the message is, (the amount of increase is not the point), what the Lord is looking for when he returns to these servants, these slaves, is increase. The amount, well, that's not the issue; but he wants to see increase. He wants to see the yielding of some kind of fruit.

Then the one who had received one comes to him, in verse 24, and said, 'Lord, I knew thee'; now pause for a minute and look at that. He says, 'I know you, I knew who you were'. He knew the kind of man that you were, 'I knew thee that thou art an hard man'; that thou art a hard man, and the word, brethren and sisters, means 'rough', 'harsh', 'strict', 'cruel', 'merciless'. That's what he thought his lord was, and his whole labour and service was affected by what he thought his lord was. And that's the same for us today; what we think our Lord to be is going to affect the way that we behave, the way that we conduct ourselves in the house of God, and the manner in which we serve him. If we see the Lord Jesus Christ as some kind of soft, effeminate, easy going individual, who lived and let live, and was prepared to let people do whatever they liked because there is forgiveness in the end, that's how we'll conduct ourselves. And that's the kind of decision making we will be party to in our ecclesias. If we see the Lord Jesus Christ as hard, strict, cruel, harsh, merciless, then we'll be just like that too. But, if we see the Lord Jesus Christ as loving, gentle, tender-hearted, but requiring of us truth, purity and obedience, then those two things will work together and it will effect the decisions that we make in our ecclesias and the manner in which we conduct ourselves. And so, his perception of his Lord was warped; and, it twisted and warped the manner in which he served his Master.

Verse 25, 'And I was afraid; I knew you were the kind of man who comes and you gather where you have not sowed.' You're the kind of individual who reaps where you haven't sowed, and I was afraid. 'I WAS AFRAID', so he's motivated by fear, not confidence and reliance upon his God, upon his Lord. He's motivated by fear; he's afraid: 'I was afraid, and I went and hid thy talent in the earth.' What's he saying? I was afraid of losing any of the money you gave me; so I didn't even bother to do anything with it. I didn't think I could do anything with the money you gave me, so I went and dug in the earth, I thought that was the best place to put it. I hid it in the earth, that's what he did! Then, he says to him, 'Look, look, here's back what you gave me; you have what's yours.' Now, the Lord pauses, he's heard what the man has said, and he says to him, verse 26, 'Thou wicked and slothful servant.' You wicked and lazy, lazy, unproductive slave - 'you knew that I reaped where I sowed not and gathered where I have not sowed'. In other words, he's saying to him, well, assuming you're right, based on your assumption and your appraisal of the kind of man I am, there was

at least something that you could have done. He says, 'thou oughtst therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and then at my coming I should have received back mine own interest, so at least I would have gotten some kind of increase. You should have done something with this money, to produce some kind of fruit. There's at least something that you could have done; but, no, you were a wicked and lazy, lazy, slothful slave.' What happens after that?

Verse 28, 'Take therefore, the talent from him and give it unto him with ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath, and cast ye the unprofitable, the unprofitable slave into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth'. This was a slave which yielded no profit to his lord; no fruit, no increase associated with what had been invested in that man.

So, we are left with two questions: (1) What are the talents? (2) Why is so much money given to the slaves? Why is so much money given to the slaves? So we move, brethren and sisters, into the next portion of this parable, which begins with the return of Christ to the earth, when the Son of man shall come in his glory. So he becomes known to everyone in the earth, this time. This is not to us the redeemed when we are judged; he is now coming in his glory to the whole earth, and all the holy angels with him. Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all the nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

Now, we begin to look at it from an exhortational basis, applying it to ourselves, because there is no doubt that there is this application to us, and this is now referring to what you and I have got to be on about in our lives today. He says in verse 33, 'Then he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world', (They've come to receive their inheritance), 'For I was hungry and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him saying, 'Lord, when saw we thee a hungered and fed thee or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee? When saw we thee sick or in prison and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of these, (Look at this) the least of my brethren, you have done it unto me'. The Revised Version says, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even the least, ye did it unto me'. So, these men and women are astonished when they hear these words. This is not something that they really expected, is it? It's almost as if what they did, they did unselfishly. They did it because they felt compelled to, there was an internal compulsion to do these things; to look after the needs of others.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, 'Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels'. Now, the devil is the slanderer;

it's that which is rooted in falsehood, lies, slander. The serpent misrepresented God, he slandered Him; there was slander which resulted in sin. When Christ put to death the devil on the cross, he put to death all that was associated with his nature, every proneness in the direction of sin rooted in original slander, the slander that took place in Eden. That falsehood within us propels us in the direction of doing what is selfish as Eve, when she adopted and built on that thinking, was propelled by herself in the direction of doing what was selfish. She moved in that direction and did something that was selfish; breaking through what God required of her, to do what appealed to herself. Christ put that to death on the cross; he put to death every proneness that he had, that we have. And if we are not, in our lives, striving to put our flesh down and subdue all of our proneness to selfishness, godlessness, sin; then, we are going to be part of that group of individuals who have been given over fully to flesh, to that sinful tendency acted upon all the time, so that we can be considered to be part of this group of individuals. They define destruction for those that are associated with that fleshly way of living, that selfishness, that breaking beyond the boundaries of propriety in God's eyes; not doing of what is good for you and me, and not for God and our brethren and sisters.

We have a choice to make as individuals, that we can make today, now, here. A choice to be part of that group that is destroyed, because they are rejected at the judgment seat, or to be the other part that receive eternal life. Now, why are these others rejected? 'For I was hungry', verse 42. And there are brethren sometimes who run out of money, for whatever difficulty; there have been times when people have known of a brother who is a spend thrift and he's hungry, and people have said about that young brother, 'Well, he always gets himself into trouble. We'll have to let him get himself out this time'. But, he's hungry! Whatever the circumstances he needs to be fed, but it's more than that. 'I was the sister in your meeting, who was starving spiritually. I was hungry for the Word of life, and you didn't take the time to feed me'. Christ says to us, brethren and sisters, 'I was that woman, that's who I was.' Just as he said to Paul on the road to Damascus, 'Saul, Saul, not why persecutest thou my ecclesia; why persecutest thou me?' That's how strongly he identifies himself with his ecclesia, with his house, with his brethren and sisters. So, that sister who is dying of hunger in our midst, and we didn't take the time to take aside and to feed her with the Word of God, that's who I was. He says. 'I was hungry', he says, 'I was thirsty'. I was the young man who was thirsty for the water of life. I sat in the periphery of the ecclesia and never got involved. I looked worldly. People thought I was unclean and rather than give me the water of life to hold onto that I might have my thirst quenched, they let me go off. They didn't take the time to give me that water to drink. That's who I was! That's what he's saying. I was that young man! He says, 'I was a stranger'. I was that brother in the ecclesia who felt like a stranger because I wasn't interesting to be around, or because, I had problems in my life and you didn't want me in your home. You made me continue to feel like a stranger; you had me on the outside, on the outskirts of the meeting, that's where I was. That was me, too! I was also him. And you neglected me and you left me off to the sides. That's who I was! That's what he's saying. I was a stranger and you took me not in. I was naked, brethren and sisters, I was naked, I was not clothed with the way of life that a Christadelphian must be clothed

with. I was a young couple struggling to stay alive in the truth, struggling to stay, surviving as a couple, and you didn't help me; you didn't come and put your arm around me and try and reclothe me with my right mind; reclothe me with the right thinking of the truth, and give me what I needed to make my marriage work. You didn't give me that; so, I was left off to the side naked. You didn't want to touch my problems because they were too big for you. You thought if you touched them you'd make them worse, so you buried them in the ground so you couldn't see them. That's who I was; I was them. That's what Christ was saying.

I was naked. He says also, 'I was sick and I was in prison and you visited me not.' I was a person who was spiritually ill, who looked as if he or she had no interest in the truth anymore. The world had taken full control of my life, and you didn't take me beside you, to instruct me and make me a friend; and, through your friendship and through the Word of life you might bring me into the truth again. And I was so sick and you didn't look after me. I was in prison. I was a young sister who wanted to marry outside of the truth, and I looked at the truth, and all I could see was chains and bars and restrictions and rules. That's all I saw, and rather than you showing me that the truth is love and joy and peace, and a hope for a kingdom to come and a belief that Yahweh will provide, for the lonely, and the single; rather than do that, you let me go outside of the truth, and then when the problem came you dealt with it. TOO LATE! I was in prison, I was that sister who saw the truth as imprisonment and you didn't stop me by helping me. That's who I was. I was sick and in prison and you visited me not, then shall they also answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty, or a stranger or naked, or sick or imprisoned. I did not minister unto thee'. They recognize what it is now. He's talking to them about ministering to people's needs, and that word 'minister' means 'to run to serve somebody'. 'To run to serve somebody', When did we ever see you in this condition and not run to serve you? Christ says, 'Inasmuch as you did it not unto one of these least, you did it not unto me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment' because the effect of this punishment on them is everlasting. They die and it is eternal! They shall never rise again; that's the end of them. They shall go away into everlasting punishment, the righteous into life eternal.

What are the talents, brethren and sisters? Is it money? Is it abilities? It's got nothing to do with any of those things. IT'S OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE, OPPORTUNITIES TO MINISTER! The least of us have a full talent of opportunities to minister in the ecclesia, no matter how elderly you might be and how bereft of any kind of gifts, special abilities. You have been given at least a talent of opportunities. That means 6,000 opportunities. The number doesn't mean anything, it just means you have a vast quantity of opportunities to help people stay in the truth, and grow in the truth, and be nurtured and strengthened in the truth. The sister beside you needs your help; the brother two rows back needs your friendship; the young person two rows ahead needs you to put your arm around him and lead him into the truth.

The young man that gets up and says something wrong, needs you to come to him gently and lovingly to say, 'This is the way it really is.' He doesn't need you to whiplash

him out of the truth. The man who's gotten his doctrine wrong needs to be cleared up, he needs his sickness healed, lovingly. None of this wrestling with the world, he needs to be shown that the truth is superior to the world, and shown not just in theory but in reality, or he will go for that world. That's what he sees is a place of love and comfort; but, if he can't see it in the ecclesia, that's where he's going.

To often, we assume in the brotherhood that labour in the truth is performed at lecterns, in front of microphones, or is performed on committees, or is performed in the area of writing, but there is such a vast area of labour that we are falling down in, and it has to do with keeping the ecclesia of God alive. And that's not just the work of arranging brethren, because all of us will be asked, 'What did you do when you had the opportunity to keep somebody alive and in the truth? To keep a marriage together? To keep a sister going, when everything looks so dark around her? What did you do? That's what we're being told. So, the man who digged and put his talent in the earth was a man who buried his responsibility in fleshly thinking, in laziness, in sloth. He was a man or woman who couldn't be bothered to minister to the needs of the ecclesia. Who couldn't be bothered to take what God had given them as a gift. Every opportunity we have to serve is a gift given by a loving Master who trusts us to take the opportunity and to do something with it.

We can't be part-time Christadelphians, brethren and sisters; there are too many needs. We can't be people who only minister to the running, gapping wounds, because that is only the end result of all of the little bruises along the way, that we never bound up, because we were too blind to see them happening. We didn't open our eyes. Open your eyes and look around your ecclesia. Don't be somebody who fills space. Be somebody who gets into the meeting and looks around. Where is everybody? How is everybody? What can I do to help? That's why the man who had five talents was able to bring five more. God gave him the opportunities. He ministered to them. He helped [and] strengthened those who needed helping and strengthening, those who needed to be kept in God's truth; not in all the nonsense that's running around the brotherhood in the truth; and not just in the truth doctrinally; but healthy, morally, spiritually, emotionally! That's what we're forgetting; we've got to keep both of those together. It's no good for us to be doctrinally sound and morally inert or emotionally depressed; that's not good enough. We've got to get it so our brethren and sisters are lifted in these truths we are trying to get them to understand, and we've got to be doing it out of our Bibles. When Christ returns to the earth he going to ask us, 'What did you do with the opportunities that I gave you, to help and to serve, to feed, to minister to thirst, to clothe, to make those who were strangers, family, not just associates on the outside; family inside?'

So, we have a great responsibility riding on our shoulders. Why did Christ tell these men this? Because they were fighting about who was the greatest in God's kingdom. And these were the leaders of all the disciples. And the disciples were not twelve people, brethren and sisters, they were many more. There were twelve whose job it was to take that message out, and to keep the ecclesias alive; but, all the others were the thirsty, the hungry, the naked, the imprisoned; all of these others, that's who they were. And when the Sons of Thunder and all the others were wrestling and hitting their

heads together, trying to figure out which one would have primacy in the kingdom, they didn't even understand [that] those neglected ones run the risk of falling away completely. And Christ was telling them, 'Listen you lot, you've got work to do! You've got to cut out this nonsense; you've got to get on with keeping these others alive, because when I come back, I want to find increase; I want to find that they're safe, they're understanding, their strength has increased. I want to come back and find that they are in the truth and watching for me; and it's your responsibility that they're in that condition.'

In our world in the truth, it's all of our responsibility. We shall all be judged for what we have done, what we have said, what we have thought, and what we have neglected to do. So, brethren and sisters, let us close with one more sobering passage, Proverbs, chapter 24. Consider how close to death so many brethren and sisters are in our ecclesias around us. We try not to look at them. We pretend they're somebody else's problem. And those of us who are not arranging brethren assume that the arranging brethren will look after everything. Those that are close to death, those that are ready to be slain by the world and its principles, but they're our responsibility, and that is the meat of the last parable that Christ ever gave. Verse 11, 'If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, behold, we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keepeth thy soul doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?' That's like a glass of cold water in our face, isn't it? for all of us? There is work that we are to be doing: we are to break beyond the boundaries of our problems and difficulties; we are to look after the problems and difficulties of others; we are to help and strengthen; we are to keep doctrinally sound; and, we are to be emotionally sound likewise. It's our responsibility to clean up our teachings and to look after the needs, the very real family emotional difficulties that exist in our midst. We want to hear the words 'Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of our Lord.' May we all be strengthened by this, the Word of God, to do this.