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## THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson for Sunday, Nov. 23

### JESUS' THANKSGIVING — AND OURS

Golden Text—The Lord hath done great things for us: whereof we are glad —Psa.126:3  
The Lesson as a Whole

In studying this chapter, a Harmony should be studied. As given by Matthew, all events of the chapter would seem to be crowded into one day. Actually there is a break between verses 24 and 25. Notice the phrase in verse 25, "At that time," and compare it with the phrase, "In that hour," in the parallel passage. Now see that Matthew indicates the general time, or season, when Jesus spoke those wonderful words of praise and confession, while Luke tells the exact hour. It was in that season when the excitement created by his miracles in Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum had shown itself to be superficial, lacking in any ethical or spiritual value. It was in the very hour that the "70" returned and jubilantly reported the success of their mission. Unless this is seen, some may question the agreement of the two accounts, and therefore their truthfulness. See how amazingly accurate is the language of the Holy Spirit! Thus within the time-compass of this chapter we have missions both by the Twelve and by the Seventy.

Verse by Verse  
Matt. 11:2—"John . . . in the prison." For the cause of John the Baptist's imprisonment see chapter 14:3. 4. Things appear differently within prison walls than out in the open.

Verse 3—"Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Where is the confidence of John. Jesus' methods were not those he expected of the Christ, and John did not understand the ways of the Kingdom he had proclaimed.

Verse 4—"Go and shew John again." Instead of giving a categorical answer, Jesus sent back an answer that John should weigh the evidence. Enlightened judgment is better than blind dogma.

Verse 5—"And the poor have the gospel preached to them." Compare Isaiah with Luke. Here were the marks of Messianic ministry, which Jesus invited John to make the basis of his faith. Luke tells us that Jesus did many of these works while John's messengers were there, as added evidence.

Verse 6—"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." The Revised Version gives, "find no occasion of stumbling in me." Prejudices and preconceived notions concerning Messiah could blind men to the valid marks of his high office. For John person-

ally this was an appeal not to allow his imprisonment and Christ's failure (?) to effect his release to a stumbling back to faith. Verse 25—"I thank thee, O Father, because thou has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." The thanksgiving here is rather a confession of and assent to God's method with men. That it was joyous assent, we know from Luke.

Verse 26—"Even so Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." Compare this with Peter's "Not so, Lord." Notice the entire submission of the Son to all the will of the Father.

Verse 27—"All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Here is at once a statement of complete dependence on the Father and a claim of absolute endowment by the Father. What He had, He received directly, not through mediating hands. God is infinite, whether in the absoluteness of the Godhead, or in the distinctions of the three divine persons. Therefore only within the Godhead can there be full understanding of the mystery of divine being. Yet the Son has come to reveal the Father and all who come to Him are introduced into this realm of transcendent knowledge. See what tremendous claims are implied in this statement.

Verse 28—"Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." Sense the tenderness coupled with majesty. He both claims sole ability to bestow the rest which human hearts crave, and freely offers it.

Verse 29—"Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly . . . and ye shall find rest." Meek and lowly people do not usually speak of their virtue, yet when Christ speaks so of Himself, it does not jar. Because of what He is, learning of Him is the way of rest. Notice, He does not offer success, prosperity, or wealth, but rest.

Verse 30—"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." "Yoke" is a figurative term for discipleship, which includes learning and obedience. How different His yoke from that of the Law as interpreted by the scribes and Pharisees and laid on the people's necks!

Heart of the Lesson  
We have three glimpses of the Lord Jesus in the printed portion. The first is a picture of Jesus as the Master, answering His servants. The second is a picture of Jesus as the Son, communing with the Father. The third is a picture of Jesus as the Saviour, inviting men to the rest of His salvation.

Clouds of doubt seem to have settled upon the mind of John. The reasons we can only guess. Did he so share the political mind of Messiah and His Kingdom that Jesus' methods confused him? Was his intense soul chafed by the unjust confinement in a dungeon cell? Did he think it strange, that Jesus, if He were the Messiah, did not take effective steps to have him released from prison? At any rate, his faith was in eclipse but he did the right thing, he turned to the Lord Himself for an answer to his questions. It was a strange but wonderful answer calculated to stir and strengthen and establish faith rather than just give it a tonic. It was an answer that honored and dignified the human personality rather than overwhelming it. Jesus said in effect: Answer your own question, John; here are the evidences, and don't let your doubts obscure your judgment.

The "brains" of the day had not come over on Jesus' side, nor embraced His teaching. Fishermen, taxgatherers, harlots were more in evidence among His followers than lawyers and rabbis. This did not appall nor offend Him. He recognized in it the set purpose of God, and joyfully assented to it. This was the glory of the Kingdom of God, not its disgrace, not "the best that could be expected in the circumstance," but the very best, the absolute best! And He rejoiced in that wonderful mutual standing between Him and the Father, and in His blessed mission to make the Father known. This is one of the profoundest passages in the Bible.

He saw men toiling under the yoke of sin, under the yoke of superstition, under the yoke of sorrow. Conscious of His ability to meet every need of the human heart, and knowing that He alone could impart rest to weary souls, He uttered a great cry. We call it an invitation, and so it is, but it came from the depths of the divine heart as an utterance of great longing to deliver men of their burdens and give them the rest for which they vainly panted. What a Gospel! What a Saviour!

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