

(2) To your spirit, 3-4; (3) To your faith, 5-6; (4) To your service, 7-10.⁶

BEYOND JORDAN - John 11:6; 10:40 - A place enriched for Him by many solemn occasions. There:

(1) He submitted to baptism, to fasting, and temptation. (2) He had heard the first testimonies of John. (3) He had gathered round Him His most enjoyable and grateful hearers. (4) Andrew and Simon, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, came to Him.

The Jordan is a very historic place. It was the passage of the children of Israel.

John 11:9,10 - Jesus replied, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in daylight doesn't stumble because there's plenty of light from the sun. Walking at night, He might very well stumble because he can't see where he is going."⁷

...*light*, a *walk* without stumbling, made possible because a man *seeth the light of this world* (9, 1:5,9; 9:5). These positive figures are closely associated with life (1:4; 8:12). They are to overcome the night and darkness, where men stumble (10), and where death reigns (13,14). Verses 9-14 set the theme for the entire chapter. There is a cosmic (huge; supernatural?) struggle between darkness and light, death and life, evil and good. It was personalized here for one man - Lazarus. He *is dead* (14). Into this human situation Jesus was set to go - to evoke faith in those who live, to impart life to the one who was dead.⁸

6- Beacon Bible Commentary, Luke 17, p. 569, 571.

7- The Message, p. 212. 8- Beacon Bible Commentary, John Acts, 7, p. 134,135.

INSERT

TWENTY EIGHTH STUDY

OFFENCES - Luke 17:1-4; Matthew 18:6,7 - Offences, Greek, *skandalon*, one of the most difficult words in the N.T. to translate. But it is a very strong term, much stronger than the English word "scandal," which comes from it. The noun and the verb form, go beyond the idea of stumbling (from which one may rise [or come up]) and always indicates or points toward spiritual destruction.

Jesus indicated that snares, to entrap the unsuspecting [or innocent], will always exist. But *woe to that man* who is responsible for setting the trap. It would be better for him -- literally, "it is profitable" -- that a "millstone of a donkey" -- that is a large one pulled round and round by a donkey -- would be hanged around his neck, and he would be drowned in the depth of the sea. This punishment was reserved for the greatest criminals; and the size of the stone would prevent any chance of the body rising again to the surface and being buried by family and friends. This consideration in the minds of heathens, greatly increased the horror of this kind of death. It is hard to conceive how Jesus could have given a more solemn warning concerning the heinousness of causing a new or weak Christian to stumble and be ensnared by sin because of one's influence. The need for a consistent, godly life here startles us. We do well to heed the warning. ¹

1-Beacon Bible Commentary Matthew 18, page 169.

In Luke 17:1-10, we find the Master's teachings on the subject of the harm worked on the souls of others by our sins; the disciples prayer for an increase of faith that they may be kept from such sins; the Lord's reply; and His little parable on humility.

FORGIVENESS

Luke 17:3 - *Take heed to yourselves...* or, "But do you take heed?" You are in danger of committing deadly sins yourselves, and of doing My cause permanent injury. There is real danger that men positioned as you are will judge others harshly, even cruelly, and so offend in another way 'the little ones' pressing into the kingdom: this is your special snare. So here he tells them, the future teachers of His Church, how they must act: while they are always untiring; brave; rebukers of all vice, and selfishness; they must never become tired of exercising forgiveness the moment the offender is sorry. The repentant sinner must never be repelled by them.

FAITH INCREASE

Luke 17:5 - The disciples come to Him; and ask Him to give them such an increased measure of faith that would allow them to exercise the difficult and responsible part He has assigned them. They evidently felt their weakness deeply, but a stronger faith would supply them with new strength. ²

They would then be able to be more gentle and wiser in their judgment of others, and take a stronger look at their own actions and intentions.

2- The Pulpit Commentary, Luke 17, p. 86, 87.

Luke 17:6 - The Lord signifies that a very slight real faith, which He compares to the mustard seed, that smallest of grains, would be of power sufficient to accomplish what seemed to them impossible. ³

In other words, if you have any faith at all you will be able to not only win the victory over yourselves; but you will also be able to gently and lovingly assess others. The Sycamine tree mentioned here, is the Black Mulberry tree, which was probably close by Jesus as He talked.

Luke 17:7,8 - It teaches two things to all His disciples: then, present, and future ---- 'patience and humility'.

It reminds men, too, that His service is an arduous (difficult; hard) one, and for those really engaged in it it not only brings hard toil in the fields during the day, but also further duties often in the evening-tide. There is no rest for the faithful and true servant of Jesus, and His restless work must be patiently gone through, perhaps for long years. ⁴

Luke 17:9,10 - *unprofitable* (v10) = "one who has provided no service beyond his duty." We can never fully do our duty. We can never do all, or even a sizable fraction, of what we actually owe to God. ⁵

Luke 17:1-10 have been titled "Spiritual Inventory."

The text is in verse 3, "Take Heed to Yourselves (examine yourselves)." (1) To your motives, 1-2;

3- The Pulpit Commentary, Luke 17, p. 87.

4- The Pulpit Commentary, Luke 17, p. 87, 88.

5- Beacon Bible Commentary, Luke 17, p. 571.