

If these notes are useful to you, and you've enjoyed them, or if you have observations or questions feel free send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net.—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the bar. Please enjoy!)

CROWD BREAKER What's your favorite thing to do on a hot day?

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Richie has raised from Luke 17. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

Charlie began by evoking and building onto the timeless Doxology first uttered by Dr. S.M. Lockridge in the seventies: [That's My King Dr. S.M. Lockridge - \[OFFICIAL\] - YouTube](#) If you haven't ever listened to it, the link will take you there. **How does hearing praise affect you, and prepare you for worship? Have you ever heard higher praise? Can you share one time when you were deeply moved and surprised by praise? What did Charlie's words do when you heard him? How does praise make Jesus accessible? How does your heart become accessible?**

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

1Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray at all times and not lose heart: (Charlie emphasizes these words. **Why are they so important? See scribes notes below for more on the widow and the unjust judge.**)

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

9To some who trusted in their own righteousness and viewed others with contempt, He also told this parable: **10**“Two men went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11**The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like the other men—swindlers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12**I fast twice a week and pay tithes of all that I acquire.’

13But the tax collector stood at a distance, unwilling even to lift up his eyes to heaven. Instead, he beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner!’ **Describe the two “main characters” in this parable. Which of the two “deserved” favor? Why? What is the worst thing the pharisee does, in your opinion? Have you ever compared yourself to another, where you thought you were more favorably positioned for promotion? What happened? Can you share?**

14I tell you, this man, rather than the Pharisee, went home justified. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” **Explain? Does the “mustard seed” quality faith enter in here? If so, how?**

Jesus Blesses the Children

[\(Matthew 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16\)](#)

15Now people were even bringing their babies to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them. And when the disciples saw this, they rebuked those who brought them.

16But Jesus called the children to Him and said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them! For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. **Again, how does the “mustard seed” faith fit here? Have you ever thought about it? Why is this same story in all three “synoptic” gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke? If the kingdom of God belongs to these, how powerful are children before God? How dangerous is it to cause a child to stumble? Because of them, talk about the days ahead for those who are deliberately harming children now?**

17Truly I tell you, anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” Charlie says this is the crucial verse. **How? What is the Pharisees’ response to this statement? What do all their degrees do for them in the end? Why? What does it mean to “receive the kingdom of God like a little child”? What does the alternative way look like?** Charlie reminds us that the kingdom of God is one earth as it is in heaven. “It is right here and now,” he says. **Explain. Why did the disciples rebuke those who brought the children? What were they missing? What quality does a child have that risks being lost to the world? Talk of the potential in a child? What will they be able to do? What will they not be able do? If we hinder a child’s potential, are we making that child stumble? How does this increase the responsibility of the schools? Of the parents?**

Charlie says, "Do you know what children do? They trust without fear. Do you know what children do not have? They don't have the pride we have that gets in our way." **Discuss. Why is this important? Why is this the requirement if we are to receive the kingdom of God? Whom shall we trust? How can it be that our impressive prayers, and titles and adornment don't matter? Or do they ever? Why did Jesus call the Pharisees "hypocrites"? What were they lacking?**

How many people do you know who have the faith of a child? How does that work? What do they do that draws you?

Charlie talks about the simplicity of this faith. Jesus lived. He died. He rose again from the grave. **Is this all you have to know? Why? Look up 1 Cor. 1** ¹When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ²For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. ⁴My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵so that your faith would not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. **How does Paul's preaching compare to what Charlie's talking about? What is missing? How do we get Paul's 'demonstration of power' instead of our persuasive words? What do we need growing in us? What do we actually expect? Are we more like children when we evangelize? Or more like adults?** Charlie says, "You are no longer a slave to your fear. Do you know what you are? You are a child of God. You just have to believe as a child believes." **How does this help? What is different between Charlie and his granddaughter? How does this help us grasp what Jesus is seeking? At what point would Jesus stop seeking? Why? How does this fact help us continue? 1 Peter 5:7 says, "Casting all your cares upon Him because He cares for you." How does that fit here?**

The Rich Young Ruler

([Matthew 19:16-30](#); [Mark 10:17-31](#))

¹⁸Then a certain ruler asked Him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" **No peeking ahead: Answer the question? What must he DO to inherit eternal life? Answer this: What must you do to INHERIT anything? What does it take to gain an inheritance?**

¹⁹"Why do you call Me good?" **Why does Jesus ask this question?** Jesus replied. "No one is good except God alone. ²⁰You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor your father and mother.'" **Why does Jesus answer this way? Is this the right answer?**

²¹"All these I have kept from my youth," he said.

²²On hearing this, Jesus told him, "You still lack one thing: Sell everything you own and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me." **Why does Jesus answer this way? Is this the right answer? What do you have to be, if you're going to inherit anything? How does an heir behave?**

23 But when the ruler heard this, he became very sad, because he was extremely wealthy. ***What is the promise the wealthy ruler missed? What do you think? Think of all your possessions. If you sell everything and give it all to the poor for the promise of "riches in heaven," does that amount to a net loss? Or a net gain in your opinion, today, in real time? Discuss this.***

24 Seeing the man's sadness, Jesus said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! **25** Indeed, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ***Why is it so hard? Talk about that for a moment. Why is the net gain hard to imagine? What does it take to follow Jesus' suggestion? Is Jesus telling everyone everywhere for all time to sell all they have and give to the poor? Is this a universal commandment for all and for all time? Or was this for this individual ruler?*** (Scribe's note: There is a tradition in the church that has no historic support that suggests that this particular rich, young ruler was named Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus who later became Barnabas. At the end of Acts 4 he sells a field that he owned and laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet. ***What if this is true? Does this change the narrative at all?***)

26 Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"

27 But Jesus said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God." ***Why does this encourage us not to give up?***

28 "Look," said Peter, "we have left all we had to follow You."

29 "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God **30** will fail to receive many times more in this age—and in the age to come, eternal life." ***What does this promise do to your perspective? What does it do to the idea of prospective net gain? How assured is the gain? Is the "many times more," the "treasure in heaven" something that only happens after death, or does it include this age? Why does that change the common narrative?***

The Third Prediction of the Passion

(Matthew 20:17–19; Mark 10:32–34)

31 Then Jesus took the Twelve aside and said to them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything the prophets have written about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. **32** He will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. **33** They will flog Him and kill Him, and on the third day He will rise again."

34 But the disciples did not understand any of these things. The meaning was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend what He was saying. ***Is there anything about what lay ahead that Jesus hid, or did not mention? Why do you suppose the meaning was hidden?*** (Note: There is no right answer!)

Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar

([Matthew 20:29–34](#); [Mark 10:46–52](#))

[35](#)As Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting beside the road, begging. [36](#)When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening.

[37](#)“Jesus of Nazareth is passing by,” they told him.

[38](#)So he called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

[39](#)Those who led the way admonished him to be silent, but he cried out all the louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ***Think of what we learned when the children were being rebuked. Did they learn anything? Why is this happening all over again? Describe this blind man’s faith in terms of the mustard seed.***

(The story is told of Blind Bar Timideus, who, when the crowds admonished him to be silent, stopped shouting. ***Why do you think his story never ended up in the Bible?***)

[40](#)Jesus stopped and directed that the man be brought to Him. When he had been brought near, Jesus asked him, [41](#)“What do you want Me to do for you?” ***Why would Jesus ask this question? What do you say to the person who tells you, “If the Lord wanted to move this tree, he’d move it?”***

“Lord,” he said, “let me see again.” ***What did the blind man just say to his “sycamore tree”?***

[42](#)“Receive your sight!” Jesus replied. “Your faith has healed you.” ***What healed the beggar? How? Is his faith different from yours? IN what way? What did he do different from the rich man? What do the widow before the unjust judge, the tax collector, the children all have in common? How did the rich, young ruler differ from them? What did he need to receive eternal life?***

[43](#)Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, glorifying God. And all the people who saw this gave praise to God. ***Looking at what happened here, do you think we’re seeing riches in heaven? When praise is given to God, what reverberates in heaven?***

Charlie spoke of the healing he received for cancer. What did the congregation do? Do you have a testimony of healing you can share?

Take the time to pray.

Scribe’s notes: Charlie began by reviewing the fact that the four gospels are each an historical eyewitness account of the work, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

More on mustard seed faith: Studying the Bible inductively, using the author of each book to drive your observations, and temporarily setting of the rest of the collection, is one of the most rewarding methods of systematic Bible study.

Luke authored this book, a physician and Paul's friend and traveling companion. It's been one chapter since he wrote the disciples' request: "Increase our faith." We saw that his response was not a how-to guide to quantify faith and measure it by measures. He taught instead that faith is based on the value we place on the word of God we receive. Faith grows like a seed, root first or it dies.

Now look closely at the parable of the widow and the unjust judge: 2"In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected men. **3**And there was a widow in that town who kept appealing to him, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' **What is the woman saying to her "sycamore tree"? Why doesn't she give up?**

4For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect men, **5**yet because this widow keeps pestering me, I will give her justice. Then she will stop wearing me out with her perpetual requests.'

6And the Lord said, "Listen to the words of the unjust judge. **7**Will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him day and night? **Can you answer the question? How do you know? What do you think: Does God appear in this life more like the unjust judge? Or more like a Santa Clause?** Will He continue to defer their help? **Answer the question. 8** I tell you, He will speedily carry out justice on their behalf. **What does this tell you? What hope is there that your prayers will be answered? At what point do you give up?**

"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" **Take as long as you need to: Using the widow's example, how does faith behave? How does your own faith behave? What opposes faith? Is that opposition overcomeable? Will the Son of Man find faith when He returns? Who decides if the Son of Man will find faith on the earth? What will He see if there is? What will He see if faith has died? How are we doing?**

Connect this parable to last week's "mustard seed-like" faith. How does the widow's faith resemble that of the tenacity of the life in a seed? With the life forces in the seed is discouragement even an option?

Why is time such an important factor? What does this mean: "Faith that isn't tried is only theory." How did the judge put the widow's faith to the test? Hebrews 11:1 Says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." Apply this to the widow. What kept bringing her back to the judge? Look at 1 Corinthians 13: "Now these things abide: Faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love." Apply this to the widow: How did she overcome?