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Lakeland Hills Leader

A Week In Review [Gospel Meeting-Lowell Sallee]

By Chuck Richardson

This week is finished and placed in the history books, but what does that history say? Is there any value in looking back, examining, and even mining the lessons delivered? May I recommend you and I do stop, reflect, and meditate on any golden nuggets of information that will ensure our eternal home, picked up and lived out until the Lord returns. Likewise, I want to thank all who attended the Gospel Meeting this past week, you benefited me greatly, maybe even more than you know. I'm convinced we miss the impact our participation has on one another. The Hebrew writer says we assemble to stir up one another to love and good works [Heb. 10:24,25], and this is what I received, a stirring to more loving and to work harder. Lowell's lessons helped me to remember that though few, we are all we have if we're going to make an eternal home with God and His blessed Son Jesus the Christ, and the Holy Spirit [John 1]. I was caused to remember that I cannot give up on, or neglect discouraging brethren [1Thes. 5:14], and I need to encourage as many as are strong to come along, dig in our heels, standing steadfast and unmovable, leaving no one behind [1Cor. 15:58]. Brothers and Sisters, I need you even more than you may know [Rom. 12:10].

For those who didn't come to assemble with us in the house of the Lord to praise His matchless name and to be fed and well drunk in the Word, I'm sadden, and yes even disheartened because I know the end of all things is as Jesus said: Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." [Luke 10:41,42] You my dear Brother and Sister, you have refused the necessary and good part! So, I hope, you will read my review of Brother Sallee's lessons with a hunger and thirst [Mat. 5:6], to return to the audio and examine the details with the aim of getting the good part to become equipped to every good work [2Tim. 3:16,17]. If we're examining ourselves honestly [2Cor. 13:5], we will be encouraged by some things we're doing well; we will be remorseful over things we're doing poorly, or not at all; and will be called to improve, correct, and repent, as God intends. So, on that note, let us get started with our review.

Our first lesson began at the Bible class hour, so some of you missed that altogether because you were instructing a young child or to our disappointment, didn't assemble at that hour. For those who chose not to attend, the lesson built around the statement of the officer returning to the Pharisee rulers without Jesus was, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." [John 7:46]. The takeaway from this statement as Brother Sallee expressed so aptly, is that God is to be feared and respected. He left no doubt from examples like the people of Noah's day [Gen. 6] to the Sinai experience [Exo. 19], we will have genuine terror in the presence of God, and thus we must respect the terror of the Lord on the ungodly [Heb. 10:26-31]. This in turn will cause us to respect or revere God's glory which lead us to strive for faithfulness in a godless generation [Heb. 10:32-39; 11; Phil. 2:15]. May I encourage to start by listening to this lesson to prepare your heart to receive the others? This is indeed the building block for our desire to be and remain faithful.

What's your net worth? Jesus taught plainly that our value is in the soul [Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-35; 15] And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry." But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." [Luke 12:19-21]. We worry and fret, struggle over and for the material things [Mat. 6:16-32] and to what end, if would trust In the Lord to provide we would be blessed with all we need in this life and peace as icing on the cake [Mat. 6:33,34; Phil. 4:7]. And besides, you can't take it with you [Mat. 6:19-21]. But at last, we betray our hearts desires to often and they reek of earthly and carnality. Why don't we learn as Paul

contentment? [Philippians 4:11-12]. And why because we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. [Phil. 4:13] Sometime after our baptism into Christ, we decided not to care for our spirit and we expect God's mercy to cover that, but just as Jesus told John to write to the church of Smyrna to be faithful unto death [Revelation 2:10], this is the only hope we have to get out of this world TO LIVE! What's your priority? Much more can be said, but I beg you to listen to the lesson on Sunday and meditate on these things [Philippians 4:8].

"Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." [John 7:46]. This statement leads us to "looking for the answers in all the wrong places." "Christian counseling", social media, godless friends and family never spoke like this man, so why should we seek counsel from these? In the final analysis, we seek these because we get the answers we want, and we stay clear of the answers we don't desire. Remember Balak sending for prophetic council from Balaam [Num. 22], therefore we learn evil men are always looking for evil council and we should have no part with them. Later in Israel's history, Rehoboam chose to listen to poor councilors when he had wise ones [1Kings 12]. And how can we forget: Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?" [2Chron. 18:17]. Please go back and read the entire episode in 2Chronicles 18-20 to get the fullness of the lesson of council and alliances and pay close attention to king Jehoshaphat. Lowell asked this question: "How serious are you about going to heaven? [Col. 3:1-2]. At the core of good council is establishing the home to listen to the council of God, so another question was asked: "What exactly do you do, to help your spouse get to heaven? Do you really understand how important a soul is? [Mat. 16:24-26]. Lowell says the breakdown of marriages is fixed with understanding the secret of real intimacy: getting closer to God will get you closer to your spouse. We conclude with his final thoughts in this light, "choose to love, it never fails". [1Cor. 13:8] To know God is to be intimate with His word [1John 2:3].

Are we going to grow spiritually? [2Pet. 3:18] Do not forget, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." [John 7:46]. In growing spiritually, we must set about doing good, like Jesus. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. [Acts 10:38]. We're called to live a sacrificially life [Rom. 12:1], you know we were created for good works, right? [Ephesians 2:10]. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. [Hebrews 13:16]. Do you desire to please God? Dear brethren, we should desire to please God. May I ask, why do you expect to go to heaven, the eternal abode of God, if you don't believe you need to please Him? In our special study this quarter, we stressed the need to come together to work. We learned the church is like the human body; each part of the body does it share to help the body function properly [Ephesians 6:11-16]. So, let us do good, helping others [Jas.1:27; Mat. 10:40-42; 1Jon. 3:17; Luke 10:30-37]. Let us do good spiritually [Gal. 6:1; 1Thes. 5:14; 2Tim. 2:2]. Let us share in communion with one another in spiritual and social relations [Acts. 2:42,44-46; 4:32-33; 4:21-31; 5:42; 8:4; 11:19-30; 13:1-3; 16:14-40; 17:10-12; 20:7; etc.,]

Do we truly forgive? "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." [John 7:46]. Caution dear brethren, we must forgive as our Lord, or we cannot expect to be forgiven [Mat. 6:12-15; 18:21-35]. How do I view others? [Luke 18:9-14] Is it that we have lost all shame and guilt of our own sin? [Jeremiah 6:15] Are we hearing, but not doing? [Matthew 7:24-27] Have I looked at my debt, and asked myself how much do I have? [Luke 7:36-50]

The weeping woman at Jesus' feet should cause a flood of tears to well up in disgust in ourselves for what we have done against God [Psa. 51; 32:1-2]. I must reckon with my sins which have piled up all the way to heaven [Ezra 9:6]. Is this in turn enthralling me to seek change [Colossians 1:13,14]. Let us seek the way of escape [1Cor. 10:12-14]. And let us ask for help from one another [James 5:13-20]. Lowell said: "not forgiving others is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die". Truly, has any man spoken as Jesus spoke?

Do you see you the beauty of the church? [Matthew 16:18,19; Ephesians 5:22-33]. Do not forget, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.” [John 7:46]. Is your perception of the church a place to go? Or is it something to do? Maybe you see the church as a place to go to get what you need? If any of these fit your description, you have missed the church for which Christ died! It’s a beauty, as Brother Sallee expressed. Paul tells that Jesus loves and cherishes her, and He even died for her. Imagine telling your spouse, after you say I do, “I am so happy to be married to you, and I hope you have a good week. I’ll see you next week at this time.” We know that statement is foolish, but that is exactly what we do as the bride of Christ. When we don’t see our salvation in the blood of the Lamb as the marriage to the husband Christ, this is what we do. We see the beauty of the church explained in a fellowship of like-minded souls [Acts 2:42,44-46], because we are changed people [Acts 2:22-23; 37-38; 41-42]. And a giving people [Acts 2:44-45; 2Cor. 8:1-5]. A fellowship in consideration of one another no matter our station in life [Rom. 12:4,5; 1Pet. 5:6]. A people joined together in excitement to share in all the work, respecting what each have to offer [1Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:11-16; Acts 6:7; 8:4; Phil. 4:10-20]. Satan will destroy you and I if we don’t enter into the fulfilling marriage to Christ [1Pet. 5:8; Rev. 2:1-7; Acts 20:28-32]. Test yourselves [2Cor. 13:5], repent [Luke 13:3,5; 1Cor. 5; Acts 8:22-24; 2:37-39] and seek to grow in the fruit of the Spirit [Gal. 5:22-23; Acts 5:14; 11:21-24]. Let us be the beautiful bride of Christ before one another, so that others may see Christ living in us [1Pet. 3; Col. 3:1-4].

Heaven, who’s going to be there? Wow! This lesson causes my spiritual senses to explode. Lowell provided the ones we expect like God, the Son, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and angels, but who thought to see the four living beings [Eze. 1:5-25], or the four living creatures of Revelation 4:6-9. The Seraphim of Isaiah 6:2,6 might cause us to imagine angel-like creatures in the frame of Gabriel or Michael the archangel, but they are shown as distinct creatures none the less. We can’t forget the 24 elders setting on thrones before the throne [Rev. 4:4]. The awesome sight of the innumerable host that John saw: *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.* [Rev. 5:11-14] I believe we’re going to be as awestruck as John [Rev. 19:10; 22:8], of all these glorious creatures with the Divine Eternal God. We’re not going to saunter in. The evidence points to a blinding awestruck, speechless entry into the eternal abode. How long this experience will last seems to be eternal. Friend, I am doing no justice to that lesson, so please go back to listen, and do not countenance any foolish earthly notion of our entrance and life before God in heaven. Did a man ever speak like Jesus? This is a resounding No!

A place called Hell! Brother Sallee explains that it is not all so, but it is as terrible as heaven is glorious. It is too common for us to dismiss or minimize this terrible place called Gehenna [Mat. 10:28]. Brethren, we have to believe in its reality, or we’ll be destined for all its terrible suffering forever and ever and ever! [Mat. 25:46] And as Brother Lowell said, if we believe in heaven, we have to believe in hell; both places are described in exacting terms as opposite one another in Scripture. Notice the terrible scene of this Revelation text: When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. [Rev. 20:7-10] A place of weeping and gnashing of teeth [Mat. 24:51], a place even worse than bodily mutilation [Mark 9:42-48]. Imagine the picture of a maggot invested body that never completes the decaying process and that all senses and feelings are real and heightened in the flame of fire that is never quenched [Mat. 13:40-42; Mk. 9:48; Rev. 20:10]. Friend, you think physical death is frightening, you haven’t seen terror like hell! I see why so many want to ignore hell, but it doesn’t change the reality.

Remember Brother Saltee said repeatedly of heavenly creatures and the pain and terror of hell, “if it isn’t literal, but it is figurative, what does it figure? Hell, a place where God isn’t present [1John 1:5], therefore, no hope of an ending!

So, we conclude, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.” [John 7:46].