

PART 36: GENERALIZATION: PRELUDE TO SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING, 8:14-21.

#1. The Lord is interested in the development of spiritual understanding. "...Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?", 8:17. #2. The disciples had gained no spiritual understanding from the feeding of the five thousand, none from the feeding of the four thousand, 8:19, 20. Such understanding is not found in nature nor in human rational capacity. #3. It was apparent to the Lord that the disciples had not pursued spiritual understanding. There is no question about how spiritual understanding is derived. It begins with the word of God and the power of God-->then one must generalize from those to-->spiritual understanding. #4. In other words, generalization is the prelude to Jesus' expectation of spiritual understanding in His followers. #5. Generalization from the five thousand and the four thousand would have opened their minds to revealed meaning. Nothing was beyond Jesus, all material conditions and circumstances were commanded by Him, obvious limitations became irrelevant. #6. Spiritual understanding does not come from doctrine but by generalization from scripture to material circumstances. The issue is not how the Bible fits into time; the true issue is that the practice of generalization is the link, the bridge, the index between revelation and spiritual understanding! And that is the real treasure, the highest goal. #7. But the disciples had "a hardened heart" (8:17), and therefore were unwilling to or disinterested in generalizing from revealed truth to spiritual comprehension. #8. The ancient Israelites made the same mistake. So, their thought, speech and behavior were never subject to spiritual understanding. #9. In the contemporary scripture is perceived in several different ways, all inspired by human wisdom. And that effectively severs the link between the Bible and true spiritual understanding. #10. A condition results: "Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?", 8:18.

PART 37: GENERALIZATION: PRELUDE TO SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING, 8:14-21.

#1. What the disciples had done was to treat the feeding of the five thousands and then, the feeding of the four thousand, along with the Lord's other miracles as experiences, only. Those experiences were amazing (1:22, 27; 2:12), alarming (4:40), frightening (5:14), astonishing (5:42; 6:51; 7:37), unorthodox (7:8). #2. Some understood that the miracles were the key to advanced comprehension of the relation of God to time and therefore, the relation of the word of God to human conditions. #3. That could not have been said of the disciples. The experiences of the power of God were not appreciated as a means to spiritual understanding, secured by generalization. #4. Many in the contemporary, look upon the Bible as no more, no less than history. Experience of the miracles was locked into the past and consequently into their historical time frame. But the meaning of those inscribed experiences is not! #5. Reduced to the status of history, the study of scripture was a means to documentary evidence of the thought forms of distant cultures and times, unrelated to modernity. In other words, they do not apply. #6. Treating the miracles as experience, only, and that, in their own time or as history in the present had exactly the same effect; no spiritual understanding was/is gained. #7. Derivation of spiritual understanding is not a function of the past. It is a function of revelation. This means that spiritual understanding is locked into a certain language

manifold! #8. That language manifold is built by generalization from the Bible to temporal, material conditions and it's resultant range of understanding, much exceeding rationalism and nature. #9. Revealed language and spiritual understanding are unified by the indexing (linking) force of generalization. Without spiritual understanding we are adrift on a sea of uncontracted language; and at the mercy of forbidden ideas.

CONTRACTION. PART 38: CONTRACTION AS THE WILL OF GOD, 8:22-26.

#1. Strong faith emerged again into public view. "...they brought a blind man..." (8:22) to the Lord. That act itself is indicative of a generalized comprehension: all things contract back upon the Son of God! "they" realized that material and historical conditions are not absolute. Nature is not determinant; it never was! #2. And they "implored Him (Jesus) to touch him" (blind man). So, "they" acknowledged that the healing of the blind man depended upon the will of Jesus to do so and nothing more. The power was already there. #3. The Lord was about to impose an irresistible spectrum of power upon the physiology of the blind man. The range of blindness collided with a spectrum of contraction. More noticeable is the fact that the Lord was, as always, in complete command. #4. The Lord moved the afflicted from complete blindness-->to partial blindness/partial healing-->to full restoration of his sight. This means that the healing of the blind man was a purely controlled contraction, 8:23-26. #5. This spectrum of contraction is not relative to the need, the conditions, the circumstances, the opposition, nor anything else temporal; rather the powers of contraction are relative to the will of God and nothing more. #6. This spectrum of healing imposed upon the man is proof of something of great importance. #7. The afflicted one was also part of the situation, just we are today. Yet the spectrum of contraction and its outcomes are not relative to our ambitions, desires, needs, nor preferences. #8. There is always the overarching factor of the will of God. And His will is the supreme causal factor. In this example, the true issue of causal importance is not the material conditions, whatever those may be. Spiritual relations between the Almighty and those who believe in Him predominate the situation. #9. Never focus critical attention upon the material factors of the circumstance. Believers, sometimes, make the mistake of reacting to circumstances on the intuition that material conditions make relative the power of God. #10. The Lord dispels that false perception through His marvelous instruction from the spectrum of contraction. The will of God is the advanced infrastructure of every circumstance, situation and state of being; nothing else is of greater importance!

CONTRACTION. PART 39: PERSONAL CONTRACTION: THE HIGHER LOYALTY,

8:27-38. #1. "And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him", 8:32. #2. The commitment to and the practice of personal contraction is a higher order loyalty to God and the Lord expresses it in extreme terms. It abates other influences, other interests and lesser concerns. #3. A pinnacle of commitment and service: "...If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me", 8:34. #4. These few but startling words constitute a reordering of one's personal existence. They change the believer's relation to all temporal things, people, society, circumstances, states of being and experience! #5.

Self-denial is the result of imposing a command component upon one's total self. The power of contraction is that command component. More than attempted suppression of temporal desires, needs and appetites, contraction forces their submission to a higher loyalty. Self-denial as contraction, then, involves a fierce self-discipline! #6. Contraction, put into evidence by fierce self-discipline, is the way of Christ. A believer "must"... "take up his cross". Jesus was intent upon fulfilling the will of God and that required His death, as a sinless man, on that hideous cross! Pain upon pain, mocked and rejected, supernatural contraction is the ultimate proof of loyalty. The way of the cross is the divine prescription for discipleship. And then the Lord says, "follow Me". #7. To "follow" Jesus requires an implacable spirit of resolution. This is a condition of mind, soul and spirit wherein all personal issues, fears, doubts and questions have been resolved. No outstanding obstacles to personal contraction back upon the will of God remain. #8. The supernatural powers of contraction paired with an implacable spirit of personal resolution becomes the structure of discipleship! It is this structure that can amply contend with "...this adulterous and sinful generation...", 8:38.

PART 40: CONTRACTION and THE TWILIGHT OF PERSONAL INTERESTS, 8:27-38.

#1. "But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's'", 8:33. #2. "man's" interests reduce to Peter's personal interests. Such things as personal interests we call universals; those being shared among everyone, everywhere and in every when. #3. However, the Lord insists that all universals must submit to revealed absolutes. Personal interests are expected to contract back upon "God's interests". Immediately, then, a conflict starts between the powers of the mind and the powers of supernatural contraction. #4. Spiritual understanding is a supernatural stipulation and not open to debate. One's interests and one's mind contract upon it or they do not. If they do not, then they are compromised by Satan's manipulation of them, as in the case of Peter. #5. Contraction breaks any unity between Satan and personal interests. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it", 8:35. #6. Personal interests are always invested with a substantial volume of emotional importance. Personal interests and their emotional gravity act to draw us into its universe. The only solution is to consign personal interests into the twilight with its fading influence. #7. "God's interests" come with a different universe of logic, reasoning and behavior. "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?", 8:36, 37. #8. Life is a continuum: It starts here in time, transits through death and into eternity. It cannot be defined by temporal experience and "man's" interests. To believe that it is, is an irreducible mistake and a tragic misconception, 8:38. #9. The practice of supernatural contraction conduces to the twilight of personal interests.