

BIBLE STUDIES
ON

John

Food for the soul and
a delightful taste of
the eternity to come

Bible Studies *on John*

These studies have been written to inspire each one of us to a deeper understanding of our relationship with God. It is my experience that we can never be encouraged enough in this and it is a great joy for me to take part in encouraging each of you. May God bless and strengthen each of you. And may He grant you fresh understanding and awakening as you take the time to study these lessons. It is my prayer that God would make use of this small attempt to spread His light and have requested that His life and wisdom be in these words for my words are nothing unless He is truly in them.

-Seth Petrofsky

This is a collection of Bible studies written for the Sky Family
Newsletter over the period of several months
By Seth Petrofsky

*All Bible references are from the NASB

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John 1:18

God in Person

“No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.”

Who is God? How has your life changed knowing that He is real and has created all things? Have you ever seen Him? Have you ever looked upon His face and been overcome by His beauty? How do you perceive Him? Is He who you imagine He is? Do you place Him in your own world and give Him boundaries of what He can and cannot do? Has He forgiven your sins? Has He extended His grace to you? John is giving us a key to all of these questions by revealing the truth which is that no man has seen God except for Jesus and Jesus has come and explained Him to us.

This is a strong incentive for us to look closely at the Gospels. Jesus is God in person and we are able to see God when we look at Him. Jesus says that if we have seen Him then we have seen the Father. He and the Father are One.

What I desire to convey is the need to look at all that Jesus has taught us of Himself and to examine all of the good works which He did while here on earth with new eyes, eyes that long to know God, eyes that long to behold the face of God, eyes that long to have true understanding into the life of their Creator. We need to seek God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength! His riches are there for those who seek them earnestly - the riches of His wisdom and the riches of our eternal inheritance. I just want to express the delight in this kind of earnest seeking. Oh how we need to draw close to the One who truly loves us! Charles Finney (a great evangelist from the mid 1800's) left us a good thing to think about when he confronted a number of people who had gone a few weeks without delighting in the word of God while reading it, that this was a sign for the need of a spiritual revival in their lives. So I ask us - how many times have we read from the Bible and when we were finished could not remember what we had read?

Let us desire to know our Savior better and to delight in Him and the wonderful inheritance that He has left for us in His words and actions - The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

God bless you all!

John 2:13-17

Zeal for God's House

And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away, stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise." His disciples remembered that it was written, "zeal for Thy house will consume Me."

Oh that zeal for God's house would consume us! Jesus drives the carnal heart from the temple of God. The greed, the lying, the focus on things of this world, these are present in our churches today and we have grown up in a society that pursues these things and calls them important and vital to life! Christian or not we all pursue these things for our pleasure and security. Oh Lord, help us to seek for Your cleansing of our lives from the love and dependency upon these things! Let zeal for Thy house consume us! Make us into men and women after Your own image so that the love for this world is not in us. Why should we cling to Your creation rather than to You?

This is my prayer – that we would forsake the love of this world to make room for complete devotion to our God! Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is our King – let us exalt Him with our whole heart and proclaim Him to everyone around us! Only He can save us from passing away with this earth. Only He can comfort us when we are hurt. Only He can give us good counsel when we don't know what to do in our struggles with the challenges we face everyday. Shall we trade Him for the passing pleasures of this life that only leave us empty and bitter at all those who cross us and cheat us and hurt us with their back-biting words? Jesus speaks with tenderness and love and heals our broken hearts and binds up our wounds. Shall we not turn to Him and cling to Him and love Him with every part of our lives?

Jesus will never betray you! He may not always answer you in the way that you think He will, but His loving-kindness is in His answer. He pulls the stumbling blocks from our lives and removes our love for this world that holds us in bondage to sin and He gives us

Himself in exchange. He is Life! The very Fountain of Life and He will fill every part of your life that is open to Him. When the various loves we have are removed He personally fills them with Himself.

So I urge each of you – Let go of the love for this world and allow yourself to be filled with Him. Sit at His feet today and tell Him that you love Him. Make room for Him! Turn off your TV and go to Him. Stop your hectic pace for a moment and reach out to Him. He is waiting. If you make time for Him you will never be the same. He Himself says, “You have not because you ask not.” Ask for Him and He will join you and help you with all of your fears and problems that continually come upon you all day long.

May God bless each of you and fill you with His Holy Spirit.

John 3:3-8

Set Free by the Holy Spirit

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Today is the day to ask God for spiritual eyesight so that our thoughts might be focused on our Lord and Savior and our hearts might be firmly fixed on Him. How can we stay on the narrow path if we don't have our eyes fixed on Jesus? If for a moment we look back at the world and desire its ways and pursuits, our spiritual eyesight becomes dim and we forget why we have been striving to walk on such a tough and narrow path. Our enemy the Devil takes full advantage of this and entices us off of the road to life and unless God intervenes we will never escape from this trap.

To all of my brothers and sisters I say – Wake up! Pray for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit! Embrace the Lord Jesus with all your heart! The Holy Spirit is able to set us free from the bondage of sin and a lukewarm love for our Savior. Oh Lord, these are the times of great drowsiness and compromise with the world! Help us to shake off all compromise with sin and not to play with it! Lord, wake us up! Shake us up today! Set our hearts on fire for You!

Let us reestablish nightly prayer in our homes and with our families. Let us reestablish nightly Bible time and reading with our families. Let us turn off everything that hinders us from spending time with God. Let us honor the Sabbath and keep it Holy as it says in Isaiah 58:13-14. These are wicked times we live in and if we don't make some radical changes in our lifestyle to spend time with God we will be swept away on the current of sin. We must hold fast to the Word of Life now more than ever!

May God be with each of you today. We have all been called by Jesus and must not delay in picking up our cross and following after Him. We are blessed to be children of the Living God! Oh, let us take full advantage of that blessing!

John 3:16-21

The Light of Christ

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

Walking in the light of Christ! What an amazing contradiction of thoughts we have here. Jesus says that He did not come to judge the world but to save it. As Christians we often wrestle with the concept that we are not to judge our neighbor. Jesus did not come to judge and He is our example. However, His words and example bring a strong conviction and indeed a seemingly harsh judgment at times. As in the case of the rich young ruler. The man asked what he should do to inherit eternal life and Jesus gives him the commandments to follow and the young man says that he has kept them from his youth. Jesus then tells him that he must sell all he has and give it to the poor and come and follow Him. The young man leaves and Jesus does not pursue him with an easier alternative but rather uses him as an example of how hard it is for the rich to enter into Heaven. Judgment has been rendered because the man loved the darkness rather than the light. We must walk in the light and the light at times will feel like judgment both to us and those around us. In fact, the closer we walk according to the Light of Christ

the more people will feel as if we are judging them because their deeds are exposed by the light. Those who become convicted by the light and repent will love us and those who become convicted and harden their hearts will hate us.

I say these things that we might not be intimidated by speaking the truth in love. To speak the truth without love is to judge. To speak the truth with love is to save. The difference is our heart attitude. We must have love. We cannot speak the truth without it. Without love we speak the truth as with a dagger intended to hurt. With love we speak the truth that might hurt for a little while but leads to eternal blessing and peace. We need to understand how blessed we are to be able to walk in the light. It is the greatest gift from God!

And what does it mean to walk in the light? It means that we have invited Jesus to come into our lives and remove every sin and selfish desire and to willingly submit to His house-cleaning. It is incredibly hard to truly ask Him to do this because in our hearts we all know that we are holding on to things that He is going to tell us to let go of, and we hope that as long as we don't look too closely, we will be able to keep them and just tell God when we arrive in Heaven that we weren't very clear on some of His commandments. Let me give us a wake up call! If we aren't willing to give things up for Jesus then we will be like the rich young ruler, unable to enter in because of unwillingness to part with our earthly comforts and pleasures. We must lay our lives completely open to Him and let Him remove the things we are holding back from Him, and only then will we truly be able to walk in the light, having nothing left to hide or hold on to. We must give all to Him not just the parts we feel we don't need for our personal comfort. He asks for all and will not be content with less so I urge us to spend some time fasting and praying that we truly might let go of anything that He still must remove from us. Trust me when I say that once He has removed it He will replace it with something one hundred times better!

So let me just encourage us to not hide from His Light but rather to come to the Light that our deeds may glorify our Heavenly Father Whom we love so dearly!

God bless!

John 4:7-10

The Well of Life

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews had no dealings with Samaritans) Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it was who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you Living Water."

The peace of God, His joy and grace, His pure life bubbling up inside us is given its rightful name – Living Water. How our loving Savior desires for us to drink of that water, and He is so willing to grant it to us! He shows us this desire by telling the woman that if she knew who He was she would ask for it and He would give it.

How often Jesus must look down upon us and say to Himself, "How shall I draw them into asking Me for My Living Water?" He desires to give us things that we never even think to ask for. As in this case, Jesus draws the woman into a conversation about a cup of water only to use it as a way to draw her into asking for Living Water. This is something she would never have thought of asking for if He had not pointed it out.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus makes the same offer to you. If you know who He is you will ask for this Living Water and He will give it to you. A well of Life bubbling up inside your heart! Refreshment for the spirit from Heaven! Now is the time to seek God earnestly for it! And how do we do this? Living Water comes from spending time with Jesus, time separating yourself unto God to seek Him earnestly for it. There is no substitute for a persistent quiet time with Him, it cannot be had any other way.

Everyone I know is making a commitment to do this by spending an hour with God everyday. We need our Savior to be the center of our lives again as He was when we were new Christians. Time and distractions have dulled the fire of our first love for Him. We need to rekindle it. So I urge each of you to join this commitment of spending an hour a day with God. Let us rise up and pray for a great revival in our land!
God bless you all!

John 6:27-29

The Food That Will Not Perish

“Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal.” They said therefore to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”

Hold up the banner of Jesus Christ! Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify our Father in Heaven! This is our commandment from God, that we love one another!

As long as we seek the food of this world, its pleasures, pastimes, and pursuits, we seek the food which perishes, but when we set our eyes on Heaven and spend time seeking the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, we seek the bread of eternal life! Jesus says that the work which we are to do is to believe in Him whom God has sent. This means that we are to truly know in our heart of hearts that Jesus is the Lord and the One sent to us from God.

Where do you stand today? Is Jesus truly the Lord of your life? Have you submitted yourself completely to Him to obey Him in all things and to go wherever He leads you? Truly I say to us all, Jesus is the Lord of Truth, Justice, and Righteousness, how could we not want to pledge our lives to such a worthy King? So many people have to submit themselves to leaders who are only out for their own selfish ambition. It is hard to submit to such a leader, but Jesus is perfect and His kingdom will be forever! Oh let us lay down our lives for Him! Let us lay our lives before Him and say, “Command us Lord!” We are submitting to a faithful King who does not send us where He Himself is not willing to go! Indeed He has already been there and conquered it! Hallelujah!!!

So I say to all of my brothers and sisters, “Rise up and serve the Lord with a joyful heart! Give yourselves to Him with a renewed vow today! Rise up as the body of Christ and do not bend any longer to the sins and pastimes of the world. Stand and become men and women who look like Jesus and behave like Jesus and love the world as Jesus did, laying His own life down for it! When people look at you let them

see Jesus' name written across your forehead. Let us be unable to be mistaken for anything other than a follower of Christ!" Make a commitment to spend time with Jesus every day so that you may grow in His image and enjoy His company!

Be encouraged brothers and sisters! Rise up and be a light to this world!

God bless you all!

John 7:37-39

Rivers of Living Water

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Let me start by asking everyone, How many of you are not content with the amount of Jesus you have in your heart and want more of Him? When you say your prayers at night do you just know that there is more to God than what you have? Are you struggling with that desire for more of Him and don't know how to get it? This is what Jesus is addressing. Jesus has promised that He will satisfy us by filling us with Rivers of Living Water welling up inside of us. Rivers of Living Water means that you will not be able to contain it all, but that not only will you be filled but everyone around you will be as well!

So let us examine how we are to receive Living Water from Him. First Jesus says that we must desire it. We must thirst for it, we must be longing for it. If we think of a man working away in the heat of the summer and how thirsty he would get while he worked, he would be ready for someone to come by with a pitcher of ice water. In fact, he would be craving it with all his heart, wouldn't he? This is how much we ought to desire God's Living Water. Second, we must go straight to the water carrier which is Jesus Himself, and must ask for it. We will not obtain it if we do not earnestly pursue Him for it. And finally, we must truly believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is our salva-

tion from sin. Psalm 91:3 says, *“For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper, and from the deadly pestilence.”* To believe in Jesus and to desire His Holy Spirit is to never want to sin again, for if you want Him to fill you with His Living Water you must also want to be completely set free from your earthly lusts, passions, and compromise with the world. The Holy Spirit will not tolerate sin and if you want to be filled with Him than you must desire to be done with all worldliness and dabbling with sinful pleasures.

To desire Living Water is to desire your life to be turned upside-down and purified from all evil desires. To desire Living Water is to desire being made ready for our Heavenly home where there is no sin. If we love sin we will not fit in Heaven for there is no sin there.

To receive Living Water is also to become useful in God’s service for He promises there will be rivers flowing from our innermost being and those rivers will affect everyone around us. We will begin to bear eternal fruit for His kingdom and God will be glorified in our lives! So count the cost and be done with all compromise with this world! Press into Jesus and pray with all your heart for Living Water! And let all the world know that you belong to Jesus!!!

John 8:12

“The Light of Life”

Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

What is the darkness that Jesus is talking about when He says that we shall not walk in darkness? Jesus is addressing people in this passage who are not understanding that they are talking to God in person. In verse 19 Jesus says, *“You know neither Me, nor my Father; if you knew Me, you would know my Father also.”*

Jesus, the very Son of God, is addressing people in person and they cannot understand who they are talking to. Their minds are in darkness. Their sinful nature guides all of their understanding of the conversation and they cannot get past it.

Jesus says that if we follow Him we will no longer walk in the darkness of sin which blinds us from seeing Jesus for who He is, the Son of God. We shall have the “Light of Life”.

Brothers and sisters, how often do we struggle with comprehending that Jesus truly is the Son of God? You see, we are actually struggling with wanting to let go of our sinful nature. As long as we hold onto those pet sins in our lives we remain willingly spiritually blind and walk in a willful darkness. In other words, we like walking in the darkness. Jesus has come to set us free from sin so if we desire to hold onto it we are fighting against the “Light of Life”. In John 3:19-21 Jesus reveals the truth of this. *“And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”*

So my word to us today is, “Jesus is the Son of God”. Let us make all diligence to spend time with Him and learn what He expects of us and begin practicing the truth, that is, putting His laws into action in our lives. Let us not walk willfully in anything we know to be sin and if we are having trouble in any area let us confess to a brother or sister that they might be praying for us. I really have found so much victory over sin by making sure that I spend an hour every day with

God to seek Him and tell Him that I love Him. You see, when we spend time with Him we are spending time in the “Light of Life”. Jesus is the Light and the more time we spend in Him the less time there is for any darkness to gain control in our lives.

So let us press into Jesus asking Him to fill us with His Light that it may radiate from our face that all may know that we belong to Jesus!

God bless you all!

John 9:1-7

Laying Down Our Lives for the Glory of God

And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.” And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing.

My question for us today is, ARE WE WILLING TO UNDERGO HARDSHIP FOR THE SAKE OF THE GLORY OF GOD? Here we see an example of a man whom God allowed to be blind from birth so that He might demonstrate His glory to many people that they might be saved. The man might have been twenty years old or more at the time Jesus healed him but as we read further in this chapter the Pharisees would hardly believe that he was truly blind even when his parents testified to the truth of his blindness. It’s amazing how far in advance God has to plan so that He can validate His miracles to those who don’t believe.

Further on in this chapter the man who was healed also believes in Jesus and receives eternal life. So God more than compensates for the years he lost to blindness, and also blesses him with a personal testimony that will draw many into the kingdom of God.

So in our present circumstances, why are we complaining about life's hardships? Jesus says that these things will glorify Him someday and draw the lost into His arms for eternity. So as we begin to follow after God and He begins to refine us through trials and hardships should we complain about these things? Jesus says that He will be glorified in our lives so that many will believe in Him through the example He will make of us. Perhaps we will be like the blind man and have our whole lives seem to go by with nothing good happening and then one day – Jesus comes and takes care of it. Why does He wait so long? Because people are so stubborn and will not believe in a God they can't personally verify the truth of. And why not, they *should* have proof that our God is real! But we are to be that proof! And why would we want it any other way? We already know Him and love Him. Why should we not willingly sacrifice our earthly lives for the sake of others who may believe and share eternity with us in Heaven? God could remove us from this world the moment we become saved, but then who would be left to be His witnesses on the earth for those who do not yet know Him?

Jesus says that eventually there will come a day when our testifying will be done and all those who have believed will be saved and those who have not will be cast into Hell. Until that day we are to lay down our lives for the world around us that many might be saved! This is a time for work and not leisure. Let us rise up and join our Master in the work He began 2000 years ago. I believe we are in the eleventh hour and here we are standing outside waiting for work. I say – Lord, give us any tool we are able to work with and send us into Your vineyard and let us make up for the fact that we only have one hour to make up for missing the first ten! At the end of the age when the work is done, let not the ones who started at the first hour complain that we only worked one. Let us give them nothing to grumble about by being very energetic in our work!

So let us not complain about our hardships but bless God that He will use them to bring people into Heaven! Hallelujah!

John 10:27-29

For Whom the Lord Loves He Reproves

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”

“My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me.” That pull on your heart that comes over you once in a while reminding you that you need to spend more time with God, praying and reading His word – this is the voice of Jesus to your soul. Jesus says that you will hear His voice. Gently He continues to remind us to spend time with Him and to let go of the distractions that keep us from doing so. However, it is the second part that is the most important for us to take note of. “They will follow Me.” Not only does Jesus irresistibly call us, but following Him is the necessary step He has given us to do.

To follow Jesus first leads us through the path of letting go of all our sinful pursuits. This is a challenging step that requires self-denial and much time with God to overcome. But everyday we have to get up with a fresh determination that we desire to leave the old way of life behind. If we look back and desire those things again we lose a lot of ground and our walk with Jesus becomes painful instead of joyful because our hearts have become divided between love for God and love for the world. To enjoy our life with Christ we must truly let go of those old desires. We cannot walk in the fullness of joy as Jesus has promised for us if our hearts are not fully His. We must let go of sin.

Now if you struggle with this and cannot let go of some particular sin in your life, do not despair. Jesus has given us another promise, one that takes over when we can’t let go of certain sins. It is called discipline. Jesus says that no one will be able to snatch us from His Father’s hand which means that He will step in and help us to overcome our weaknesses. So we can expect hardships and painful experiences to come upon us until we let go of those sins we have been holding onto. God will not leave us in our sinful pleasures. He will be faithful

to purify us from them because those things will not be in Heaven and if we cannot let go of them now we will not be able to let go of them in Heaven. Proverbs 3:11-13 says it well. *“My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord, or loathe His reproof, for whom the Lord loves He reproves, even as a father, the son in whom he delights.”* So if you have weaknesses in your life that you are allowing to remain there, God will send discipline to remove it. It is part of His loving commitment to preserve your soul for eternity. It is also the greatest blessing, for when we let those sins go a joy and excitement will come flooding into our hearts that is almost inexpressible and to wonderful describe, for we are at peace with God and have let go of the things that were bringing ruin upon our lives and upon our households.

Take a moment to read Psalm 119: 97-104. David is talking about the beauty of obeying God’s commandments. Here is an excerpt from it. *“Oh how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies.”* God’s commandments make us wiser than our enemy and all of his sinful desires that he tries to fill our lives with. And God’s discipline gives us the fear of God that we need in order to stay away from them. In keeping His commandments there is a great reward! Our lives will not self-destruct, but will become fruitful and a blessing to many people.

Oh let us give heed to Jesus’ voice and follow Him with our whole heart! That we shall never perish but have eternal life!

John 11:3-4

Jesus Delays

That Many Might Believe

The sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.” But when Jesus heard it, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”

This is the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead which makes what Jesus said to be something we have to look at closely, for He tells His disciples that the sickness is not unto death which led them to the conclusion that Lazarus would not have to endure the pain of dying. Then Jesus finishes with telling them that He will be glorified by Lazarus’ recovery.

As we read the story, Lazarus’ sickness did cause him to physically die and he had to undergo his trial with patience knowing that even if he were to die, death itself was no match for Jesus’ authority and power.

So let me ask us, how many of us have had a trial where we knew Jesus would intervene, and indeed He had even given us promises that He would, and yet the conclusion is that He did not rescue us from the loss of those things? That great ending where God victoriously rescues us, did not happen. I myself have just been through a trial of that magnitude and He seemingly hasn’t come and rescued me. Now as we continue to read in the next two verses of this chapter it says that after hearing the news of Lazarus’ sickness, He delayed two more days during which time Lazarus died. So Jesus gets an urgent request from Mary and Martha and yet delays in going to them.

So the question is – why did Jesus delay? He knew the delay would mean physical death for His friend whom He loved. So why did He delay in going and healing him and keeping him from enduring anything more. And at the same time, saving Himself from the frustrated and sorrowful feelings that were stirred up in Mary and Martha towards Him because of it, so much so that when Mary confronted Him He wept for her grief. The answer is found in the second part of His statement. *“This sickness is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”*

Jesus allows His friend Lazarus to be part of a great miracle to demonstrate the truth of who He was, the Son of God. It says later on in this chapter that so many people believed in Jesus because of this miracle that the priests were afraid the entire nation would be won over to Christ because of it! Lazarus was a well known man who lived just outside of Jerusalem and many people were at his funeral and then witnessed him raised from the dead. It says that Jesus did not arrive until Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days, long enough for many people to have heard and witnessed the truth of it. They then became eye-witnesses to his resurrection through Jesus.

So what I want to say to each of you today is, if you have experienced the four days in the tomb or are just experiencing them, this sickness is not unto death! For though you should die physically or lose everything, Jesus is the resurrection and the life and this sickness will be for the glory of God and many will believe in Jesus because of it. So be of good courage for He is weeping and enduring it with you while He delays, but as David says in Psalm 126:5&6 *“Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting, and he who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.”*

Be strong and of good courage my brothers and sisters! Our God is awesome and He will be glorified in these things and many will be saved because of it!

John 12:44-60

Jesus, our Lord and Savior

And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. I have come as a light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness (sin). And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word which I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

I just want to lift Jesus up before everyone here today. I want to open the eyes of all who read this that Jesus is the Son of the Most High God, the Creator of this earth and all that moves upon it! He is the one in whose image we have been created and He will be returning soon to rule over all the nations of this present earth. The Bible says that He will reign for the next thousand years until the great judgment. Isaiah 2:4 says, "*And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many people; and they will hammer their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.*"

Jesus says, "*I have come as a light to the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.*" Jesus does not intend for the world to live in ignorance to the truth of who He is and what He came to do for us. He came that we might enter into a relationship with our Creator and that we would become Jesus' eternal brothers and sisters! However, He does not force people to follow Him, but the fact remains that He is God and all who do not listen to His words and act upon them will be judged by them and shall not enter into eternity with Him or become His eternal brothers and sisters.

Jesus came to bring us the wisdom of God that we might live as God does. He does not want us to be separated from Himself for eternity. Every word and every action that He displayed is part of God's own character. He says, "*If you behold Me, you behold the Father.*"

He came in person to lead us into Heaven and to give us a future and a hope. Our Heavenly Father, our Creator, desires us to be with Him for eternity, and to accomplish this, He sent His Son to pay the penalty that our sin demanded, for God had promised Adam and Eve that if they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree they would die, eternally as well as physically. God cannot break His word, and therefore He and His Son devised a plan to save mankind. Jesus would pay the price for Adam's sin and the corruption of the human race. Our Savior died that we may live.

But if we reject what He has offered us we will not enter into eternal life. He offers it to us freely but if we reject it for this world's power and excitement we are paying a high price for a few moments of existence! Jesus holds out His hand and says, it's either sin, corruption and death, or willingly walking away from the world for an eternal reward and life forevermore. We are given the choice, but don't delay long in considering these two sides or you may, through your next indulgence in the world's excesses of pleasure, lose your very eternity as your life expires because of it. We do not know the day or the hour we may go, so it is best not to delay your decision! And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me. I have come as a light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness (sin). And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word which I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

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John 12:23-26

A Fruitful Life in Christ

And Jesus answered them saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.”

Submit your life to Jesus. This is the meaning of these verses. Submit yourself to His leadership and become His servant. Jesus’ word about a seed dying and going into the ground is a wonderful picture. The seed that one grain of wheat is able to produce is remarkable. One seed turns into many. Jesus has called us to submit our lives to Him in all things so that we might become like that fruitful seed.

Search your heart right now and ask yourself the question, “Have I ever told the Lord to do whatever He wants with my life, send me anywhere, train me to do anything, and really meant it with no reservations in my heart?” God brings each of us to this point in our lives but have you ever said, “Here I am Lord, use me whenever and wherever You want,” and had nothing in your heart that held you back? That reservation is the death that Jesus is talking about. If you love some part of your life, you cannot cross this line. Your heart simply cannot cross it for it has a barrier and will not let go of the world. This is the point where we have to let go and hate this life compared to the eternal life that Jesus has for us if we let go. “He who loves his life will lose it (Die eternally).” “He who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal (Live eternally).”

“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor Him.” This is the crossing point for us where our lives will begin to bear eternal fruit in the lives of others. And Jesus promises us that not only will we be with Him in Heaven, but that our Heavenly Father will honor us as well. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him (God), for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

I want to encourage all of you to spend some earnest time in

prayer seeking God. I want to encourage you to ask Him for help in letting go of all those things that keep you from truly giving all of your heart to Him. We need to be able to say, “Lord, whatever You want me to do and wherever You want me to go, I am Yours.” This is the path of all who call themselves after Jesus name. To be a Christian is to be a disciple of Christ and in Him is great eternal reward. So seek Him until all barriers come down between you, and you can say with your whole heart, Jesus I am Yours.

God bless you all and may you bear much eternal fruit today through Christ Jesus our Lord!

John 13:20

Spokesmen for Jesus

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

We have a high calling as servants of God. Jesus says that if men receive your testimony of Christ they are receiving God’s salvation for them. Today I want to address the words, “He who receives whomever I send.” As Christians this clarifies our duty regarding our purpose in life once we have been saved. We need to look closely here because we don’t want to ignore or be unaware of the job that Jesus has for each of us to do while He is away.

Everyday is a new day. A day where we need to rise and say, “Lord, what is your agenda for me today”? Everyday there are places God wants to send you, people He wants you to talk to, and eternal hope He wants you to share. People all around you are miserable inside. They are looking for something to make them happy and they think they have found it in sinful pleasures, but these things leave them more depressed than they were before. You and I – we carry the way out for them, but we’re either selfish with it or we don’t fully believe in the Lord ourselves, otherwise we would be sharing Him with everyone. It is not good to be embarrassed about the King of Kings and to pretend you don’t know Him. This day – before the cock crows – will you have denied Him three times? Think about this. We deny Him with our silence, we deny Him when we laugh at a crude joke. We deny Him

when someone asks us for advice about some sin that they justify as being OK to live with, and we keep silent and say nothing that would cause them to fear God and truly escape from that sin. We compromise our walk with God with the sins we don't deal with in our lives and because of this we are not able to speak boldly against it.

The point of this message is that each of us has been sent to do a job and we need to put aside our fears and laziness and take up the work He has for us. Many people who don't know God yet are depending on us to do our work and rescue them. It is time to seek God earnestly and say, "Lord, what do You want me to be doing? Where are You sending me?" It is time to remember our vows we made to the Lord on the day we were saved. We are to be dead to sin and alive in Christ! We no longer belong to ourselves, but to God. We are His and He is ours!

Rise up today brothers and sisters! Let us serve our glorious King with enthusiasm and joy! He is the Lord Most High! King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Creator of the earth and all that is in it! The heavens obey His every desire!

God bless you and fill you with His Living Water this day!

John 14:1-3

I Go to Prepare a Place For You

“Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go and prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am you may be also.”- Jesus

Where is your heart today? What are you striving to achieve? What drives you when you wake up each morning and confirms to you that you’re on the right path? I know that I have days when my life makes sense and I’m excited to be alive, however on other days I wake up and wonder, “What am I doing with my life?” “Where is it going?” “Does it have any purpose?” There are days when my trust in God falters and my faith is weak and I say, “Jesus are You really there? Are You really watching over me because so many things in my life just aren’t making sense?”

Jesus wants to assure us that His love for us is great and in these few verses He redirects our sight to eternal things. We get distracted and discouraged by the everyday occurrences and forget that these days are only temporary. *“Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me, in My Father’s house are many dwelling places.” “I will come again and receive you to Myself.”* These are words Jesus means for us to take to heart. He says these things with compassion knowing how easily our hearts are troubled – minute by minute, day by day. He desires to assure us that He has an eternal place prepared for us and that He will return to bring us safely home to Himself.

I want to encourage us all to redirect our hearts today towards our Savior. He is faithful and whatever earthly thing you struggle with, He will see you through it. He left us with words of comfort and assurance that we might meditate upon them and be comforted by them. In Jeremiah 33:19-22 God confirms that His promises to us cannot be broken. *And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, “Thus says the Lord, ‘If you can break My covenant for the day, and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed times, then My covenant may be broken with David My servant that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical*

priests, My ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be counted, and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.” As God has promised that nothing can break His covenants with His people or with the day and night, so also He will not break His promises that He has made to us that we would become part of the heritage of Abraham by being grafted in to his family.

Let us remember His promises to us today and let us renew our vows to walk in holiness before Him each day. He loves us and will be our Heavenly Father for all of eternity! God bless you all this day!

John 14:8-12

Jesus' Desire For Us To Know Our Heavenly Father

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father."

Jesus' words in this passage are so sincere. He longs for Philip to understand that He and the Father are so completely one that to know Him is to know the Father. He says to Philip that He doesn't even speak on His own initiative but that whatever the Father desires to share or do is what He does. This is a very touching conversation Jesus is having. He is about to be crucified and He really wants to convey what is in His heart to Philip, the other disciples and to us. He really wants us to know that He and the Father are one and to know Him is to know the Father.

How do we apply this heart stirring conversation to our own relationship with Jesus? He has told us many times that He desires for us to be one with Him just as He and the Father are one. And He explains how He lives every moment in such close fellowship with His Father that He is continually speaking His Father's words and acting on all He has for Him to do. This is our guide to how close a fellowship He desires for us to have with Himself. We can see the heart of God through Jesus' tenderness towards the blind and the lame and the hungry, His tenderness towards those who are condemned to be stoned to death and for the ones who were horribly demon-possessed. We can see His tenderness for the dying daughter and for the woman who came to the well to whom He gave Living Water instead, and His tenderness to the handful of rough fishermen who became the pillars of His church.

We see His heart when He looked down upon Jerusalem with anguish saying how many times He desired to gather them under His wing like a mother hen gathering her chicks, and with His final words, *“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”*

The final word for this message is this. We have been called to share in this intimate relationship with our Heavenly Father. He desires for us to be so close to Him that we are constantly conveying His love and compassion to others both speaking and doing all the things that are on His heart. Jesus says that because of His finished work on the cross not only will we do the work that He was doing but would do even greater things. So we have to ask ourselves, “How closely have we been fellowshiping with our Heavenly Father?” Enough to always know what He is thinking, enough to always know what He would have us to do, enough to be completely one with Him in every area of our life? It is such a close relationship that He desires for us to have with Him and these are some of the facets of it. This kind of relationship with Him requires keeping the final commandment that He left for us which is to love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength.

Let us renew our desire to walk this closely with Him. We need Him this much in order to avoid all the temptations and to be fruitful workers in His vineyard. May God bless each of you and fill you with a fresh love for Him that willingly puts down all distractions to follow Him. God bless!

John 14:18-21

What We Are To Be Doing While We Wait For Jesus To Return

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.”- Jesus

What can compare to the love of God! What can compare to knowing that the Creator of all has His eye on you and that His heart is fixed on you? If we love Jesus and desire to keep His commandments with all our heart, this is a good indication that we have been born again! *“After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you will behold Me; because I live, you shall live also.”* We live in the days where the world does not behold our Savior for He has gone to prepare an eternal home for us and has not come back yet. However, to each of us who eagerly await His coming back, He has promised to reveal Himself to us and to send His Holy Spirit to be our constant companion. I urge us not to treat this gift lightly or to take it for granted. Our Lord and Savior reveals Himself to us daily and desires us to walk among the world and do the work He would be doing if He were here in person. He desires for us to take care of one another. He said before He left, that we would do the works which He did and greater works as well, and what things did He do? He healed the sick, preached the Gospel to the poor and made disciples. If we are to follow in His steps these are the things we should be doing. I want to talk a little bit about preaching to the poor. It gives us the proper heart attitude as we serve the Lord, for the poor have no way to repay you for your work in a physical way and so all of your provision for the work must come from God. This is a good lesson because it weans out selfish ambition and greed from the hearts of all who serve in this way. Love becomes the motivation for all that is done and Jesus says that if we give even a cup of cold water to the least of these we are doing it to Him.

To keep the commandments means that we have God ordained

work that needs to be done. He has work for each of us to be doing so that we might be a blessing to one another and strengthen one another. Isaiah 58:6-8 says, *“Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and to bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh (family)? Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; and your righteousness will go before you; the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.”*

God wants us to love one another and to consider the wellbeing of our neighbor before ourselves. It is a life of real love that God has called us to and it is a deep and sincere love that He has for us. Let us rejoice and depend upon His love that we may go forth without worry as we set out to love one another as He has taught us.

God bless you all!

John 14:12-15

A Wake-Up Call

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”- Jesus

“The works that I do shall he do also.” Let us explore the works that Jesus did which He has for us to do also. As we look through the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John we see that the miracles Jesus did all related to helping others, and when someone asked Jesus if he could join Him Jesus replies by saying that He has no place to rest His head. In other words, He has no home and the life He leads will be an uncomfortable one. When Jesus sent His disciples out two by two they were not to take any money or extra clothes with them but to live wherever they were welcomed and to eat whatever was set before them. Jesus was not concerned with His own comfort and support. His every effort was for the sake of other’s needs and salvation.

If I could I would just like to open our eyes as Christians to show us how selfish we have become. We complain to God for every inconvenience that comes upon us and we strive every day to make our lives more comfortable. We rarely have time for a neighbor in need or a sick family member. As brothers and sisters of Jesus – these things should not be this way! Jesus was only concerned with His neighbors and never took a thought about Himself. His life was so busy helping His neighbor that He would have never even had the time to think about Himself. Can we see how far from our Savior’s example we have come?

Jesus is not speaking poetically and romantically when He says, *“Sell all you have and come follow Me.”* Jesus is turning our lives as we have known them upside down, and every fleshly love is getting scraped off of us. We think we know Jesus already, but is He removing your foundation from under you right now? Are terrible things happening in your life right now and your’re finding yourself saying, “These things aren’t coming from the God I know”? I tell you – don’t resist this upheaval in your life. Your God whom you thought

you knew is real, and He is changing your comfortable view of what it means to be a Christian! You say, “This is not the God I know.” You are right for you have not known Him as well as you thought and He is shaking out your false foundations so that He might replace them with His solid Rock.

Give your lives anew to Him and say – Lord, your ways are above mine and Your wisdom for my life is higher than mine and from now on I will no longer create You in my image but will become like You! Show me who You are! God has to shake us out of our sleepiness. We need to be out on the streets serving Him with passion. We need to speak boldly to our coworkers and really care that they are heading for eternity in Hell!

Brothers and Sisters, wake up! Turn off your TV’s and go out and see the world as it is, full of sin and hopelessness. Rise up and save this upcoming generation that has no hope of escape from the constant bombardment of sin and temptation!

Where are my brothers and sisters of God? Rise up and take back this country! Get on your knees and pray like you have never prayed before! We have been asleep in this world’s pursuits but the time for sleep is over! Wake up and save our land! These are the works that Jesus did and greater things will He do through us! God bless you all and fill your lives with new life and encouragement!

John 14:16-17

The Oil of the Holy Spirit

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.” – Jesus

Jesus says that He will send us the Holy Spirit and the world cannot receive Him or know Him, but we will know Him because He will abide in us. I think that it is interesting that Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit will be our Helper forever. That means that He desires to be part of our lives and to instruct us in the ways of our Heavenly Father for all time. In other words, the Holy Spirit will truly be our closest companion. Think about what that means, the Spirit of Righteousness and Truth abiding in you. You will never be without a constant reminder of what it truly means to live a holy life before God. However, not only will He teach us what righteousness is but will be our helper in being obedient and in overcoming our sinful desires and weaknesses. He will both convict and overcome our sinful nature. What a wonderful blessing.

Now let me ask each of you, have you truly in your heart desired such a Holy Being to be in your life? One with whom you can never get away with any sin because He stands there with conviction in His hand? It is the most fearful and yet the most desirable thing in the world to have Him reside in you and to have His Holiness upon you. You will truly never be the same again. It's amazing how much compromise we desire to have in our lives even after we have become Christians. There are parts of our old lives that we hope we can incorporate into our new lives with Christ. However, to have the Holy Spirit dwell in you is to know that you can never pretend ignorance to the sin you desire to keep in your life.

Brothers and Sisters, it is time to rise and wash our sin stained robes once again and pray for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit and to recommit ourselves to the changes He wants to bring into our lives. We need to go back to the days when we first were saved and wanted to be free from sin more than anything else in the world. Over the years we have fallen back into the sleepiness of the world's distractions and

temptations and have become unfruitful. Jesus gave us the parable of the ten virgins who fell asleep. Brothers and Sisters, it is time to wake up for our Savior is coming soon! Not only do we need to stop sleeping but we need to wake up everyone around us that we might refill our lamps and not be caught without oil at His return!

Time is short and our brothers and sisters need us to rise and wake them. Let us ask God to refill us with the oil of His Holy Spirit! God bless you all and may you go forth and bear much fruit for our Lord and Savior!

John 15:1-2

Patience While Being Pruned

“I Am the true vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.”

“Every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.” Jesus has called us His branches and said that His Father tends us and prunes us that we might be healthy and bear fruit. However, this pruning that God does is not pleasant and often leaves us feeling less than loving thoughts towards Him. We are going along trying our best to serve Him when suddenly the world falls apart around us and we lose our most precious earthly possessions. At first we feel like God has abandoned us in spite of our constant pleading with Him for help, but far from this being the truth, our Heavenly Father is jealously tending us that we might bring forth fruit abundantly.

God’s pruning sets us free from the excesses we have grown up around us that take up all of our time and energy. He prunes things that our hearts are attached to so that we might be free to set our hearts on the treasure in Heaven. Jesus says it well in Matthew 6:19-21 *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* As we draw close to God very often there are things that we know we need to let go of and yet we can’t do it and we

leave them in our lives for a period of time. However, God is faithful to remove those things for us as He watches and sees that we truly desire to be free from those things and yet cannot let go. He steps in and prunes us.

Many times, however, He prunes us from things that we have no desire to let go of and this is where we can get angry with God for His work in our lives. There are things we have that we feel we could never live without and God says, – “They are holding your heart hostage to the earth which is passing away and I have promised to set you free and preserve you for eternal life.” I call this pruning – A Severe Mercy – a blessing that we only truly appreciate years after He has done it. However, it is not fun for Him. He listens to our anger towards Him and endures it for our good. We are very often not grateful for this pruning process! If only we could bless His heart by patiently enduring it with a cheerful and hopeful heart. However, this hopeful heart is only attained by having our treasure in Heaven and it is our treasure on earth that He is pruning which means that our heart is being torn in the middle of it.

So what can we do to more quickly come to peace with this pruning process? Surrender – we need to surrender the things that God is pruning rather than trying to re-grow those branches. The pain remains while we fight to re-grow what He has pruned, but if we surrender and focus on our roots – digging deeper into Him and drawing from His Living Water, we will grow and mature our roots so that we will be able to support the fruit that will come forth as the season changes to summer in our lives.

I want to encourage you to not resist God’s pruning in your lives, but embrace it and bear it patiently. Set your heart on our treasure in Heaven so that your heart will be at peace and no longer feel the loss of this temporary earthly life. May God bless and encourage you in your walk with Him!

John 15:1-4

Abiding In The Vine

“I Am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He (God) takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”- Jesus

Jesus is showing us the emphasis that God has placed on bearing fruit and that it is the outward sign of where our hearts are. Anyone can call themselves a Christian but it is the fruit of our lives that will show whether we truly are. In fact, God says that every branch in Him that does not bear fruit will be removed which is even more thought provoking. For if a branch already was with Him but stopped abiding in Him it would cease to bear fruit and be removed. Certainly a word of warning to us not to take our daily walk with God for granted. Ezekiel 33:13 puts it even more clearly. *“When I say to the righteous he will surely live, and he so trusts in his righteousness that he commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but in that same iniquity of his which he has committed he will die.”* This is where the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom as Solomon says.

So what does it mean to abide in the vine and how do we do it? To abide in the vine is to take our time for seeking the Lord with all of our heart, seriously. It is to make time for Him everyday where we put aside everything in order to be with Him. What friendship have you ever had where spending time with that person no longer mattered? A true friendship desires to spend time together even when it is not possible because of time or distance. So also, our relationship with God does not grow without an effort to make time for Him. So why can it be so difficult to make time for God? Because we have an enemy who tries to fill our time with pressing things and other loves that will consume our time and devotion. We pursue a sport or a romance or our career as if these things are truly the only thing that will keep us alive or are worth living for. How can we tell if these things have become too important? Look at your reaction if they are taken away. We fall into despair – you got injured and your future in that

sport is lost forever, the person of your dreams has left you, someone has seen your idea and is undercutting your business. Just look at your response to these things. Anger, despair, getting even, anger at God for not stepping in, these reactions show what our hearts are in love with. The only way to let go of them is to start spending time with God on a daily basis. As we spend time with Him He places His hand upon us and removes the despair and bitterness and frustration from our spirit and replaces it with His peace. He is able to do the impossible – bring peace and contentment back into our lives. Our hearts let go and are free to take hold of Him and to enjoy His company. The more faithful we are to spend time with Him the more often we enjoy this peace and contentment and the more we look forward to being with Him. This is the beginning of true love for our Savior. Not just the first love of being saved by what He did for us, but a sustainable and ever-growing daily love relationship with Him. The more time we spend with Him the deeper it grows and it is not possible to get to the end of it! With the pleasures of this world you reach the maximum it can offer in literally moments, but with God you can never get to the end of it. With God's love you will never find the end where you feel empty and have to find something new.

So let us start spending more time with Him and enjoy the everlasting blessing He has given us which is to have a personal relationship with the Creator of the universe! And let us bear much fruit which grows so naturally as we abide in Him. God bless you all!

John 15:5-8

The Fruit That Comes From Abiding In The Vine

“I am the Vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

Last week we talked about what it means to be abiding in the Vine. We talked about it being a commitment to spend time with Jesus and that from this close fellowship with Him our corrupt desires disappear and in their place Jesus fills us with a new desire to be close to Him. It is this process which sets our hearts free from the love of the world and able to love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Jesus releases us so that we are free to love Him.

This week I want to work on some of the fruit that He has promised we will bear if we are abiding in Him. The first thing we all think of by this statement of bearing fruit is winning souls for Christ. This is true but what I want to talk about today is fruit that is born in us that comes from no outward attack on sin, no ambition or plan but only from spending time with Jesus – The fruit of the Spirit. You see, Jesus desires to refine us into His beautiful character and it is not in our own ability that this will be accomplished but only through His Holy Spirit. Let us list out the fruits of the Spirit as is mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”* In one sentence we have the sum of all the things we want to be and prove everyday that we are not. It is these fruits springing up in our lives that cause us to go out and rescue people. The opposite of these character traits is hell and ugliness and death and when we find ourselves full of selfishness, no self-control, anxiety, harshness, and envy, we hate these things in ourselves and desire to change – but how? How do we do this? This change that we desire is what turns us into caring, devoted, loving,

selfless people who cannot help but rescue the lost and distressed people around us.

Jesus says that if we abide in Him (spend time with Him), He will abide in us and we will bear much fruit. In other words, these character traits will start growing inside of us of their own accord. They grow naturally and will ripen quickly the more we spend time with Him. I will go so far as to say that you will not be able to stop them from coming out of you as long as you do this. One other quick note - a tree growing by a river needs more water the larger it gets in order to feed its ever growing branches and so it is the same with us. The more we bear fruit the more time we will need to spend with Jesus in order to support it. And a tree, no matter how great and mighty it may become, will die without water and so will we if we let distractions, temptations, and pursuits get in the way of our time with Jesus. – Our relationship with Jesus is forever and this is the friendship and love He has for us.

So let us press on in jealously guarding and cherishing our daily time with Him. It is the greatest gift He has given to us and from it our lives will be filled with

Life and Fruit!

God bless you all!

John 15: 9-11

The Joy Of Christ

“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”- Jesus

The question for today is, why does Jesus say that we are to keep His commandments in order to abide in His love? What is the love He is talking about? Jesus gives us a point of reference when He says, “I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.” This love that Jesus is telling us to abide in is our source for being alive. It is the kind of life, bubbling up inside, that causes us to be excited to be alive. Jesus says that if we keep His commandments our joy is going to be made full. He equates keeping His commandments with abiding in His love.

We have a funny teaching in our churches called – “God knows we will never be perfect in this life.” Yes it is true that we stumble and sin all the time but it is not an excuse to not commit ourselves to trying. Jesus says to resist the Devil’s temptations and he will flee from us. All besetting sins are temptations and within our power to resist by God’s help. God doesn’t want us to use the excuse that we will never be perfect. He is pleased with us when we resist, and the harder it is to resist the more pleased He is when we overcome it. It delights His heart to see the faithfulness of His child to persevere under such challenges.

When we resist the temptation to break the commandments there is a purity that comes into our lives, and with each passing day that we hold fast, our lives start to get more exciting. Think of an alcoholic. Everyday that he doesn’t drink he is able to think and work and get his life back together. Everyday builds on the last and his life becomes exciting. But if he is constantly falling back into drinking he is always starting from square one with nothing to build on. So our lives become more exciting the more we build them on keeping the commandments. God has built a great reward into each of His commandments if we keep them, an eternal reward with promises like He gave to Abraham that will last forever. We serve a God Who has great wisdom which He desires to pass on to us, but it is a wisdom that can only

build off of obedience. I used to pray for wisdom all the time (I still do) and God would teach me many things, but His wisdom always affected my life, causing me to have to change the way I lived and I used to think – wisdom is only as good as it is made use of. If God teaches you something and you don't use it, it does you no good and He is not going to give you more until you use what He has given you already. Keeping the commandments is the foundation stone to all wisdom. If we keep them our joy will be made full because we won't always be starting from square one but will be building on those principles that bring peace and order in our lives so that we can learn new things.

There is no fun in learning the same lessons over and over again and as we keep the commandments we will abide closer with Jesus, ever growing in His character and love. The Ten Commandments are like sight to the blind, they give understanding as to why our lives keep falling into trouble and they show us the path we should walk on in order to keep from doing it again. The commandments were given for our blessing, so let us meditate upon them and live in the fullness of joy that Jesus has promised for all those who would walk in them.

God bless!

John 15:16-17

Encouragement In Bearing Fruit

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another.” -Jesus

I really want to encourage everyone this week that God will bless every action and every prayer that you make on behalf of your family, your neighbor, or your friend in your efforts to draw them into the Kingdom of God. Jesus says that He has appointed us to bear fruit and that the fruit will remain. He is encouraging us to earnestly ask for their salvation and to step out in faith that He will answer. Every little seed of truth that you sow into their lives will come up and bear fruit. I know that we all get discouraged when after years of praying for someone we don't see any changes in their life. We have an enemy that wants you to give up in your prayers for that person and he will do anything he can to discourage you from praying with your whole heart, for he knows that God will answer if you persist.

This is a great word of encouragement for those of us who have been asking the Lord for years on behalf of others and going out of our way to draw them into God's kingdom. It seems like we can go forever and still see no good coming from it. But let us look at the example that Jesus has left us with. When He hung on the cross all of His disciples had deserted Him and the Jews whom He had tenderly cared for and ministered to were crucifying Him. There was no earthly hope of seeing any good fruit from all of His work. He was staring at a total loss even of His own body and yet, the day He died, all of the seeds He had planted started to come to life! His church grows bigger by the day and there will be no end to the fruit for which He has labored. So for us – we need to take courage from this example He has left us with and not despair or let go of our prayers for people or stop going out of our way to draw them to God even when we see no fruit. Jesus has promised that there will be fruit!

So let us step out and start thinking of what kind of seeds we can be planting. There are seeds of action like visiting neighbors or nursing homes or going out into our local communities and helping out. We could be writing letters to friends and family in which we

share the love of God with them. We can hand out tracts or join a group that is spreading the Gospel in our communities. I just want to encourage you that anything you can come up with to do for someone will grow and bear fruit. So let us seek God earnestly today that He will give us new ideas for what we can be doing to spread His kingdom so that we will have fruit for our labors at the end of this age and that the fruit will remain for all of eternity. God bless you all!

John 16:13-14

Christ Glorified

In The Life Of A Christian

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.”- Jesus

Jesus has sent His Holy Spirit to be our teacher and to open our eyes to the scripture. He desires to reveal all that God has for us, both here on earth and also in eternity. Jesus says that whatever the Holy Spirit hears from God He will pass along to us. The Holy Spirit is our direct connection with God and our greatest companion. Not only will He instruct us but He will also glorify Jesus physically as well. In Mark 16: 17-18 Jesus gives us some pretty astounding promises of what the Holy Spirit will do. *“And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”* These are some very physical manifestations of the power of God that He says will accompany all who have believed and follow Him. In Matthew 10:8 Jesus describes how He views these gifts. *“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you have received, freely give.”* Jesus considers the gifts He has promised us to be freely used for the benefit of others. They are a free gift to us and therefore we should not hold onto

this blessing but freely give it to others. These things are not mysterious happenings; they are a gift to be shared.

The Holy Spirit wants to move with might and power in our lives and He does not desire to be some mystical religious force, but to be our instructor, teacher, and companion in bringing forth and spreading the glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The reason I am dwelling on these things is because Jesus wants us to walk victoriously in His name, not being afraid to speak up for Him, and continually benefiting from all He is truly able to do in our lives. He wants to give us complete victory over every sin and at the same time, fill our minds with the wisdom and beauty of God. He wants to show us new things about God's creation every day that will only feed our growing desire to learn more, and at the same time, to pour out His compassion on the blind, lame and weak of this world.

Jesus wants to affect our lives as never before, but we must lay down our lives to follow Him. We cannot pick up this new life He offers us while hanging onto our old lives. The two cannot mix. One is based on selfish desires and pride while the other is the life of a servant, full of compassion for others and demonstrating a sweet, Godly humility. Jesus' love can only come forth from a humble heart. So let us humbly seek the Lord that we might let go of the world each day and serve Him with our whole heart that the Holy Spirit might be free to glorify Jesus in our lives.

John 16: 31-33

Jesus Has Overcome The World

Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? Behold an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

The question for today is, “Have you been scattered”? Have you been holding on to Jesus as your Savior and support and yet your confidence has been shaken because of the great trials that have come upon you, and you have asked – Where are you Jesus in my hour of need? Have the trials been so great that you have fled for your life in despair that not even God could save you from them anymore? Jesus’ words are as much for us today as they were for His disciples. Jesus was about to be publicly executed which He knew would greatly weaken their belief and confidence that He was indeed the promised Messiah for whom they had forsaken their earthly comforts and homes to follow. The disciples had given up everything in this world to follow Him and suddenly their trust and faith was going to be tested. Jesus promises them that He will be their peace in the midst of the trial and that though there was going to be tribulation, He had overcome it.

Why does Jesus’ “overcoming of the world” give us courage? What did this mean for them and what does it mean for us? Jesus’ words were His confirmation that He had not bowed to any of the temptations and that He was about to give the final blow to the hold that sin had upon their lives. His last great battle was about to be won in which the devil’s power over us would be crushed once and for all, opening the door to the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon all who believed in Him and forever changing the world. Jesus was clearing the road that led to our Heavenly Father that we might be reunited with Him and become a new creation. Jesus was not saying that they would have no more tribulation on earth, but that He had purchased the peace of pardon so that our souls would no longer be at war with God, but full of His Life and Power. Jesus is telling them that He was going to be victorious in spite of their inability to stand up in the midst of the trial.

So what does this mean for us? Jesus' words, "Take courage, for I have overcome the world" are for us in the same way, that though the trial may have caused us to lose our confidence in Him, yet He will be faithful to rescue us anyway. He is with us even when we have forsaken Him because of our doubts and fears and He will complete the good work He has started in us because He loves us and has already overcome the world on our behalf.

So take courage my brothers and sisters – in this world you will have tribulation that will cause you to stumble in your faith, but God will surely rescue you for He loves you and has overcome the world for you that you might be with Him forever! God bless you all!

John 17: 3

The Testimony Of A Christian

1. John 17:3 *“And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”*

2. John 17:18 *“As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”*

3. John 17:21 *“That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may also be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.”*

4. & 5. John 17:22-23 *“And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.”*

6. John 17:25-26 *“Oh righteous Father, although the world has not known Thee, yet I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou didst send Me; and I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them, and I in them.”*

We are to be living proof that God is the only true God, and that He sent Jesus Christ to save us and to give us eternal life. Jesus says that eternal life is knowing God, and believing in Him, and His Son Jesus, whom the Father sent to us. If we are to be witnesses and the living proof that Jesus is Lord of all, then how are we to do this? There is nothing supernatural about us; we do not stand out or show God's glory in ourselves. In point (3.) Jesus requests of God that we be made one with Him, and with Jesus, that we might truly know the Love that the Father has for us and be able to share it with the world.

It is time for us to ask for help. It is time to pray for Jesus to take His rightful place in the center of our lives, as He did when we were first saved. Too many things are trying to steal our hearts away from Him, and we lose our connection to His life-giving presence. It

is time to pray for a revival in our hearts, that we might be centered on Jesus. When He is the center of our desire, we will bear an overflowing testimony of His sovereignty in our lives.

In points (4 & 5) Jesus tells His Father that He has granted to us the glory that God has granted to Him that we might be one in Himself. What is that glory which He has passed on to us? The glory is unity with God. Jesus, having removed the barrier of sin from between us and God, has given us complete access to the throne of God and to the wonderful works of God through prayer. We are open vessels able to convey the glorious truths of God. Again, what is that glorious truth? It is the reality that He is the only true God and that He has sent His beloved Son Jesus to us to be our Savior.

Point (6) The world, having lost its ability through sin to be able to see God and to know Him, was in need of a witness. Jesus was sent to be the mouth of God and to bring the light of God's word to mankind. I think this is an amazing picture. A world in darkness which could no longer see the glory of God is given the light of Jesus Christ and yet if God did not open the eyes of the people still no one would be able to see His glory. What kind of darkness is it that we are dealing with here on earth? If Jesus was invisible even to those who were teaching the laws of God, this is a deep, spiritual darkness. This is why Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the brilliant light of Christ. We too, can expect an impossible task of bringing the Gospel of Christ to people if we do not have the blessing of God's Holy Spirit with us to open their eyes. We must pray earnestly for the awakening touch of the Holy Spirit on those with whom we share the Gospel. The world cannot see the truth even if Jesus Himself were here in person to present it. Jesus relied on God to send the Holy Spirit to awaken the hearts and minds of the people and to be a witness to the truth of what He taught.

Therefore – eternal life is – That we may know God, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He sent.

John 17:22-23

One In Christ

“And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.”

What does it mean to be one with Jesus and our Heavenly Father? Let us consider what it would be like if you went to grab a glass of water and your hand picks up the spoon next to it. Your hand has disregarded your body's desire for a drink and decided it liked the feel of holding a spoon. This is kind of a funny illustration but we have been called the body of Christ and He is our head. For us to work as one body the head of the body must direct the rest for the good of the entire body. To be one in Christ is to be of the same mind, heart, and action with Him. His desire is our delight to carry out. Everything we do affects the entire body of Christ and when we are stubbornly set in our earthly pursuits, refusing to let go, it can have consequences that can take a long time to recover from.

We need to look more closely at what this signifies in terms of the unity Jesus has said we are to have with our brothers and sisters. The comfort of the entire body is dramatically altered when all of its members are working together under the leadership of the head. Caring for one another, bearing with one another's faults, and forgiving one another, is the muscle and tissue that keeps us together. Having hearts set on helping one another everyday should be an active thing rather than waiting for something bad to befall a neighbor before we feel any kind of need to help them. Our love and concern should not be cause and affect but continuous.

This is significant because it pulls us out of ourselves and into a life of service and blessing to everyone around us. If we let it, everyday will consume us with pursuits for our own gain, and concern for our neighbors, family, and friends will be forgotten. It is so easy to get caught up in these things that we don't even notice. To be one with Jesus is to be filled with His love for everyone around us and to find ways to help them. To be one with Him is to seek His plan for our lives so that we can be doing the job that will most benefit the body of

Christ. To be one with Him is to be filled with the joy of serving Him and seeing Him work through our lives.

So I want to encourage all of you today to earnestly seek his plan for your life. It can be hard to lay down your earthly ambitions in order to do this but only someone who is truly willing to do whatever God's plan is will receive His plan for their lives and carry it out. You cannot want your own plan and His because invariably your plan will hinder the effectiveness of His plan and the two will get in the way of each other. We cannot be divided when we serve God, but must serve Him with our whole heart. When we have committed all our heart and all our life to Him, His joy and excitement will come pouring into us to the point where we cannot even contain it.

God desires to fill your life with excitement and the most amazing adventure, but it requires counting the cost of what you are going to let go of. His plan for your life will fill the rest of your life. It is all or nothing and will not be joyful and exciting unless you have committed everything to Him.

So let us renew our commitment to Him and serve one another joyfully. Encouraging one another and spurring one another on to greater works in Christ!

God bless you all!

John 18:10-11

Why do we resist God's will for our lives?

Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slaves name was Malchus. Jesus therefore said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

Why do we resist God's plan for our lives? The Father's plan for Jesus was leading Him to the cross. I need not explain that this was going to be a painful event. Submitting to God's plan very often will lead us into painful experiences that our bodies do not want to undergo. So many of God's lessons for us can be quite painful and we would never have chosen to go through them of our own will. God often brings things to pass where our most precious possessions get taken from us and we are unable to stop it from happening, but when the ordeal is over our heart has let go of another idol and we gain a peace in Christ that is deeper than before.

Jesus' word – "Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given Me" is full of strength and encouragement for us when our hearts are torn with the loss of something we hold dear or when we are at a crossroads in our walk with Him and He is asking us to freely let go of something we have been holding onto. The cup that the Father has for us enables us to let go of the world and be free to love Him completely.

However, there is another factor in the cup that the Father has for us and it is this. It will save souls! The cup that God has for you is going to make your life fruitful and exciting! This is the joy that is set before us, that in enduring all of these things great fruit will come forth. Our flesh recoils at the pain of the experiences therefore we must look past it to the joy of the eternal fruit that will be produced as we walk in the steps that God desires us to walk and fulfill the plans that He has for us.

Why is it hard to except God's will for us and endure these things? It is hard because we are not focused on the love for our neighbors and seeing them brought into the kingdom of God. Brothers and Sisters, we need more love for those around us. We need the love that gladly endures all hardships for their salvation. We get so caught up in

our own pains that we stop looking outside of ourselves. We want to set ourselves aside and become a blessing to everyone around us.

These trials produce two things, they refine us into God's character and they draw others into the kingdom of God. Therefore, shall we not drink the cup that the Father has for us? Let us pray for perseverance and courage and love that we might endure these things that we might not only please our Heavenly Father and make His heart glad, but that we might bear fruit that will endure for eternity and have many friends who have entered in because of our labors. Jesus is returning soon! Let us be found diligently working in His vineyard when He comes!

God bless you all!

John 20:29

Waiting upon the Lord

Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”

It is a step of faith that Jesus calls us to. Jesus is speaking to Thomas – one of his disciples who spoke out to the others that he would not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead unless he was able to see Him in person and put his fingers into Jesus’ wounds. Jesus says to him, “Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”

Jesus will often come to our aid in a very visible way and yet there are many times when we are enduring some hardship or period of waiting for something which we have asked Him for and we start to doubt that He will come to our rescue or answer our prayers. We start to doubt even though we have many witnesses to the contrary. We have so many proofs of His faithfulness to keep His promises to us and yet sometimes we are like Thomas and declare that unless we see proof we will not believe that He will do as He said. Jesus words, “Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed,” is His promise of blessing for us if we hold fast to His promises no matter what things look like. He will come through and take care of whatever it is that we have asked Him for.

So how does this translate into our everyday walk with God? Well, quite simple really. The Devil is always trying to offer us things that we don’t have to wait for or don’t seem to require any pain to achieve, things that we can have right now if we are willing to overstep a few of God’s laws. He often stirs up our hearts so that there seems to be no other alternative than to do things his way. He likes to fill us with such passion that we refuse to look at the consequences of our actions and do things in the heat of the moment that will cause us a lifetime of misery. God on the other hand, desires for us to have what is truly good for us and part of this is working on our character so that we will not waste what He gives to us, but will make the best use of it. So He allows delays to test us and to work patience and trust in us. God has our eternity in mind when He takes care of us and He is constantly working to conform our character into His image. We are His children forever and so He takes great pains with us to set our lives on a good foundation.

So how do we hold onto the truth of these things when we are in the midst of a temptation or trial? It seems like it is just too hard to remember when we are fighting with a desire or test and we are contending with our weak nature. The answer is to hold onto God's love for us and to not be afraid to cry out loud for His help to overcome what we are struggling with. If we cry out, He will refresh our spirit and renew our confidence, and give us a fresh wind to go forth and endure until He has finished all that He is accomplishing in our lives.

So let us keep eternity in our hearts and God's love for us and our love for Him, continually on our minds. A good verse to dwell on is Proverbs 16:17. *"The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life."* God bless!

John 21:25

Pressing on in the service of our Lord

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the whole world would not contain the books which were written.” –John

Jesus calls Himself the first of many brothers! The path He walked before us was one of great courage and many wonderful signs. His life was one continuous demonstration of the love and support our Heavenly Father has for us. What a wonderful example He has left for us! I get so excited when I think about what John is saying here; that the world could not contain all of the books it would take to write down all that Jesus did during His time on earth. The four Gospels give us different highlights of Jesus’ ministry in order to give us a glimpse into all that Jesus did while He was here. I marvel at Jesus feeding the five thousand people with just a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. Creating something from nothing was as simple as breathing to Him.

We who have been saved by Him have a wonderful heritage. It is so important to dedicate our lives to Him so that the rest of our time on earth will be spent in preparation for a glorious eternity with Him! We need to make the most of the days and years that we have in front of us taking the talents God has given us and multiplying them. I get so inspired when I read about the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 how as soon as the faithful servants received their talents they immediately started working with them and doubled what they had been given. The joy of being diligent with what God gives to us to work with is something not to take lightly. It is a wonderful thing to feel God’s approval as we step out to witness or help someone in need. He is so pleased with even our faltering steps.

It is time to ignore the distractions of this world and to ask God for His help in overcoming our lazy human nature and set about making the most of the time we have left! I know that I have shared this before but it still keeps me focused. Jesus gives a parable of a land owner who hires workers for his vineyard and every few hours he goes out and finds new people standing around waiting for work and

he promises each of them the same wage for their labor even though some have worked longer than others. Finally at the last hour of the day he finds more people waiting for work and he sends them to his field. Now when the day is over he proceeds to pay each man the same wage and the ones who worked the most began to complain about the ones who worked for only an hour. My friends we are in the final hour before Jesus returns and our work is short! So let us work hard so that the ones who worked the longest will have nothing to complain about as we make up for the hours we missed!

So let us press on with the time that we have and encourage one another to do more for our dear Savior that it may also be said of us that the world could not contain an account of all that we have done to serve our Savior!

God bless you all!

~Notes ~

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