

Calling the Bride



"And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" – John 8:32

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Inspirations from John 15

Jesus said in John chapter fifteen;

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away:

... (John 15:1,2).

If a man does not abide in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned (John 15:6).

The Apostle Paul shows us that "...the word of the truth of the gospel;...brings forth fruit...(Colossians 1:5,6). The fruit is the spiritual development in the believer which in turn produces a productive disciple that brings the fruit of souls into the kingdom of God.

We must abide in the doctrine of Christ, the gospel, in order for the sap of God's Holy Spirit to produce our fruit through the truth of the gospel. In other words, we cannot change or abandon the gospel, the requirements for our salvation. We are saved by faith in Jesus' atonement for our sins and His resurrection from the dead.

Jesus warns the church in Sardis to "*Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found your works perfect before God*" (Rev. 3:2).

God assures the overcomers that, "...I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels" (Rev. 3:5). Jesus said that if we deny Him, He will deny us (Matthew 10:33).

Some of the believers in the church in Sardis were beginning to drift away from foundational doctrines of the church and the truth of the gospel. Jesus is the only way to the Father as He said in John 14:6. There is only one plan of redemption that can give us eternal life.

The believers in Sardis are told to "*strengthen the things which remain,*" and to "*Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent*" (Rev. 3:3).

"Remember" that God gave His only begotten Son and He is the only way, truth and life (John 3:16,14:6). If they do not obey this warning then we can see them being portrayed as those hapless, faithless branches in John 15 that are being severed from the Vine of Christ and cast into fires of hell.

While we are told that they will be removed by the Father, it is their own lack of regard for God's word, and their preferences for the precepts of men that causes their removal.

We are told to regard the ... "*the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness: otherwise you also shall be cut off*" (Romans 11:22).

When Jesus tells us to abide in Him, it is for our protection and safety, our overall welfare and peace. Let's heed those warnings that are written in love to guide through the perilous wilderness of this life into the promised land of eternal life.

Whoever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son. - II John 1:9.

VALUE THE INTANGIBLES

Now the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. - Romans 15:13

In the morning I usually spend some quiet time in the presence of my Lord. During one of these quiet sessions I heard His Still Small Voice whisper to me in the silence, "Tell My people to value the intangibles."

We live in a materialistic world, where the tangible things we see and enjoy are usually seen as having great value. But how can we enjoy these things without the intangibles I believe the Lord is referring to?

In Romans 15:13, the Apostle Paul mentions the Lord's joy, peace and hope. Our God is the God of hope. These are intangibles, and unless we have the Lord's joy, peace and hope, how can we ever enjoy anything else? Our misery compels us to fill our souls with things. The lust of having these things only satisfies us for a moment and the cycle must be repeated creating an artificial, very temporal high that usually leaves us flat and disappointed when it dissipates. God's valuable intangibles are designed to satisfy for a lifetime and far beyond. He is more than willing to bless us with these treasures if we are willing to seek Him for them and covet their worth.

His joy is developed in us when we realize what was accomplished for us by Jesus' death and His resurrection. We can rejoice with the disciples before the door of His empty tomb knowing that the power of death upon our souls has been forever shattered. That joy blooms into peace and we trust that the God that has so skillfully orchestrated our salvation, is also just as capable of escorting us through the wilderness of this life to ultimate victory, no matter what we encounter in this journey through time.

The peace we feel as we hold God's hand along the way fills us with hope. We have a future and it doesn't matter if we are lying on our death beds, experiencing physical trauma, or other sorrows, hope is the shining beam that draws our

minds and our hearts to look upon the glorious future with Him in eternity that He has promised.

Joy, peace and hope are marvelous companions. Their lyric voices serenade our souls and we know we cannot live without hearing their sweet song on a daily basis. Sing with them, seek the One who bestows them and let the world see the difference their song makes in your life.

The Love that Saves

He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. – Matthew 10:37

We love our families, our children. God wants us also to love our brethren in the faith, and even our enemies. But Jesus shows us our love for Him must be greater than our love for anyone or anything. He said what He said because He loves and values us. He knows that our love for Him is our preservation; because He alone is our salvation and our only hope of eternal life. – “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father except by Me.” –John 14:6.

If we love Him more than those we love, then those we love can never move us away from the love that saves us.

If we love Him more than the things we own and the contents of our bank accounts, then we will not deny Him when threatened with the loss of those things or even loved ones.

Faithful servants of Christ have been forced to watch loved ones tortured because they refused to deny Jesus. Someday we all may suffer the loss of everything when faced with the world’s attempts to brand us with Satan’s mark of the beast (Rev. 13:16-18).

If our treasure is truly in heaven (Matthew 6:21) and our minds are set on the permanent reality of things above (Colossians 3:1,2), we can reject the temporary for the eternal.

None of these choices will come without tears and great sobbing agony. But the trial of our faith is worth much more than the gold that perishes (I Peter 1:7). We must spend quality time with God in prayer and His word, asking Him to develop the faith producing love for our Savior that will keep us standing in Him when the forces of evil try to compromise, or force us into spiritual failure.

We succeed when we can confidently walk away from our losses in this life toward our promised eternal inheritance in Jesus; an inheritance and hope which has, through faith, become more precious than anything, or anyone we can see with our mortal eyes.

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light - I Peter 2:9.

The Apostle Peter calls us a “royal priesthood.” One of the pastors I know shared this insight with me. He said that in the Old Testament the Levitical priesthood would represent the people before God. Jesus is a priest of a different order, a priest after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 5:6,10) who came to Abraham offering him bread and wine. This royal order of priests represents God to the people as Jesus did when He came to earth and represented God the Father. Jesus is the image of God, (Hebrews 1:3.) When Jesus offers us His bread and wine, He is inviting us to partake of His royal priesthood and we are also called to represent God before the people; we are “Ambassadors of Christ” (II Corinthians 5:20.)

It is a high and holy calling and we are admonished to walk worthy of it (Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10.) How do you think it will affect our behavior in this life if we continually think of ourselves as royal priests?

This image also has great meaning for those of us who have come out of not so sanctified lineages. Many have struggled to overcome the sins that have pervaded their family lines. The Apostle Paul notes that Melchisedec is “without father or mother” (Hebrews 7:3). There is no earthly lineage associated with him. Can we picture ourselves coming before Jesus our High Priest? Through His cross He has adorned us in His white robe of righteousness. He offers us His bread and wine. We take His offering with grateful hands, and then as we turn to face those He has called us to serve, the dark lineages of our troubled ancestors are deftly severed. Those lines have been replaced with a holy lineage for we have been reborn into God’s eternal kingdom. Jesus is our High Priest who directs our service and we can begin again as a totally new creation in Him.

You look down at the bread in your hands which represents His Word, and the wine in the cup you are holding which represents His Spirit. They are yours to share.

Partake of them, rejoice and show forth the praises of the One who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light!

*Let your light so shine before men,
that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in
heaven. - Matthew 5:16*