

Jesus has spent much of the 12th chapter of Luke's Gospel reassuring and encouraging his disciples as they endure the increasing threats and accusations from the religious leadership. Especially as Jesus tells the religious leaders they have no place in his Kingdom...

Which goes directly contrary to what the Pharisees and religious leaders' expectations of their roles in the messiah's Kingdom. They had expectations of the Messiah, that he would be an earthly King over all nations, and the nation of Israel would be the head nation. And they had expectation that their role in His Kingdom, being the religious and nations governing leaders...who would hold the highest positions enforcing the faith, while exercising religious oversight while governing the nations..... Jesus basically let them know this would never happen...as their hearts were far from God and because they greatly misrepresented him.

The animosity was such that in verse 4 of the 12th chapter of Luke, Jesus says to his disciples; *"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more,"* and then in verse 22, Jesus says; *"Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life,"* and again in verse 32, Jesus says; *"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."*

- **Now he tells them what he expect of them...as his followers...be about the business of God...and remain loyal to Jesus...**

NLT LK 12:35 "Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and knocks. "

Peter was not sure who Jesus was addressing so he asks...

NLT LK 12: ⁴¹ Peter asked, "Lord, is that illustration just for us or for everyone?"

- *It is commitment to him and his cause... it is Faithfulness and faithfulness means to be loyal and diligent. and that is what Jesus said to his disciples...your commitment is to me...not to your expectations...*
- *Why would he say this? Because they also had expectations of Jesus and his Kingdom...But Jesus said to his disciples...your commitment is to me...not to your expectations...*

Faithfulness means to be dependable. Being dependable is rarely convenient. A faithful person follows through on their commitments, even if it means personal sacrifice, even when they are hurt, experience disappointment, loss, trouble or persecution, set backs and delays nor the words of their detractors *or their emotions*

- **why?** *their service is based on loyalty to Jesus and therefore doing his will above all else....or their emotions*

The result: ³⁷ *The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded. I tell you the truth, he himself will seat them, put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat!* ³⁸ *He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn. But whenever he comes, he will reward the servants who are ready.* ³⁹ *“Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would not permit his house to be broken into.* ⁴⁰ *You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.”*

- **In essence...be faithful men and women of integrity...serving and living the life of a follower of Jesus no matter how long it is until the Lord returns...for you...**

- **It is The difference between a fan of Jesus and a follower of Jesus**

Jesus responds...

NLT LK 12: 42 And the Lord replied, “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. 43 If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. 44 I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns.

- **Faithfulness is not an option we choose. God expects us to be faithful to Him, and He seeks men and women who will live so as to consistently carry out His will.**
- **Caleb is one of these examples of integrity.... Faithfulness...and wisdom. Here is a man who stood in the face of an entire nation and pleaded with them to follow after God. These people reacted so violently to Caleb that they sought to stone him. At the age of 85 Caleb begged for the "honor" of driving giants out of the Promised Land. Here was a man who served God his entire life. He never retired from serving God.**

JOS 14:6 A delegation from the tribe of Judah, led by Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, came to Joshua at Gilgal. Caleb said to Joshua, “Remember what the LORD said to Moses, the man of God, about you and me when we were at Kadesh-barnea. 7 I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of the LORD, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land of Canaan. I returned and gave an honest report, 8 but my brothers who went with me frightened the people from entering the Promised Land. For my part, I wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God. 9 So that day Moses solemnly promised me, ‘The land of Canaan on which you were just walking will be your grant of land and that of your descendants forever, because you wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God.’

¹⁰ “Now, as you can see, the LORD has kept me alive and well as he promised for all these forty-five years since Moses made this promise—even while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Today I am eighty-five years old. ¹¹ I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then. ¹² So give me the hill country that the LORD promised me. You will remember that as scouts we found the descendants of Anak living there in great, walled towns. But if the LORD is with me, I will drive them out of the land, just as the LORD said.”

¹³ So Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave Hebron to him as his portion of land. ¹⁴ Hebron still belongs to the descendants of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite because he wholeheartedly followed the LORD, the God of Israel.

He trusted God wholeheartedly...all the way...he was a man faithful to his commitment...the question for you and I ..is how do we do this in our time ...walking it thru is difficult...

That my friends is not easy to do...nor for the faint of heart

NLT Luke 12: ⁴⁵ But what if the servant thinks, ‘My master won’t be back for a while,’ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? NLT Luke 12:⁴⁶ The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant in pieces and banish him with the unfaithful. ⁴⁷ “And a servant who knows what the master wants, but isn’t prepared and doesn’t carry out those instructions, will be severely punished. ⁴⁸ But someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly.

- **So the idea of beating ANYONE is repugnant. Let's not judge Jesus' words by Twenty-First Century values, but by standards of his time. Using rods to punish was extremely common.**

- **Fathers would discipline their children with a rod; masters would discipline their servants with a rod. Punishment of criminals would sometimes be with a rod or whip. (For example, see Deuteronomy 25:2-3; Psalm 89:32, Proverbs 10:13; 13:24; 14:3; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15; and Hebrews 12:10-11.) **Discipline was not designed for cruelty, but for instruction.****
- **It was a common and acceptable practice for training...**
- **Notice the element of delay in the master's return **that** was present in the parable "My master is taking a long time in coming"Jesus is preparing his disciples for a delay in his own return. The Greek word is *chronizo*, "to extend a state or an activity beyond an expected time, 'delay, take a long time**

In this instance the abusive head servant begins to beat his fellow servants. Instead of acting as a servant, the head servant is acting as the master and taking upon himself a master's prerogatives to discipline.

- He is indulging his whims. Moreover, the head servant has abandoned the self-discipline that got him appointed head servant in the first place.
- He gorges himself with food and wine, and goes about drunk rather than sober.
- **Drunkenness is the direct opposite of the qualities of being wakeful and watching that the initial parables stressed (12:35-38).**
- **The unfaithful servant now lives for himself and not his master. He neglects his responsibilities toward his fellow servants, and, instead, looks to his own comfort and luxury, signaled by "eating and drinking."**

If we are living for ourselves, we cannot at the same time be a faithful servant to the Master.

Jesus concludes with some pretty sobering words. A servant will be beaten in accordance with his knowledge of what his master wanted.

- **He will come under judgement like the unbelievers...as an unbeliever...a hypocrite...**
- **Go to Matthew for clarification...of why this will happen...they are hypocrites saying one thing doing another!**
- *NLT MT 24: 50 The master will return unannounced and unexpected, ⁵¹ and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Who are the hypocrites?... he told us earlier...the Pharisees....the religious leaders who claimed to be right with God ...they will be cut out of the faithful and have no place with God...

Jesus is telling Peter he is very serious ...that while he is away his servants are to serve faithfully with integrity and wisdom... Failure to do so...results in demotion...

The servant who knows what his master wants is held responsible to take action. If he doesn't believe his master, that doesn't alleviate his punishment

The contrast ... faithfulness is rewarded with promotion

Luke 12:48b.....When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required.

- Those who are capable to handle what they have been given to handle...will grow in capacity to handle more!
- **The steward that Jesus holds up for acclaim is not doing something particularly flashy or creative. He is just continuing to do his duty, day after day, without fail, without forgetting, without unexplained lapses. His virtue is faithfulness. You can count on him.**
- Faithfulness applies to any situation – big or small. God will not reward you for the position or worldly success you attain but He will reward your faithfulness to do what He has called you to do.
- Everyone does not have the same opportunities. Nor do we all have the same abilities. But we all have something. We have the capacity to be faithful in our own condition (Matt. 25:14-30).

And here is the clincher...the unfaithful to Jesus never belonged to him to begin with...as Mathew tells us...

NLT Matt 25:31 “But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. ³² All the nations^[e] will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

- **Notice that everyone claiming to be a sheep is not one...there are goats mixed in..they were never sheep...**

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

³⁷ “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ ⁴⁰ “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters,^[f] you were doing it to me!’

- **What stands out is that they were faithfully doing the works of Jesus...what he did...**
- **It was such a part of their lives that they did not think it stood out ...it just what we do they responded ...nothing more nothing less...we serve..**
- Everyone does not have the same opportunities. Nor do we all have the same abilities. But we all have something. We have the capacity to be faithful in our own sphere of influence....

My dear fellow servants. I encourage you as I encourage myself with the words of Christ:

Be dressed for service .

Keep your lamps burning.

Be watching for him to return, he brings his reward.

Even if he is delayed, stay loyal.

Be a faithful and wise manager.

Serve those under your care.

God has given you much.

Be worthy of that trust he has in you.

May we say like Caleb did.. *JOS 14: 11* *I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could then. end*

We are the Servants

- My dear friend, these parables Jesus has been giving apply to first of all to his leaders... us -- you and me.
- Jesus is the Master. We are the servants, some of us are head servants. We have been given responsibilities to fulfill in this age between Jesus' First Coming and his Second Coming.

- We all have been given much ...what shall we do with it

I think of the David, the shepherd boy from Bethlehem, who, the Scripture declares,

- *"served God's purpose in his own generation."* (Acts 13:36)

I want to do that. I want to serve God's purpose in my own generation.

I want to be a faithful servant...I want to be trustworthy among men, and trusted by my God.

But I have failed perfection. I have sinned. Yet I struggle to rise to my own expectations of myself and fulfill the dreams I believe God has put in my heart.

I believe You, too, desire for God to use you. You have received much from the Master, and it is now in your hands to do with it what you can. To prepare for his coming.

You fall short. You, too, fail. But you do not quit. You do not give up. Neither do you allow yourself to fall into self-indulgence and luxury. Instead you seek His Kingdom and His righteousness. Your heart is on the Lord, and he is leading you to do something important for him.



- God actively looks for faithfulness in His servants.
- Fulfilling his word...that he will come when they did not expect it...moral here...a servant of God serves period...

- Faithfulness applies to any situation – big or small. God will not reward you for the position or worldly success you attain but He will reward your faithfulness to do what He has called you to do.
- Faithfulness is one of those god-like traits. God is faithful, and we appreciate the effect His faithfulness has on us: we can rely upon Him. Because we appreciate reliability in others we begin trying to be more reliable ourselves. Reliability gradually becomes one of our characteristics. What was unrighteousness in us gradually becomes God's righteousness in us. It is this growth, or maturation, process that the New Testament elsewhere describes as our "new creature," our new way of thinking, living, and being god-like.

⁴¹ “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.’^[g] ⁴² For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. ⁴³ I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

⁴⁴ “Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

⁴⁵ “And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’ ⁴⁶ “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

end

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Our generation shuns words like "duty" and "obligation... But there is a very real sense in which people will come to fulfillment and maturity only through learning to be faithful, duty responsible servants of Jesus. I know it runs across the grain of our somewhat selfish souls, but then, Jesus' teachings often did grate on self-absorbed people.

Jesus is telling Peter he is very serious ...that while he is away his servants are to serve faithfully with integrity and wisdom... Failure to do so...results in demotion...while faithfulness is rewarded with promotion

The steward that Jesus holds up for acclaim is not doing something particularly flashy or creative. He is just continuing to do his duty, day after day, without fail, without forgetting, without unexplained lapses. His virtue is faithfulness. You can count on him.

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Jesus concludes with some pretty sobering words. A servant will be beaten in accordance with his knowledge of what his master wanted. The Greek verb here is *dero*, "originally, 'skin, flay,' but in our literature only in imagery, 'beat, whip.' "[12] America is awash with the theory that corporal punishment of children is equal to child abuse. So the idea of beating ANYONE is repugnant. Let's not judge Jesus' words by Twenty-First Century values, but by standards of his time. Using rods to punish was extremely common.

- Fathers would discipline their children with a rod; masters would discipline their servants with a rod. Punishment of criminals would sometimes be with a rod or whip. (For example, see Deuteronomy 25:2-3; Psalm 89:32, Proverbs 10:13; 13:24; 14:3; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15; and Hebrews 12:10-11.) **Discipline was not designed for cruelty, but for instruction.**
- The servant who knows what his master wants is held responsible to take action. If he doesn't believe his master, that doesn't alleviate his punishment.
- He knew it and refused to believe it and act upon it. What the servant is expected to do in Jesus' words is to "get ready." The Greek verb is *hetoimazo*, "to cause to be ready, 'put/keep in readiness, prepare.'" [13]

- Servants, disciples are responsible for what they have been told, and must use that knowledge to prepare themselves for what is to come.

To Whom Much is Given, Much Is Demanded (12:48b)

If verses 12:47-48a explain the concept of relative responsibility for punishment, then vs. 12:48b summarizes the concept into a principle.

48B.... When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required

God actively looks for faithfulness in His servants.

*MT 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in **heavenly** glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

MT 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something

to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

MT 25:37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

MT 25:40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

- **What stands out is that they were faithfully doing the works of Jesus...what he did...**
- **It was such a part of their lives that they did not think it stood out ...it just what we do they responded ...nothing more nothing less...we serve..**

MT 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me. ^{MT 25:44} "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

The unfaithful servant say this...I would have done those acts of service for you if I knew it was you...

- Buy it was just people...if we would have seen you ...we would have been on it...

MT 25:45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

MT 25:46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Fulfilling his word...that he will come when they did not expect it...moral here...a servant of God serves period...

God actively looks for faithfulness in His servants. It is one of the qualities on which He judges His people. Jesus tried to help us understand God's great interest in our trustworthiness. "His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."--Matt. 25:21

Everyone does not have the same opportunities. Nor do we all have the same abilities. But we all have something. We have the capacity to be faithful in our own condition (Matt. 25:14-30).

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Faithfulness applies to any situation – big or small. God will not reward you for the position or worldly success you attain but He will reward your faithfulness to do what He has called you to do.

By practice over time we develop characteristics, we routinely behave as God would behave. Not because we should, or must, but because we choose to, we prefer to, because it is in our character to do so.

Faithfulness is one of those god-like traits. God is faithful, and we appreciate the effect His faithfulness has on us: we can rely upon Him. Because we appreciate reliability in others we begin trying to be more reliable ourselves. Reliability gradually becomes one of our characteristics. What was unrighteousness in us gradually becomes God's righteousness in us. It is this growth, or maturation, process that the New Testament elsewhere describes as our "new creature," our new way of thinking, living, and being god-like.

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End

- If we claim to be Jesus followers...we all have areas of influence

@@@@@@As leaders—we've got to be honest with...GOD – Is our life and ministry REALLY “all about 22222Him?” because you go into life and ministry believing it is or at least hoping it will be...but you can get sidetracked..

I like what Oswald Chambers says..., “Jesus did **not** say, “He who believes in Me will realize all the blessings of the fullness of God,” but, in essence, “He who believes in Me will have everything he receives escape out of him.” Our Lord’s teaching was always anti-self-realization. His purpose is not the development of a person— His purpose is to make a person exactly like Himself, and the Son of God is **characterized** by self-expenditure. If we believe in Jesus, it is not what we gain but what He pours through us that really counts. God’s purpose is not simply to make us beautiful, plump grapes, but to make us grapes so that He may squeeze the sweetness out of us. Our spiritual life cannot be measured by success as the world measures it, but only by what God pours through us—

Faithfulness is Not Optional

When two people get married they expect one another to remain faithful. Faithfulness is a part of the marriage contract. So also with God. Faithfulness is not an option we choose. God expects us to be faithful to Him, and He seeks men and women who will live so as to consistently carry out His will. "And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind..."--1 Sam. 2:35

We show God our faithfulness by obeying Him. His heart becomes our heart; His mind our mind; His will our will. One cannot be faithful to God if they do what they please.

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Everyone does not have the same opportunities. Nor do we all have the same abilities. But we all have something. We have the capacity to be faithful in our own condition (Matt. 25:14-30). Yet all people do not prove trustworthy when tested. Jesus was reminding us of this very sobering fact.

The Lord's servants are stewards. They control things in their own lives which belong to God--which is everything in their life and person. One example of a stewardship God is specially interested in is the caring for and feeding of His people. This is not a judgment we have arbitrarily made. The Bible makes this judgment for us: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."--1 Cor. 4:1,2

Examples of Faithfulness

Think of the patriarch Joseph, son of Jacob. He obeyed God even when faithfulness brought him difficulties. He was sold as a slave while carrying out his father's orders (Gen. 37:13-29). He was thrown into prison because he was faithful to his master, Potiphar (Gen. 39:1-20). Joseph was always faithful to God, and in due time he was set down at the right hand of Pharaoh, ruler of Egypt.

Moses was "faithful in all [God's] house" (Num. 12:7). What does "all God's house" mean? It means that he obediently did all God asked of him. Moses was characteristically enthusiastic for God...thus quite different from the Israelites with him. They were enthusiastic one day, grumbling the next, and idolatrous soon after. Moses did not allow the people's attitude to deter his own obedience. He was an imperfect man like ourselves, and he, too, made his notable mistakes. Yet, he consistently did God's will the best he could.

You will recall that to others God often spoke in dreams and visions, but He did not do so to Moses. God spoke clearly to him, and He cites Moses' faithfulness as his reason for doing so (Num. 12:6-8). You and I can learn from that. If we obey, if we are faithful, that behavior enables us to hear God's voice more clearly. When our heavenly Father speaks, He expects and deserves obedience.

Daniel was faithful to God, but he had reasons of personal safety to disobey or "deny" God. He had been snatched from home, moved as a prisoner to Babylon, and enrolled in school in the king's court. But God's servant Daniel was unmoved. God honored and exalted him for that faithfulness. He was so faithful in his assignments that when enemies sought to overthrow him, they were unable to do so. Finally, they resorted to using Daniel's worship of God as a weapon against him (Dan. 6:1-5). From Daniel we learn that God honors faithfulness even in the most ungodly surroundings.

We Learn Faithfulness

Jesus Christ is the supreme example of faithfulness. He always did God's will and spoke God's words. He had only one desire, "...not my will, but thine, be done."--Luke 22:42

Jesus' obedience did not come naturally. This we are told in the Book of Hebrews. Even for Jesus, faithfulness was something to learn. "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered..."--Heb. 5:8

We, too, can learn faithfulness. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"--Luke 16:10-12

As we grow more faithful in one area of our life, that faithfulness can carry over into other areas. Faithfulness toward God begins with faithfulness toward family, faithfulness on our job, and faithfulness in financial dealings. We can't wait to show our faithfulness until someone trusts us with something big. We must be faithful now with whatever has already been entrusted to us.

Let us not be too quick to say or promise anything. God judges us when we make promises: will we do the thing that we have said? "...draw near to listen [in the house of God] rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools;... Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God...When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it, for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay."--Eccl. 5:1,2,4,5 NASB

Obey God Promptly

One aid to developing godly characteristics is to develop the habit of obeying God promptly. When we delay we are really only saying, "God, I want to have my will for a while. I'll obey you when I'm good and ready." But, of course, that isn't obedience at all!

We can start by obeying the revelation that we already have in the written Word of God. Ready obedience to God's Word will set us apart as one whom God can trust to carry out His will. "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way [NASB margin, "a way of integrity",] he shall serve me."--Psa. 101:6

Strive to become a man or woman whom God can trust to carry out His instructions. Serve God now with all your heart in single-minded obedience. Do not wait for life's big challenges before learning faithfulness. Start now, with life's littlest details, and learn faithfulness so that you will be ready for greater tests to come.

Abide in Christ! Allow His words to dwell richly in you. Please God in your words and actions, rather than pleasing your own heart. If you do, you will fully manifest a godly and christlike character through the fruit of the spirit, which spirit dwelleth within us.--Rom. 8:11

End.....

do you believe you would come to the conclusion that you are, now, a disciple and follower of Jesus? Not a fan, but a follower?"

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- Rather than continue to encourage and reassure his disciples, Jesus says that his ministry will cause division.
- After spending 45 verses trying to quiet the anxiety of his followers, as they are in the midst of a semi hostile throng...
- Jesus tells them that he came to bring fire to the earth...and this fire will separate people...

LK 12:49 "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!

- When Jesus said He came to bring fire on the earth, He was talking about bringing judgment--not the judgment of others but rather His own judgment.
- It is a judgment that the Messiah will bear for others, not one He will inflict on others. "I've come to start a fire on this earth -- how I wish it were blazing right now! I've come to change everything, turn everything right-side up -- how I long for it to be finished! Do you think I came to smooth things over and make everything nice? Not so. I've come to bring fire from heaven...
- The fire will, create a burning enthusiasm among some and fierce antagonism among others, deplorable, but inevitable, and the sooner kindled, the better.
- The clashes that would be caused by the Gospel, some people rejecting, others accepting it and even its friends opposing one another in their interpretation of its meaning.
- Jesus, of course, does not mean to say that it is His wish that there should be dissension and strife. He is rather speaking of the actual results of His message and work.
- How he wishes it was already kindled...he was already at the cross...

Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!

- Here we have a second metaphor. He is speaking of His baptism of blood, His crucifixion, and death. Look at Mark 10:38.

MK 10:38 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

- This is one of the fairly numerous statements in which Jesus predicts His Passion. Whenever He thought of it, sorrow assailed Him. . . .
- Verse 50 shows the anxiety of Jesus with which He views His coming death. It is similar to John 12:27

JN 12:27 "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.

- He shudders but He does not shrink from it.
- That is significant for us...the cross must proceed the resurrection...
- The cross is the kindling for the fire...the resurrection and Pentecost are the flames igniting the world.....

Luke 12:51 Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. ⁵¹

- He insists that he will not bring peace. Instead, his ministry will bring division among families and friends.
- For his followers they will change...and some people will not embrace the new you...
- there are times when separation must take precedent over loyalty...

The question here is what kind of peace is Jesus talking about...

John 14:27. He assures His own of peace, but not as the world gives peace.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

- In his spirit or the inner person... the believer is at peace with God But that will not make life a heaven on earth.
- And Peace" of the world means the kind of peace which humans desire, the total absence of trouble. Circumstance and relationship driven...
- For some reason followers of Jesus mistakenly look for a life of complete peace at home, at work, in the church, and elsewhere.
- this is false sort of peace which people long for.
- Sometimes we will have to choose between being a God pleaser or a man pleaser...or a self pleaser...
- Because some of God's demands do not please...even us
- nor are our chosen method for dealing with a particular situation or relationship ...so whose method do we go with....

His peace is the peace that will govern..but it is progressive...not an event...it is found internally...working it's way out externally...

ISA 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,

Prince of Peace. ^{ISA 9:7} *Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.*

- The terms in red...are a progressive movement...his Kingdom come...the Jews believed the messiah would bring peace on earth...but he was bringing peace with God...first
- *Jesus has taken away the fatality of our existence and given our lives eternal value."*
- Our only protection midst all this sin and division in the world is the Word of Jesus ^{JN 16:33} *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

And this trouble will sometimes happen with those closest to us...sadly enough...the ones who ought to be for our new lives often give us the most trouble...

Luke 12:52 From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three.⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

The picture is of a family of five: father, mother, daughter, son, and son's wife. The mother and the mother-in-law are the same person. The son's wife has come to live with the family.

- " He is not saying on which side the two or the three are. The emphasis is on the word "divided against."
- There is a difficulty that will arise when one chooses loyalty to Jesus... this hostility will be because they do not regard Jesus...who he is and what he represents... the same as you...
- Just expect it...so the man or woman worthy of following Jesus will consider this part of the cost...it divides because it is serious business...
- Jesus experienced it his followers will experience it...God is the one who deserves and demands our highest allegiance...

Note the parallel thoughts spoken by Jesus in **Matthew 10:35-36.**

^{MT 10:36} *a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.* ^{MT 10:37} *"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;³⁸ and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

- The prohibition...do not love anyone more than me...this will bring problems in some of your relationships...they will want you to love them more...by demonstrating you love them more than God
- And you will also struggle with allegiance to yourself..or allegiance to God...
- But if your life is lost in God you will find it...

This persecution arises from a lack of knowing God...and especially his character...

John 15:20-21. ²⁰ Remember the **words** I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ **They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me**

- They do not understand who he is nor where he is from...
- But the preaching of the **Word** causes divisions, not because of God or because of the Word, but because of unbelief...

The point is division. And division within the family... You don't have to raise your hands, but I wonder -- have any of you ever experienced division within your own family because of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Let me put it another way: Is there any one of you who hasn't experienced division within your family, because of the reality of the Resurrected Christ?

Any family that is divided by an issue will suffer the same sort of agony, and the agony is destructive unless it is caused by someone choosing a better way. The virtue of suffering is determined by the merits of the cause of the suffering.

I'm telling you, if you've got Jesus Christ in your heart (and in the core of your being), you're going to make other people a little uncomfortable. And that might even include members of your own family.

LK 2 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

later on...when he was twelve...

*LK 2:49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my **Father's house**?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

still later...

*MK 3:20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is **out of his mind**."*

A little while later they found him...

MK 3:31 Then Jesus' *mother and brothers* arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your *mother and brothers* are outside looking for you." **MK 3:33** "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. **MK 3:34** Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

And his brothers..... **JN 7:1** After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. ² But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, ³ Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. ⁴ No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵ For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

- His brothers were willing to place their brother in harm's way ...because they thought it might bring him publicity...they did not believe in him..but enjoyed the miracle magic show...
- And misunderstood his motives...they thought he wanted to be a popular public figure...

Some acknowledge the Gospel as true, others not. The Gospel is a "scandal," a foolish thing, to the unbeliever it was to Jesus brothers...it might be to ours also....

The solution.... don't give up...James and Jude two of Jesus brothers eventually came around...as Paul reports staying true to that which is of first importance stay on fire.....and boy did they catch on fire..

1CO 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to *James*, then to all the apostles,

GALI: 19 I saw none of the other apostles--only *James*, the Lord's brother.

JAS 1:1 *James*, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. **JAS 1:2** Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Jude came around...

JUDE 1:1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of *James*, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ: **JUDE 1:2** Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

If we stay on fire ...we may yet not win our loved ones and friends...the key is stay on fire...but even if it does not happen yet....sometimes we have to quit chasing those who do not want to get caught...and eventually they will stop running and unite with those heading on the same path...listen to these words of encouragement...

LK 18:28 Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!" LK 18:29 "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God³⁰ will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life

But here is the kicker... Have you seen the bumper sticker that reads: "I like Jesus. It's his followers that drive me nuts"? I'm going to get one of them but I am going to create another one to go right under that one. It would read: "And I'm one of them. Sorry." We will even have issues with those who love the lord...this is so we get the opportunity to practice the two great commandments love God and Love others ...

And remember... There is a peace promised beyond the challenge of following Jesus; a united family beyond any division that faith may have caused or bring. There is no conflict, no division in the kingdom of God. That was Jesus' ultimate prayer! It is our ultimate goal! It is where we are heading...keep your lamps lit...until we jettison this earth suit...and enter the division less kingdom of God...

Finishes his dialogue with Peter...

*LK 12:54 He said to **the crowd**: "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does.⁵⁵ And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is.⁵⁶ Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?*

- *Jesus showed them two clear weather facts of the region. But then had to tell them that the signs of the times are also that easy to recognize if they allow and accept to understand.*
- ***The same holds true for us today. We need to look, discern, and want to "correctly" understand His ways for today.***

end

*I like what Oswald Chambers says..., "Jesus did **not** say, "He who believes in Me will realize all the blessings of the fullness of God," but, in essence, "He who believes in Me will have everything he receives escape out of him." Our Lord's teaching was always anti-self-*

realization. His purpose is not the development of a person— His purpose is to make a person exactly like Himself, and the Son of God is characterized by self-expenditure. If we believe in Jesus, it is not what we gain but what He pours through us that really counts. God's purpose is not simply to make us beautiful, plump grapes, but to make us grapes so that He may squeeze the sweetness out of us. Our spiritual life cannot be measured by success as the world measures it, but only by what God pours through us—

Go to Matthew for clarification...

*MT 24:45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' ⁴⁹ and he then begins to **beat his fellow** servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the **hypocrites**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

**Who are the hypocrites?... he told us earlier...the Pharisees....the religious leaders
...they had no place with God...**