

Walking with Christ

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”

—*Philippians 3:10*

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE

Apostle Paul clearly indicates that he was willing to give up all of the prospects of his earthly life and position of honor, that he might know and serve our Lord Jesus. In this letter to the brethren at Philippi, he further stated, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”—Phil. 3:7,8

OUR HIGH CALLING IN CHRIST JESUS

Paul set aside everything that pertained to his former ambitions, which were based on human knowledge and understanding, that he might instead win Christ. He explained that this High Calling in Christ Jesus would include a resurrection from death to the highest of all spiritual planes of

life, the divine nature. It would also mean that he would have a share in Christ's future kingdom in which all of God's human creation would be blessed. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3:11-14

Paul desired the kind of spiritual knowledge that would prepare him for a ministry in which he could preach this wonderful message of righteousness and truth to the sin-sick and dying world. He wanted us to also consider that the same principles he was adopting also apply to our spiritual growth and development. We, too, must have the spiritual food that is provided in God's Word of Truth concerning his ultimate purpose for the reconciliation of the human family.

OUR GUIDING LIGHT

God's Word is described as a lamp and guiding light for our benefit as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. The psalmist wrote, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."—Ps. 119:103-105

This wonderful light of understanding has been provided for us so that we, too, may walk in the path

of righteousness, and strive for the High Calling in Christ Jesus, even as Paul did. God's Word provides us with the proper spiritual nourishment to make us strong in the Lord. If we accept his spiritual teachings, and properly assimilate them, we will be transformed by the power of our loving Heavenly Father and his Holy Spirit.

In our present earthly condition, food is eaten to provide energy and strength for our fleshly bodies and to allow them to function efficiently. A similar application is true when we feed on God's Word. However, we also need to be rightly exercised by the spiritual energy that we have derived from the Word of God. For this, we look to Jesus as our perfect example. He diligently studied his Heavenly Father's Word of Truth and did everything in his power to serve him. He embraced every opportunity that came his way of doing good for others. The Apostle Peter testified to our Lord Jesus' earthly ministry. He said, "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."—Acts 10:38, *New American Standard Bible*

A SOUND MIND

Character development and a serious study of God's message of Truth are essential for all who seek to walk in newness of life and to share in the sufferings of Christ. In his letter to Timothy, Paul encouraged him by reminding him, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."—II Tim 1:7

If we put the Truth first, then service will find its proper place in the life of the consecrated Christian. We must seek to be balanced by obtaining a proper degree of basic and fundamental doctrine, character development in our lives, and service to God.

We are living in a very precarious time, and we are witnesses of disintegration all about us. In our present world, we see a great increase in sorrow and hopelessness among many people. We need to utilize the teachings of the Scriptures to comfort others whenever possible, and with the proper spirit of God. We have been anointed to preach the wonderful message of Truth as recorded in the Word of God, even as was our Lord Jesus, who said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."—Luke 4:18,19

SERVING GOD'S PEOPLE

Some of the Lord's people who are enduring trying experiences could very possibly appreciate a word of comfort and encouragement from us, and we should be ready to serve them in this capacity whenever we have opportunity. We have not reached the point in time in God's ultimate plan and purpose where there is nothing for us to do but to wait upon him. As long as we are still here in the flesh, God has so arranged matters that there is always something we can do in the service for his people.

PEACE OF HEART

If we trust in God and his arrangements, we will not worry about the increasing levels of violence and trouble that surround us. We have received a priceless legacy from our dear Lord Jesus who bequeathed the wonderful promise of comfort to his faithful followers. He said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”—John 14:27

We should all have this level of peace and, if not, it may be obtained by laying hold of it and praying for an abundant measure of faith. We must humbly submit our lives to God to receive the rest of faith that God has promised. Through the Prophet Isaiah, God assures us, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” (Isa. 26:3) It is through the strength of God’s Holy Spirit, which activates our minds, that we may grow in the development of this peace which Jesus has left us.

STEADFAST AND UNMOVABLE

Concerning Jesus, the Apostle Paul said, “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” (I Tim. 1:12) Again, he said, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”—I Cor. 15:57,58

A person who is steadfast and unmovable, and is filled with the peace of God and has trust in him, will not be disturbed by the agitated and restless conditions around him, because he is filled with our Lord's eternal and glorious peace. If we only have this peace partially, we must pray for a greater infilling of it. He wants us to ask him because it shows our trust in him, and our faith in the promises of his precious Word of Truth. Let us pray as did David, who said, "As for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies."—Ps. 69:13-16

Our Lord hears our prayers and delivers us, even as he delivered his Son. We are to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. We see manifested in the earth many powers of natural phenomena such as the power of a raging sea, violent storms, and earthquakes; but none of these can compare to the power of God's might which protects us.

SEEKING THINGS ABOVE

In his message to the brethren in Colosse, the Apostle Paul wrote, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection

on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”—Col. 3:1-4

In our featured scripture, the Apostle Paul spoke concerning God’s power to resurrect him when the occasion arose. This is illustrated when we consecrate our lives to our loving Heavenly Father, and when we are immersed into Christ’s death. We are lowered into the water, which represents the death of our old fleshly nature, and then we are lifted out of the water by the one performing the immersion service, which represents our being risen with Christ.

Those who are truly risen with Christ will seek those things which are above. Those who tear down, find fault, and do not seek to build up and strengthen the weak, cannot be risen with Christ. The “old creature” was to have died at the time of immersion, but if it asserts itself by such acts of the fallen flesh, we should be aware that these are not the ways of the New Creature in Christ Jesus. We are to seek those things which are above, and in so doing we will experience the power of his resurrection, and come to know the fellowship of his sufferings.

HIGHLY EXALTED

We know that Jesus sacrificed his perfect humanity for the poor, sin-sick and dying world, and he is now highly exalted by the power of his Heavenly Father. Paul stressed, “If there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection

and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:1-11, *NASB*

Whatever we do for the Lord’s people we do for him. This is a solid principle. Had we been living at the time of our Lord’s first advent, we all would have no doubt wanted to serve him in every way possible. We would have wanted to give him gifts, help bear his cross, and to offer all the assistance we could. If we do these acts of kindness today during our own lifetime, even to the least of his brethren, we are doing it to him. Jesus taught this principle of Christian grace, and it is applicable to those who are now living during the closing years of this present Gospel Age.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

The Apostle Paul said that he wanted to be made conformable unto Jesus' death. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."—Gal. 2:20

We recognize this as a figure of speech to illustrate the sacrificial death. Jesus died on the cross willingly to become man's Redeemer. Those who would follow him must also be willing to die a sacrificial death, having given up all hope for a life here upon this earth. They are willing to be spent in his service, and this involves being made conformable unto his death. It is the new mind that now dictates to the flesh what it must do, and it is the new mind that receives the power of his resurrection.

A NARROW WAY

As we draw nearer to the end of our walk in the narrow way, may we be strengthened, and not give up hope. May we become energized through this strength to fight the good fight of faith and to finish our course as faithful servants.

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."—Phil. 3:10

