

## 15.

# A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Lk 12:32). Our heavenly Father desires very much that each and every one of His children would be obedient to Him and would enter into His Kingdom. It is not His desire to turn any away. Surely in His own heart when He begot us through His Son Jesus Christ He yearned that we would be faithful and that we would inherit this great blessing. The scripture reads, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn 3:16). We also read in Romans 8:32: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

These passages demonstrate to us God’s great love toward men. He didn’t even spare His own Son in manifesting to the world the immeasurable, immense love which He has. Concerning salvation we know that it is not His will that any should perish but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth. I am certain that this same attitude also applies to His children entering into the Millennial Kingdom. Just as God does not take pleasure in casting anyone into the lake of fire, so also He does not wish for any of His children to miss out on the things which He has prepared for them.

It is up to us. If we are willing and obedient, He is faithful and He will enable us to enter into these things. All the power and the authority of God are invested in Jesus Christ and they are available to us today through the Holy Spirit. We should not make excuses about being too weak

or unable. On the cross, by the shedding of His blood, Jesus purchased everything that is necessary for us to be obedient and to accomplish His will. Not only this but He has poured out His Spirit upon us and will grant us His grace so that we may live according to God. If we are willing, He will empower us to overcome the devil's kingdom. There is no need for even the smallest, weakest member of the body of Christ to be defeated. God has done it all. What remains is only for us by faith and obedience to enter into it. Let us not be condemned or afraid. It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom.

Now, we need to say a word to backsliders. If you are a backslider and living in a backslidden, sinful condition, it is not too late to repent. You can turn from your evil, sinful living right now. And when you do you will find that the Father will welcome you with open arms. Just as the prodigal son about whom we read in the scriptures went away from his father for awhile and squandered his substance on riotous living and evil companions, one day came to himself, returned to his father's house and was there received with joy and feasting by his father; so you too can repent and turn away from the direction in which you have been going and come back to God. He will receive you, He will love you, He will again clothe you in a clean garment. And if you continue faithfully until He comes, you too can enter into the Kingdom.

It is not too late. It will never be too late to repent and turn again to Him until the day He comes. On that day it will be too late, but until then there is opportunity for every child of God who has returned to his vomit and wallowed in the mud to turn again and receive the inheritance. In His great love which He has for all of mankind and especially for His children, the Father will certainly receive you back and enable you to live for Him. I must say here that those who have backslidden probably will not receive the same degree of reward. Nevertheless they can still enter into the Kingdom of God if they turn to Him before it is too late.

There is an interesting parable in the New Testament (Mt 20:1-16) about workers whom the Lord sends out into the vineyard. The story is told of how some workers were

hired early in the morning, others later on in the day, and some towards the end of the day. When they came to receive their pay, each one was paid the same thing. Some of those who had been working hard all day long complained about this, but the Lord rebuked them and said, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good? So the last will be first, and the first last." (Mt 20:13-16). This is how the Kingdom of God will be. Those who are born again early in life and who work faithfully and diligently until He comes again will enter into the Kingdom. And those who are saved later on and work for only a few short years will receive the same inheritance.

There is still time for you. If you have not received the Lord or if you have not yet begun laboring in the vineyard, Jesus Christ is calling to you. He is calling laborers to come and work to bring forth fruit unto God. If you hear this call begin today. It is not too late to begin doing the Lord's will until He comes. Do not let the devil deceive you into thinking that you're too old or that it would be too hard or that it's simply too late to do anything. If from today onward you work faithfully, you will receive the same reward as those who have labored patiently throughout their lifetime.

In Matthew 5:19 there is another encouraging word. Here we find the story of a man who disobeyed one of the Lord's commandments and even taught others his disobedience. The scripture says that he will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. At first this may not seem very encouraging but the good thing about it is that this man was still found in the Kingdom. Even though he was in some measure mistaken and deceived and taught others his deception, because he was doing the work of the Lord he entered into the Kingdom. He may be the least, perhaps, but nevertheless he is there due to his efforts. Of course there are others who will not enter in because of not striving lawfully; however there does seem to be some room for error. God looks upon our hearts and He judges

righteously. All of us should do our best to work according to the light which we have seen. But let us be encouraged that if we are not perfect, but only faithful, God will recognize this on judgment day. However, remember this too: many who are first shall be last and the last, first (Mt 19:30).

Let us read together a portion of another parable about the Kingdom of God. This is the parable of the sower. I'm sure that most of you have heard it before. It is the story of a sower going forth to sow his seed which falls into different kinds of ground with varying results. Jesus explains:

“To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God : but to the rest it is given in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they may not understand.

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes, and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

But the ones on the rock are those, who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.

And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it, and bear fruit with patience” (Lk 8:10-15).

How accurately this parable describes the workings of the Word in the hearts of men and how clearly it applies to the coming Kingdom. The Word of the Lord has gone forth and for most of you readers it probably has been sown in your hearts. It is really up to us what kind of response we are going to have to it. Since we are in control of our own heart we must decide which one of these several ways we will be going. I think it would be a good idea for all of us

to examine ourselves in the light of these words. Now I do not advocate long hours of self introspection but I do believe it is absolutely indispensable for us to have times of waiting before the Lord, allowing His Holy Spirit to search our hearts. We must be open and willing for the Spirit of God to expose us in many areas of our life, to shine into us and help us see the stones, the thorns and all the things that will choke the Word, hinder it, and make it unfruitful.

No one who is truly willing to serve the Lord will be kept out of the Kingdom by these things, for we can, when we see them in our hearts, ask the Lord to remove them. We may request that He change us into the kind of person He wants us to be. God can take away the heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh (Ezek 36:26). We, with the help of the Holy Spirit, can break up the ground, throw out the stones, cut down the weeds, and bring forth fruit unto God. Let us therefore examine ourselves in the light of the Word and through the enlightening of the Holy Spirit and see which one of these kinds of hearts we have. If we find that our heart is evil, stony or full of the thorns and thistles of this world, then let us repent – repent for the sake of the Kingdom – and renew our hearts toward God. He will greatly assist us in this and help us to enter into what He has promised.

It is important that all believers know the fear of God. The scripture tells us that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Pr 1:7). To have a healthy, reverent respect for the power of God and for the coming judgment day is good. However, there are some believers who labor under constant condemnation from the devil. It is to these that I would like to write this word. Even though there are many things in this book which are frightening, do not allow the devil to use them to accuse you. If you are doing your best, if you are obedient in everything that you know the Lord wants of you and are in your heart living for God, do not permit Satan to condemn you and keep you from your joy. Resist his accusations and don’t believe what he says. The devil is a liar and would love to keep you under constant condemnation so that you cannot serve the Lord or know His will.

On the other hand, there may be many Christians who have the opposite kind of problem. These are those who refuse the speaking of the Lord, whose ears are grown dull of hearing. They hear but they don't heed. These are the ones who constantly make excuses for not doing what they know God wants them to do. Since God today is invisible and we don't see Him with our natural faculties, it is all too easy for the children of God to ignore His speaking or to excuse themselves from doing His will.

If you are one of these, I plead with you, unstop your ears, soften your heart, make it tender towards God and allow yourself to respond to what He is saying. He may be asking you to do something which is very difficult. Perhaps He is asking you to sell all and go to another nation to preach His Word. Perhaps He is leading you to get out of some occupation to which you look for security but which keeps you away from Him. Perhaps He is telling some of you younger people to give up that boyfriend or girlfriend who you know is not a believer, or is not living for Jesus Christ. Nothing is too much to sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom. Do not be like Esau who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, who sold his right to the inheritance simply to gratify his momentary cravings.

In God's Kingdom today and in His Millennial Kingdom which is coming, there are great spiritual rewards. The joy is unspeakable and full of glory, but you will never know it or taste it unless you lay aside what is keeping you from entering in. The scriptures exhort us to "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Lk 13:24). This is referring to how a pack animal, in order to go through a narrow opening, first had to have all its baggage unloaded. It was only after being thus disencumbered that a beast of burden could squeeze through. The sad reason that so many of God's precious children do not enter into the Kingdom is that they are unwilling to rid themselves of all the baggage which is keeping them from the will of God. They are hanging onto many things being afraid to let go of them and trust Jesus to be all to them. Many believers have barely gotten the aroma of the rich enjoyment of God which is available to them today. They stand

in the outer court and never enter into the holy of holies, into the very presence of God, to feast with Him and enjoy Him, because they are attached to outward, material, earthly things. Let us lay aside the weights and the sin which so easily beset us and run the race. If there is something which is keeping you from entering in, cast it aside. Do not be encumbered so that you cannot enter. God will keep those things which you have entrusted to Him until the day when He comes, and then He will reward you abundantly for what you have left behind for His sake.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Kingdom of God lies waiting before us. The door is open and all may enter in. Let me say again that no one is too weak or too feeble. The ones who do not enter are simply unwilling. No matter what your state or your condition, you can repent today, turn to the heavenly Father, and He will strengthen you and enable you to work faithfully until He comes. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Master when he comes will find so doing. Assuredly I say to you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods" (Mt 24:46,47). May God have mercy on us to make us His obedient people, and those to whom He says, "Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your lord" (Mt 25:21).

I would like to end this chapter with just a few verses which show how faithful God is if only we will be, and how much it is His will for us to enter into His heavenly Kingdom. "Now may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it" (I Thess 5:23,24). "Who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful" (I Cor 1:8,9). Paul says: "And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me for his heavenly kingdom" (II Tim 4:18). "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6). "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to God our Saviour, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen" (Jude 24,25).

