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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

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NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

All Communications

D. Lancaster
77 Belmont Avenue
Springhead
Oldham OL4 4RS
England

M. C. Steiger
836 King Road
Forestville
New York 14062
U.S.A.

JOY AND REJOICING IN HEAVEN

In a recent study of Luke chapter 15, we are reacquainted with two parables spoken by the Lord Jesus which convey the same message - that being, the joy and rejoicing there is in heaven over one repentant sinner.

In this chapter we learn there were 4 classes of people gathered to hear Jesus speak - publicans, sinners, Pharisees and scribes:

“Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” Luke 15:1-2

There were two separate attitudes of mind in these four different groups of people who came to hear Him preach. The publicans and sinners came to learn from Jesus, while the Pharisees and scribes sought occasion to criticize and murmur against Him in disbelief of what He taught. The latter’s fault-finding showed their failure to see him as not only a great prophet, let alone the Son of God and the means of eternal life. There was no feeling of humility in their hearts, no thinking that they might be wrong - they were not ready to examine themselves honestly but presumed they were right and in no need of repentance.

With astute insight given by the Spirit, and knowing through this power, what the Pharisees and scribes were thinking of Him, the Lord Jesus taught a parable of a shepherd who owning an hundred sheep, leaves the ninety-nine to go and search for the single one that is lost:

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.” Luke 15:4-6

This parable was relevant to the common people for many in the crowd would be agricultural workers, keeping sheep for their livelihood. The Lord Jesus concludes this parable by saying:

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” Luke 15:7

There are none who are “just” or who “need no repentance” (saving the Lord Jesus). All who think they are “just”, allow their fleshly pride to deceive them - and such was the case for the Pharisees and scribes. Meanwhile the publicans and sinners who were looked down upon, would feel a sense of joy and rejoicing that they had a means of hope and life eternal through repentance.

Jesus gave this parable to teach that all men need humility, for none were “just” before God - being flesh, and in need of forgiveness. The Pharisees and scribes were more versed in the law, yet overlooked the compassion and mercy contained therein. Instead they elevated themselves through fleshly pride, looking down on others less educated than were they. They took no pity on their poorer brethren - there was no effort to provide care or love as children together living in God’s household. The true child of God sees a need and attempts to come alongside and provide help, whether it be spiritual or materially for his brother.

The apostle Peter also wrote of the need for ALL to come to repentance in order to be found acceptable before God:

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
II Peter 3:9

Feeling themselves above the common people and in no need of repentance, the Pharisees and scribes felt themselves right in their own eyes - but they were not considered so in God’s.

How true that God is not slack - for He does all in His power to reward repentance and draw those that seek Him through His Son.

In another parable taught by the Lord Jesus - two men came into the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a publican. A publican was a Jew employed by the Romans to collect the taxes from the people, and so was hated for doing the bidding of the conquerors. The Pharisees were schooled in the law but thought themselves above the rest of Israel because of their education and status.

In the temple the publican did not lift up his eyes to pray for he knew he was unworthy and smote himself on the breast in remorse for he knew he needed repentance and God's mercy - he was truly humble. Meanwhile the Pharisee was proud of his own position in society and looked up to by others. He should have been a righteous man for he knew the law, yet he kept the letter of the law only - tithing and fasting, but his heart was full of fleshly pride. Thinking himself as a righteous man standing without fault before God - not knowing how far he truly was from being right in God's eyes.

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Luke 18:11-14

How easy for the flesh to have that same attitude that they are better than others. Yet how wretched we ALL are in the face of God's glory and righteousness - He who in perfection condescends to look down upon man to forgive and guide him. Those that turn from pride seeking repentance, will be accepted at the judgment seat with rejoicing.

In this same chapter 18 of Luke a certain ruler asked what could he do to attain unto eternal life? He had done many good things being schooled in the law, but the Lord Jesus with the power of the Spirit, knew his heart and how he loved his riches, replied:

"...Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich"

Luke 18:22-23

When those witnessing this event heard how the rich young ruler went away sorrowing, they too asked: "Who then can be saved?" (verse 26)

Yet the Lord answered with mercy and hope:

“...The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” Luke 18:27

To the fleshly mind without faith many things seem impossible, yet with the Spirit’s help all is possible to one in sincerity seeking God with true repentance and humility.

M.C.S.

PAUL’S JOURNEY TO ROME

As we read the closing chapters of Acts, we get a glimpse of the hardships that Paul had to endure as the circumstances led him to Rome. Throughout that journey, Paul’s faith in God remained strong, as he boldly taught of his conversion and his belief in the Lord Jesus.

Paul was to travel to Jerusalem and was informed, while in Caesarea, that he would be bound if he continued on his journey to Jerusalem:

“And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.” Acts 21:10-14

Paul then traveled to Jerusalem and met with the brethren. While in the city, Paul was found within the temple by the Jews of Asia, who stirred up the crowd with false accusations against him. The people then sought to take Paul's life:

“And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.”

Acts 21:30-33

Paul was to be taken into the castle, but he persuaded the chief captain to allow him to speak to the crowd. Paul then spoke of his conversion, and how Ananias had told him that he was “a chosen vessel” to witness to all people regarding the word that he heard and the things that he had seen from Jesus. Paul also spoke of a vision of Jesus, who told him to leave Jerusalem because the people would not listen to his words. So, Jesus instructed him to leave and go to the Gentiles. Paul's words continued to inflame the people, to the point that the captain of the guard had to intervene:

“And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust in the air,

The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.”

Acts 22:22-24

The chief captain was about to have Paul scourged to get the truth of the matter from him, when Paul declared that he was a

Roman. The captain then spared Paul, and commanded that the chief priests and their council appear, to bring the Jews' charges against Paul. Paul spoke to them, saying:

“... Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.
And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.
Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?
And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?
Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.”
Acts 23:1-5

Then Paul perceived that the council was part Sadducees and part Pharisees, and declared himself a Pharisee, who believed in the resurrection of the dead. It was then that a riot started between the two factions, and the chief captain took Paul into the castle for his own safety. While in the castle, Jesus appeared to Paul:

“And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.”
Acts 23:11

It was then that forty Jews took an oath to neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Paul's sister's son heard of this oath, and came and told Paul. The young man was instructed by Paul to go to the chief captain and tell him what he had heard. The chief captain then sent soldiers with Paul to Caesarea, to Felix the governor. Felix declared that he would hear Paul's case once Paul's accusers had arrived. Ananias the high priest arrived with the elders and spoke against Paul:

“For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:
Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.”
Acts 24:5-6

Paul was then allowed to defend himself:

“Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men.

Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.

Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.”

Acts 24:11-21

Felix commanded Paul to be kept under guard, but allowed him liberty, and stated that visitors should not be forbidden. Felix hoped that Paul would pay him to be released, but Paul did not, and so he remained bound for two years, until the time when Felix was replaced by Festus.

Festus journeyed to Jerusalem, and was approached by the high priest and the chief of the Jews, to have Paul brought to them, but he refused and asked them to return to Caesarea with him and make their case against Paul there:

“And when he was come, the Jews which came down from

Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar have I offended any thing at all.

But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go." Acts 25:7-12

After some time, King Agrippa came to Caesarea and was told of Paul's case:

"And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him." Acts 25:24-25

Paul was given an opportunity to tell his case to Agrippa, and he told about his conversion and his work that followed. After Agrippa heard Paul speak, he determined that Paul was not worthy of death or imprisonment, and could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.

So Paul was sent via ship to Rome. At one point in the journey, Paul warned that they should not leave Crete:

"... Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives." Acts 27:10

Against Paul's advice, the ship did set sail and was set upon a storm that tossed the ship in a great wind. After three days of continual battering, all looked grim; but Paul spoke words of encouragement:

"... Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now, I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve. Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island."

Acts 27:21-26

As we know, through much hardship and danger, all people aboard the ship made it safely to the island of Melita. While on Melita, Paul was bitten by a venomous snake, but felt no harm. He also healed the father of the chief man of the island, along with many others with diseases.

In time, Paul did arrive at Rome and was there two years, as he taught of the kingdom of God and of the Lord Jesus. Throughout his journey, Paul spoke boldly of his faith in God and Jesus, to all with whom he came in contact — whether they were Jew or Gentile. He spoke with confidence before rulers and leaders, not only of his own case, but also of his strong beliefs. He was able to do this because of great faith in God. He was sure that he would make it to Rome, no matter what circumstances came upon him, because Jesus had told him to go. We did not see any faltering of Paul's faith in God throughout his journey to Rome, because it was his faith that allowed him to do great works.

We too must follow Paul's example and be bold in our faith. We must believe that as long as we are seeking the Lord, no matter what happens to and around us, we can accomplish the work that God has set before us.

E.J.M

A BIBLE CLASS

Better to give than receive

In the scriptures there are many statements that provide food for thought - such was so in our readings from the Acts where Paul says to his brethren, as he left them to journey to Jerusalem:

“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, when He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
Acts 20:35

Even those in the world speak of this famous saying, but Paul’s purpose was with a deeper more spiritual meaning. He was reminding the elders of Ephesus of their responsibility to apply the spirit of the Lord Jesus’ words into their work of ministering, especially since he was leaving their presence and may not have any further contact with them, for he expected not to return.

The work of those elders and the work of all, even in this current time, is to support the weak - to give help to the weak where it was needed. Who are the weak? We are all in need of the help of one another, therefore, Paul was encouraging these brethren to use God’s ministry to instruct from Jesus’ spirit, by giving of themselves and thus revealing His spirit. This help was to be directed from a right spirit, not directed from a fleshly mind in order to dominate or take advantage of those who are weak, as is the flesh’s viewpoint.

How great a lesson the Lord Jesus gave - not only from his preaching but his entire life’s work was an example documented for our help - so that as he thought and walked, so must we endeavor as well. To conclude a faithful and obedient life, He offered his life’s blood as a willing sacrifice at Calvary - giving his life for His friends.

Upon sending his disciples forth to preach the gospel it is recorded in Matthew that:

“...he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.”
Matthew 10:1

Armed with the power of the spirit to heal and to preach,

showing the spiritual power given them, He also gave them another vital message:

“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:8

This word “freely” as used in this reference means “a gift or present”, implying the sacrifice from another given to help another. We know that in so doing the flesh can be controlled if one realizes there is love expressed in giving to another. The Lord Jesus knew His disciples would succeed to heal the sick by the power within them, but they must also freely teach - giving of the knowledge of the gospel that His work be accomplished and we too are today to do likewise. A cheerful giver is spoken of in the scriptures in relation to the giving of alms but encompasses much more! It is just as important to look around and perceive another’s situation and if a need is seen, we must supply what is needful- whether it be physical or spiritual help.

We would be lost without the gift of the Lord Jesus’ sacrifice, for He is the only means of approach to the Father. Without Him to intercede to the Father in our prayers, mankind would be left without reconciliation for our sins, and die without hope. We therefore must in a small matter give to others in need. So much we have been given and likewise must reflect the love of that gift in our living to others . Many of the disciples lost their lives in the process of broadcasting the love and hope they had been given. God said in pride of the Lord Jesus, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17). This pride was for a Son who had obeyed faithfully all that His father commanded.

His control over His flesh nature was what was so pleasing to His Father. It was even more difficult for Him because He had the spirit’s power and could receive status and praise from others if He displayed this power to all. That is why He often said after doing a miracle of healing “tell no man”. Jesus did not want the exhibition of His power to overshadow the words of His ministry of God’s word.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”
James 1:5

God has given His wisdom in full measure that a man of faith not waiver, but be sure and anchored in His word and walk steadfast and singly in that direction that He has shown through the Bible. To know that God has made known His word to help us live acceptably to Him should make us rejoice in the knowledge of that great gift and therefore make us in return be a "cheerful giver", grateful for the great blessings we have received. If we concentrate on giving as we have been given, then we will not be so concerned of our own needs in daily life, for the means to receive all that is needed has been granted to us from the Almighty.

It is an effort to be aware of others' circumstances and needs - it takes us out of ourselves and by doing so, and pleases our Father as we exhibit this unselfish spirit of Christ who said:

"...Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."
Matthew 25:40

By providing unselfishly to one in need and with an open and cheerful heart, we give glory to the Giver of all blessings, paying homage to His goodness, kindness and longsuffering for our failures - especially when we forget to be a "cheerful giver" as is our Father and His Son.

M.C.S.

ONE ACCORD

We read of the work of witnessing by the apostles in Acts. This was a work clearly guided by the Spirit. They responded with one accord, and how essential their like-mindedness was to perform the work which was before them. Acts chapter 1 verse 14 tells us:

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”

Here we see the apostles and those with them waiting for the promise Jesus had spoken of, the coming of the Holy Spirit. Also in Acts chapter 2 verses 1 and 2 we see them likewise in one accord:

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.”

And again in chapter 2 verse 46 we see a regard for their united place in the sight of God:

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.”

Further in chapter 4 verses 21, 23-24 we see how they were met with opposition and how their singleness of mind was a help:

“So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.”

As the apostles went about the work of witnessing in the power of the Spirit, they praised God and were strengthened as chapter 4 verse 31 tells us:

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

What a great determination to witness must have stirred in the apostles as they felt this power of God. In the 5th chapter, the 12th verse, we read of that power working on their behalf in miraculous ways:

“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people: (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch.)”

The work of witnessing went forth with positive results as the spirit of the apostles moved in one accord with the Spirit, and so success was seen.

As in all cases of attempting to do the work of God, there is often opposition, as there was with the work of the apostles, as we read in Acts 5 verse 17-18:

“Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him. (which is the sect of the Sadducees.) and were filled with indignation. And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.”

Common suffering as well as common elation was felt by the apostles, that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ. Do we not often find as there is a stand made for the word of God that there also is opposition? Yet, certain of the apostles were put into prison, however, we find the Spirit coming to their aid. The power of the Spirit could not be quenched, nothing could hold back the purpose of God to be accomplished. Their release certainly must have bolstered their faith, and as they were allowed to continue the work of God, this presented sure evidence of the

intervention of God on their behalf. We read of this in Acts 5 verses 41, 42:

“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

How needful it is for us to regard in our witnessing, the above examples. Although our witnessing now is one of sackcloth, we can be helped in it. Perhaps it is similar to the situation of the apostles who were waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit to come upon them. We are waiting for Jesus' return and the will of God to be accomplished at that time, when the Gospel will go forth in all the world, and the name of Jesus Christ proclaimed.

Does this not remind us that we must also be of one accord now, to be like-minded as we wait for God's will to be accomplished? During our time of probation, how often we find we are tried as the apostles were. We go to Luke 6 verses 22-23 and read how this struggle is to be regarded:

“Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.”

These words would have been in the minds of the apostles at that time as they rejoiced to suffer shame for Jesus' name, thinking of the blessing to come. Were they not of that one mind and purpose, as they were in one accord, seeking God's help — looking to the blessing that God had promised? Such speaks of the exuberance of spirit the children of God must have in the midst of trial. Truly, there are times in which we should regard the blessings we have as we reach for the help God has promised. In such trials, we should leap for joy in the knowledge that we are endeavouring to destroy our flesh.

Jesus continues in Luke 6 verses 24-26 to speak and warn of the woe to come if our flesh gets the upper hand:

“But woe unto you that are rich! For ye have received your consolation.

Woe unto you that are full! For ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! For ye shall mourn and weep.

Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

As we regard the apostles, it becomes clear that they took care that all things were common, to avoid any appearance that they were rich in the world's goods, for their work was a work of the Spirit and not of the flesh. Woe and warning given to who? Is it not given to those who would try to avoid the shame and reproach that comes with an understanding of God's Truth? Perhaps we are helped to regard this reproach of Christ in John 17 verse 14:

“I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

The world hated Jesus' apostles as it hates all those associated with the Spirit of Truth. The record of the apostles speaks of how they were sent in John 17 verses 18 and 21:

“As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

The work of the apostles, was it not just that; to have the world believe? We see in the early works that many did believe. However, not long after, great persecution came upon the apostles and many were killed for the word of God. Yet, they left a record for us to consider today, for Jesus says (verse 20);

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word.”

How much we must regard our place in the purpose of God, to have provided for us the knowledge of God's plan. As we regard this great mercy of God, we must seek to be like-minded in this purpose, in one accord as were the apostles.

We may have questioned what drew the apostles together to think in one accord. Was it not the love that Jesus speaks of in John 17 verse 26:

“And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Is this not what is required likewise today as we wait for the return of the Lord Jesus? It is in that love declared by Jesus that we must wait, that love through which we might be of one accord and one mind. We do know of the trials and testing that will come but that love will help us to overcome:

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.
But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s suffering, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” I Peter 4:12-13

This is the spirit of understanding we must have. As we regard our life with its trials and testings, we need to rejoice the same as did the apostles who felt worthy to suffer shame for Jesus. In such a spirit there is the understanding that as those sufferings are perceived in joy, there also comes the understanding that the destruction of the flesh gives glory to God. This must have sustained the apostles as they all did their work to the glory of God and so perceived the love of Christ in it.

“Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” I Peter 4:19

Are we not required likewise to perform those works which are required of God? The most important ingredient is being in one accord, having the knowledge that the purpose of God will be accomplished.

We need to regard the one accord and singleness of mind of the apostles and also reflect love one to another so we might be truly striving to help one another rejoice in our common trials and testings.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity.”
Luke 21:25

We cannot help but take notice of Jesus’ words quoted above as He answers the question put to Him: “what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?” after He spoke of the day coming when not one stone of the temple would be left standing.

The Lord Jesus spoke of many signs which will foreshadow His return in the last days, but perhaps never so obvious today is the “perplexity” that the present world finds itself in.

The world is so overwhelmed with problems, which even the greatest minds are unable to solve. Attempts to correct only result in additional problems, which in turn prompt even more. One has only to examine the dilemmas in the world today to realize the perplexing situations which exist. Below is just a sample list of the most perplexing of these problems in no particular order.

World Over-Population
Global Poverty
National Debt
Homelessness
Environmental Issues
Illegal Drug Use
Abortion
Attempts at Human Cloning
AIDS/HIV
Refugees
Alcoholism
Nuclear Uncertainty
Natural Disasters
Deforestation
False Concerns Over Global Warming
Clean Water Availability
Alternative Energy
Recycling
Energy Conservation
Morality
Teenage Pregnancy

THE REMNANT

Illiteracy
Terrorism
Corruption
Gangs
Prison Overload
Sex Offenders
Divorce and Separation
Health and Social Issues
Starvation and Malnutrition
World Unrest
Arms Trade

...and there are many more.

If this doesn't describe our present world as being in "distress of nations, with perplexity" (Luke 21:25), your comprehension is seriously flawed in not being able to see the forest for the trees.

These world problems are so obvious today and will only get worse, with no human solutions, as Luke 21 verse 26 informs:

"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken". (verse 26)

Yet there is a solution, which God has provided in His mercy through His word, as the words of the Lord Jesus tell us:

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."
Luke 21:26-27

We can count on God's word to fulfil all that He has spoken, remembering:

"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."
Luke 21:33

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR MARCH 2013

HAMBURG, NEW YORK

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30 am

Thursday: Bible Class 3:30 pm; Forestville, Hamburg and Fredonia

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

Our thoughts are constant towards our brethren in England, hoping that the worst of the winter season has passed.

We rejoice in the knowledge that our Father watches over His house and allows true fellowship to exist between us. Even though separated by thousands of miles, our mutual faith binds us together in our journey Zionward. We thank God for His merciful kindness and guidance in these last days.

M.C.S.

MANCHESTER

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30 am

Thursday: Bible Class 2:00 pm

Our meeting place at our new address has become convenient to us all. We have much to be thankful for in our circumstances. Help to us for our Ecclesial work, from our Heavenly Father, brings to us the comfort of provision and we wish to express this here.

For more information or to read our literature, log onto:

www.remnantofchristsecclesia.com