

Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (*1 Cor. 1.18*).

Edifying the Body of Christ (*Eph. 4.10-16*)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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Jesus Wastes Nothing

Lave you heard the voice of the Lord calling you to serve Him? Have you continued waiting in His Word, in His presence over the years, waiting while serving where you are for the doors to open for you to go through to be where He has shown you He wants you? Have you shared your calling with others, told what the Lord has called you to do while waiting for those doors to open? Have you seen the look on their faces as they smile and pat you on the back – and noticed the silence that lends itself to letting you know they believe you – not.

How long, my brother and sister, have you waited for that call to be realized? How long has your heart cried out desiring to serve the One Who has called you? How long has your heart ached for more of Jesus in His service?

You look around and see others who are so actively doing “good things” and being held in high esteem for all they are doing. They look so good and *seem* so important in the work of the kingdom of God, and your heart is broken as you sit on the sidelines saying, “But God called me to go, to do, to be . . .”

There is a time of preparation, my brother, my sister. God may be preparing you for a service that is beyond anything you could think or dream for Him. However, though you *feel* left out, you feel useless, you *feel* God is bringing you along for His service in a way you cannot envision.

Remember Joseph who served the Lord in prison during a time of preparation; he was faithful to the Lord even in the midst of chaos, humiliation, and being falsely accused. Remember his brothers turned against him and even set him up for this time of serving the Lord in prison. How long was his school of preparation? Joseph had no idea what the future held for him, but he was faithful unto the Lord his God in prison. He ministered to others for the Lord. He gained the confidence of the “keeper of the prison” (Gen 39.21-22; 40.4).

I do not know about you, but how I dream of being in preparation in a utopic environment, being sent on a mission that brings glory to me – uh, I mean to Him. I want everything to be good for me, to look good for me – no pain. *Forgive me, Lord.*

As I review the life of Joseph, his school for God’s calling was in prison, humiliation, perceived as a failure in the largest of ways. Remember how he told his brothers of a dream God gave him showing that others would serve him?

There is a song that says, “Bloom where you are planted.” It seems that all most of us see today is the end result. We do not see the means to the end, meaning, we are not serving the Lord in the valleys as we are en route to the mountain with Moses. We

written Word and the living Word, Jesus Christ. Those who have heard the voice of the Lord are not caring that the Lord has called others to do what *appears* to be greater things. We will desire to hear the voice of the Lord to be what He calls us to be, to do what He calls us to do, to go or stay where He wants us to be. Our only desire will be to live in His presence and experience His glory in and through serving Him where we are.

It is believed that the leftovers from the feeding of the five thousand and four thousand were used to feed the poor. There are those who see ministry on a point system, and they would find feeding the poor to be the bottom rung, beneath them. God may have a ministry for you in your waning years that is considered to be the bottom of the rung by the “church” leaders, but very important to the Lord. You may feel like this ministry is for the leftovers . . . but the Lord found it so important to feed the poor that much is written in His Holy Word about the poor, so this and anything else the Lord calls you to is not “leftover.” Yes, there were leftovers after the feeding of the five thousand and four thousand, but they were **BLESSED** leftovers, **BLESSED BY THE LORD HIMSELF.**

Do you feel like so much has been wasted in your life, that you were never allowed to do for the Lord what you believed you were to do? Do you feel like a leftover? Remember the Lord blessed the broken pieces, the fragments before feeding the five thousand and four thousand and saw the importance of using the leftovers He blessed!

You are not “leftover” if you are serving the Lord in ANY area of ministry to which the Lord has called you – regardless of circumstances or age – or anything. Pray that you will have eyes to behold His glory, ears to hear His voice, and a heart to hear (*שָׁמָע shāma'*), to walk in obedience to Him and Him alone. Isaiah had eyes to behold His glory (Isa 6.1-8) and ears to hear His voice and a heart to respond to the Lord as he said, “Here am I, send me.” – as you say, “Here am I, send me.”

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31)

are not willing to go through years of preparation. We are not willing to serve the Lord where we are today. We want to be served.

Was Joseph in prison for eleven years? What a waste of time to spend in prison – *it seems*. Worse yet is the one who got out of prison and forgot about Joseph until some years later.

This school of preparation brought Joseph to a place of love for the Lord that was a melding with Him, abiding in Him. He was able to go on with the Lord without bitterness which prepared him for a profound service for His Lord when the time came (Gen 41-45).

We need to see Jesus moment by moment, not what we want nor where we want to go or do. We need just to be in His presence loving Him, allowing Him to use us where we are each day. It is in the walk with Him that we arrive with Him wherever and whenever He chooses.

I wonder if Joseph wondered if all that was happening to him since his early life was for naught, if he were ever discouraged, ever feeling useless, inadequate, like a failure. Whatever may have been going on in Joseph, he did not let it deter him from serving the Lord, even in the worst of experiences.

I believe he understood that the Lord wastes nothing in our lives if we will but offer it to the Lord, if we will surrender each day in our lives to Jesus, surrender our will to the Lord allowing Him to work in us a time of preparation for that moment when we are released from prison, when we walk through the fiery trials like Moses in preparation of that great and glorious day of going to the mountain of the Lord.

Too often we fail to understand God's call upon our lives, that it is a call to live for Him day by day, each moment of each day. We are led to believe that God calls us to **become** someone important and do an important work for God – either instantly or in the sweet bye and bye. Living for Jesus and serving Him is in the now, in the day to day living. When I read of those great saints who have gone before us, I am aware that God called each one to live for Him daily – first and foremost. He led them as they walked with Him to accomplish what it was that would bring glory to His Holy Name in their daily walk. Their walk with the Lord was one of commitment to Him out of His love for them and, then, their love for Him.

Paul in prison – did not seem to be in ministry as he was in prison. I believe that he and all the apostles, all the saints who were persecuted were not seen in their time as great witnesses for Jesus Christ, nor do I experience them as seeing themselves accomplishing great things for the Lord. Rather, they lived for the Lord daily, abiding in Him and He in them. It was a love relationship: the Lord's love for them – and their love for Him as well.

As you and I reflect upon Paul's life lived for the Lord, we are affected and led by his life for the Lord. However, we have a tendency to say that God called him for great service and believe he had a map of his life and saw that all he did was great and mighty. I believe if we look more closely in the Bible at his life, we will find that he was led one step at a time, seeking the will of the Lord in his life daily – as we are to do. I do not believe that Paul heard the call of God and said, "Oh, I am destined to do great things for the Lord. I am called to be a well-known preacher of the Lord and will accomplish great things; my name shall be great."

No, Paul, Peter, James – all of the disciples, and those all through history whom the Lord has used mightily, were not aware of the efficacy of their service for the Lord Jesus. They just walked with the Lord daily, thankful that they were counted worthy to serve Him, to suffer for Him (Acts 5.41). Their eyes were upon Jesus!

Look at John the Baptizer. Now, this man of God . . . well, he did not exactly fit the modern "well-known" preachers – in more ways than one! He knew the call of God upon his life to preach the truth of God. He did not take a course in how to win friends and influence people. He cared not what others thought of him, his dress, or his *tastes* in life. He cared only to serve the living God, the only true God at any cost. I do not think for one moment that as he went to his death, he thought he was greatly used in the service of the Lord. I do not think as he was in prison that he thought he was being used of the Lord. But he was. It is obvious – he was beheaded because of the Word which he preached.

Beloved, if you are not accomplishing what you believe you are to accomplish for the Lord, quit looking at your accomplishments and/or failures and begin looking to Jesus. If you have come to a place of discouragement in your life, having endeavored to serve the Lord for many years only to find that you have failed to do "great things" for Him, look to Jesus.

When Jesus fed the five thousand and the four thousand, did He not collect the fragments which He blessed? Yes, remember how He took the bread and the loaves and blessed them, **then** He broke them, then He gave the broken pieces to the disciples to use, to give to the people who had come to be touched by the hand of the Lord. Was it not the broken pieces that gave life to the people receiving them? It was not the physical size of the fragments, the broken pieces that ministered to the people; it was the One Who had blessed them **and** broken them, His life flowing in and through the ministry regardless of the size of the piece. It was Jesus Who touched the lives in this ministry of feeding the five thousand and the four thousand.

Did not Jesus also find the leftovers to be fragments of value? Did he not command the disciples to collect them (Jn 6.12)? He wastes nothing, and nothing is wasted in your life when offered to the Lord.

If you are looking at yourself and/or your ministry, then you are failing in the work of the Lord. As broken vessels, we are to rest in the Lord Jesus Christ; we are to abide in Him and He in us and walk daily with Him on the *Via Dolorosa*. The ministry is His ministry, the ministry of the body of Christ with Jesus Christ as the head of the body. When we surrender our lives to Jesus and all that we do or think or are, then Jesus will accomplish His will in and through us as He sees fit (Rom 8) – as He did in the life of Joseph (Gen 39-45).

Paul teaches that we are to walk in the Spirit (Romans 8). When we are walking in the Spirit, our eyes will be upon Jesus. We will not look to the left nor to the right (Isa 31.21) to see what others are doing or accomplishing. We will not even evaluate what we believe we have done; we will not evaluate how we believe we have been used of the Lord. We will simply walk with our eyes upon Jesus and behold Him in all of His glory.

When we walk in the Spirit, our hearts will be tuned to the Lord Jesus Christ and will not long to do anything but be with Him throughout the day. When we walk in the Spirit, our ears will be tuned to His voice to hear His words to us. We will be in the