



THIS IS GOING TO BE
A GREAT, GREAT
ANNIVERSARY.
VERY SPECIAL,
VERY BEAUTIFUL,
REALLY TERRIFIC.



...Dogs Eat The Crumbs

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." (Matthew 15:21-22)

In these verses, the Canaanite woman is seen as "coming out" from Sidon. Sidon was a Gentile city named after a man cursed by Noah. Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. One night Noah drank too much wine and passed out in his tent, naked. As Noah lay in a drunken stupor, his son, Ham, discovered his nakedness. The next day, when Noah realized what his son had done to him (and I am not saying what that was), Noah cursed Canaan, Ham's son. Sidon was a city named after the first-born son of Canaan. This woman came out to Jesus crying for mercy. Clearly, this woman does not depict the Church, as many commentators would have you to believe. The Church is the virgin bride of Christ, this woman was not a virgin for she had a daughter. However, it is possible that the

daughter is a depiction of the Church, I cannot say yes or no, I only say that I am too lazy to search the matter out. The daughter was made clean, though she stood afar off, and receiving mercy through no merit of her own. We will let you be the investigator in this matter; my attention is drawn to her mother.

Just as Canaan was cursed for what his father did to Noah, so this woman also abided under a curse (Galatians 3:13-14). We too are cursed for what our father (Adam) did. The woman "came out" after hearing about Jesus. She sought Him out and fell at His feet, for we read in a parallel account, "For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet." (Mark 7:25) The first thing I would remind you of, though I have reminded you often, is: faith cometh by hearing (Romans 10:17). This woman heard that Jesus was able to heal those suffering with unclean spirits. After hearing this, this woman chose to believe it. We know this is true because she immediately sought for Jesus. Faith that is not acted upon is not faith. If what you believe does not drive you to your feet and excite you with anticipation; do not worry too much about it, you will soon get over it.

Saving faith will always set you upon a journey, a journey that causes you to "come out" from the place that God has cursed. It will cause you to seek for the Saviour with an expectation that can only be satisfied by the truth of the Word of God. ***"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."*** (Matthew 7:7-8)

The second thing I wish to point out is that this woman's concern was not for herself. Her concern was for someone she loved dearly, someone she loved more than she loved her own life. Many of us, if not most of us, have someone that we are desperately concerned about. Somewhere there is somebody who weighs heavy on our minds. Someone needs our help with a problem or with circumstance that life threw at them. So, the question is, what are we doing about it? I mean really?

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This woman did not sit idly by and watch her child suffer. This woman did not sit around wishing that someone would come to her door and solve her problem for her. After she heard about Jesus, this woman was compelled into action. She took the matter of her daughter, and she took it to Jesus, and she placed her daughter's problem at His feet. She knew that Jesus was Lord of the Jews, for she addressed Him as such, "...thou Son of David." Being a Canaanite, she knew the Jews had no dealings with Canaanites, but she did not let what she knew discourage her. **"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."** (John 4:9) This Canaanite woman, like Abraham before her, was strong in faith; she believed in hope, against hope (Romans 4:18), for she heard that Jesus was a Lord of great compassion.

"But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." (Matthew 15:23) "But He answered her not a word." Many of us have taken our concerns for our loved ones to the Lord and we have laid those concerns at His feet. But when Jesus answers us not a word, we quickly become discouraged, and we slowly fizzle away until we stop coming to Him altogether. Call it discouragement, call it a lack of faith; call it what you like, but this woman did not give up. Jesus answered her not a word and she just kept on coming. She was not about to let the Lord get away with that. She would not leave Him alone until she got what she came for. She was wholly invested in her cause. She was fully persuaded that Jesus was able to perform what she so desperately sought for. This Canaanite woman, this Gentile if you please, refused to be ignored! The Lord answered her not a word, because she was not Jewish: she was a Gentile. Gentiles cannot and will not obtain the Lord's mercy by addressing Him as "thou Son of David." We do not obtain salvation by becoming Jewish. Those who teach such things, do so contrary to sound doctrine. "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Revelation 2:9) "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss." (James 4:3)

This woman is determined. She knows Jesus is able to help her daughter, and she will not cease. If need be, she is more than willing to humiliate herself and suffer great shame for what she believes. Those who observed her had no compassion for her grief. Indeed, they are somewhat offended by her persistent crying out. "Send her away..." is their plea, "Her groveling in the dirt, weeping and begging is embarrassing; just send her away and be

done with her." But their taking offence did not deter her in the least; she accelerated her pursuit two-fold. Her determination was stronger than their opposition against her. We need to take lessons from this woman; her faith is infectious! When we beseech the Lord for a righteous cause, we need not let those who look on discourage us. Often the devil uses those closest to us to discourage us from our faith towards God. Such was the case with Job's wife (Job 2:9), such was the case with Peter when he tried to prevent Jesus from going to the cross (Matthew 16:22-23), and such is the case here with the disciples crying out: send her away. The question, the lesson here is this: are we willing to suffer humiliation to bring the needs of our loved ones to Jesus Christ? This woman was and we need to learn from what God's Word says about her.

"But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me." (Matthew 15:24-25) The Lord finally answered, but His answer was not directed to the Canaanite woman; His answer was spoken to His disciples, and His answer was a resounding, No to the woman! She besought the Lord for mercy on behalf of her grievously vexed daughter, and the Lord's answer was a resounding, No! Let me ask you: if you were this woman and this happened to you, would you not be discouraged? Be honest, would you not give up the cause and go sadly away, broken hearted and discouraged? The Lord of mercy told you, He was only sent to Israel. What hope did a Gentile, have? "O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." And the Lord replied, "...I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Now look how this woman responds to the Lord's answer?

This woman did not become angry or disheartened. She did not hang her head and go away, instead, she worshipped Him, she begged Him, she pleaded with Him and said, "...Lord, help me." We need to worship Jesus in good times and in bad, in victory and in defeat, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health. This woman's faith made her relentless; she would not cease; you could not silence her. She was persistent to the point of being annoying and there was no end to her incessancy. Like a bloodhound on the trail of a scent, she would rather die than give up her attempt to save her daughter's life. First, she pleaded, then she cried, and now she groveled at His feet, begging Him to help her. We have much to learn, from this woman, about selfless humility. We have much to learn about incessant faith. As I read

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this account, this woman put me to shame, and as I mused upon her faith, she caused me to weep. If this woman petitioned the Lord for my needs, of a truth, I would be walking on water right about now.

Before coming to Jesus, this woman reached the end of her rope, a place I like to call "Wit's End" (Psalms 107:23-30). She took her daughter to physicians and to the so-called faith healers. She bought their concoctions and their 10 essential oils, spending all her substance. She tried exorcists, witch doctors, voodoo, yoga, transcendental meditation; you name it, she had been there and done that. Then she heard about Jesus. She knew Jesus was the answer to her desperate situation. She knew, if Jesus would not help her, then there was no help to be had; no hope left for her anywhere. She was at wit's end, and as she laid there in the dirt, empty of all pride, there was no humility left within her to lose, no pity for self. There remained no self-deception about what was important in life. She had poured herself out like water, she was completely spent. There she was, before God, begging for mercy from the God of all comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3), not for herself, but for someone she loved more than what she so willingly sacrificed.

Now ladies, let me draw your attention to the fact that this woman did not much care that her tears ran down her dirt smeared face and ruined her makeup. She did not care that she found herself groveling in a dirty street, getting her Fifth Avenue clothes all dirty. She did not much care that her sixty-dollar nail job was ruined, (sixty bucks up in smoke). She did not care that her hair was a tangled mess! In fact, she did not much care what she looked like at all; and neither did Jesus. In the final analysis, it is not what you see in the mirror that is important. Who you are on the inside is your only attribute that impresses the Lord. Jesus did not look on the outside; He looked into this woman's heart and beheld her beauty. This Canaanite woman was an exceedingly rare beauty and Jesus very much liked what He saw, as we shall see.

"But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." (Matthew 15:26-27) First the Lord ignored this woman; answering her not a word. Then the Lord refused her request because she was a Gentile. Now

He called her a dog, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." During all this, the disciples were insistent that Jesus send her away. They humiliate her because she makes herself a public spectacle. They are utterly indifferent towards her suffering. "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly." (Proverbs 25:16) For obvious reasons, a dog was considered an unclean animal, and Jews were forbidden to touch the unclean thing. This was the standard which Jews applied to Gentiles; they were considered unclean. To be called a dog in biblical times was considered a very great insult and a just cause to be angry. But to be called a dog by God Himself would be devastating. It would crush our spirits; surely, we would go silently away, with our tails tucked between our legs, like a dog; but not this woman, no sir, not on your life.

This woman refused to be discouraged, but remained strong in faith, and answered the Lord, saying, "Truth, Lord, you are absolutely right! That is exactly what I am, I am a dog!" "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom." (Proverbs 13:10) There is no contention to be found in this woman; she already poured out her pride; there was no pride left in her to offend. "Call me a dog, call me anything you wish, only know this, I would gladly be your dog, lying under your table, partaking of the crumbs which fall from your table. Make it so Lord; make it so; only send me not away without so much as a crumb." Truly, it is a far, far greater privilege to be a dog in the house of the Lord, than to be a queen in the devil's palace.

By acknowledging that she is a dog, this woman not only declares her uncleanness, but she also acknowledges her unworthiness for mercy. She came seeking a crumb from the Master's table. And to be His dog was to recognize Him, not only as her Lord, but also as her Master. This woman is a depiction that Gentiles would obtain mercy by way of Israel. Salvation fell from the table, where the Jews sat, to the dogs waiting under the table. What a refreshing difference this is from the hypocrites whom Jesus just left, who came from Jerusalem to scold Him about the washing of hands. "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James 4:6) This Canaanite woman openly admitted that she is a sinner, unworthy of His mercy, and yet so dependent upon it, none the less; she is a dog, unclean and in desperate need of His

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cleansing, healing, touch.

"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." (Matthew 15:28)

Please grasp this: the Lord wrote this woman a check, upon which He wrote, "...be it unto thee even as thou wilt." He did not write upon it, "As I wilt," He wrote on it, ***"...as thou wilt."*** Praise the Lord for His loving kindness, which He extends even to dogs such as you and I. He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. God always recognizes and rewards humility and diligence. I hope you grasp the significance of this. There is so much to be learned from these few verses of Scripture, and we have only scratched the surface. It is my prayer, that you will scratch beneath the surface of what is written here, and discover the answer to the question that the Lord asked Peter in chapter 14, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:31)

Please know that great faith will not be denied. Great faith will be recognized. Though it may be ignored; yet shall it persevere. Though it be humiliated; it will persist. Though it may be refused; it will not contend. Though it may be insulted; it shall be rewarded, if we only believe and doubt not. ***"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."*** (Jude 1:3) If nothing else, this woman was earnest. We need to earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints. ***"...And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."*** (Matthew 15:28) Amen!

Ava's Verses

This month Ava's Verse is:

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." (Colossians 3:14)

Godly Sorrow

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." (2 Corinthians 7:10-11)

Godly sorrow, or true mourning, produces carefulness, it causes a clearing of ourselves, it causes indignation to rise up within us, it produces fear, it gives us a vehement desire for things we once despised. It sparks zeal within us for the things of God, and it causes us to seek revenge. I would like to say a few words about each of these attributes associated with godly sorrow; there is a great need for us to muse upon this much neglected subject.

First, Godly sorrow produces **carefulness**. It causes us to question everything we once took for granted, whether there be any virtue in the thing before us, whether there be any truth, any honesty or purity or good report. It causes us to be careful about the choices we make, about the things we say, about the things we do, and the places we go. We are no longer content to make those choices based on what satisfies our fleshly desires; we are reinforced from above with renewed certainty, and that certainty helps us to make choices based on what is pleasing to God. ***"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."*** (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

Next, Godly sorrow causes a **clearing of ourselves**, a confessing and forsaking of those things which we once kept hidden; thus, clearing our conscience of offenses. It causes us to embrace that which is good, which in turn, causes us to relinquish and to discard the filth we once coveted, collected, and cherished. Like a fever, the fervency of godly sorrow burns away at the root cause of our most deplorable condition, it burns away at the strangleholds of our pride. It settles, then it clears the muddy waters of our mind. Confusion of purpose, along with its pattern of wrongful thinking, is replaced with certain clarity of thought. We now see clearly, through the murkiness of uncertainty and beyond. Godly sorrow chases away hopelessness, depression, and anxiety. It shines light upon those strongholds within our darkened minds, wherein dwells lies and deceptions created by our ungodly imagination. ***"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself"***
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against the knowledge of God.” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5) Godly sorrow causes us to wash the slate clean, granting us a new beginning with renewed hope, with the washing of pure water; we are restored with new respect toward God, towards others, and lastly toward ourselves.

Godly sorrow causes **indignation** against those things which we once cherished, embraced and promoted. It causes us to have indignation against all forms of ungodliness, no matter what form we may discover it. Godly sorrow causes us to have indignation towards ourselves where indignation rightfully belongs. We no longer feel justified to blame God or to blame others for our own failings, realizing that we are the product of the choices we made that we are justly reaping what we ourselves have deliberately sown. Finally, we see that we are our own worst enemy. Godly sorrow causes us to have indignation against ourselves for the trouble and the regrettable hurt we caused in the lives of others, for the needless disregard we extended to them. It causes us to experience indignation against the pride we nurtured and fed upon in our ignorance, thinking ourselves to be much more than we truly are; selfish, self-promoting, self-satisfying, self-righteous, pompous, and egotistical fools.

Godly sorrow crowns our lives with the fear of God; not a debilitating **fear**, but a motivational fear; one that teaches us to have a good healthy respect for God with whom we have to do. It is not a crippling fear that one might extend and apply to the vast unknown, but rather, it is a fear which enables us to operate with confidence and security, within a framework of absolutes. *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being.”* (Acts 17:28) It is a fear that teaches us to separate what is right from what is wrong, to refuse the evil and to choose the good. It is a healthy fear; the kind of fear that prevents us from doing what we know to be harmful. *“And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”* (Job 28:28) The fear of God is to the heart as a bridal is to a horse. When we are tempted to veer to the left, a gentle tug from fear and we are made straight, a hard pull on the reins and we are stopped in our tracks. *“I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”* (Jeremiah 17:10) But a

man without the fear of God before his eyes is likened to a wild stallion with no bridle; his neck is clothed with thunder, he paweth in the valley, he snuffeth up the wind, he mocketh at fear; and so, shall he reap the whirlwind in the Day of Judgment.

Like rain, falling liberally upon parched dry earth, Godly sorrow falls upon a repentant heart; bringing with it a **vehement desire** to know God, and to know what pleases Him. *“Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.”* (Psalms 145:16-20) A man will not receive those things for which he has no desire to possess; but rather, he will shun them. Godly sorrow brings about a reversal of the things that a man desires. Godly sorrow causes the contrite spirit to desire the things which he once despised and shunned; and to despise and shun the things which he once desired. Godly sorrow reveals to us our great need, and at the same time, it awakens our desire to receive the things which God so longingly desires to give us.

This vehement desire fills us with unyielding **zeal**; and we cannot forbear. From a spring of gratitude and gratefulness; zeal bubbles up from within; energizing us and filling us with boldness, and with all things necessary to go forth and proclaim the goodness of God, the longsuffering of God, and the everlasting mercies of God; to boldly proclaim our God, who is gracious and abundantly forgiving. And as we go, proclaiming the goodness of God, the world perceives us to be mad; thinking us fools; madness has taken hold of us, and we are no longer our own. True; we are no longer our own, for we have given our lives over to God; but this is not foolishness; nor is it madness; for this is but our reasonable service; and we gladly suffer the world’s reproach. *“I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”* (Psalms 69:8-9)

And now we arrive at the last attribute of godly sorrow, **revenge**; and what can be said of revenge? *“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to **revenge** all disobedience,*

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when your obedience is fulfilled." (2 Corinthians 10:5-6) No longer tolerant of the things we once allowed; our revenge is not aimed towards others, but rather, it is aimed against ourselves and against ideology which opposes itself; ideology that is against God: for we do mortify our own flesh and spiritual wickedness, bringing it into obedience, as we cast down every high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God. ***"...Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*** (2 Corinthians 7:1) We need to pray for godly sorrow, we need to fall on our faces before God, asking Him to send godly sorrow into our lives. Pray for godly sorrow; let godly sorrow rain down upon us, clearing, and cleansing, and refreshing as it falls freely.



Art Thou He That Should Come?

Art Thou He That Should Come?

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? (Matthew 11:13)

Maybe the long prison term had done much to cloud John's mind and dull his senses. Maybe John was feeling neglected and just needed a little encouragement. Maybe John thought the stories he heard concerning the works Jesus performed had been exaggerated. Maybe John just grew tired of looking at the ugly faces of the two young men gawking at him from the other side of the bars. Who knows for sure why John sent his two disciples to find Jesus and ask Him that question? What is clear is that John had slipped from his earlier steadfast testimony of Jesus Christ. *"And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he [John] saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"* (John 1:36) *"And I [John] saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."* (John 1:34)

Called to his ministry from his mother's womb, John dedicated his entire life to God. His ministry was every-

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thing to him, but then suddenly, it was gone, all of it taken from him, and he was cast into Herod's dungeon. Why? What had he done wrong? Why did the trumpet of God not blast these dungeon walls to the ground and set him free to continue the work for which he was born? When an otherwise ambitious man sits idle, alone in a darkened cell, deprived of his livelihood, who can know the thoughts that come rushing in to fill the void? Even when you try, you cannot hold renegade thoughts back. It is like digging a hole in the middle of the sea; as fast as you bucket the water out, it rushes back in. You plug up one hole, and those thoughts find two others to seep through. Anyway, things were not what they should be, certainly not what John had imagined. John needed answers to these questions which continued to gnaw away at him, consuming his spirit, bite by bite.

John's message to Israel was: "Repent, ye generation of vipers! How shall ye escape the wrath which is to come?" This was the message he received through inspiration from God, and this was the message that continued to burn within him, begging for release. John had seen the Consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25) with his own eyes. He saw the Messiah who came to restore glory to God's chosen people, but when the wrath of God didn't follow, as John supposed it would, as the Old Testament prophesied, John became apprehensive. And now, from the gloominess of Herod's dark, damp, dungeon, John began to question whether he had made a mistake. Was Jesus the promised Redeemer? And if so, why didn't Jesus release him from his cell? Why was he rotting in prison if Jesus was truly the Son of God? He faithfully performed his ministry to the best of his ability; surely God knew this; this was not how he envisioned the end would come. But whatever his motivation was, John knew exactly where to find answers to the questions which plagued him; and when he could forbear no longer, John sent two of his disciples to search for Jesus. John mixed his doubts and apprehensions together and condensed them down to formulate this solitary question: "*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*"

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matthew 11:14)

The key to understanding this verse is the word "shew." Jesus did not say "Go and tell John again," no, Jesus said, "*...Go and shew John again...*" Scripture tells us that the Church walks by faith, and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). John was not part of the Church; the Church had not yet come into existence. John was a Jew, and Jews, according to the Law of Moses, required a sign. John was looking for the conclusion of his ministry; he was looking for the establishment of the physical kingdom on Earth. John was looking for the physical deliverance of the Nation of Israel. John was looking for the promised Redeemer, prophesied to come and deliver the nation from its oppressors. He was looking for Israel to be restored to her former glory. John was looking for Israel's Messiah to rule over the nations, sitting upon the throne of David. John was looking for the consummation of all things according to the covenant which God had made with his forefathers. But that did not happen, none of it happened, the consummation of all things did not occur, and so now, John was confused. "*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*"

Jesus instructed John's disciples, "*Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see.*" What these men heard, and saw was not the physical deliverance of the nation, but rather, they heard and saw the spiritual deliverance of individuals as Jesus freed poor needy souls from years of bondage and slavery to sin. The promised Redeemer had indeed arrived, and He healed thousands and raised the dead to life again before their very eyes. Individuals were set free from life-long bondage to sin and from the physical infirmities their sins created. Jesus told John's disciples, Go and shew John again. Go and show John that Salvation has indeed come to his people, **and you have seen the signs** to prove it, signs spoken of by the prophets. "*But I have greater witness than that of John [the Baptist]: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*" (John 5:36)

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, after being in the presence of God, his face shone so bright that the people could not steadfastly look upon it. Moses had to cover his face with a veil. This needs to be our testimony. People need to see that we have been in the presence of Jesus Christ. They need to see the excitement He stirs within us. It needs to bubble out of us like an active volcano, overflowing and filling every cavity of our being. They must see it shining on our faces, they need to

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see it in the way we interact with others, and in the way we conduct our lives. **We need to “shew” them by the things we both say and do.** There needs to be visible radiance as we tell of the great things we witnessed Jesus doing, and of the things He spoke with us about. **It must be infectious! It must be infectious in order that it might be contagious.**

“For our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:29)

When we are on fire, we will ignite others, and they too will catch on fire. When your heart is right with God, His Spirit will burn within you. His words will burn within you, and you will not be able to refrain.

“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.” (Jeremiah 20:9) When your heart is right with God, you are like the bush which Moses saw in the wilderness from afar off. The bush burned, yet it was not consumed (Exodus 3:2), and it caused Moses to wonder with amazement as he stood in awe of it. **“Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see.”** We need to shew others the things which we both hear and see.

“Go and shew John again.” The word “again” tells us that John once knew these things. These things once burned brightly within John. Tough times tend to focus our attention on our troubles, and we remember the things we should have forgotten, and we forget those things we should have remembered. Jesus knew that the flame in John needed to be rekindled. Sometimes we just need to be reminded of those things we already know; the things that we somehow let slip. **“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them.”** (2 Peter 1:12) John did not need to be instructed in the things of God; John simply needed to be reminded of them. Shew John that the gospel is preached to the poor, that lepers are cleansed, and the dead are raised to life again; that is just the spark he needs to get his fire burning again.

“And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.” (Matthew 11:6) The word offended, as it is used here, means to trip up or cause to stumble. There is no sin in stumbling, nor yet in falling; but if one refuses to get back up; and should they lie there wallowing in self-pity, then it becomes sin to them, and God cannot bless them there. If we fall, we need to lift ourselves back up, recognizing

that we have placed ourselves “afar off,” we have placed ourselves in isolation from God, a place of self-withdrawal. When we are offended in God, it is not because God has forsaken us; it is we who have forsaken Him. We need to draw nigh unto God, and as we do so, God will draw nigh unto us. **“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”** (James 4:8) This is the place of blessing! The closer we draw to Jesus Christ, the more blessed our lives will become.

Jesus perceived that John was offended. This does not mean that John lost his faith in Jesus. Nor does it mean that John had fallen away into unbelief. The Lord’s ministry of meekness, in conjunction with an absence of wrath from Heaven, confused the prophet. For though John had once proclaimed Jesus to be “The Lamb of God,” he now desired to see “The Lion of the Tribe of Judah” come and devour his enemies and free him from prison. Jesus knew John needed to be encouraged, so He sent John’s disciples back to John to remind him of the things he once knew. John was simply having a hard time maintaining his focus in light of the difficulties being forced upon him. In this respect, John was not far removed from the place where you and I often find ourselves. Jesus understood the difficulty John was faced with, and He held no resentment towards John. Jesus offered a remedy for John’s dilemma: **“Go and shew John again.”** Shew John that individual deliverance is being wrought. Show John that people are delivered from spiritual bondage, as was foretold by the Holy Ghost. **“The LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”** (Isaiah 61:1)

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. (Matthew 11:7-8) After John’s disciples departed, Jesus begins questioning the multitude concerning John, “What did you expect to find? A crazy man, a man with a devil (verse 17), a reed tossed to and fro by the wind (an evil spirit)?” John the Baptist was neither of these. John was not a man quickly shaken by words of reproof, or by degrading speeches, uttered by the desperate (Job 6:26). Unlike a reed, which is easily tossed to and fro by

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the wind, there was firmness and strength in John. Rooted and grounded in truth, he swayed not to the right, nor to the left, but he stood firm in his belief. John knew what he believed, he knew why he believed it, and he stood firm against every wind of doctrine which blew contrary to his beliefs. *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."* (Ephesians 4:14)

John feared God – he feared not the face of man. ***"Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."*** (Jeremiah 1:8) John was a bold man who spoke the truth of God freely, warning all men, both small and great, of their dire need to repent. John was no respecter of persons. Pauper or king, it mattered not at all to John; truth does not change to accommodate the station of men's lives, and neither did John's message. John was not swayed by the public's opinion of him; neither good nor bad. The praise of men was of no importance to him, and were it so, he would not be the servant of God.

John did not waste his life accumulating wealth on Earth; all his treasure was in Heaven where his heart was. John's life was simple and his needs were few. He had very little that he called his own. He was not dressed in expensive suits; neither did he drive a fancy car. Fashion was not a high priority on John's list. He lived in the wilderness where he adorned his flesh with camel's hair and a leather girdle. Camel's hair went with just about everything, without the need to accessorize. John spent little time grooming; vanity was not his downfall, although he did bath often (you know, that baptism thing he did). John was not given to appetite; he did not fuss much over dinner: God took him out to eat every night – dinning on locust and honey. He had no bills to pay, no landlord beating on his door demanding the rent. John had no lawn to mow, no dog to feed, no clock to punch, and no stocks and bonds to fret about, and no cell phone to consume his time and attention. Unshackled from the cares of this world, John was free to spend his time and energy pleasing his God.

John possessed no desire to become rich or famous; save in the eyes of God. He was a man of honesty and integrity. He was an uncompromising man with pure motivation: to do the will of God. He did not cave in to the pressures of the religious leaders of his day, nor did he shy away from the threats of politicians. John was a shining example of strength and stability in the

face of great adversity. Often ridiculed and scorned for the manner in which he lived his life, yet he would not compromise his values; neither did he bridle his tongue before Herod over his adulterous lifestyle: and this proved to be his undoing.

Today, Christians have much to learn from the life of such a courageous man as John. We cannot all be John the Baptist, but we can all glean some basic principles from the example of his life for application to our own Christian walk. A Christian needs to be rooted and grounded in the word of God. He needs a sure foundation, one that is immovable, one he can place his trust in, and depend on through the storms of life. By following John's example, we will not waver, but remain strong and uncompromised in our faith, when confronted by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. Which things shall come for the word's sake. If we have food and raiment, let us learn to be content therewith (1Timothy 6:8). *"The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment."* (Luke 12:23)

The lukewarm winds of the Laodicean spirit are blowing from the pulpits of most churches today. Pulpits occupied by preachers more concerned with profit than with pleasing God. They lack the conviction and stability that John possessed. Their compromised message descends like a slow-moving fog, upon all those who occupy their pews; creating weak-minded Christians, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine; grown men and women, destined to remain babes in Christ forever; unsure, unstable, carried about by the sleight of men, and by cunningly crafted fables (Ephesians 4:14). Having no root, they are like freshly planted trees, moving first to the right and then to the left, before being cast down and tossed aside altogether. Like the waves of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed, they are unstable in all their ways (James 1:6 & 8).



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