

Partakers of a Divine Purpose

II Corinthians 11:2-3: “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

Let's pray:

Lord, we are so thankful how in the abundance of Your great love, You truly have already fed us so much this morning. We came to remember You, and yet we leave as the blessed ones. How merciful You are, Lord. And we want to continue in the Spirit of the bread of life, that we would break this bread of life. Open it up that Your very life could speak to us in this day and in this time. We are thankful, Lord, for the enabling power of Your Spirit. We are thankful for the provision we have in You, and as we come and look to You, that You really would work in all of our hearts and lives in these critical days. In Thy wonderful name we pray. Amen.

The Eternal Companion for God's Son is Upon God's Heart

Periodically, I get asked this question: “What is on your heart?” I think most of us at times will ask us that. And I have to say that for the last year or so probably what many others have on their hearts also is that we as God's people would be prepared for His soon return. And these two verses in II Corinthians to me have always meant a lot because I feel they capture the very essence of what God is after. In verse 1 we see Paul summarizing God as a God of purpose, and He is very jealous. He is a jealous God, and Paul had been captured by that jealousy. And in that jealousy the Lord has one desire—that eternal companion for His Son, a bride betrothed to Him, that corporate expression of His life. This is what is upon His heart, this is His purpose, this is what He is after. And we are thankful how He paid that price to bring us into this.

Then in verse 2 we get to see how closely related we, as the ones betrothed and engaged to Him, are to be. We are being engaged to Him, we are not to be distracted, we are not to be looking at other things, but we are to have a life relationship with Him in which there is such a simplicity and purity of devotion to Him.

Abide in the Simplicity and Purity of Love Relationship with the Lord

Oftentimes ones will ask, “How do you know if you are in love with someone?” All of a sudden you notice that you do not see him one day, and you begin to miss him or her. They are not around and you start thinking about them more and more in your heart. There is a love there that He is desiring that we be partakers of, and that we should really be staying in that place of simplicity and purity of that love relationship, of that devotion to Him.

It amazes me in the days in which we are living, and I guess it has been going on forever, the enemy, the world, even our own religious self can make this preparation for the Lord's return complicated. It is like there is this whole industry of deceiving spirits out there, “Oh, if you want to be prepared, you have to do this, this and this, you have to watch this video, you have to act

like this, you have to buy this book, you have to subscribe to this video, and there is always money behind it.” It just goes on and on and adds to the complicity of trying to prepare for His return.

But if we look at our Lord when He was talking about coming back, it was always a simple message to us. He just wanted us to have that heart to heart intimate relationship, that daily relationship with Him, walking with Him and talking with Him. There is a relationship, and this is what He is after when He says, “Come and believe all of this.”

Gaining a Heart of Wisdom

As I started thinking about this, I began to look back over the last messages that I had shared, and I started seeing this theme that had really been on my heart for a while. I shared a thought on “Gaining a Heart of Wisdom.” And the object of that was to see His divine purpose, just as Moses had prayed in Psalm 90 that we would number our days, that we might gain a heart of wisdom. What is a heart of wisdom? A heart of wisdom is knowing His heart, knowing His purpose, knowing His desire, and that His divine purpose would govern our life every day. We would not have other things to decide what we are going to do, but His divine purpose would be governing our lives every day.

The Father’s Good Pleasure to Reveal His Son in Us

Then I shared on His good pleasure, and it made me consider about His divine pleasure. In His divine purpose He has a divine pleasure. And do we really realize how much pleasure it brings the Father to reveal His Son in us. It is a joy in our Father’s heart when He reveals the Son in us, and then it is all worked out for His glory and His purpose. We have a great call upon our lives.

Demystifying Overcoming

Then I touched on this matter of “Demystifying Overcoming.” And within the heart of those who are overcoming by His grace there is a divine passion within them. There is a passion for nothing else but Christ, and He brings us into this victory of overcoming the world of sin, flesh and the devil as we daily simply listen and obey Him. Again, overcoming has been so blown out of proportion and made so complicated, or made some elite group, but it is a false lie. It is for every brother and sister because each one of us has that overcoming life living within us, and that overcoming life just wants to be lived out as we listen and obey Him. Praise God for that!

What Do You See?

I considered this matter of what do you see? And it made me see that there is a divine perspective that He wants us to come into. He desires that we not be governed by our natural perspective, but that which is to govern our lives would be seeing things from His divine perspective. As we look around at the days and times we are living in, He tells us to look up. How are we seeing things? We do not understand a lot of things when we look at it naturally, and that is why we are to look up. Then we get a divine perspective of the times we are living in.

Your Divine Priority

The last time I shared was, “What is your motivation?” Or we could call it, “Your divine priority.” It was with a simple desire that His divine priority for His Son would be glorified and be

all and in all, and it would govern our ambition and motivation, and His divine priority would govern our daily lives.

Participate in Divine Purpose as Participants

I was considering this thought for today before I went back and reflected on this, of us being partakers of His divine purpose. How do we participate in divine purpose as participants? How do we partake of His divine purpose? In Hebrews 3:1 we find a great testimony.

“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, (there is no condition here; this is an absolute fact. He has called us to be partakers of this heavenly calling.) consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;”

So how are we partakers or participants of His divine purpose? How do we consider this? As we look at this I was reflecting back through the book of Hebrews, and the book of Hebrews is a book of exhortations. There is a group of exhortations in Hebrews, and within this group there is a warning and there is an encouragement. There is the “beware of this,” but “I have made this provision.” Encouragement is always in Christ. Whatever the warning is for us not to do this or do that, don’t fall back, the provision He has made for us in encouragement always brings us back to Christ. We also see in Hebrews how we are to respond to this great calling because we see throughout this book, it is always encouraging us, and the wonderful provision that He has made for us.

The Last Warning in Hebrews

This morning, I would like for us to consider the last warning, the last call that He gives, the last exhortation in Hebrews 12:25-29. Now there are a lot of riches in these verses, but we are not going to do an exposition on these verses; this is just to set the scene.

Hebrews 12:25-29: “See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, ‘YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.’

This expression, ‘Yet once more,’ denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.”

As I said in these verses, there are a lot of riches we could consider, but today I want us to focus on one aspect out of this, and it is verse 28, especially in this point of partaking in participating with this acceptable service unto Him. Verse 28 is one of those verses the New American Standard messed up in the translation.

Let Us Have Grace

“Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken.” The better way to read the following is, “Let us have grace.” For some reason they want to say, “show gratitude,” but it is simply the word “charis,” which is grace. “Let us have grace” because we have grace. We have received grace by which (by His grace) we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe. Now there is a great gratitude in our heart for what we receive, but in this verse it says, “the grace that we have received,” and it is in the person of Christ.

Now as we focus on this one aspect of these verses. We are not taking away from the significance of any of the other verses, but we just want to focus on this today.

Change the Perspective to the Heavenly One (the Better One)

Previously, the writer had been encouraging these ones to get their eyes off earthly things, particularly their religious Judaic system which held them in so much bondage. They were to change their perspective to the heavenly one or as the phrase that is used in Hebrews so much, “the better one,” whether it is a better covenant or all the betters. That is looking up; that is seeing Christ.

He is encouraging them to see all that the Lord has brought them into both individually and corporately. And if you think back earlier in this chapter, you could see how he is encouraging them, “Since you have been brought to Mt. Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” It goes on and on, reminding them of the full provision that they have in Christ and all that He has done. He is reminding them that they had come out of Judaism in which they had placed so much security in the temple and Jerusalem which was soon to be destroyed. And he said, “If you are looking for this as your security, you are not going to make it. You need to refocus and fix your eyes upon Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith, the Mediator of the new covenant.” That is our hope, that is the encouragement, and that is all because of what was ahead of them. They were under a lot of pressure and persecution at this point, and many of them were slipping back into Judaism because it was more comfortable, and they did not want to endure being persecuted by Rome.

At this time Judaism was still a legal religion within the Roman Empire, and if you were a Jew practicing Judaism you were safe, but if you were a Christian they were beginning to persecute you more and more. So they fell back into Judaism thinking it would provide them a security. But we see later on in a few years it did not provide any security at all, and Jerusalem was totally destroyed. But with His heart of a jealous love for them, he cries out in verse 25.

Do Not Refuse Him Who is Speaking

He says, “See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking.” That little phrase: “See to it,” can also be translated just as easily, “Take heed,” which we have heard before. “Wake up! Be on the alert!” He is trying to get their attention. “Do not refuse Him who is speaking!” And who is speaking to them? Who is speaking in the letter to the Hebrews? In that first chapter, we are reminded of how in Hebrews 1:2 it says, “In these last days [God] has spoken to us in His Son.” He is speaking to us through His Son, Jesus Christ, and we need to have those ears to hear what He

is saying. He is reminding them that their security is in Him and Him only because there is going to be a great shaking.

The Prophecy of Haggai

He goes back and quotes the Old Testament prophet, Haggai. Now let me try to summarize Haggai. The Jewish people had been taken captive in Babylon for their disobedience, but by God's grace a remnant returned to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. However they had become discouraged, and they got distracted and were caring about their own things. And God, in His great love, spoke to Haggai and Zechariah.

In part of Haggai's prophecy he said, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven." And he was sharing this to encourage them because many of them who had seen that original temple were looking back. They knew that there had been a former glory, and they saw what this new temple was going to be like, and they were disheartened. "What is this going to be?" And Haggai, in his great love for the Lord, was a vessel that is actually a beautiful expression of how the message and the messenger are one. This is true of all prophets, whether you are looking at Isaiah or Jeremiah, the message and the messenger are one. He cried out to them to wake up, to encourage them because there is a glory that is to be set before them. And praise God, they responded and completed that work!

Haggai was an amazing prophet because he saw so far beyond. It talks about what God was going to do at the very end, that the latter glory would be greater than the former glory. In essence, Haggai saw all the way to the consummation of the ages. We could say that he saw into those last couple of chapters in Revelation. And it is amazing with that encouragement, everyone rose up and began to build. It shows that God is a God of purpose, and what He begins He is going to complete. And we need that revelation today because we can become distracted and disheartened. We can say, "How can I really partake of all that He has done? And the answer is, because we are looking at ourselves, and when we look at ourselves, we will only be discouraged. But as we see Him, and we remember that we have grace; we have Him, and by that we can continue.

God is Warning Us

Just like in those days of Hebrews, today God is warning us. He is going to shake once more, and I really believe that He is already shaking. We are experiencing some of that shaking already, but we are going to see that there is going to be much more ahead. But this time it is interesting that it is not only the earth that will be shaken. In the Old Testament, when He spoke the first time about the earth shaking, it says, "The earth and the heaven are shaking." You can actually sense in these days, especially at the prayer meeting on Wednesday night, that there is so much unrest in the spiritual realm that what you are praying about, what you are battling with is not flesh and blood, but there are powers, there are principalities, there is a shaking going on. Are we even aware of it? Are we tuned in enough to know that this is far beyond just this flesh and blood. There is a heavenly battle going on over the consummation of His purpose, and we want to be those that are responding to that.

He actually encourages them and says, "When He shakes, only the things that can be shaken will fall away." Now what is going to be shaken? Those things of the works of the flesh, the enemy, the world, the things that maybe we thought were so necessary, but now we see they are totally unnecessary, those extra things, extra baggage that we do not need, He shakes. But whenever God shakes, remember that it is the hand of love. It is out of His love that He warns us because He is jealous for the life of His Son to be manifested within us, and He says, "You are being distracted by these other things, and I am going to shake so you can wake up and see that it is really not that important. It is really not that important over who wins the basketball championship. Everybody will all be occupied for a month. It is actually one of the greatest betting events throughout the year. There was an article this month that said three billion dollars were going to be bet on the NCAA Tournament. If people think when they fill out their bracket just right and they win this money, it will be their security, and they will be set for life. I know nobody in here ever fills up those brackets. I will probably watch some of the tournament, so don't get on that or you will miss the whole point.

We know how things that we get so caught up in can distract us and really bring us down. But He wants things to get back in that right perspective so that the things which are of Him cannot be shaken; they will remain. They are the things of His life, His works because we have His grace, and remember this grace is a Person, and it is by His Person, by His life, that there can be this acceptable service. He concludes these verses by saying that our God is a consuming fire.

Our God is a Consuming Fire

Now how does that hit you? When it say, "Our God is a consuming fire," are you rejoicing or are you terrified? Actually, fire in and of itself is neutral. If you think in the natural realm, it depends on how you use fire. It can be for warmth and light or it can be a forest fire. How are we using it? It all depends on how fire is being used. We are thankful that even back in Deuteronomy where it first talks about our God being a consuming fire because He is a jealous God. He is jealous for the life of His Son, jealous for Him. And we saw how in II Corinthians 11:2 there was that Godly jealousy. Paul was jealous for the life of the Lord Jesus to be manifest in us. Jealousy is a neutral term, also. God was jealous for His Son. If you are jealous of something, that means you are coveting. That is a sidetrack, and we will not go down that path.

But when one aligns their heart with the things of the Lord, the things of His purpose, there is a blessing. There is a provision, there is a bounty there. But when we reject Him and do our own things there is a curse. There are issues, there is despair.

Just think of the blessings of a fire throughout the Scriptures. How did God show His presence as they were going through the wilderness? There was the fire by night to comfort them, to assure them and let them know always that He was there over them. We see how on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down, there were tongues of fire, the very life of Christ, that Spirit of God coming through that fire from heaven. And as you look throughout the Old Testament when an offering was made, when a sacrifice was made, how did you know it was accepted? Fire came down and boom! it was accepted. It was a testimony that this was accepted by God.

Of course, we know there was some fire that was not so good. If you were not following Him, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire. In Korah's rebellion, two hundred fifty men that were with him got zapped by the fire. So, if we see this consuming fire is God, we can only say, Wow! There is a beauty in it, and it is purifying us and drawing us closer to Him. It is only burning the things that are not necessary. Could we have that perspective? But if we see God as a consuming fire, it is terrifying and fearful. We need to have Him reexamining our hearts. Could we see in a fresh way how jealous He is for His Son's life to be worked out in us? It will give us a clearer grasp on this verse that I was going to focus on.

Verse 28 begins with, "Therefore," which means to remember what has gone before. Remember Him, remember all of His work, and how we have been brought in. Remember that we have been brought into that kingdom which cannot be shaken. And what security, hope, strengthening, and comforting peace that is. That is the place we have. We start from a place of victory; we start from a place of security and strength. And since we have grace, our response is by grace we offer up to God an acceptable service. Praise God as we respond to His grace there is an acceptable service, acceptable to Him.

Serve God Well-Pleasingly

As you look at a couple of other translations here, we see that it says in Young's literal translation, "That we may serve God well-pleasingly." May we be serving God well-pleasing to Him because we have received everything from the Lord. Because we have this grace, we are able to offer up the sacrifice to Him of service. There is one song in particular that I do enjoy and it is, "Yet not I but through Christ in me." One of the things I love is the very first phrase within the first verse. It says, "What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer!" Praise God for that! And the next little verse says, "There is no more for heaven now to give." The Father has given it all. He has given Christ; He has given us grace. There is no more grace for us to get. We've got it!

Do we realize the riches of His grace that we have in us? the power of His life within us? That is what we are discovering day by day. As we have this heart to heart relationship with Him living in that simplicity and purity of Him, we discover more and more of the grace of God, the life we have within us, and that can be expressed and govern us more and more. Because when you talk about this phrase, the New American Standard says, "the acceptable service." In the Greek it means "well-pleasing to Him." Well-pleasing service, and that makes you say, "Well, who is well-pleasing?" We know that is Christ; Christ is the One. Anything that originates from the life of Christ within us, that is well-pleasing to the Lord. Again, it is not I but Christ. He is the origin, therefore it is well-pleasing to Him. It is not our initiative, our works. No, it is Christ in us being manifest. That is what that phrase "acceptable" means. I like "well-pleasing" better than "the accep

This service that we are talking about here, just for clarity, means to minister spiritually; there is a spiritual value in this service. There is an eternal value when this ministry of service is offered up. When we talk about something being eternal, that means there is gold going into the city. There is a life, there is more and more of Christ coming forth. It is serving with His interest in view, not our own interest. These two words are used in a very familiar passage in Romans 12 when there is that great call to consecration.

Romans 12:1 says: “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

That “acceptable” there is well-pleasing. It is the same word that we looked at earlier, and this spiritual service of worship is the same word as we have back in Hebrews, that “spiritual” sometimes is translated “your rational, your intelligent, your service, worship.” It is that free-will offering of service unto Him which is ministry to the Lord and ministering to one another. That is what it is. It originates from Him. So often when it comes to service, we want a list. How do we serve? What do we do? We have one for workdays, there is a list in there which is great help for us. I am not using that as a negative example, but just as an example of a list. This is what we need to do because we need to be reminded.

Led by the Spirit

But in our service sometimes we say, “Okay, just tell me what to do and I will do it. I am supposed to do this, I am supposed to do that.” What is that? That is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is still around and very active today. But He desires that we have this heart to heart relationship with Him, eating of the tree of life, being led by the Spirit. We talk about being led by the Spirit. Are we really comfortable with being led by the Spirit? When we gather on Sunday morning, are we comfortable being led by the Spirit? When we gather for Bible study, for fellowship times, for prayer times on Wednesday nights, are we actually comfortable being led by the Spirit? Or are we a little more secure maybe in what we are going to set up? Outwardly, things can look the same, but it is the origin that God is after. He is looking for us to really be able to see His life manifest in a very wonderful way.

We talk about this well-pleasing service, and one of the things about the Lord we notice is that a lot of times it is like, “Okay, either tell me what to do or tell me what it is.” We want this knowledge of good and evil. “So, just define it, tell me what it is, and I will do it.” But so often the Scripture does not precisely define what it is to do. If you look at the Lord’s table, there is very little in the Scripture of actually what goes on during the Lord’s table. We are told to remember the Lord, and there is a cup and a loaf. However, like everything else there is not an instruction manual on what to do. But as we find His heart, He leads us into it. He encourages us to come together for prayer. We have some instructions on prayer, but it is really being led by Him. So many of the things of the Lord are hard to define and tell us this and that. And that drives us crazy sometimes. I just want to know what this is. It is kind of this, it is kind of that.

The Things of Him Are Life

I remember a little phrase that Stephen used quite often. He said, “When you try to define many of the things of the Lord, you end up confining them because the things of Him are life.” So when we talk about this well-pleasing service and what it is, we really cannot absolutely define it, but we can define the words. But what does it look like? What does it look like in our lives? And that is when we look to the Scriptures to see. He gives us plenty of examples and plenty of encouragement there. It is like, “Okay, you are telling us to be ready for the Lord’s return. What do I do? Give me the five lists, and I will do it.” He just shows us ones who were ready for His return, and He gives us some teaching.

A Daily Life with Him in Simplicity and Purity

How do we prepare for His return? If you look at what He says, it is simply living daily for Him. We live every day with an expectancy, allowing Him to be Lord of our life every day, following and obeying Him throughout the day. It is having that relationship and that desire because so often we can think in preparing for His return, we have to do something extra special. I have to get some extra special teaching, I have to get some unique knowledge about end time events, and all such things as this. No! If we are following Him, if we have this relationship with Him, it is all going to work out okay, because we will be with Him right where He is.

He wants to teach us so much in this simplicity and purity of a daily life with Him, and in the days we are living in that is so counter intuitive to the spirit of this age. As He calls us to be ready I want to make one clarifying point here. His call for us to be ready and His call for us to be prepared is not at all related to our interpretation of His second coming. If you look at the call to be ready and the call to be prepared, that is an absolute unconditional call. He does not say I want you to be ready if there are two raptures, if there is one rapture, if there are three raptures, no! He says, "I want you to be ready for My return." Now there may be interpretations. We can have the number of raptures, go through the tribulation, this, or that, and we should search the Scriptures and come up with our own interpretation of the second coming, but the call to be ready and the call to be prepared is not related to that. It is not like, well, if this is the way it is interpreted I need to be prepared, but this is not going to happen, I do not need to be prepared. No! His call goes out to everyone to be prepared. "You do not know when I am coming; you do not know exactly how I am going to come. But I am coming, and I want every one of you to be ready for Me." And if we have a love relationship with Him, we will have that desire to be ready, to be captured by Him.

Examples of Lives Prepared for His First Coming

So, as we look at ones who were prepared, we are going to look at some of them in a general way who were ready for His first coming. I remember last month or so Jerry shared on his interpretation of the Lord's coming, and he went through these different ones individually who were ready for His coming. But we will see here in a general way some characteristics within all of them that characterized their lives with well-pleasing service, and because of that, they were accepted.

In looking at each one of the lives that were ready when our Lord came the first time, whether it was Elizabeth and Zachariah, Joseph and Mary, the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna, they were all very faithful in their daily lives. They were just simply going about doing what the Lord had for them to do every day whether it was Elizabeth and Zachariah with him going to the temple, Mary at home, Joseph at work, the shepherds in the field. That is what the Lord had them doing that day, and they were just faithfully doing it. What encouraged me was they did not allow their responsibilities in their daily lives to distract them from hearing and obeying His voice. They were faithful in their homes, they were faithful at work, they were faithful in school, they were faithful in the temple, but they did not allow that to distract them from hearing His voice. And that came because we can say of all of them, they were abiding in Him. He was their home. They were

resting in Him, and they came to know Him. Again, as you look at them, they were not doing anything extra special. They were just faithful with what God had put in their hands for that day.

Prepared and Chosen by God

Also, we see that these ones were not just random choices. God did not look around and out of an impulse say, "Oh, there is a young virgin; I will pick Mary, there is this or that." No! We can see in the life of Mary and in her songs that she had a relationship with the Lord, and we can see her response. You can look at Anna and Simeon and see how they had a daily relationship with Him. In Zachariah's prophecies we see the Lord. You can see how they knew the Lord. When Elizabeth was with Mary, you can see their relationship with the Lord. These were His hidden ones, His chosen ones, and He said, "Ah, they are ones whom I can entrust very much with My Son coming the first time."

It is the same way in His coming the second time. Praise God! In this world today, there are many hidden ones unnoticed by man but known by the very throne of God. One of your goals in life maybe is to be a hidden one in the midst of the world. We might not be great in this world; we might not even be great in the religious world or whatever sphere or circle we are in. But do we have that hidden relationship with Him that He knows us? To be known by man or to be pleasing to God and not pleasing to man? Obviously, if He desires we would have a good testimony both ways, then He will work that out, but our goal is to be pleasing to God and not simply to please man. Praise God!

Parables in Matthew 24 and 25

Also, as we think about His second coming, the Lord shared several parables about His second coming, and as you look at a couple of these we see that there is a common thread in them. We are not going to look at the details because sometimes when you look at the details, you miss the forest because of the trees. But as you look at these precious parables that the Lord shared, what we will see there is these ones had a life with Him, and out of that life came service to Him. A brother shared that life is the gift of God, and service is an expression of that life. The fruit of His life in us produces well-pleasing service acceptable to Him. Matthew 24 and 25 is where these parables are.

Matthew 24:44 is a call to be ready, and then it comes right into this next parable in Matthew 24:45. This is where the master puts his servant in charge of his house and then he leaves. They do not know when he is coming back, and this is the question they asked him.

The Faithful Slave

Matthew 24:45: "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?"

Who then is the faithful, wise, and thoughtful caring one? And we see how one is commended, and one is disciplined. Why is the one commended? He is commended for simply being faithful with what God put in his hand. He is commended for his service. He daily cares for his master's house and those within the house. He knows how much the master loves the house and those that are in the house, and he knows the value of the master's house and its purpose.

And to him it was a great work, and he was living every day there for his master's return. He was coming under what the master would have him do. Now this is a picture for every one of us. This is not just one person put in charge, but this is actually a call for each one of us as we are all within God's house to be good and faithful servants, to be well-pleasing to Him. It is interesting as you look at this, it says, "He gives them their food at the proper time."

It was interesting in the breaking of bread today that we heard a lot about His food, that bread of life. As each one of us received the bread of life, do we allow that bread of life to be worked in us so that we can then share it with others? Because what the good and sensible faithful servant did was to share Christ with each one; he brought the life of Christ to each one. That could be maybe in a message, but also it could be in daily life—a phone call for the older people, a text for younger ones, taking somebody a meal, caring for ones when they are sick, encouraging ones when they are going through some times of discouragement. What a way of life for the wise and sensible servant who knew. He had a relationship with the One so that he could see, Ah, this one is hurting. What is going on with this brother? What is going on with this sister? How can I impart Christ to them in a way that could be an encouragement, to be a comfort to them? Do we have that heart? Is that our desire? This is what He is encouraging us to.

There is a verse in Isaiah 50:4: "The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, (of one who has been taught) that I may know how to sustain the weary ones with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple."

We need our ears awakened morning by morning to hear His voice, the voice of one taught by Him, the voice of one that is teachable, that we could really be able to display the care of Christ, the love of Christ for one another.

When it talks about giving food at the proper time, it is knowing the right food for the right time, the right thing to do at the right time. If you read through Proverbs, it talks about some of those right times. For instance, if somebody is in a house of mourning, you are not supposed to go over there celebrating and laughing. There is a way of caring for ones; there is a proper way of bringing Christ in. Sometimes it is probably the hardest thing for us to do, and that is to say nothing. But just go and be with someone. They may be going through something very perplexing, but it is just simply knowing that someone is there. That is a tremendous ministry. But we come under pressure, feeling like we have to do something or say something. Of course, at times we do; it is not that you never say anything or do anything. Again, it is being led by the Spirit of life, His life within us.

The Self-Centered Servant

As we think about the other slave, he was disciplined. He said, "My master delays." What did he do? He just lived for himself. His was a very self-centered life, and he did not care for others. He thought he knew the master when he said, "The master delays." He called Him, "My master;" he thought he knew him. He thought he had a relationship with him, but he was fooled; he was deceived. He did not have that living relationship; therefore, he did not realize the great work that had been entrusted to him. He just thought it was of little value. "What I am doing is nothing.

I am just waiting for my master,” but he was not even waiting for him. He used all the right words, but he did not have the heart for that love to come in.

Not in Form, but Captured Life

So often we can use the right words. I am going to use the conference coming up. I really love the theme for the conference—“Caught and Kept.” Do you know what my prayer is for that theme? That it would not become a nice little phrase for us, but we would have lives that are caught and lives that are kept. We will not even have to say the words, but that would be our lives lived out and expressed that ones would say, “Wow! They are really caught and kept by Him.” He would receive the glory. That is what our desire is. We do not want to come up with a nice little phrase because they come and go. Now don’t anybody take that wrong; try to get what I am saying here. However, I do like the thought, “Caught and Kept.”

But we can see how we can attach a phrase, and it enters into our religious vocabulary. What was the phrase some years back? If you remember it was, “Passing the Torch.” That phrase got used a few years. Praise God, we can see some fruit in another generation. But we do not want things to be a phrase; we want it to be life capturing us in a wonderful way.

As we see this faithful one, He knew the heart of his master. He knew how much his master cared for everyone who was in that house, and he wanted to show the love of the master to each one in a willing way. And he was ready every day for when he returned. He did not know what was ahead of him. He did not know all the events that were going to occur. He did not know the sequence of things, but whenever his master came back, he was going to be ready because he had the grace to offer up that acceptable service.

Parable of the Ten Virgins

In Matthew 25 we have the parable of the ten virgins who are waiting for the Bridegroom to come, but He delays. And we know that all of them went to sleep. It turns out that five of these virgins were ready and five were not. Now as you look at the parable of these ten virgins, again we are looking at it in a macro picture. These were all Christians because they all had the oil which speaks of the Holy Spirit. These ten were believers because they had His life within them. How are the five who were ready described? They are described as wise, “those wise ones.”

Remember Moses’ prayer in Psalm 90. They had counted each day and they gained a heart of wisdom. They simply knew Him. They knew His heart, they knew His desire, they knew what the Bridegroom really wanted. They knew what He desired because they had an established relationship with Him, and daily they learned of His heart, and they allowed Him to prepare them. Christ had been made unto them wisdom.

And He has been made unto us wisdom. Praise God! They were all believers, all ten. Christ had been made unto them wisdom. Any believer in Christ has been made unto us wisdom, but are we learning that wisdom? Are we entering into knowing Him experientially as our wisdom and our daily life? The five wise ones were not doing anything extra special. They were simply responding to His life, and they had that intimate personal heart to heart relationship with Him.

How about us? That is what He is calling us to. Enter into the joy of your Master. Enter into the love of Your Master. Be captured by His love. Those five foolish ones just lived for themselves. They were saved, yes, but they never really came into that heart-to-heart relationship with the Bridegroom. They simply lived for themselves, and they missed out on that joyful reward of that heart to heart fellowship with One who loved them. He loved all ten of them unconditionally. He died for all of them, but those five foolish ones never entered in fully to that love. They were still loving themselves; they had not experienced that transformation.

Summary

As we see God calling us to really be partakers in His divine purpose, one of the keys here is just knowing His life, His heart, His purpose. It is absolutely essential. We have to enter into that, and that is all by His grace. It is responding to the grace within us because He has given us His Holy Spirit. We have the Holy Spirit within us. When we were born again we received that Spirit, but are we listening to it? Do we take time every day to listen to the Holy Spirit? And then when the Spirit speaks to us, do we obey that Spirit? And in that obedience are we serving Him? Maybe serving Him is caring for one another, maybe serving Him is going here, going there, maybe serving Him is just spending a little extra time alone, quietly with Him. But are we listening, obeying and serving Him by His grace?

In His great jealous love He is exhorting us. He is warning us that there is going to be a shaking. It is going to be getting worse, but I have made a bountiful provision. This grace which you have been given, may we put aside the things that can be shaken. Put aside the things of the world and self. And may we hold fast to that which cannot be shaken, hold fast to Christ, hold fast to Him and Him alone. Through the shaking that we will encounter, the shaking that we have already encountered, holding fast to Him, we will find Him as our sure and steady anchor. And may we enter into the joy of being partakers of His purpose. As we see and get a glimpse of what His heart and purpose are, we see that we are coming in. There is a joy that we enter into now. There is a future joy, yes, oh, how glorious that is, but there is a joy today that we can be experiencing out of a relationship with Him. May we have that, and may we allow His purpose to be the governing purpose in our life.

What governs our life? What makes the decisions in our life? May His purpose, may His end, may that be the governing desire and factor in our life. And may we abide in that place of simplicity and purity of devotion to Him. Stay in that place, down at His feet, that most high place, looking to Him, having an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the churches in this hour, responding to Him and obeying Him in the continual testimony. Yet not I but through Christ in me. Christ in us, that is the hope of glory. Christ in us, that is what we have. We have grace to offer up that well-pleasing service. We have Christ by which we can offer well-pleasing service and may we respond in that spirit.

Let's pray:

Lord, we are thankful for this great calling that You have upon our lives. And Lord, it is a calling with purpose, and we are thankful, Lord, in this purpose that every day we experience Your love, but we also experience Your patience and Your loving kindness. And Lord, as we offer

ourselves to You again as that living sacrifice, we want to give You that freedom, that great liberty in our hearts and in our lives to do the work that You are desiring to do within each and every one of us, that we could be the people of God that will be a testimony unto You. We want to be those that are vessels fit for Your use. We want to be those that are hastening Your return, and we are thankful, Lord, that You have made every provision for life and godliness in Christ Jesus. And we would be responders to that life. We would be partakers of that divine nature. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me by CityAlight

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to His
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing, "All is mine"
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need, His power is displayed

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley He will lead
Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven
The future sure, the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And He was raised to overthrow the grave

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh the chains are released, I can sing, "I am free"
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow Jesus
For He has said that He will bring me home
And day by day I know He will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

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