

"THE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE PURE WORDS, LIKE SILVER TRIED IN A FURNACE OF EARTH, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES.

YOU SHALL KEEP THEM, O LORD, YOU SHALL PRESERVE THEM FROM THIS GENERATION FOREVER." (PSALM 12: 6 & 7)

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“GIVING GOD OUR BEST”

(Part Two)

As we continue our message relating to giving our “Best” to God, it might be worthwhile to refresh our minds as to the meaning of the word “best”. Webster defines “best” as follows: “1. Excelling all others 2. Most productive 3. Largest or most.” In other words, “our best” in any given area of our life, would simply speak of the best that we had in that area. When we speak of “our best”, it could refer to our material possessions, our talents, our behavior relating to relationships, praising God, prayer, or worshiping Him. In every area of ones life, there is a “best” and a “less than best”. This truth applies to every living human on earth.

Before we proceed further it is important that we remember that our “best” (individually speaking) is a relative term. My “best” in any given area of life is not your “best”. Nor is your “best” my “best”. Never make the mistake of measuring another’s “best” by what you believe is your “best”. Only God knows what our “best” is, because He alone knows our heart. One of the biggest problems within the Christian community today, is that of casting others in our own mold, and measuring each other by a standard of what we (individually) believe should be their best. This behavior is birthed in man by a spirit of religious pride. While each of us is vulnerable to the spirit of religious pride, it finds its most productive host in those occupying positions of leadership. I have personally fallen under the influence of this demonic spirit and am well acquainted with its sinister work. So beware of judging another’s “best”! Each of us has enough to deal with, concerning our own personal “best” for the balance of our life, that we have no time to engage in this sinful activity.

“--- Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;”

(Philippians 2:12)

Jesus tells us clearly in Matthew 7:13&14 that the gate that leads to life is narrow, difficult to pass through, and that “few” will find it. That warning alone causes me to fear and tremble when I consider that regardless of what I have been taught to the contrary – regardless of what I may believe – nevertheless, the word that Jesus spoke will judge me, and you, on that day (John 12:48). When it comes to the issues of blessing and cursing, life and death, heaven and hell, all things that pertain to life on earth – after all the books and papers are written – after all the sermons preached – after man has said all that he has to say – everything in the end will come

down to God's Commandments, Precepts and Judgments. What God has declared, will be! I cannot change that, and you cannot change that. That truth alone should cause each of us to fall on our face and cry out – "Oh God, have mercy on me"! Solomon, the wisest man to have ever lived, put it best when he wrote the following:

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil."

(Ecclesiastes 12:13&14)

Much is said in Father's word concerning His precepts. Psalm 119 alone contains 21 references to God's precepts. To ignore what God has revealed concerning His precepts is to ignore God, and that brings us nothing but trouble, loss and death.

The English definition of "Precept", according to Webster is as follows: "a command or principle intended as a general rule of action or conduct." The Hebrew definition of the word "Precept" (piqud) is as follows: "a commandment, statute, mandate; something appointed or authorized by God."

And so, we see that according to God's word, He has established certain precepts, that if followed, bring blessing, and if not followed result in loss of blessing. I am fully persuaded that all of the trouble in the church today is the fruit of the "direct" violation of God's precepts by some, and the "indirect" violation by those who refuse to separate themselves from the sin of others who rebel against God's precepts. The latter are as guilty as the former. Their silence and acceptance of those rejecting God's precepts cause them to be numbered among the transgressors (see Galatians 5:9, Matthew 16:6, Mark 8:15, Romans 16:17&18, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13)

"If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."

(2 John 10&11)

How many times have we failed to separate ourselves from a person or group of people that violate the holy precepts of God, all for the sake of love and unity, and then wonder why we are seeing so much trouble? 2 John 10 & 11 declares but one of God's precepts, and to consider it as insignificant, or to ignore it altogether, is to guarantee a loss of blessing and to invite God's discipline.

"My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips."

(Psalm 89:34)

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."

(Galatians 6:7&8)

The precept of sowing and reaping is as certain, no, it is more so, than the law of gravity. When a perfectly innocent person steps off the edge of a cliff in the darkness of night and falls to his or her death, we may mourn their death, but we do not question the law of gravity. Neither should we question God when we suffer loss due to our having violated one of His precepts. We cannot violate one of God's precepts and not suffer the consequences of having done so. This is why our Lord declared the following precept:

“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

(Matthew 4:4)

Many Christians today are attempting to live their lives by following the words of their priest, preacher, a would be prophet, the pope or the author of some “how to” book. Worse still, are those of us who are following the dictates of our own heart, when those dictates violate God's precepts. We are so enamored with our favorite Christian super stars and idols of religion that we have become spiritually blind and deaf. Upholding the testimony of Jesus Christ has become secondary at best, to upholding our own religious kingdoms – our own doctrines, our own ministry or church. May God have mercy on us all before it is too late!

“And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The father loves the son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

(John 3:32-36)

Oh saints, hear me when I say that life and death – blessing and cursing – gain and loss – all hang in the balance of who we choose to believe – God or man!

“For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar.”

(Romans 3:3&4)

Never forget that just because we stamp the name of Jesus on our religious activity it does not mean that He endorses same, or that He established it. Listen to His own words:

“Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone, they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”

(Matthew 15:13&14)

I cannot help but wonder how much actual spiritual blindness there is in the church today. Our ditches are filled with sickness, disease, divorce, strife, division, poverty, depression, unforgiveness, lust, idolatry, lack of faith, lack of knowledge, lack of Godly fear, lack of discernment, ect. Let me ask you, dear reader; If the new covenant, of which we as born again

believers are covered by, is better (Hebrews 8:6) than the old covenant which promised freedom from what our ditches are filled with, and if God has declared that He would not break His covenant (Psalm 89:34), why are we not experiencing a greater measure of His promise of blessing than we are? What is the problem? Do you think that God's word is not true? Could God some how have changed His mind concerning what is written in the Holy scriptures and just not told us yet? Or could it be that we – His people – have broken covenant with Him, violated His precepts and are now suffering the consequences of having done so?

The stark reality and undeniable truth is, that God's word prophesied that we would be in a steady spiritual decline in the latter days of time (Matthew 24:3-28, Luke 17:22-37, 2 Timothy 3:1-17, Jude 3-19 and Revelation chapters 2 & 3). We have broken covenant with God. We have violated His precepts, discounted His command to obey Him and to pursue Holiness (Hebrews 12:14), and we have done so without so much as a second thought. I have said before and I say again, most of us have a greater fear of our neighbors dog than we do of God. We have heaped up blind teachers for ourselves who make us feel good about our standing before a Holy God. In short, for the most part, we just do not believe what God's word says. May God have mercy on us and do whatever is necessary to gain our undivided attention and wake us up from our spiritual stupor.

Who among us would deny that the dust of destruction and corruption is not piling up around we Christians? Who among us would be bold enough to deny that God's word declares that the cause of our corruption is the direct result of our having violated one of God's precepts by sowing to our flesh rather than the Spirit (Galatians 6:7&8)! Our problem is not the Pagan world, the court system, public schools void of prayer, our law makers or Satan. We always want to blame something or someone else for our trouble. Many of us place all the blame for our troubles on Satan. Just like Eve in the Garden of Eden, instead of confessing her guilt and repenting before a Holy God, she pointed her finger of blame at Lucifer. We are no different today! We refuse to acknowledge our guilt and admit that "we" – you dear reader – and I - are the problem. And just like Adam and Eve, who suffered great loss, we too will continue to suffer great loss in this life as long as we fail to adhere to God's Commandments, Precepts and Judgments.

Today, we have given birth to an entire generation of those who claim to be "born again" believers of Jesus Christ, but who have never been broken, never acknowledged their rottenness before a Holy God and their need of a Saviour. They have never cried out before God and repented of their sin and corruption. They have never sworn their allegiance to Jesus Christ as their Lord. They view themselves as believers, but not Disciples (Matthew 28:19&20). They know not the word of God and have no love of His law written upon their heart and placed in their mind (Hebrews 8:8-12). They live their lives not to love, fear and obey God, but to receive His blessings and go to heaven when they die. This is the generation of Christians that my generation of leaders has produced. We (my generation) have much to repent for and are in need of a double portion of His mercy. May God help us!

In Revelation 3:14-22 we find the description of our modern day church, which our Lord threatens to "spew out of His mouth" (Vs. 16) if we fail to repent.

In Hosea, God spoke and established a spiritual precept or principle that applies to us today. Hear and heed the word of the Lord!

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me;¹ Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. The more they increased, the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame. They eat up the sin of My people; They set their heart on their iniquity. And it shall be: like people, like priest. So I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their deeds. For they shall eat, but not have enough; they shall commit harlotry, but not increase; Because they have ceased obeying the Lord.”

(Hosea 4:6-10)

Clearly, the vast majority of us have not been, and are not now, giving God our best as He commands that we do, and that He is so deserving of. Please remember that our Father will not ask more of you or me than He knows that we have. We choose from what we have and offer it to Him. If it is our best, then He receives it and blesses us. If it is less than our best, He rejects it and will not receive it, nor will He bless us for same. This is one of God’s precepts that never changes.

Please allow me to give an example of one’s offering to God less than their best. I choose to go to a fellowship meeting of believers and at some point we decide to enter into His presence to worship Him and to commune with Him through prayer. At that point I realize that I have my cell phone, and it is on. Maybe I am expecting a call from home – maybe I am a doctor on call and might be needed – maybe my children are traveling and might need me in an emergency. What should I do? Leave it on or turn it off? It is my choice – offer God the best I have by eliminating all possible distractions and turn the phone off – or offer Him less than my best and leave it on – clearly it is my choice and God knows the difference. Should I choose to leave the phone on, for whatever the reason, I have offered less than my best, and as a result He will reject whatever I offer Him in worship and prayer – at that time. Sounds hard does it not? Narrow and difficult? Absolutely! You see, God will not relegate Himself to second place for anyone regardless of our attempt to have Him do so. Listen –

“Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.”

(Leviticus 22:20&21)

Please read Leviticus 22 verses 17 through 25 as well as Malachi 1:6-14 which form the basis of the precept of offering God our best. We no longer offer Him offerings for our sin, except that of repentance, however the precept of offering Him our best which is accepted, or less than our best, which is rejected, again has never changed and never will. Listen to Malachi 1:8&14:

¹ See 1 Peter 2:9 – Many claim the promise of priesthood today without meeting God’s conditions for same.

“And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably? Says the Lord of hosts.”

“But Cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished –

For I am a great king”, says the Lord of Hosts, “and My name is to be feared among the nations.”

In Luke the fourteenth chapter, verses 26 through 33 our Lord laid out the conditions that had to be met to be counted among His disciples. If these conditions are not met, we cannot be His disciples. We cannot! All of these conditions are measured by God, in the heart of man, and we cannot fool Him regardless of how righteous we may sound or look to others. When Jesus concluded His precept of abandoning one’s heart to Him, He said:

“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”
(Luke 14:33-35)

Offering God our best is nothing more than showing Him that we honor and respect Him above all else in life. Offering Him less than our best shows a lack of honor and disrespect. Every time we commit this sin, we insult Him as the one true God, who is the source of every good and perfect gift that we have (James 1:17). Is it not time that we stop playing at religion, renounce the spiritual denial that we have been in, acknowledge our sin, and beg Fathers forgiveness for our wicked behavior? As certain as God’s rejection is of our offering Him less than our best – it is just as certain that He will accept us, forgive us (1 John 1:9) and bless us – “if” – we will “do” as He says:

“- - - If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

I thank God for revealing His truth to us, while we still have time to turn back to Him. May our Lord bless you dear reader, and grant you the grace to hear what the Spirit is saying in these times of spiritual decline. May you be counted among those that He calls friends and may you fully please Him by offering Him your best.

God Bless,

Tom