The Woman of Christ Faces Daily Living

The Trip of a Lifetime

Hebrew 11:10; Psalms 23:4; Luke 18:14; Psalm 51:17

Lesson #12

Packing Up

Farewell to our earlier days before coming to the Lord. Baggage we won't carry (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Where Are We Going?

The highway leads to a beautiful city (Hebrews 11:10). Looking back at Lesson 1 and remembering - the lofty goal of a righteous life.

Visiting Friends Along the Way

But life is a long road, and we'll need strength from others, from their prayers (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Saying "Goodbye" to fellow Christians is reminiscent of the apostle Paul's departure from the Ephesian elders, reminding them this may be their last time together. He warned them to be ever aware of those who would distort the truth. He urged them to watch closely so that they would remain strong. The visit's end must have been a poignant sight as Paul kneels and prays with them. The elders were weeping, hugging and kissing him goodbye before accompanying him to the ship (Acts 20:16-38)

Wrong Turns and Detours

When our journey carries us a long way from the spiritual encouragement of Christians, strange ideas may form, initiating confusion. Paul asked earlier Christians, "Who has bewitched you?" (Galatians 3:1) In Revelation 2:4, Jesus says, "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love." Jesus urges action and tells believers to remember how far they have fallen, repent, and return to the good works and heart they had at the beginning (Revelation 2:5). Indicators of leaving the first love:

- Worship and spiritual growth are hindered because of feelings of obligation more than joy. Obedience becomes that of fixed habit or guilt rather than happy affection.
- Spiritual Indifference: Losing the sense of wonder, marvel, and deep, daily reliance on God.
- Neglecting spiritual diet by drifting away from prayer and studying the Scriptures.
- Anguish & heartbreak over daily concerns such as marriage; children's choices; and/or financial hardship.
- Exhaustion that leads to questioning ourselves, "Is it all worth it?"

Rest Area

Take a break: solitude on a mountain, in a boat or on the backyard swing

- Mark 1:35: Early morning and nighttime prayer -- "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed."
- Luke 6:12: "One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent the night praying to God."
- Luke 5:16: “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”
- Matthew 14:23: "After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. Later that night, He was there alone."
- Mark 6:46: "After leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray."
- Matthew 14:13 Seeking comfort during grief and stress: "When Jesus heard what had happened (the death of John the Baptist), He withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place."
- Matthew 26:36: "Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.'"
- Luke 22:41: "He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed..." and Luke adds, “…being in agony, He prayed more earnestly” (Luke 22:44a).

Emergency call for help! Earnest prayers in tears!

Away from others and distractions, we can truly communicate with our Lord. A good friend referred to this privilege as time on his open line to God. At such times, we might call out, “Father, I’m begging you to hear me as I call out from this world of deception and its false offers of opportunity. Rescue me from those who scheme for my very soul. With their dishonesty, they’ve offered rewards that have brought me only despair and emptiness. I have bought into those lies, and I’m in desperate need of You, Father. Please help me.”

I hope you will cast your cares on the Lord. He’s waiting (1 Peter 5:7-8).

Grace is God’s great gift of love poured out on humanity. When we hear the word “grace,” our very beings should fall down before Him and go into “thanksgiving mode.” There’s never been a more meaningful gift than that which offers salvation and life eternally in Heaven. Consider His great love, compassion and mercy, and be assured that He hears the earnest prayer.

Amazing Grace in Action

- King David wrote "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart …” (Psalm 51:17). He had committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband killed. When confronted by the prophet Nathan, he did not make excuses. He experienced a broken spirit; a deep, honest admission of his human weakness; and his need for God. David knew the pain of a contrite heart, one that feels true sorrow for sin and turns away from pride. God never turns away a humble, repentant person who comes to Him.
- King Manasseh was one of Judah’s most evil kings. He practiced intense idolatry, witchcraft, and child sacrifice. After his capture in chains by the Assyrians, he humbled himself deeply before God. God heard his prayer and restored him to his throne in Jerusalem. King Manasseh of Judah is one of the Bible's most extreme examples of wickedness followed by true repentance and God’s mercy.
- The prodigal son left home looking for “a piece of the action.” When he found it, he learned “sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you

more than you want to pay." Coming to himself, he said, "…I will say unto my father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee… And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him" (Luke 15:18-20).

Back on the Road & Staying the Course

"Staying the course" means continuing a task or goal until it is finished, in spite of facing difficulties or obstacles. It means to persist and not give up until you reach the end of a plan or effort. The phrase likely comes from a nautical or horse-racing background: the description of a ship maintaining its heading by constantly measuring its position and making necessary corrections or a horse having the stamina to finish a race. Its usage is to encourage people to keep going through hard times; to promote endurance in maintaining strong focus when problems happen; to urge pushing forward instead of stopping when things get tough; to embrace the belief that hard work will lead to the desired result over time.

Philippians 1:6 says, "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Journey's End

There it is! Heaven, at last!

Excitedly anticipating the first view. Recall your earlier trips that held such thrill - the sight of your destination! What must it have been like for Columbus; for William Clark of the Lewis & Clark Expedition who celebrated the sight in his journal, writing, "Ocean in view! O! The joy!" or for Moses who, though restrained from entry, was given a panoramic view of the promised land. Let's ponder often the thrill that awaits those of us who have "stayed the course" when we hear our Savior's greeting, "…Well done, good and faithful servant … enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" Matthew 25:23" (KJV)

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound …

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