

Get Off the Ride and Walk

I am glad to see this week's essay is beating the same drum we have been knocking holes in since Tabernacles. As of this writing, Passover is only 57 days away.

Things will undoubtedly heat up for God's Church as they always do, just before one of His Holy Days. If I had a mega-phone, bullhorn, or loudspeaker system, I would get on the rooftop and shout this message out. The issue would still be the same, who would really be listening.

Have you ever ridden on a merry-go-round several times and gotten a little nauseated? How about staying on a roller coaster without exiting until you got a headache and nearly threw up? What made you exit? What made you stop? How many people are out there, professing to be in God's Church and "following" God's word and are in utter misery? Ask yourself, why? Think about this and we will get back to it.

As a cop for over thirty years, situations and scenarios did not always provide enough time for planned out resolutions. Our actions were all too often needed immediately. The choice was simple, fix it or someone could get hurt or worse.

When we conducted large scale operations or dignitary protection details, we had the time. Time to gather intelligence, outline, set assets in place and ensure all

bases were covered. We had a plan to follow. Everyone had instructions and knew their assignment. Believe me there is a tremendous amount of coordination that goes into protecting a President or Prime Minister. The same goes for executing search warrants on drug houses and violent criminals. Written guidelines were available and followed for mission success. Granted, reality could always throw a wrench in the gears, but in planning for the possibilities of such, we were prepared for contingencies.

Once an operation or detail was completed, a debrief was conducted to critique performance and address any issues where we could have done better. We always looked at ourselves first. If there were any problems, it was because someone did not follow instructions as written. Mission success or mission failure depended upon just how well we trained and were prepared to follow a written plan.

I am confident that everyone can see the connection coming into view between the previous paragraphs and staying on an amusement ride too long. If not, it will not be difficult to clear it up. We can quiz ourselves to see how we are doing on the journey to God's Kingdom.

If there is something grossly wrong or disruptive in your life, how long has it been going on? Have you done an adequate amount of sincere and deepest soul searching? Are you still dragging old luggage around with you that you should

have thrown away long ago? Are you walking with God, and do you truly know Him?

God has given us His written word. It is our guide, our map, our instructions for life on Earth and making it into God's Kingdom. ***We are to live by every word of it,*** not just what we feel or think we should follow (**Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4**).

It is ***NOT*** rocket science. Every word means "every word." God would have so stated if His word were a multiple choice or a menu from which we could select the guidelines for our conduct. But He is strict and no respecter of persons, He will not play favorites.

2 Chronicles 19:7- "And now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Be careful and act wisely, for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of a bribe."

Acts 10:34- "Then Peter opened his mouth and said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons,"

Romans 2:11- "Because there is no respect of persons with God."

Colossians 3:25- "But the one who does wrong shall receive *for* the wrong he has done, and there is no respect of persons."

Ephesians 6:9- “And masters, do the same things toward them, forbearing threatening; knowing also that your own Master is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him.”

1 Peter 1:17- “And if you call upon the Father, Who judges according to each man’s work without respect of persons, pass the time of your *life’s* journey in *the* fear of *God*;”

I wanted to emphasize this point. God does not care how sweet or how nice someone is when it comes to keeping His word and His Commandments. Period. No matter how many hymns a choir sings, how many tracts people hand out, or how many times you mumble a “sinner’s prayer,” if you are not keeping God’s Commandments as He instructed, you fail. This is a suitable place to start in the examination process approaching Passover. Are we walking in alignment with God’s word? God’s word will complete us and lead us to righteousness.

Psalms 33:4-6- “For the Word of the LORD is upright; and all His works are *done* in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD. By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”

2 Timothy 3:12-17- “And indeed, everyone who desires to live godly in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted. But wicked men and imposters shall become worse and worse, deceiving *others* and being deceived *themselves*. But *as for* you, continue in the things that you did learn and were assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*; And that from a child you have known the Holy Writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus. All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; So that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.”

When we come to know God’s word, we must strive to live by each word of it. How many times have we said, “God knows the heart?”

Hebrews 4:12- “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and **is able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.**”

For those of us who have been following God’s word for several years, are there still issues and hurdles we have yet to overcome? Do we constantly suffer the same

ups and downs as usual? What lessons have we not learned? What baggage are we still holding on to?

Hebrews 5:11-14- “Concerning Whom we *have* much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For truly, by this time you ought to be teachers, *but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* word of righteousness because he is an infant. But solid food is for those who are fully grown, who through repeated practice have had their senses trained to discern between good and evil.”

Failure to listen to what His word is telling us only causes issues to remain and we fail to break free from the cycle of repetitiveness. Perhaps it was something that happened in our childhood through no fault of our own. Releasing all our cares and concerns to the One Who bore our sins is a direction that should be examined.

Fully trusting in God’s ability to heal and mend us is not always easy. Sometimes we expect to be healed or fixed overnight while the issue may have cultivated over

many years. If you want a harvest, let the seeds of His word He planted in us grow, nurtured by obedience to Him.

Mark 4:14- “The Sower sows the Word.”

We should not expect a harvest ten minutes after planting a crop. Not that God could not resolve a problem in an instant, but it takes time. The change and transformation that He desires in us may take us the rest of our lives.

I worked in child crimes when I was a detective. One of the major problems older victims of abuse had been letting go of guilt and realizing they were a victim; they did nothing wrong. Even greater was coming to a place of forgiving the abuser. Those outside of God’s church may never forgive someone for a wrong but if we are truly following His word and walking with God, we must be obedient to forgiveness. Jesus Himself, forgave those who crucified Him. He can and will heal us too. Any unforgiveness will be held against us and will impede our spiritual growth.

Matthew 6:14-15- “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Are you holding any grudges or unforgiveness in your hearts toward anyone?

Luke 23:34- “Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And as they divided His garments, they cast lots.”

Psalms 55:22- “Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be moved.”

Matthew 11:28-30- “Come to Me, all you who labor and are *overly* burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke *is* easy, and My burden is light.”

1 Peter 5:6-7- “Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in due time; Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.”

There is that word again, ***humbled***. God does not want us to be puffed up or full of ourselves. It can be difficult to forgive a wrong if we can never be humble. In the end, what really matters?

Are we submitting to the authorities?

Luke 20:25- “Then He said to them, “Render therefore the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God.”

This is extremely difficult as this is an election year, and the lunacy and propaganda are all around us. Truthfully, is anyone in power godly in their conduct following God’s word and Commandments? Doubtful. But God allows these people to be in power, it reflects the conduct of the people, we get what we deserve. Imagine where we would be if churches preached God’s truth and kept His Commandments and Holy Days?

1 Peter 2:13-17- “Therefore, submit yourselves to every human institution for the Lord’s sake; whether to the king, as supreme, Or to governors, as sent by him to execute vengeance *against* evil doers, and to praise those who do well. For so is the will of God, that by doing well yourselves, you may put to silence the

ignorance of senseless men; As free, and not using your freedom as a cover for evil, but as bondslaves of God. Show honor to everyone. Love the brotherhood, revere God and honor the king.”

Are we being holy in our daily lives and conduct? Pretending and playing church will keep anyone on the merry-go-round and experiencing the difficulties of a roller coaster. We serve a holy God.

Isaiah 6:3- “And one cried to another, and said, “Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.”

1 Peter 1:15-17- “But according as He Who has called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct; For it is written, “You be holy because I am holy.” And if you call upon the Father, Who judges according to each man’s work without respect of persons, pass the time of your *life’s* journey in *the* fear of *God*;”

Are we striving to remain out of the world’s affairs? We are residents here on Earth until Christ comes back and we are resurrected into His Kingdom. We were charged to come out and be separate from the unbelievers.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18- “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: “I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,” says *the* Lord, “and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,” says *the* Lord Almighty.”

Are you still seeking God and His righteousness from a source that ***is not following*** His Commandments? I am not advocating living with your head buried in the sand, but I urge caution on any source you may seek or think “they have a good message.” So many worldly sources will scratch itching ears. TV preachers are experts in the “warm and fuzzy” soothing messages that will always make you feel good. Pursuing godly advice from an earthly source may offer a Band-Aid on a tumor. Any open-door Satan can get a foot in, he will. Remember, a little leaven spoils the whole lump. Again, I am not saying there are no sources of wisdom out there but use due diligence and sift information through the word of God. See what

the Source of all truth has to say on the matter. God may heat up the metal before making a sword out of it. He does not use a Band-Aid; He fixes problems from the inside out. Seek God first.

Not being tied to the unbeliever is in the spiritual sense. Certainly, we cannot avoid other human beings. That is not the intent. We must be cautious not to be pulled back into the mire from which we were saved. We must remain on guard for our spiritual condition. I still have many “worldly” friends and associates. I do not spend time together with them the way I used to. Keeping this instruction in God’s word will draw us closer in our relationship with Him. We are no better than anyone else, but we now have a new set of standards we live by. .

Galatians 6:3-9- “For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself. But let each one prove his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; For each one shall bear his own burden. Let the one who is being taught in the Word share all *his* good things with the one who is teaching *him*. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall reap corruption from the flesh. But the one who sows to the Spirit shall

reap eternal life from the Spirit. Now we should not lose heart *in* doing well because we who do not faint will reap in due time.”

Blessings will come in our lives *if* we are obedient to God’s word and His way of life. Ridding ourselves of our former conduct and even associations will happen if we are diligently seeking to have a relationship with God, desiring to grow in the image of our Savior Jesus Christ. We cannot be just believers; we must be a doer.

James 1:21-25- “Therefore, having rid yourselves of all filthiness and all *the* abounding of wickedness around you, then in meekness accept for yourselves the implanted Word, which is able to save your lives. Then be doers of *the* Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves Because if anyone is a hearer of *the* Word and not a doer, this one is like a man considering his natural face in a mirror. Who, after looking at himself, went away and immediately forgot what he was like. But the one who has looked into *the* perfect law of freedom, and has continued in *it*, this one himself has not become a forgetful hearer, but is a doer of *the* work. This one shall be blessed in his actions.”

Again, we can so easily deceive ourselves by “playing church” thinking we are worshipping God yet doing it our own way. Over two hundred “Christian”

denominations in the United States alone and an estimated thirty thousand worldwide, all revering God in their own way. Slap a Jesus label on it and if it is good for the “children” God will certainly approve. It is okay to pray to saints, observe man-made holidays and negate the Old Testament because it is for the “Jews.” Is it any wonder people do not understand God’s word?

I used to be amazed at how many “religious” people were so on fire for Jesus but never read His words! Jesus kept the true Sabbath and God’s Holy Days. Not once did He say, “celebrate my birthday.” What did He tell us to remember? His sacrifice at Passover! I wonder how much hate mail we would get if we put up signs that said, “nobody goes to heaven when you die...?” But the scriptures confirm, we go to our rest and return to the dust from which we were taken.

Genesis 3:19- “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return.”

John 3:12-13- “If I have told you earthly things, and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (And no one has ascended into heaven, except He Who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, Who is in heaven.)”

You will not hear that verse in church. But having God's Holy Spirit and understanding and reading His word, we come to a place where we know the Plan of God. We know the deceptions of the enemy. God cannot lie (**Titus 1:2**).

1 John 2:3-8- "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked. Brethren, I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment, which you had from the beginning; the old commandment is *the* message that you have heard from *the* beginning. Again, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining."

When we repented, we were baptized, and we were cleansed of our sins by the shed blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. We chose to end the amusement rides. Yet

we still have a human tendency to drag around our old baggage and wonder why we are not growing in The Lord.

Ephesians 1:6-9- “To *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; Having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself;”

Colossians 1:12-15- “Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love; In Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins; Who is *the* image of the invisible God, *the* firstborn of all creation;’ ”

Jesus Christ purchased all our old baggage with His life. Yet Satan has his way of shoving an old suitcase out in front of us every chance he gets to constantly remind us of our past sins. But we are blessed that our God does not remind us of our past.

Hebrews 8:12- “For I will be merciful toward their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their lawlessness I will not remember ever again.”

Hebrews 10:16-17- “‘This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,’ says *the* Lord: ‘I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds; And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again.’ ”

We have been baptized unto His death and therefore we are alive in His resurrection.

Romans 6:3-5- “Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if

we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection.”

We must endure trials, storms, and fiery darts to bring about the changes from our old self to the new man and we are to put on Christ.

Galatians 3:26-27- “Because you are all offspring of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.”

Ephesians 4:21-23- “If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to *the* truth in Jesus: That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind;”

Colossians 3:10-17- “And have put on the new man, who *is* being renewed in knowledge according to *the* image of Him Who created him; Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian *nor* Scythian, slave *nor* free; but Christ *is* all things, and in all. Put on then, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness, *and* longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if anyone has a

complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive.*”

And above all these things *put on* love, which is *the* bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly* in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him.”

We must let the word of God **remain within us.** Keeping it in our hearts and minds in *all we do.*

1 Peter 1:6-7- “In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials; In order that the *proving of your faith*, which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ;”

1 Peter 4:10-13- “*Let* each one, according as he has received a gift from God, *be using* it to serve the others as good stewards of the grace of God *which* manifests

itself in various ways. If anyone speaks, *let it be as the* words of God; if anyone serves, *let it be* as from the strength which God supplies; so that in everything, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to Whom is the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you which is taking place to test you, as if some strange thing were happening to you. But to the degree that you have a share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice; so that, at the revelation of His glory, you also may rejoice exceedingly.”

This character change must be in our day-to-day conduct as well as our demeanor at our Sabbath fellowship.

2 Timothy 2:16- “But avoid profane and vain babblings because they will *only* give rise to more ungodliness,”

Would you tell a risqué joke if Christ were sitting next to you? Would you let slip a “ck” explicative or other course language in conversation to make a point if Our Lord were standing next to you?

Matthew 18:20- “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them.”

He *is* among us. Believe me I am no stuffed shirt and every day I try and put the old man a little more distant in the rear-view mirror, failing quite often.

1 Corinthians 5:7- “Therefore, purge out the old leaven, so that you may become a new lump, even as you are unleavened. For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.”

Every day, waking up and getting out of bed (a blessing in itself) *is* a *new day* to grow in the ways of The Lord. I pray He takes captive our thoughts and may our actions and conduct be pleasing to Him and in accordance with His will. Search yourselves and ask God to reveal any old luggage we may be hanging onto. Jesus already paid the price so we may travel His path without burden, dragging what is unnecessary.

The spring Holy days will soon be upon us. Passover is only 57 days away and the Feast of Unleavened Bread follows. We began our preparation right after the Feast

of Tabernacles and The Last Great Day. We must be worthy to participate in the renewal of our covenant.

2 Corinthians 11:27-30- “For this reason, *if* anyone shall eat this bread or shall drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, he shall be guilty of the body and *the* blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself and let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup accordingly Because the one who eats and drinks unworthily is eating and drinking judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord. For this *very* reason, many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many have fallen asleep.”

If you are so tired of riding a merry-go-round with life’s trials or the rollercoaster difficulties of endless anguish, get off the ride and walk with God.

2 Thessalonians 2:12-13- “And *earnestly* testifying, that you may walk worthily of God, Who is calling you to His own kingdom and glory. Because of this, we give thanks to God without ceasing: that when you received *the* Word of God, which you heard from us, you did not accept it as the word of men, but even as it is in truth—*the* Word of God, which is also working in you who believe.”

Ephesians 4:1-5- “Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the* Lord, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called With all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Being diligent to keep the

unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism;”

Because of our calling, we have a tremendous responsibility. We have been adopted into God’s Family and given His name. It is binding on all of us to walk worthy of that name. The process of change and growing into the image of Christ takes place over our lifetime. Seek Him first, look for Him first. Love Him first. Take this quick eye test and remember and do what we just read. Amen.

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