

Always On My Mind

“You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

This is *the* first and greatest commandment;
(Matthew 22:37-38)

These verses from Matthew 22 give the response by Jesus to a “doctor of the law” who was trying to tempt Him by asking what the great commandment of the law was. Jesus restated what Moses told the children of Israel before they crossed the Jordan River.

Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD.

And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart.

(Deuteronomy 6:4-6)

Jesus told him what he already knew. What He did by this was to show the New Testament church that the statement by Moses in Deuteronomy gave the instruction to physical Israel to love God with all of their heart, soul and might and His restatement of it brought it to the other part of the promise to Abraham, his spiritual seed.

“And said, ” ‘By Myself have I sworn,’ says the LORD, ‘because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son;
That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, ...”

[spiritual Israel]

and as the sand which is upon the seashore. ...”

[physical Israel]

(Genesis 22:16-17).

This is the covenant God made with Abraham which He has, and is, keeping. For our part we are to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul and mind as the spiritual seed, God’s church.

How often do we think of our personal covenant relationship with God? We were individually and personally called by God the Father.

No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me.

(John 6:44-45).

As you can see, not only has He called us, but He is teaching us. I am amazed each Sabbath at how much we are learning. He is bringing these lessons to us every week.

Are we keeping Him as our top priority during the rest of the week? He has called us to work towards something very different than what is found in “mainstream” religion. We were not called to be good Christians, although that may be part of it. We were called, taught to believe and have faith, repent and be baptized and *converted*. That’s the key, conversion. There are a lot of people who claim to be religious and good Christians, but God wants more than that from us, He wants our hearts. He has called us to be different, to separate ourselves from the world and submit to Him and do His will.

Before we were Baptized this was explained to us. We cast off the old man and walk in newness of life, ridding ourselves of the previous influences of the world.

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.

(Romans 6:3-4).

He has called us to be part of His family, heirs of the kingdom of God. We must transform our lives so we may be found worthy to be chosen. We have been called now we must remain faithful so we will be chosen at the end.

But the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved. (Matthew 24:13).

And you shall be hated by all men for My name’s sake; but the one who endures to the end, that one shall be saved. (Mark 13:13).

Blessed *is the* man who endures trials because, after he has been proved, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12)

As a Christian and part of God’s called simply living in and surviving in this world is going to get much more difficult. We have seen the fruits of Satan’s spawns in government, movies, television shows, video games and on numerous websites. In the late seventies the US Supreme Court handed down a decision relating to what could be classified as pornography. It said the item in question had to have some socially redeeming qualities or it could be considered pornographic. By those standards this present society could be classified as pornography. There aren’t many things now that have any socially redeeming qualities, especially news and politics.

We have to strive for a higher level than the rest of the world. Yes, we keep the Sabbaths and Holy Days but how are we the rest of the time? How much of our old life are we carrying around with us each day? In some cases that can be a lot of excess baggage. How much of it can be considered idolatry? Think about it. What is most important to you? Cars, trucks, guns, money? How about sports? Do you cut Sabbath short to do your own thing or just relax after study? What takes up most of your time? Do you work so many hours it's hard to have time to study God's word or even pray? Do you work so hard you are too exhausted to even think let alone study? What gets in the way of our ability to truly worship our Creator God the way He expects us to? When I sit down and think about it I can come up with too many things. None really valid, though.

We know we are to transform our lives to be more like our Elder Brother, Jesus. Is that something we can do? I mean, He was sinless. How do we do that in this world – in this evil climate? Brethren, we are not expected to be perfect, but we are expected to put in the effort required to produce good fruits. We can strive to be like Him. We will stumble, sometimes we'll fall flat on our face, but we continue to pray for guidance and wisdom and repent when we need to and continue following His example in ALL things. Endure to the end.

For to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His footsteps

Who committed no sin; neither was guile found in His mouth;

Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; *when* suffering, He threatened not, but committed *Himself* to Him Who judges righteously; (1 Peter 2:21-23).

Nowhere were we told this would be easy and without trials or problems. We should know, because we have been told, it will be worth it in the end.

Brethren it is up to us individually to produce the fruits worthy of our calling. God needs to be our primary focus. He needs to be always on our mind.

With things in this country and world progressing the way they are we absolutely must strengthen our bond with God. All the enjoyment we think we've gotten from the various things in our lives, is it really worth it? All of a sudden you wake up and think, I'm too young to be this damned old! But you're not. Think about this, if a thousand years is but a day to God, Adam, Eve and those of that time who lived 8-900 years didn't make one day in Gods timing.

I know most of us can get something in our heads we have a hard time dismissing. I don't know why but earlier this week a song from the 70's popped into my head and it seemed to take on a life of its own. The more I thought about the lyrics the more they seemed to relate to my relationship with God. I began to realize there was a lot more I could and should be doing

because this could be going through my mind if God ever said, Depart from Me, I never knew you. A very scary thought.

Always On My Mind:

“Maybe I didn’t treat you
Quite as good as I should have.
Maybe I didn’t love you
Quite as often as I could have.
Little things I should have said and done
I just never took the time.
You were always on my mind.”

I know we all want to do the right thing and most of the time we probably feel we are but remember, God knows our heart and we can say what we want, whatever is right in our mind but is it really?

There’s a line towards the end that has me praying more earnestly:

“Tell me that your sweet love hasn’t died.
Give me one more chance.”

We know through scripture that His love for us will not die but I imagine He could be very disappointed if we neglect such a tremendous opportunity to be with Him and our Lord and Savior for eternity because of some lesser worldly concerns.