

Echoes of a Busted Drum

After seven years of fellowship, it is time to sharpen some future swords. As you all know, Chauncey and I are not getting any younger. Contrary to widely held belief, he was not born in 1849...maybe John Spano was around at the turn of the century, however, none of us saw Benjamin Franklin discover electricity. As it was important for our roles in law enforcement, training replacements is also vital for future growth and continuing God's mission for our small flock.

Satan has constantly attacked all members but the grace of God Almighty, the Blood of Jesus Christ and the gift of His Holy Spirit has empowered us not only to endure but proceed. Are we all still moving forward? Remaining stationary or taking a step back has never been a desired direction. There was a line from the movie "Patton" in which George C. Scott (as Patton) was asked to fall back. His reply was, "I don't like to pay for the same real estate twice." While an occasional pause for a regroup may be in order, remaining in the same spot allows the enemy to zero in on your location. We do not need to aid him in making ourselves better targets.

I am confident we have had a belly full of “tolerance” for several years. I am speaking of the liberal tolerance and perversions that have been shoved in our faces from all angles and the media. We become villains or misogynists if we do not accept others for their sins. We can see from the condition of our spiritual and moral compass how far gone our nation has become. We cannot allow it in God’s house.

Studying scriptures will give us the principles to keep and mind as we look deep within ourselves to see where exactly we stand and just how serious we *are* in our walk toward salvation and God’s Kingdom. They establish foundational values and guidelines for thought and conduct. Memorizing the entire Bible is a better idea but is a bit more difficult.

If these scriptures sound familiar, they should. This has been a repetitive theme for the past couple of years, hence the “busted drum.” By asking simple questions based on God’s word, we can evaluate ourselves and keep track of spiritual progress. These are the only standards by which we need to compare ourselves. Keep them in mind and store them in your hearts as we read.

God has not compromised His Word or His Commandments. He remains unchanged.

Malachi 3:6- “For I *am* the LORD, I change not. Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Hebrews 13:8- “Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

His judgment is upon His Church first. Those of us who profess to be “His called/chosen” need to keep this in mind.

1 Peter 4:16-19- “Yet if anyone *is suffering* as a Christian, he should not be ashamed; but let him glorify God because of this, **For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God;** and if it first *begins* with us, what *will be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if the righteous are saved with much difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and *the* sinner? For this reason also, let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to *Him* in well doing, as to a faithful Creator.”

Do you really know God? Do you seek Him and His word first before any other source on spiritual matters or salvational issues? Does He know you? Are you truly walking with Him?

1 John 2:3-6- “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.”

Psalm 119:1-3- “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep His testimonies and **who seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways.**”

Psalm 106:3- “Blessed are those who keep judgment, and he who does righteousness at all times.”

Does your actions and conduct reflect the image of Christ?

Matthew 7:16-23- “**You shall know them by their fruits.** They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. **Every tree that is not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire.** Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who *is* doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?’ And then I will confess to them, ‘**I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.**”

Are we exercising due diligence in the development of our spiritual fruit?

2 Peter 1:5-10- “And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; **And to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love of God.** For *if* these things exist and abound in you, they *will* cause you to be neither lacking effort nor

lacking fruit in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **But the one in whom these things are not present is spiritually blind—so shortsighted that he has forgotten that he was purified from his old sins.** For this reason, brethren, **be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure; because if you are doing these things, you will never fall at any time.**”

How easily are you offended? We are not to take offense in spiritual wrongs unless it is against our God. (David killed Goliath over his insults toward God- 1 Samuel 17:23-51). If we truly esteem others more important than ourselves, we will not be offended.

Matthew 11:6- “And blessed is everyone who shall not be offended in Me.”

(Luke 7:23)

Matthew 5:39- “But I say to you, do not resist evil; rather, *if* anyone shall strike you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

Matthew 18:4-7- “Therefore, **whoever shall humble himself as this little child,** he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever shall receive one such little child in My name receives Me. But **whoever shall cause one of these little**

ones who believe in Me to offend, it would be better for him that a millstone be hung around his neck and he be sunk in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For it is necessary that offenses come, **yet woe to that man by whom the offense comes!**”

Matthew 18:15-17- **“So then, if your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault between you and him alone. If he is willing to hear you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not listen, take with you one or two others, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he fails to listen to them, tell *it* to the church. But if he also fails to listen to the church, let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector.”**

Matthew 18:21-22- “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.”

These instructions are more severe for those who teach or lead. The consequences are quite clear.

Malachi 2:1-9- “And now, O priests, **this commandment is for you**. If you will not hear, and if you will not lay it to heart to give glory to My name,” says the LORD of hosts, “**then I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings**. Yea, I have indeed cursed them already because you do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your seed; and I will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your appointed feasts. And one shall carry you away with it. And you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, so that My covenant might be with Levi,” says the LORD of hosts. “My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him for fear; that he might fear Me, and he was in awe before My name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips. He walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and turned away many from iniquity, For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and the people should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But you have departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,” says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore I have also made you contemptible and base before all the people, just as you have not kept My ways but have been partial in the law.”

Jeremiah 23:1-2- “**Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture,**” says the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD, God of Israel,

against the shepherds who feed My people, “You have scattered My flock, and have driven them away, and have not taken care of them. **Behold, I will bring upon you the evil of your doings,” says the LORD.**”

Ezekiel 34:1-4- “And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds, “**Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves!** Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you kill the fat ones, but *you* do not feed the flock. You have not made the weak strong, nor have you healed the sick, nor have you bound up the broken. You have not brought again those that were driven away, nor have you sought that which was lost; but you have ruled them with force and with cruelty.”

Not just the shepherds, we all should be setting the example of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 5:1-4- “*The* elders who are among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed: **Feed the flock of God that is among you,** exercising oversight not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*; Not as exercising lordship over your possessions; **but by being examples**

to the flock of God. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, eternal crown of glory.”

For these reasons, we are warned that not many should become teachers.

James 3:1-13- “My brethren, do not many of you become teachers, knowing that **we will receive more severe judgment;** Because we frequently offend, every one of us. If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man *and is* able also to hold in check the whole body. Remember, we put bits into horses’ mouths in order that they may obey us, and we direct their entire bodies. Consider also *that* ships, being so large, and being driven by strong winds, are turned about by a very small rudder, wherever the will of the one who is steering may decide. In the same way also, the tongue is a little member, but it boasts great things. See how large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire; And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. So has the tongue been set among our members—*the one member that* defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of life, and is set on fire by Gehenna. Now then, every species of animals and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But the tongue no human being is able to tame; *it is* an unrestrainable evil, full of death-dealing poison. With it we bless God *the* Father, and with it we ourselves curse people who

are made in *the* likeness of God. From the same mouth comes out blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so! Does a fountain pour out of the same opening sweet water and bitter water? My brethren, can a fig tree produce olives, or a vine *produce* figs? In the same way, no fountain can produce salt water and fresh *water*. Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him demonstrate his works through good conduct in *the* meekness of wisdom.”

Do we play favorites in any way, shape or form that would constitute sin in God’s eyes? If so, gut check and repent.

James 2:1- “My brethren, do not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.”

James 2:8-10- “If you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you have respect of persons, you are practicing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors; For *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one aspect, he becomes guilty of all.”

Are you spiritually awake? Do you realize assumption, complacency, and trying to justify yourself by works will not cut it?

Proverbs 6:9-19- “How long will you sleep, O sluggard? When will you arise out of your sleep? Yet, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest; So shall your poverty come as one who travels, and your want like an armed man. A worthless person, a wicked man, walks with a perverse mouth, Winking with his eyes, speaking with his feet, pointing with his fingers; Perversity *is* in his heart; he is always planning mischief; he causes discord. Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; instantly he shall be broken without remedy. These six *things* the LORD hates; yea, seven *are* an abomination unto Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that plots wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to evil, **A false witness *who* speaks lies, and *he* who sows discord among brethren.”**

Galatians 5:4-9- “You who are attempting to be justified by *works of law* **you are being deprived of any *spiritual* effect from Christ. You have fallen from grace!**

For we through *the* Spirit are waiting for *the* hope of righteousness by faith; Because in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision of any force, nor uncircumcision; rather, *it is the* inner working *of* faith through love. You were running well. Who

hindered you, *persuading you* not to obey the truth? **This persuasion is not coming from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.**”

Titus 3:8-11- “This *is* a faithful saying, and I desire you to strongly affirm *all* these things, so that those who have believed God may apply themselves to doing good works. These things are good and profitable for men. But avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and debates and quarrels about law, for they are unprofitable and vain. **After the first and second admonition, reject a man who is teaching heresy, Knowing that such a person has been subverted and is sinning, being condemned by his own words.**”

His judgement *is* coming. If you think for a minute your trials and storms in the past are “mere coincidence,” think again. Every trial is a test. It is a test of our faith and of our love for God. With each test comes an opportunity. An opportunity to glorify God by our faith and conduct. Through our faith and the power of His Holy Spirit and standing on His word, we may pass these tests. If we do, they become a testimony. If we fail, no worries, you will get the test again...and again. Quit hitting the snooze button and wake up.

He that has an ear, let him hear. Listen! If we are not doing these things now, how will we expect to complete the tasks in His Kingdom? News flash! We will not make it. The thousand-year nap lies ahead and as **Sage said** at one of our meetings, “at least they will be well rested!”

Revelation 3:6-13- “. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write: These things says the Holy One, the One Who *is* true; the One Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens. I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie—behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the time of temptation which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast that which you have so that no one may take away your crown. The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and I will write upon him the name

of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him* My new name.

The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

We have two ears and one mouth; we are to listen twice as much as we speak. Do not just read His words, live them, meditate on them, day, and night. Strive to be like our Savior Jesus Christ. Esteem others more important than you.

Philippians 2:1-5- “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, Fulfill my joy, that you **be of the same mind**, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing. *Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory, **but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself**. Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;**”

Revelation 22:12-19- “And behold, I am coming quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each one according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. **Blessed are those who keep His**

commandments, that they may have the right to *eat of* the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. But excluded *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idolaters, and everyone who loves and devises a lie. I, Jesus, sent My angel to testify these things to you in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star.” And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who thirsts come; and let the one who desires partake of the water of life freely. For I jointly testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, *that* if anyone adds to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone takes away from the words of *the* book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from *the* book of life, and from the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book.”

Remember, we are ambassadors for Christ and the example we set is for others to follow. What example do people see when they look at you? Are you more concerned with your image among men than you are of how God sees you? You had better get a new mirror and get on your face before God and repent while there is still time. God’s standard is the only thing we need to compare our conditions with.

These are not my words. These words are God's words found in His Bible. If you know God, if you are seeking God and have come out from the world as He has told us to, you will know and understand His scriptures. He will reveal Himself to those of a pure and contrite heart who are seeking **to know and please Him, worshipping Him in spirit and in truth!** If you find anything in this message offensive, you were not paying attention to **Matthew 11:6**.

It is not my intention to offend anyone. If in fact it does, please speak to the Author of the scriptures as they are His words and not mine. He will be more than glad to enlighten you. Of myself, I have no power to convict anyone. I do have the Holy Spirit of God within me, received at baptism, and I seek only His wisdom, guidance, and love. We all have the same book, His Bible, One Savior Jesus Christ, and we all have the same instructions. While our roles may vary in the church, obedience is commanded and imparted to each of us. Deviation from His word of any sort will detour your spiritual growth and may even lead to your destruction. Getting on the same page is where the enemy attacks most. He cannot stand to have God's children in harmony. He has already lost the war and we have the power from above to defeat the "skirmishes" he attempts.

Our relationship with God Almighty is entirely up to us. He does not need our opinions or assistance in furthering His plan of salvation for mankind. It will take place *with* or *without* us. He wants our love and devotion to Him and His Son. Walking in obedience yields unspeakable joy.

1 Peter 1:8- “Whom, not having seen, you love; in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, and rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory;”

And We have His peace.

John 14:27- “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give it to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it fear.”

He loves us more than we could ever imagine or even hope for as He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ to pay for our sins and become heirs to salvation and future sons in His Kingdom. This may have been another scriptural overload, but the more of the word that goes in, the more will come out. When He returns, we will be ready. Amen.

