

Last in Line

Most all of us at some time in our lives have had to wait in long lines for one thing or another. More often than not. Lunch lines at school, lines at the movie theaters, lines at the supermarket and so on. Some can remember the gas shortages of the 1970's and the long lines out of the parking lots and down the streets. Gas was under a buck then so it wasn't as painful as having no lines today at \$4.50 a gallon. Instead of wearing on your patience, today it wears a hole in your wallet.

Even more mind-numbing, is the waiting we endure to get on a ride at one of the major theme parks for 90 minutes for a 4-minute ride (if that long). This is possibly a little more painful as we probably paid over \$100 for the privilege of being herded like cattle through rows of ropes and cues with all the other thrill seekers. And if your adrenaline glands aren't satisfied unless your ride in the roller coaster's first car, you can wait an additional amount of time for that treat in a separate line (or pay extra for a "fast pass"). Not all lines are tedious and frustrating. With Passover approaching, we are already in a line where the waiting will be rewarded, eternally.

The time we spend waiting in God's line isn't to be wasted away. We are to use this time for self-improvement to meet God's Standards. We are to work on ourselves, not for earthly gain but to transform ourselves into the image and

likeness of our Savior Jesus Christ. **Romans 6:5**- “For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection.” (**Romans 8:29**). **Psalm 17:15**- “As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness.”

1 Corinthians 15:49- “And as we have borne the image of the *one* made of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *One*.” (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).

Selfish vs. Selfless

The pre-Passover self-examinations are part of our annual renewal of His Covenant with us. The concept of self in this context is far different from the world’s views on “the self.” According to the Free Dictionary, selfish is best defined as:

“concerned chiefly or excessively with oneself, and having little regard for others.”

With a few exceptions, that just about fits everyone on the planet who drives in Florida. It all too often fits the younger I and me generation who have been spoon fed and conditioned to believe the world owes them something. Safe spaces and the re-writing of history are displays of this mindset.

We won’t be snapping “selfies” or posting all our escapades on Facebook like so many. It seems that people throw their arms out of socket to get noticed. “I’ve just got to get my opinion on line so I get “likes.” Oh wow! Try and spend them...It also boggles my mind that so many individuals now-a-days are obsessed with

taking “selfies.” I read the business blogs on Linked-In and again, even there, selfies abound. I’m curious if people’s lips get tired from blowing their own horn. “I, me, I me...” with an occasional we and us. This excessive self-centeredness has polluted the bulk of our population and it is spiraling out of control. Just look at the junk on television like Jersey Shore and all the other “bling” themed “entertainment” our youth have to emulate. They are disillusioned to think they need things and possessions to enjoy life. The saying goes, “he who dies with the most toys, wins.” No, he who dies with the most toys is dead. Self-centered and selfish are the norms. “Me first.” This lifestyle is the polar opposite of God’s Way of “selfless.”

Jesus never sought recognition for Himself. He only lived to glorify The Father.

John 17:1- “Jesus spoke these words, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your own Son, so that Your Son may also glorify You;” We are to do the same. **Matthew 5:16-** “In the same way also, you are to let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father Who *is* in heaven.” (**Romans 15:6**).

According to the Free Dictionary “selfless” is best defined as: “having or exhibiting, or motivated by no concern for oneself, unselfish.” There are so many scriptures on this theme to meditate on before Passover. We can read of countless

incidents where someone gave their life in saving another, especially in times of war. But there are those whose selfless acts occur during times of peace. **John 15:13**- “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends.” The greatest example of this was when our Savior gave His blameless life to pay for our sins, past present and future (**Romans 5:6-10, 1 John 2:2**). Just this last week, there was an incident where a Florida Highway Patrol Trooper, drove her car *intentionally* in the path of a drunk driver on the Interstate. She did so to stop the drunk driver from reaching a group of runners who would have been directly in harm’s way if she did not act. The horrific head-on crash was caught live on her dash camera. She survived as did the drunk driver. A total selfless act of service.

Serve One Another

Matthew 23:9-11- “Also, do not call anyone on the earth your Father; for one is your Father, Who is in heaven. Neither be called Master; for one is your Master, the Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant.” **1 John 3:16**- “By this *very act* we have known the love *of God* because He laid down His life for us: and we ourselves are to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

We need not die to display this type of love among our family of God. **1 John 3:17-19**- “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him? My little children, we should not love in word, nor with our tongues; rather, we should love in deed and in truth. And in this way we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him,” We are to serve one another, edify one another (**Romans 14:19, Ephesians 4:12, 4:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:11**).

Matthew 20:26-28- “However, it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant; And whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave; Just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life *as* a ransom for many.”

Matthew 23:9-11- “Also, do not call *anyone* on the earth your Father; for one is your Father, Who *is* in heaven. Neither be called Master; for one is your Master, the Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant.” As Elders, we are to feed the flock of God.

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.”

This in no way dismisses anyone else from doing likewise. God’s Word applies to us *all*. **1 Peter 5:5-7**- “In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject to *the* older men; and all *of* you be subject to one another, being clothed with humility because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble. 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.” *This especially applies to the upcoming young men of our fellowship family*. If you haven’t noticed, Chauncey and I aren’t getting any younger. Growth in God and His Church will require a growth in responsibility as well as knowledge.

Be humble. We know God loves a contrite spirit. **Isaiah 57:15**- “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name *is* Holy; “I dwell in the high and holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones,” (**Psalm 34:18, 51:17, Isaiah 66:2**). When serving others, be careful not to self-elevate yourself (**Matthew 7:1**). Remember to remove the speck from your brother’s eye requires you to remove the lumberyard from your own first (**Matthew 7:3-5, Luke**

6:41-42). Stand naked in front of a mirror. If you think God is satisfied with what you are looking at, judge away. If not, think about what His Word says.

We can be content with our place in line, even if it is dead last. God has given us our position. **Matthew 20:16-** “So the last shall be first, and the first *shall be* last; for many are called, but few are chosen.” **Mark 9:35-** “And after sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and *servant of all.*” (**Mark 10:31, Luke 13:30**).

He is not delaying His coming or His judgment. This is the time when we fill out our job applications, *line by line*, preparing for His return. **Matthew 24:46-** “Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing.” He is actually being merciful in delaying His coming as He desires that none shall perish (**2 Peter 3:9**).

As we read in this week’s Daily Berean, would we qualify for the Lamb’s Blood on our doorposts? If the sky cracked and the trumpet sounded this afternoon, how many of us would be waving goodbye to those on the first bus out of here? I can assure you, the moaning over the abominations of this world mentioned will come with the closer you get to God and living His Way of life.

He gives us some pretty easy instructions for keeping things in priority. **Mark 12:30-31** “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second is like this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (**Matthew 22:37-40, Luke 10:27**). Do this first and everything will fall into its proper alignment.

We talked awhile back about the four-letter word, wait. Waiting isn’t such a bad thing if it is in preparation for eternity. **Psalm 27:14**- “Wait for the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall make your heart strong; yea, wait, I say, *wait* on the LORD.”

Our place in line will already have been established and guaranteed by God’s Word. **1 Corinthians 15:23**- “But each in his own order: Christ *the* Firstfruit; then, those who are Christ’s at His coming.” When our time in line is up, there won’t be any pushing or shoving or scrambling to get to the front of the line, at least from those who have the correct ticket. There may be some chaos for those scrambling to find a “scalper” to buy one but more than likely they’ll be looking for a mountain to hide under. **Psalm 37:34**- “Wait on the LORD and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the earth; *when the wicked are cut off.*”

you shall see it.” We hopefully will have waited patiently working on ourselves, growing in God’s Ways and the image and likeness of His Son. Disney’s Imagineers won’t be able to dream up a ride anything close to what God has in store for His chosen.

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