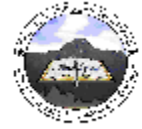




On The Frontier



“For The Glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

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Deliver Me From Distractions . . . Lest I Be Distracted From Deliverance!

Jesus put forth this extraordinarily clear statement in regard to service:

Luke 16:13

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (wealth or riches).

Despite the rapid veneration of “multi-tasking,” none of us have the ability to serve two (let alone multiple) masters. When we try to do this, something will suffer. (Sadly, the greater majority these days have chosen to serve greed not God.)

As far as Jesus was concerned the servant owed the master his undivided attention. The alternative would see the important commands issued by the master to go unheeded. Carefully observing the master’s commands denies the plausibility of any division in attention. Though many would deny this, it is none-the-less the truth. This severely fatigues the notion of multi-tasking.

Psalms 123:2

Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their masters, *and* as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

This verse is rich in cultural meaning relevant to those familiar with “Easternisms” or “Orientalisms.”

In the lands and times of the Bible a master would often give unspoken commands to the servant. These would be issued via hand signaling. If the servant was not vigilantly attentive to the master’s every move, the commands would be missed. Since commands would not be constantly issued, the servant would of necessity be required to patiently wait upon the desire of the master. Consequently, it would be impossible to have two masters as the servant could not afford to take his eyes off of the one whom he served. Service could never be properly provided if the servant’s watchfulness were to become the sardonic facsimile of a spectator at a tennis match. Truly, attention to detail was the priority of the day.

In like manner we are to keep our eyes steadfastly fastened upon God. We are to wait patiently upon Him and not allow our attention to be diverted to another. Our Adversary is aware of this and works hard at dividing our attention. If he can distract us he can keep us from the things of God. If we are kept from the things of God we will continue in whatever state we are. This will leave us bereft of the deliverance we seek.

James 1:2-8

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

The following verses should exemplify our expectations:

Psalms 130:5,6

I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: *I say, more than* they that watch for the morning.

We are to keep our eyes steadfastly focused upon the Lord God and not look to anyone or anything else for deliverance. Furthermore, we are to be absorbed with our love for Him and never allow ourselves to forget who He is and what He means to us!

Psalms 40:1-5

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.

The world around us, in its satanic orchestration, is rife with distraction. And our sin nature (inherited from Adam) is easily manipulated by the basic demands of daily living. We often spend our days in a flux between trusting God and dreading the worsening of our surrounding circumstances. We are all, each and every one of us, tempted to centralize our thoughts on worldly situations rather than godly solutions. This battle for our attention is one that constantly rages. Often it is manifested in anxiety!

Philippians 4:6

Be careful [*merimnao* = anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

The Bible In Basic English gives it thus:

Philippians 4:6

Have no cares; but in everything with prayer and praise put your requests before God.

This seems almost puerile! To have no cares does not sound very responsible. Does it? Or does it?

I Peter 5:5-11

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Casting all your care [*merimna* = anxiety] upon him; for he careth [*melo* = cares about] for you.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Casting our care upon God has humility as prerequisite. So often pride hinders us and distracts us from reaching out for help. "I can do it myself. After all, I'm a man and men take care of their problems without any help from anyone. This is my life and I don't need anyone telling me

how to live it." How vain and foolish we are when adopting such attitudes. I'm reminded of what my dad used to tell me, he would say, "Fear gets you in trouble and pride keeps you there."

When speaking of the greatest redemption of all, the coming of the Kingdom of God, Jesus diligently added the cares of this world to the list of that which burdens the heart.

Luke 21:33-36

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged [*baruno* = weighed down] with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and *so* that day come upon you unawares.

For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Surely we all want to be worthy when we stand before our Lord in that Day! That being so, we must remain watchful and prayerful.

Mark 13:33-ff

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house

cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning:

Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Two simple things, prayer and watchfulness. Two very powerful and important things! Two very easily overlooked and neglected things! Even when doing what we think is godly we can find ourselves distracted due to anxiety. For anxiety is a monstrous distracting factor in life.

Luke 10:38-ff

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

But Martha was cumbered [*perispao* = driven about mentally, distracted] about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful [*merimnao* = anxious] and troubled [*turbazo* = disquieted, disturbed] about many things:

But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Poor Martha! She thought she was serving, doing the right thing as it were. But was she blessed? No! One

thing is certain, if she had her priorities straight she would have been blessed. She was distracted in the very act of what she thought to be godly service.

On the other hand, Mary chose to sit at the Master's feet and hear God's Word. That was the good part she had chosen. She had her priorities straight. Martha did not. Consequently, Mary was blessed and Martha was anxious and troubled. The Greek word which has been translated "troubled" in verse 41 is the word *turbazo*. It is from the Latin word for crowd - *turba*. This word is akin to the Greek word *thorubos* which means uproar or tumult as in a riotous breaching of public order. Today we get the words turbo and turbine from these. Both are words which describe a violent powerful spinning with a resultant vortex or whirlpool (think of the agitator in a washing machine). This is what Martha's mind was like that day. Her mind was in a tumult, her thoughts spinning wildly out of control. All because of the anxious state she allowed herself to be in. Anxiety is precursor to distraction. This impedes our deliverance. For Martha that day deliverance was slow in coming. As if caught in the ocean's undertow, she was being dragged under when she should have been lifted up. Drowned not delivered.

Consider Adam and the impact of his life upon all mankind.

Romans 5:12-21

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression [*parabasis* = stepping aside or walking alongside the law], who is the figure of him that was to come.

But not as the offence [*paraptoma*= fall beside, deviate], so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

For as by one man's disobedience [*parakoe* =hear aside, hear amiss, disobedience] many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Adam disobeyed the Word of God (Romans 5:19). He set the Word aside. Refusing to "hear," he set his "hearing aside." This distraction was not any indication that he was deceived (Timothy 2:14). His concern for what Eve thought took precedence over his hearing obediently what God said. The result was his defiance of a direct command from God. That is, he "stepped aside" or off of the Word. You cannot walk alongside God's Truth, you must walk upon it.

Because of Adam's conscious violation of God's command, death passed upon all mankind (Romans 5:14). Why? Because after that Adam set his "hearing aside" he "stepped aside" and ultimately "fell aside" (Romans 5:15). Hence the fall of man followed upon this deviation from truth in Adam's life. He heard aside, stepped aside and fell aside.

But thanks be to God that His Son has delivered us to the uttermost! God's grace, His free gift, has abounded toward us!!! Our Lord's remarkable life of dedication and obedience has redeemed us for all ages! He stayed on course and never allowed himself to be distracted from that which God had called him to. What a magnificent Saviour we have!

Consider, if you would, the following example:

Luke 9:51-56

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

The preceding passage is testimony to the heart and commitment the Old Testament prophesied the Messiah would demonstrate:

Isaiah 50:4-10

The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him that is* weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who *is* mine adversary? let him come near to me.

Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who *is* he *that* shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

Who *is* among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh *in* darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Jesus set his face "like a flint" to go to the very place where he would be brutally tortured and crucified. Why? Because his soul was set like the sails of a great ship bound for glory. He indeed is the living Word of God! He never allowed himself to be distracted from doing God's Will. For him the Word of God took precedence over EVERY thing else!

Luke 2:42-ff

And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew *not of it*.

But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

Always about the Father's business, even at age twelve! Nothing could distract him, which is why he is the one we must look to when we are distracted.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

It is in the mind that we grow weary and faint. The burden of anxiety

distracts us, weighs us down, makes us tired and feeble of purpose. We must continue to look unto Jesus and consider his life in light of our own.

Anxiety is that state of mind where we no longer trust God. If that were not so, we would not be anxious. In other words, when you trust God you have nothing to be anxious about. When we are anxious we are distracted. Our thoughts are taken from the deliverance that God promises to the many "what if" scenarios suggested by our circumstances. Simply put, when we are distracted we have taken our eyes off of the Lord and put them upon our situation. This is a recipe for disaster not deliverance.

We've all been there. Why me? Why now? Why won't God help me? What did I do? What is He waiting for? That doesn't sound much like a heart fixed on God, does it? Yet, it seems all too common among us beloved of the Lord. And if beloved, why should we trouble ourselves thus? Notice, I said trouble ourselves. Of course we have the situations made possible by Adam's sin and an Adversary who is all too happy to destroy us (as previously noted). But we also have a wonderful Saviour who has redeemed us and a magnificent God who is always at the ready to show Himself strong on our behalf. Since these are constant, we become the only variable. The Devil always wants to destroy us, God always wants to deliver us. The focus of our faith determines the outcome. If the Devil can distract us he can defeat us. If we allow ourselves to become anxious and thus distracted, we've defeated ourselves. Either way, we are denied deliverance.

Thankfully, our solution is a simple one. Stay focused on God and His Word and refuse to be distracted. Of course we cannot do this alone. We

require God's help and should not hesitate to ask for it.

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land and not inhabited.

Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

Incidentally, fellowship with like minded believers doesn't hurt either (Hebrews 10:23-25).
