Doing and Saying – a Christian Pilgrimage

Week 65: More family stories, and following Jesus

Day 448: Good and evil

"Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him saying, "Explain to us the parable of the darnel in the field." He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world and the good seed are the people of the kingdom. The poisonous weeds are the people of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. As the poisonous weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom everything that causes sin as well as all lawbreakers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one who has ears had better listen! (Matthew 13:36-43)

"The one who plants the Kingdom of God into people is the Son of Man. The devil plants evil into people. At the end of our age, the Son of Man will send His angels, the evil will be ended and only the good left." Note: Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a prominent Russian writer and historian, famously stated, "The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts."

There are people who recognize that they are in the Age of the Messiah, that there is a kingdom of peace, health, wholeness, completeness, peace and love, which is to be lived by. There are people who do not recognize this good kingdom, but believe that the only kingdom is one which they can grasp, invade, or take control of. There are people who believe that the future is better, and there are those who do not. Frequently, those people are at battle within our own selves. It is important to remember Christ is calling you, Christ is with you, and through Christ and His sacrifice, evil will be ended, no matter how strong it may seem at the moment.

A.) Write down the names of some people you feel are following the way of evil.
B.) Pray that the Kingdom of God may be successfully planted in them, and grow into a large and vibrant plant.

Share your thoughts with those you trust.

Day 449: The Family of Christ is like …

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, hidden in a field, that a person found and hid. Then because of joy he went and sold all that he had and bought that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he found a pearl of great value, he went out and sold everything he had and bought it.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea that caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, they pulled it ashore, sat down, and put the good fish into containers and threw the bad away. It will be this way at the end of the age. Angels will come and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
(Matthew 13:44-50)

Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance, and then, using your own words, explain the three parables given here. What is Jesus telling us?

Share your thoughts with those you trust.

Day 450: Something old, something new …

(Jesus asked) "Have you understood all these things?" They replied, "Yes." Then he said to them, "Therefore every expert in the law who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and old." (Matthew 13:51-52)

"Expert in the law" didn't mean a lawyer like we think of them today – it meant a lawyer skilled in the laws given in the bible (what we think of as the Old Testament). Often these were teachers or rabbis, but they could also be lay people or judges.

"If you know the old ways and understand the new, then you can bring forth both as needed." It is important that we don't disregard the Old Testament, but understand it so that, being led by the spirit of Christ, we can apply the Old and the New teachings of Jesus to move forward for the Kingdom of Heaven.

What would be one or two key teachings of the Old Testament which apply to the Kingdom of God? What would be one or two key teachings of Jesus which guide us in living our lives according to His will? Write down some that you know (feel free to research through your bible for this).

Share with those you love.

Day 451: Rejection

Now when Jesus finished these parables, he moved on from there.

Then he came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue. They were astonished and said, "Where did this man get such wisdom and miraculous powers? Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother named Mary? And aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? And aren't all his sisters here with us? So where did he get all this?" And so they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own house." And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief. (Matthew 13:53-58)

"Aren't you getting above yourself?" "Just who do you think you are?"

It's becoming very clear who Jesus thought He was – the problem was that many would not accept it – especially, it seems, those who thought they knew Him best. You may find in your own life that people will not accept you, especially if you are acting different from their expectations. What Godly, bring-His-Kingdom-into-focus way can you react when you are not accepted because of Jesus? Write down your thoughts.

Share with those you trust.

Day 452: Confronting power

At that time Herod the tetrarch heard reports about Jesus, and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead! And because of this, miraculous powers are at work in him."

For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had repeatedly told him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." Although Herod wanted to kill John, he feared the crowd because they accepted John as a prophet.

But on Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Instructed by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." Although it grieved the king because of his oath and the dinner guests, he commanded it to be given. So he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. Then John's disciples came and took the body and buried it and went and told Jesus.." (Matthew 14:1-12)

There are consequences to facing up to power – real consequences. Sometimes, life and death consequences. This life you are investigating, following The Way with Jesus, will upset people, sometimes people with power to inflict harm on you. Good thing it is worth it.

List why you wish to follow Jesus. Now, list some things (or people) standing in your way. Prayerfully, how can you pursue God's agenda of what is healthiest for you and for all He created, including those who are standing in your way? Give thanks to God that He is giving you such an adventurous life!

Share your thoughts with your fellow explorers.

Day 453: Taking a break

Now when Jesus heard this (the death of John the Baptist) he went away from there privately in a boat to an isolated place. But when the crowd heard about it, they followed him on foot from the towns. As he got out he saw the large crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. (Matthew 13:31-35)

The death of John the Baptist hit Jesus very hard – He went away to have a break and grieve. But even there, He was found, and in compassion He ministered to those in need.

Following Jesus can be hard in many ways – and it is healthy for you to frequently take breaks to heal, talk with God, and have some recovery time. This can be especially hard when those you love are affected. Even then, you may be called to minister. Try and take care of yourself while you are caring for others.

Have you had a time where you had to take a break? When something hit you really hard? What recovery mechanisms do you use in such cases? Make note of these, and other ways you stay healthy.

Share your thoughts with those you trust.

Day 454: Rest

Rest, receive nourishment, feed both body and soul. Reflect on the past week and care for your needs (body and spirit). Pray. Dedicate this day to God. Worship! Fill yourself with Light. In the evening get together with a group you trust and share what you would like to from the previous week – good points, hard points, what you've learned, what you've struggled with, etc. Decide again if you wish to continue journeying together or want to stop.

Know that God loves you. Celebrate, Rejoice, Give thanks, talk and walk with God. Be in shalom.