

March 17, 2019

The Deeper Things

"So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised...We are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved."

Hebrews 10:35-39

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Hebrews 11:1-40

If someone were to ask us what it means to live as one who follows Jesus Christ, how would we answer? If we used the Apostle's words we would say that we no longer live, but Christ now lives in us. And we would hopefully conclude, ***"The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God..."*** (Galatians 2:20-21)

Understand that to live by faith in the Son of God makes no worldly sense. From the world's perspective the satisfaction of our own arrogant desires is all that really matters. The world would teach us to live for ourselves, to gratify our own lusts, to grab everything we can, because we, after all, are the most important beings in all of creation.

The world teaches us to live selfishly. Jesus calls us to give up selfishness and to live selflessly. If that call made perfect sense then to live selflessly would automatically bring us all of the blessings the Father has promised immediately. In truth, as disciples, we will live like Noah and Abraham and so many other heroes of faith. We will choose to sacrifice our own self-serving ways to become the selfless servants the Master calls. And like most of those heroes we will not receive the full reward for that choice this side of heaven.

As disciples we will still struggle with ill health, with financial set-backs, and with relational disappointments. Most of us who choose to follow Jesus will live in a world that actually hates us. But, as disciples, we do not live for what this world can offer.

The true disciple understands that the God of creation is a promise keeper. If we persevere, if we remain faithful, even when our faith makes no worldly sense, then the God who promises will keep his word and we will receive the eternal reward he has promised.

Jesus told his earliest disciples, ***"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."*** (John 14:13)

Those who heard Jesus utter that promise did not experience great worldly rewards for their faith. Nearly all who heard him speak that promise were martyred for their faith. Over the centuries since Jesus made that promise countless of his followers, his true disciples, have lived and died in a cruel world without experiencing great blessings, but, for those who remained faithful, the promise was fulfilled.



How do I know this? To be honest I don't know it in a worldly sense, but I do know it because I have faith. I have chosen to believe that my Lord is preparing a place just for me and for each of us who choose to go on believing.

I have chosen to believe that the God of creation is waiting for me to move into his house. I have chosen to believe that my Father and God keeps his word. That is, after all, what faith is. The choice to believe. Faith is the choice to believe with certainty that the promise is real and to know without doubt that the Son of God is preparing a place just for me even though I cannot yet see it.

A true disciple, a surrendered follower of Jesus, chooses to sacrifice everything to heed the call. Literally a true disciple will lay down his very life for his Master and we will do that because we have chosen to believe.

Discipleship:
Becoming More Like
CHRiST
EPHESIANS 2:10