

REMEMBER THE BEREANS

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We have been looking at some of the lessons that we can learn to be alert and watchful. We need to have on the whole armour of God for our protection.

Last week ... we focused on The Belt of Truth ... The Word of God ... The antidote to deception. It's important that we know the Truth. We should value the Scriptures. One little test is how much time do we study them? How much time have we spent in The Word of God in the last 7 days? How much time do we spend in worldly pursuits versus in The Truth?

The Truth is very plain. We are supposed to be continually growing. There is no time when we have "arrived". We are supposed to be more and more fruitful. We shouldn't be resting on our laurels so to speak.

Matthew 21:18-22 (NKJV)

18 Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry.

19 And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.

20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

21 So Jesus answered and said to them, "**Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done.**

22 And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." *(A lot of people think that only Jesus can do miracles.)*

Read this verse. Jesus is very plain ... that "YOU" ... me ... Can do the same)

Go back to verse 19. Jesus was expecting to find figs ... "Fruit" on the tree. When He got there ... there was no fruit. It was hypocritical ... it purported to be fruitful. Jesus cursed it and devoted it to destruction. How about you and me? Are we supposed to be fruitful? Reading that what do you think ... should we be fruitful?

Luke 13:6-9 (NKJV)

6 He also spoke this parable: **"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.**

(What's the point of any tree if it doesn't bear fruit?)

7 Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, **'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'** *(So. Is fruit important?*

Yes it is. This is obviously teaching about people. In a person's life ... there should be fruit. Notice on top of that ... there is a time element involved!)

8 But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilise it.

9 And **if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'** "

The story is pretty consistent. The Scriptures are a key part about us being fruitful. The Vine Master is looking for "fruit" in our lives.

John 15:1-8 (NKJV)

1 **"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.**

2 **Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**

3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 **Abide in Me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it **abides in the vine**, neither can you, unless you **abide in Me.**

5 **"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**

6 **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.**

7 **If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.**

8 **By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

We absolutely absolutely need to be united to The Vine.

Do we know what Jesus taught? Where do we find that knowledge? We should be familiar with God's Words ... they should be living and real to us.

We all have ample time ... we've got time to learn ... to develop. We shouldn't be wasting that time. There should be progressive change in us ... growing in grace and knowledge. As long as we are moving and progressing ... we can "fly".

Mark 4:26-29 (NKJV)

26 And He said, **"The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,**

27 and should sleep by night and rise by day, **and the seed should sprout and grow,** he himself does not know how.

28 **For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.**

29 But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

There is a time period being revealed here. First the blade ... then the head ... then the head becomes fully mature ... then it is ready. We are supposed to be like that ... changing and changing and getting ready to be "harvested".

After a few years there should be more "fruit" ... and after decades ... we should be like the full grain ... ready to be harvested. What do we need to be doing to develop this "fruit"? Spending more time in the Word of God.

Isaiah 55:6-11 (NKJV)

6 Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. (*There is a time element here ... a time window*)

7 Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the Lord,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.

8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord.

9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. (*We should be more and more like Him*)

10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower

And bread to the eater,

11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;

It shall not return to Me void,

But it shall accomplish what I please,

And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

When God sends His Word out ... It is PRODUCTIVE!! It produces an outcome. And in our lives it does exactly that ... if we receive it and yield to it. Do we give it the opportunity?

But ... Seed needs good ground.

Matthew 13:18-23 (NKJV)

18 "Therefore hear (*understand*) the parable of the sower:

19 **When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.** (*This is the majority of people*)

20 But **he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;**

21 **yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.** (*A good start. Receives it joyfully ... but it doesn't last. The ground is too shallow ... too stony. The ground is not good*)

22 **Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.** (*What happened to the fig tree that was unfruitful ... which was thrown into the fire? We are talking here about believers. Most of us come into this category. They have been "begotten" ... they are "on their way" ... they get distracted. The Word is choked. God's instructions are choked ... because other things "have entered in". The quality of the ground is up to us*)

23 **But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.**" (So you and I are responsible for the ground. Two things involved here ... *Time and Quality of Time*)

What do we feed our minds on? What we think will influence what we believe.

1 Peter 1:22 - 2:2 (NKJV)

22 **Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit** in sincere love of the brethren, **love one another fervently with a pure heart,**

23 **having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,** (*The Word of God is incorruptible seed ... it takes seed to beget ... good seed ... living seed*)

24 because

"All flesh is as grass,

And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.

The grass withers,

And its flower falls away,

25 **But the word of the Lord endures forever.**" (*God's Word*

carries on!) Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

Chapter 2

1 **Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,**

2 **as newborn babes, desire (long for ... pursue ... Amplified Bible ... "earnestly desire or crave") the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,** (*The Word helps us to grow*)

Is God's Word boring? Other things are far more interesting?? More episodes of Gunsmoke or the lives of The Kardashians in full

technicolour ... X rated. Peter expects us "to crave" ... if we want to grow.

Matthew 4:1-4 (NKJV)

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But **He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "** *(LIVE ... NOT JUST HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF ... THE WORD OF GOD! ... which means that we should know what it says? Do we know what lessons that God has preserved for us in His Word?)*

It takes effort!! We have to learn to live by every Word of God.

Joshua 1:8 (NKJV)

8 **This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate (be constantly in) in it day and night, (all of the time) that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (It's the same for us today ... and we have the end of the story ... right up to the book of Revelation)**

Psalms 1:1-3 (NKJV)

1 Blessed is the man

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor stands in the path of sinners,

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 **But his delight is in the law of the Lord,**

And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree

Planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither;

And whatever he does shall prosper.

Psalms 1:2 (Message)

2 **Instead you thrill to God's Word,
you chew on Scripture day and night.**

Deuteronomy 17:14-15 (NKJV)

14 "When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,'

15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.

Deuteronomy 17:18-20 (NKJV)

18 "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.

19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,

20 that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel. (*We are kings in training.*

So this is good instruction to us. We don't have to write it out ... but we do have to spend time in it! It is vital spiritual armour)

Luke 6:46-49 (NKJV)

46 "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like:

48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Come to Jesus. Hear His sayings. Does them! Or ... do we just "talk the talk". This is part of our spiritual armour. It's up to us how we use our time? There can be a cost if we don't spend our time wisely.

Hosea 4:6 (NKJV)

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Because you have rejected knowledge,

I also will reject you from being priest for Me;

Because you have forgotten the law of your God,

I also will forget your children. (If we don't have the knowledge ... The law ... Torah ... Revelation of God ... then we will be destroyed)

Destroyed because The Belt of Truth couldn't be found.

Acts 17:10-11 (NKJV)

10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the

Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. (*These individuals are referred to as "noble" or "fair-minded" ... received the Word with enthusiasm. They scrutinised ... took the time ... made the effort ... DAILY! We need to check things out like the Bereans did. They were an excellent example).*

Proverbs 2:1-9 (NKJV)

1 My son, **if you receive my words,**
And **treasure my commands within you,**
2 So that you **incline your ear to wisdom,**
And **apply your heart to understanding;**
3 Yes, if you **cry out for discernment,**
And **lift up your voice for understanding,**
4 If you **seek her as silver,**
And search for her as for hidden treasures; (*all active words. Not passive ... not idle ... not lazy. Work hard. Generate effort*)
5 **Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,**
And find the knowledge of God.
6 **For the Lord gives wisdom;**
From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;
7 **He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;**
He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;
8 **He guards the paths of justice,**
And **preserves the way of His saints.**
9 **Then you will understand righteousness and justice,**
Equity and every good path. (*Put some effort in!*)

Ephesians 6:14-17 (NKJV)

14 **Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,**
15 and **having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**
16 **above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.**

17 And **take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;**

So The Word of God is two parts of the armour. The Truth is our belt and the Word of God is also described here as The Sword of The Spirit. The Truth is the key part of our armour. If we aren't wearing the armour ... then we are toast.

So what do we do now? We should take the time and take the effort to get into The Word of God ... somehow. Maybe read through the whole book. Or read The New Testament ... for just two chapters per day ... you can get through the New Testament twice in a year. Whatever you want ... you can do.

The recommendation is find something that works ... for you. It is our responsibility.

So remember the Bereans ... who searched the scriptures daily.