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Daily Devotion, Thursday, December 7, 2017 - The Pattern for Servanthood

DECEMBER 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotion, Thursday, December 7, 2017 - The Pattern for Servanthood

Matthew 20:25-28

In the world's thinking, great men are the ones with authority, prominence, and power. Though Jesus Christ had all that, He surrendered it to become a servant (Isa. 42:1; Phil. 2:7).

Jesus gave Himself completely to fulfill the Father's plan of redemption, even though the beneficiaries—namely, each of us—were undeserving. God, who is holy and righteous, has eyes that “are too pure to approve evil, and [He] can not look on wickedness with favor” (Hab. 1:13). Therefore, He must separate Himself from those who are stained by wrongdoing. That includes all of humanity (Rom. 3:23).

Everybody is born captive to fleshly desires (Rom. 6:16-18). When someone claims to be living on his “own terms,” he is serving whatever his human nature craves. The penalty for that false sense of liberty is death (Rom. 6:23).

Jesus' ultimate act of service was to give His life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). The word *ransom* describes the price paid to set a slave free—Christ voluntarily purchased our liberation. There was only one way our holy God could remove our guilt yet remain true to His own law: Someone sinless had to pay our sin debt for us.

Jesus' sacrifice spared us the penalty we deserve. Instead, we receive grace and have been declared not guilty. Moreover, we are elevated from slaves to children of the Almighty! Jesus served the Father's purpose faithfully. He gave up His righteousness to carry our wickedness—and endured a crushing separation from God. To meet our needs, the Savior held nothing of Himself back, and thereby set a powerful example of servanthood for us to follow.

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, December 6, 2017 - Walking in the Light

DECEMBER 06TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Wednesday, December 6, 2017 - Walking in the Light

Ephesians 5:1-17

If you've ever lost power at night, you know how disorienting it can be to try and find your way to a flashlight or candle. You think you're heading for a doorway but unexpectedly bump into a wall. This is what our life was like before we met the Light of the World. In fact, we didn't even know what real light was and had become comfortable in the darkness because it kept us from seeing how sinful we truly were.

An amazing transaction occurred when we finally believed the gospel, repented of our sins, and confessed Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We were rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of Light. And now Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, has come to dwell within us (Col. 1:13; Eph. 3:17). So how are Christ's followers supposed to live? Today's passage outlines three basic responsibilities:

1. Walk in love (Ephesians 5:1-2). As the Savior sacrificially loved us, so we are to love others. If we are at odds with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we can't claim to be walking in Light (1 John 1:7).

2. Abstain from sin (Eph. 5:3-7). Believers aren't sinless, but they don't habitually practice deeds of darkness.

3. Learn what pleases God (Eph. 5:8-17). The fruit of Light is goodness, righteousness, and truth. These are displayed in our character, conversation, and conduct when we are living out our faith.

Let's make it our aim to move ever closer to the Light, letting Jesus expose and remove any areas of darkness so we can reflect His glory and goodness.

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, December 5, 2017 - Praising the Lamb of God

DECEMBER 05TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Revelation 5:1-12

In heaven, there is unceasing worship and praise of God. Revelation 4 and 5 describe John's vision, in which four living creatures proclaimed God's holiness day and night. The apostle then heard 24 elders respond with a declaration of God's worthiness (Revelation 4:8-11). He listened as they sang a new song of praise, declaring that the Lamb of God had purchased men for God—and then witnessed multitudes of angels proclaiming Jesus' worth (Revelation 5:9-12).

What was it about Jesus that motivated such heartfelt worship? It was who He is, what He has done, and what He will do. He is ...

- *God the Son, who laid aside His divinity so that He might rescue us (Phil. 2:6-7).*
- *The Savior who took on human form and died so that we might be saved (Phil. 2:8).*
- *The only One who revealed God the Father to us (John 14:9).*

- *The Son of Man, who chose to identify with us because of His great love (John 1:14, John 15:13).*
- *The Lamb of God, who took away the sins of the world (John 1:29).*
- *The Lion of Judah, who will return as the judge, the ruler, and the authority over all (Revelation 5:5).*

These same attributes should motivate our praise and worship of Jesus. Ask the Lord to help you establish a pattern of praising Him and responding in adoration each time you think of Him. Heavenly music is to be sung by the redeemed on earth for all to hear.

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Daily Devotional, Monday, December 4, 2017 -

Preaching Like Peter

DECEMBER 04TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Monday, December 4, 2017 - Preaching Like Peter

Acts 2:14-42

Peter's first sermon takes less than five minutes to recite. Sharing the gospel doesn't need to be complicated or lengthy. In fact, Peter's message contains a formula we can use to outline our own testimonies.

Preparation. The disciple relied heavily on the Scriptures to make his case for faith in Christ. But Peter knew there was another important element—after being miraculously enabled to proclaim the gospel in multiple languages, he must have realized the significance of the Holy Spirit. No matter how persuasive a man's message is, only the Spirit can open the door to unbelieving hearts and minds.

The Savior's credentials and purpose. Peter cited the “miracles and wonders and signs” that validated Jesus as the promised Messiah (Acts 2:22). Then the disciple made clear Jesus' foreordained mission on earth: to die for mankind's sin. Christ willingly and obediently submitted to the task assigned by His Father.

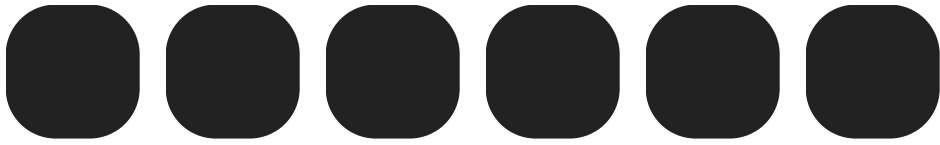
A personal invitation. Peter wasn't shy about convicting the hearts of his audience. “This Man ... you nailed to a cross,” he said (Acts 2:23). The new preacher made sure listeners knew their responsibility in the Messiah's death, but then gave the exciting news that Christ was alive. Those who believed were invited to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38). Any gospel message should finish by telling people how they, too, can be saved.

Witnessing to others can be intimidating. But if you are prayerful and prepared, you can trust the Holy Spirit to be with you and to handle the outcome.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, December 1, 2017 -

DECEMBER 01ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Friday, December 1, 2017 -

Philippians 4:11-13

God has provided us with many things to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17). But our lives are frequently filled with turmoil instead of contentment. Here are four practices that create dissatisfaction.

1. Busyness. We live in a hurry-up society, dashing from one activity to another. Jesus did not rush, yet He accomplished everything God gave Him to do. Rarely did He tell His followers to move faster. He even praised Mary for choosing to stop and spend time with Him (Luke 10:39, Luke 10:42).

2. Earthly perspective. Too often we live focused on our circumstances. Our minds are filled with what occurred earlier in the week, what's on today's agenda, and the activities happening next week, month, or year. No wonder enjoyment of life remains elusive. The solution is to have an eternal perspective, which acknowledges God is in charge and our goal is to please Him.

3. Self-imposed pressure. We have all experienced the unavoidable burdens of schoolwork, employment, and relationships. But we bring needless pressure on ourselves when we allow unnecessary “musts” and “shoulds” to rule us. The remedy is to turn to God, acknowledge His right to order our days, and ask for His plan.

4. Unhealthy attitudes. Things like perfectionism, false guilt, and apathy all undermine our enjoyment of life.

Satisfaction is found in a life that reflects God’s priorities—and time with Him comes first. Reading His Word, we become mindful of the Father’s great love, learn what He views as important, and experience the joy of belonging to Him. When contentment is elusive, it’s time to reexamine our priorities.

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