

Sluggards and Sloths :

Are You Diligent and Faithful in the Affairs of God's Kingdom?

Part 1

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Remain Alert, Be Faithful, Keep Occupied, Watch And Be Ready, No One Knows The Day Nor The Hour, False Prophets' Erroneous Jesus-Is-Coming Dates, Churches Movements And Cults Founded On False Prophecies, Endtime Deception And Scoffers, Parable Of The Wise Servant, Dangerous To Set Dates In Our Minds, Be Diligent And Faithful In Lord's Business, Don't Be Slothful, Sluggards And Sloths Bible Verses, Parable Of Ten Virgins, Be Well-Oiled With God's Spirit, Will The Lord Delay His Coming? His Spiritual Lights In This World, Exhort One Another Daily, Be Not Weary In Well Doing, Will We Someday Know Day And Hour, Parable Of The Talents, Our Time May Be Shorter Than We Think, Importance Of Bearing Fruit, Seek God's Will For Your Life

In the closing verses of Matthew chapter twenty-four, as well as in all of Matthew chapter twenty-five, Jesus shares three Parables with His listeners which emphasize the importance of His children remaining alert, continuing to be faithful, and keeping occupied in the affairs of the Kingdom. However, just prior to sharing these three Parables, He advises us to watch and to always be ready, because we really do not know the day nor the hour of His Return, as we see by the following verses:

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Matthew 24:42-44, KJV

Of course, over the decades and centuries, a number of people have claimed to know the day and the hour of Christ's Return; but as I point out in such articles as "Sorry . . . Jesus is Not Coming at Any Moment", as well as in "The Misguided End of the World Predictions of Harold Camping", such people have only embarrassed themselves, and fallen flat on their faces every single time. Sadly, some of these false prophecies, and the misguided, self-assigned "prophets" who have proclaimed them, have resulted in the birth of a number of new religious movements and churches which continue to deceive their members to this very day.

The tragedy is that even though it has become quite apparent that the so-called "prophecies" of their founders and leaders were false, many of these people continue to stubbornly and blindly believe in and follow the doctrines of their movement or church. Remember this: Just because a particular movement

or church has acquired a certain degree of respectability in the world, and even though it may have thousands or millions of members, and even though it may have been established many years ago, does not mean that it is not a cult.

As I explain in the aforementioned articles, one of the bad fruits of all of these failed predictions is that they have resulted in a lot of people hardening their hearts to the point that they even scoff at the mere mention of the idea that Christ is going to return. However, in their Wisdom and Foresight, God the Father and Jesus Christ knew ahead of time that such a sad day would eventually arrive. Thus, we find verses such as the following in the New Testament:

". . . Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"  
Luke 18:8b, KJV

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."  
2 Peter 3:3-4, KJV

Of course, that such profound deception should occur in our modern day should not really come as a surprise to those of us who diligently study God's Word, because it was prophesied to occur thousands of years ago. In fact, as I point out in other articles, even before the First Century had concluded, the dark shadow of deception had already begun to infiltrate the Early Church. Thus, we find both Jesus and His Apostles issuing such warnings as the following in the New Testament Scriptures:

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many . . . And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many . . . For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."  
Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24, KJV

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"  
1 Timothy 4:1-2, KJV

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."  
2 Timothy 3:13, KJV

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."  
Acts 20:29, KJV

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also

be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

2 Corinthians 11:13-15, KJV

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition . . . And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:"

2 Thessalonians 2:3, 8-11, KJV

But again, the point is that because we really do not know with any degree of certainty exactly when Jesus will return, we must guard ourselves against slothfulness, remain alert, and keep our hands on the plough by remaining faithful in our daily tasks for the Lord. If we strive to do this, then in reality, regardless of when the Lord returns, we will be ready, and we will not be ashamed at His glorious Coming. In the first Parable that follows, the servant did the exact opposite. He lost the vision, he lost the spirit of urgency, and he lost his faith. He deceived himself into believing that he had all the time in the world, he became slothful in the Lord's Business, and look what happens to him:

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 24:45-51, KJV

There is something else that is worth noting in the previous Parable. Please notice that the evil servant says to himself "My lord delayeth his coming." Now think about that statement for a moment. Why would he say that? The implication seems to be that the evil servant may have believed that he knew when the Lord was going to return. How else could he determine that the Lord had delayed His coming, unless he already had a specific date in mind? Or perhaps the evil servant had a date in mind, and when the Lord did not show up, that is when he decided that the Lord had delayed His coming. No matter how we look at it, it is dangerous to set dates in our minds for the Lord's Return, because doing so may ultimately affect our attitude, and how we act, live and work for the Lord, just as it did with the evil servant.

In a few of their Epistles, the Apostles Peter and Paul also admonish the Disciples of the Early Church to not be slothful

in the Lord's Business. They urged the early Christians to maintain diligence, to remain fervent -- or on-fire according to the original Greek word -- in spirit, to be faithful in the Work of the Lord, and to patiently wait to receive the promises, as we see by the following verses:

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;"  
Romans 12:11, KJV

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."  
1 Corinthians 4:2, KJV

"Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."  
2 Corinthians 8:7, KJV

"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."  
Hebrews 6:10-12, KJV

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity . . . Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:"  
2 Peter 1:4-7, 10, KJV

Obviously, being faithful and diligent in God's Business is the exact opposite of being slothful. It may interest you to know that just as the Bible has absolutely nothing positive to say regarding human pride, in similar fashion, it offers nothing positive concerning slothfulness either. We have already looked at a few verses. Following are several more that are found in the Book of Proverbs:

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise . . . How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?"  
Proverbs 6:6, 9, KJV

"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat."  
Proverbs 13:4, KJV

"He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster."  
Proverbs 18:9, KJV

"A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so

much as bring it to his mouth again."  
Proverbs 19:24, KJV

"The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."  
Proverbs 20:4, KJV

"The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour."  
Proverbs 21:25, KJV

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man."  
Proverbs 24:30-34, KJV

"As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth."  
Proverbs 26:14-15, KJV

Exactly how do we accomplish these things? How do we guard ourselves against becoming slothful in the affairs of God's Kingdom? How do we remain faithful and diligent in the Lord's Business? Jesus shares the secret with us in the Parable that follows. He informs us that we must simply remain well-oiled with the Spirit of God, which is exactly what the Apostle Paul likewise means when he writes that we must be "fervent in spirit". Consider these verses:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."  
Matthew 25:1-13, KJV

Please notice that while in the first Parable the servant said "My lord delayeth his coming", in this second Parable we are told "While the bridegroom tarried". So twice now we are being told by the Lord that He may not arrive when some people think, and that He may actually arrive later than we think. That is an interesting thought to consider.

Concerning the wise virgins who had oil for their lamps, as the Lord and His Apostles inform us in a number of verses that are found in the New Testament, we are supposed to be the spiritual lights of the world. But if a lamp has no oil, or if a candle is foolishly placed under a bushel, how can it possibly give light to the house? Obviously, it cannot. Consider these verses:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."  
Matthew 5:14-16, KJV

"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."  
Luke 11:33-36, KJV

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children . . . For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."  
Ephesians 5:1, 8, 11, KJV

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"  
Philippians 2:15, KJV

Something else which we can all do to make certain that we remain faithful and diligent in the Lord's Business, with our lamps well-oiled and burning brightly for Jesus, is to exhort one another daily. This is something which I strive to do everyday through my articles, as well as through my daily Endtime Prophecy Net Blog entries, my comments on my Facebook page, and via email messages that I respond to.

In the New Testament, we find a number of verses where the Apostles encourage the very same daily exhortation, so that we will not be weary in well-doing. Please note that in a few of the verses below, I have added the word "exhort" in brackets. This is because while the KJV translators chose to translate the word as "comfort", the actual Greek word that is used -- "parakaleo" -- is likewise translated as "exhort" in other verses:

"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more . . . Wherefore comfort [exhort] one another with these

words."

1 Thessalonians 4:1, 18, KJV

"Wherefore comfort [exhort] yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."

1 Thessalonians 5:11-14, KJV

"For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing."

2 Thessalonians 3:11-13, KJV

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Galatians 6:9, KJV

"Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded."

Titus 2:6, KJV

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Hebrews 3:13, KJV

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Jude 1:3, KJV

But let us return to Jesus' three Parables in the Gospels. Thus far, the Lord has reminded us three times that we do not know the day nor the hour of His Return. First He says "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Then, in the Parable concerning the evil servant He says "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of." Finally, in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, Jesus says "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Despite this fact, and even though Jesus informs us of the very same thing in a few other verses that are found in the Gospels, amazingly, as I mentioned earlier, there are still some people today who continue to insist that they know when the Lord is going to arrive. Over the years I have watched so many YouTube videos, visited so many websites, and read so many wayward comments on social networking sites such as Facebook, where people delve into the Jewish feast days, and delve into gematria -- a Kabbalistic method of interpreting the Hebrew scriptures by computing the numerical value of words, based on those of their constituent letters -- and fiddle with dates on their calculators, and then claim "Oh! I've got it! This is definitely the date!" Sorry! Wrong!

To add a degree of balance to my previous statement, let me also mention that in 1999 I wrote an article entitled "As a Thief in the Night? Not for Me!". In the article, I propose the idea that while at this current time we may not know the year, month, day and hour of Christ's Return, perhaps it is possible that at some point in the future, God may choose to reveal this most important date. It does not seem to me that God would purposely provide us with so many prophetic signs in the Scriptures -- some of which are very time specific -- if He did not want us to know when Jesus will be returning to the Earth for His children. Perhaps, similar to the Book of Daniel, this vital piece of information is purposely being concealed from us until God's appointed time. Maybe we won't know until just a very short time prior to His Arrival. Who knows. God does.

In the third Parable below -- which most Christians refer to as the Parable of the Talents -- the Lord switches gears; and instead of emphasizing the fact that no one knows the day nor the hour of His Return, He encourages His followers to simply remain faithful in our tasks and duties, until His Father finally determines that the time of the Harvest has arrived:

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 25:14-30, KJV

From the previous Parables, it becomes evident that none of us can afford to continue business as usual, because time may be shorter than we think, and we each may not even have as long on this Earth as we think. The Apostle Paul shares the very same message and spirit of urgency with his readers in his Epistle to the brethren at Rome when he writes:

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."  
Romans 13:11, KJV

Please notice the very end of the verse where Paul says "our salvation nearer than when we believed." Is it possible that they too had fallen under the delusion that they had all the time in the world? Had they become slothful in business, and weary in well-doing, so Paul was endeavoring to stir them up again through this epistolary exhortation?

As Jesus teaches us in the Gospels, and as other verses in the Scriptures likewise reveal, the truth of the matter is that none of us know our personal future. We could die and be gone from this Earth tomorrow. Due to unforeseen reasons which we have not anticipated, our lives could abruptly end due to sudden sickness, or due to an unexpected accident, or due to a multitude of other reasons. Consider the truth that is revealed in the following verses:

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."  
Psalms 90:10, KJV

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."  
Isaiah 40:7-8, KJV

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"  
Luke 12:20, KJV

"Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready."  
John 7:6, KJV

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"  
Hebrews 9:27, KJV

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."  
James 4:14, KJV

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth

for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."  
1 Peter 1:23-25, KJV

Some of you may be thinking to yourselves, "If I am taken from this Earth tomorrow, well, glory hallelujah! That means that I will go to be with the Lord! What is wrong with that?" Well, nothing, really . . . unless you have been slothful in the Lord's Business, and therefore have nothing -- or perhaps very little -- to show for your time spent on this Earth. In other words, the main purpose of the aforementioned Parables is twofold. They are to show us the importance of remaining alert; and they are also to stress upon us the importance of bearing some kind of fruit for the Lord. This is particularly evident in the third Parable -- the Parable of the Talents -- where the man -- obviously meaning Jesus -- goes on a journey into a far country -- meaning Heaven -- and expects his servants to increase his goods during his absence.

To reiterate, as I explain in such articles as "Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service" and "Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?", the purpose of accepting Jesus Christ is not just so we can save our own skins from the Wrath of God. It is not just so that we can sit lazily on our fannies and say to ourselves "Wow! I believe in Jesus! I am saved! I am going to Heaven!" Now, obviously, that is the main reason why most people accept Christ. However, if that is the only reason why you accepted the Lord, and why you continue to believe in Jesus, then I am sorry to tell you this, but you are acting and living in a very selfish manner.

Upon accepting God's free Gift of Salvation and Eternal Life through faith in the Atoning Sacrificing of Jesus Christ, the Lord expects us to demonstrate our appreciation for the Gift, and our love for Him, by becoming involved in the affairs of the Kingdom in some fashion. As a member of the Body of Jesus Christ, we each need to endeavor to find out how God can best use us for His glory. As I explain in the article "What is God's Will for My Life?", we each need to earnestly seek the Will of God for our lives. Quite often, our particular place in His Kingdom -- at least here on Earth -- may be directly related to the skills and talents which He has given to each one of us.

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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Sluggards and Sloths :

Are You Diligent and Faithful in the Affairs of God's Kingdom?

Part 2

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Become Involved In Affairs Of God's Kingdom, Members Of God's Household, Seek God's Will For Your Life, Bear Fruit For His Kingdom, Don't Become Entangled In The Affairs Of This Life, We Are Not Of This World, Treasures In Heaven, Love Of Money: Root Of All Evil, Strangers And Pilgrims, Blinded By God Of This World, A Jealous God, Idols And Time Wasters, Shame And Everlasting Contempt, Judged And Rewarded According To Our Works, Faith Without Works Is Dead, Don't Be Ashamed Of Your Faith, Boldly Preach The Gospel, More Sure Word Of Prophecy, Isaiah Prophecy: They Shall Not Be Ashamed That Wait For Me, Scoffers: Where Is The Promise Of His Coming?, Build On Right Foundation, Purged And Saved By Fire, Different Members But One Body Fitly Joined Together By God's Spirit, Conclusion

As I concluded in part one, once we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, that is not the end of the road. It is really only the beginning of our journey of faith. From that point forward, our Heavenly Father expects us to demonstrate our appreciation for the free Gift, by loving Him, and also by becoming involved in the affairs of His Kingdom in some fashion. After all, as the Apostle Paul informs us, once we accept Jesus Christ, we are spiritually born into the Royal Household of God, as we can determine by this verse :

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" Ephesians 2:19, KJV

No parent desires to raise a slothful child. How much less our Heavenly Father? Thus, we each need to endeavor to find out how God can best use us for His glory in His Kingdom. We each need to earnestly seek His Will for our lives. I noted in part one that sometimes our particular place or calling in His Kingdom -- at least here on Earth -- may be directly related to the skills and talents which He has given to each one of us. For example, in my younger days, I was a preacher and soul winner for the Lord in a few different countries. Now, in my later years, the Lord has inspired me to feed His children by way of this online writing ministry.

The point is, we can't afford to be lazy and slothful in our Father's Kingdom, lest we receive the same reprimand as the evil servant in the first Parable that we examined; or lest we be shut out like the unwise virgins in the second Parable; or lest we be rebuked like the unprofitable servant in the third Parable who failed to put his master's talents to good use. We must find some way to be fruitful for the Lord. This issue of bearing fruit for the Lord is in fact discussed in a variety of verses which are found throughout God's Word, as we can determine by the following:

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also

shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."  
Psalms 1:3, KJV

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."  
Proverbs 11:30, KJV

"But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold . . . But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."  
Matthew 13:8, 23, KJV

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."  
Matthew 13:31-32, KJV

"And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."  
Mark 4:20, KJV

"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."  
Luke 8:15, KJV

"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."  
Luke 13:6-9, KJV

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."  
John 12:24, KJV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned . . . Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye

should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."  
John 15:1-6, 16, KJV

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."  
Romans 7:4, KJV

So what about you? If you have already accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, what are you personally doing in your life right now in order to please your Heavenly Father? Are you storing up Eternal Rewards in Heaven, or have you become so caught up in this materialistic life and the human rat race, that you have sorely neglected the needs of your spirit? Are you so busy serving this temporal world and just endeavoring to survive in it that you have neglected the more important affairs of God's Kingdom? If you are truly fighting the good fight of faith, then as the Apostle Paul writes, you simply have no time to become entrapped in the time-consuming affairs of this present earthly life:

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."  
2 Timothy 2:4, KJV

Do you honestly believe that verse, or do you just blow it off and convince yourself that while what Paul writes is obviously true, it is just meant for other Christians, but not for you? Have you deceived yourself into believing that it is acceptable to have one foot in God's Kingdom, while the other foot is still in the world? Are you trying to be a dual citizen? If so, please allow these additional verses to speak to your heart:

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."  
John 15:19, KJV

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"  
2 Corinthians 6:17, KJV

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."  
James 4:4, KJV

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."  
1 John 2:15-16, KJV

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth

and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also . . . No man 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."

Matthew 6:19-21, 24, KJV

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Colossians 3:1-2, KJV

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:"

1 Timothy 6:6-14, KJV

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Hebrews 11:13-16, KJV

It is plain to see then that, truly, we Christians are not really of this world. Just like the Patriarchs of old, we are strangers and pilgrims here, who are on our way to the Promised Land of the eternal Kingdom of God. Isn't it time that we start acting and living like we truly believe this? You must understand that you belong to God now. He is your Master, and not Satan -- who Paul refers to as the god of this world -- and his human puppets who rule this current world. Consider this verse:

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

## 2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

The Bible informs us that our God is a jealous God, and He will have no other gods before Him. It is important that we all realize that anything which we put before God, and our service to God, is making an idol out of it; whether it is our job, our fancy car, money, our girlfriend, our status in our local community, our multitude of electronic gadgets, the time that we waste playing computer games, the hours on end that we watch television, or anything else. As I pointed out in part one, some Christians are going to be very surprised on the day that death knocks on their door, and they go to meet the Lord. Why? Because, sadly, they were sluggards and sloths in this current life, and they will have nothing to present before the Lord. They will arrive in the Heavenly Courts quite embarrassed and empty-handed. I am reminded of the following verse that is found in the Book of Daniel:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."  
Daniel 12:2, KJV

We need to remember that the Scriptures inform us that our works will follow us after this life has ended, whatever they might be. But if we have been lazy and slothful in the affairs of God's Kingdom, or if we have foolishly placed the things of this present world above our service to the Lord, what works will we possibly have to present to Him? Isn't it important then that we each make sure that our lives and our works will be pleasing to the Lord? Consider the following verses:

"If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"  
Proverbs 24:12, KJV

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."  
Matthew 16:27, KJV

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:"  
1 Peter 1:17, KJV

". . . I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."  
Revelation 2:23b, KJV

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."  
Revelation 14:13, KJV

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those

things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Revelation 20:12-13, KJV

While the Scriptures inform us that we are not saved by our good works -- Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, etc. -- they do tell us that people will recognize that we are truly saved Christians by the works which we perform for the Lord. This is because they will see the positive fruit in our lives. Our works for the Lord will be a manifestation of our faith to them. So as the Apostle James writes, we must put feet to our faith, and not just talk about it alone. Please consider the following verses:

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Matthew 7:20, KJV

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

James 2:20-26, KJV

As we saw in part one, we should not attempt to conceal our spiritual light, or hide our candle under a bushel. We must not be ashamed of the Lord, the Gospel and our faith. If we are ashamed for whatever the reason -- such as being afraid to offend people by sharing the Gospel with them -- Jesus plainly tells us that He will likewise be ashamed of us at His glorious Coming. We are given the very same message in other Books of the New Testament as well. Consider these verses:

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark 8:38, KJV

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Romans 1:16, KJV

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

2 Timothy 1:12, KJV

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call

them brethren,"  
Hebrews 2:11, KJV

Rather than be ashamed, and try to hide our light under a bushel, the Scriptures admonish us to do the exact opposite. That is, we are to boldly preach the Gospel, exactly as the First Century Apostles and Disciples did, as we can see by verses such as the following:

"Now when they saw the BOLDNESS of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus . . . And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all BOLDNESS they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with BOLDNESS."  
Acts 4:13, 29-31, KJV

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."  
Acts 5:29, KJV

"But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached BOLDLY at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake BOLDLY in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him."  
Acts 9:27-29, KJV

"Long time therefore abode they speaking BOLDLY in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."  
Acts 14:3, KJV

"And he began to speak BOLDLY in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."  
Acts 18:26, KJV

"And he went into the synagogue, and spake BOLDLY for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God."  
Acts 19:8, KJV

"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more BOLDLY unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,"  
Romans 15:15, KJV

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth BOLDLY, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."  
Ephesians 6:19-20, KJV

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in

nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all BOLDNESS, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."  
Philippians 1:20, KJV

"For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."  
2 Corinthians 10:10, KJV

"So that we may BOLDLY say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."  
Hebrews 13:6, KJV

"Quench not the Spirit."  
1 Thessalonians 5:19, KJV

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."  
Hebrews 4:12, KJV

So as you can see, if we behave like sluggards, sloths and unfaithful servants; and if we try to conceal our spiritual light under a bushel because we are ashamed of our faith in the Lord; Jesus will most assuredly be ashamed of us as well at His Coming. To the contrary, if we are burning embers for the Lord who boldly preach the Gospel of Salvation, neither will Jesus be ashamed of us when He returns. In fact, in the following two verses, the Apostle Paul informs us that if we believe in Jesus, we will not be ashamed:

"As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."  
Romans 9:33, KJV

"For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."  
Romans 10:11, KJV

Why is Paul so confident that we will not be ashamed if we believe in Jesus? The answer lies in the fact that we have what the Apostle Peter refers to as "a more sure word of prophecy", as we see by this verse:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"  
2 Peter 1:19, KJV

As you can see, that word of prophecy assures us that "the day star" -- Jesus Christ -- is coming -- the day dawn -- and will arise in our hearts. The Apostle Paul was obviously aware of this marvellous prophecy that is found in the Old Testament Book of Isaiah. In the prophecy, Jesus advises us to wait for Him. Thus, with good reason Paul could tell his readers with such confidence that we "shall not be ashamed". Consider the following verses which prove this point:

"Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me."  
Isaiah 49:22-23, KJV

I find it interesting that the previous verse from Paul's Epistle to the Romans where he informs us that we shall not be ashamed comes right after a pair of verses with which many Christians are familiar. In fact, these verses concern our Salvation, and boldly proclaiming the Christian Gospel. I am including all three verses together below, so that you can clearly see that what Paul is actually saying is that if we believe in our hearts, and boldly confess our faith in Christ with our mouths, we will not be ashamed, because He is coming back for us:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."  
Romans 10:9-11, KJV

So, it does not matter what nonbelievers say and think. As the Apostle Peter writes in his second Epistle, it does not matter in the least if they daily mock us and scoff at our beliefs, and sarcastically ask us "Where is the promise of His coming?". They can laugh at us, roll their eyes at us, and do whatever else they want. But guess what? In the end, we will have the last laugh. Why? Because we have "a more sure word of prophecy" which tells us that we "shall not be ashamed", and that is good enough for me! How about you?

Thus, it should be evident to you that by boldly proclaiming our faith with our mouth -- or with the keyboard I might add -- we are truly letting our spiritual light shine before the world. We are not being sluggards, sloths and evil servants. Neither are we unwise virgins who ran out of oil. We are in fact faithful and diligent servants, and faithful ambassadors for Jesus Christ, who are actively engaged in the affairs of God's Kingdom. We are doing exactly what the Lord wants us to do; and in so doing, we are building on the right foundation -- Jesus Christ -- and performing works which will last into the next life. It is only these kinds of works which will not be burned by the Lord's fiery judgments. All others will be destroyed. Please consider the following verses:

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the

fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

1 Corinthians 3:10-15, KJV

In conclusion, let's all strive to be fruitful branches for the Lord in whatever ways He reveals to each of us. As the Apostle Paul explains to us in his Epistle to the Corinthian brethren, we are all different members of the same Body of Christ. Our gifts and talents may be different, but it is all the same Spirit working in us. Thus, if we are well-oiled by God's Holy Spirit, we will be "fitly joined together" as Paul also writes in the following verses:

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."  
Ephesians 4:14-16, KJV

With these verses I will conclude this article. I trust that you have found it informative, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. If that is the case, please consider sharing its URL link with your online friends. If you have a user account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would also very much appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly! For additional info, you may want to refer to the list of resources below which were also mentioned in this series, and which are likewise located on the Endtime Prophecy Net web server:

Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?  
Study, Work and Don't Be Ashamed  
Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service  
My Personal Vision and Your Challenge  
Are You Just a Baby Huey?  
The Only Credentials You Need  
Are You Crucified with Christ?

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