

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

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Mark 5:36 – *“Don’t be afraid. Just believe!”*



THE DEVIL AND FAITH

It is ironic that men, especially those among us who wield the most power, cannot fulfill their gilded-tongued promises to mankind, but are very willing and able to make good on their devilish threats. The result, of course, is wars, upheavals, governmental overthrows, successions and terrorism. Every nation on earth promises peace but the great majority of the world’s leaders have spent much of their lives swimming in a transgressive cesspool of immorality and pseudo-power. They cannot guarantee the peace of which they pseudo-speak when, in fact, they are consumed with greed, corruption and filth beyond comprehension.

Have we gone forward, with time, or have we, in fact, retreated from that lofty goal of truth, peace, and the unrequited love of God?

“God?” the devils scream through whomever will give them voice. “What does He have to do with anything? Of course there has been progress. There has been great progress!”

And the devils have found another voice through which

to speak as our modern, liberal intelligentsia raves on and on about this so-called progress.

“Oh,” they say with glib tongue, “we have definitely progressed. Just look at the things we have accomplished: medical cures; the arts; knowledge. Just look at the progress! Why, it’s right there staring you in the face.”

Progress? Yes, by the grace of God, we have controlled a few diseases, and, during the same period, because of our insistence on serving the devil, we have accumulated many more of which we can find no cure. And, too, we have created television, computers, video-games, cell phones and push-button living that has turned us from a nation of do-ers to a land of do-nothings. We have turned art from painting and sculpting beautiful things to filth and meaningless drivel. Progress?

Most of our children are fat because they do not exercise; they spend all day playing video games. Politicians and corruption can now be used in the same sentence without raising an eyebrow. And the next string of politicians and business leaders will have emerged from a “me-first” generation that is lazy and

intolerant of anything of which they do not agree; a “you-owe-me” generation who will be more interested in saving the spotted owl than an unborn baby. Progress? Hear the devil laughing?

The older generation is being retired sooner than they’d wish to make room for a younger, more belligerent but open-minded work force that allows any spirit to control their thinking. Just don’t ask them to believe in God. This, friends, is progress. And it is operated under the control of the prince of the air, the very insidious devil whose only goal is to steal, to kill, and to destroy; the very ignominious devil whose name causes us to shudder, but to whom we run back to, so often, without even realizing what we are doing.

It is amid this tumultuous society of under-spiritualized, nascent under-achievers that the scorned and derided true Spirit-filled Christian takes his stand, ready to be vilified and, if necessary, persecuted. He knows to whom he belongs; and he knows his enemy well. He, by the grace of God, operates under the power of the Holy Spirit of God and he does not shrink

back when the world and its glittering, golden hemorrhoids shower him with filth and laugh at him derisively. He already expected that. It was promised to him by the Captain of the Lord's Host.

Do you see the world through those eyes, friend? Sometimes the truth is hard to see, especially when that which is blinding us is also wrapping us up in chains.

This is the world in which we find ourselves, Church! So what are we going to do about it? **Part of our problem is that we are caught up in the spirit of the world just enough to be numbed to the true effect it is having on us.** We think we're all right because we have our salvation. We stumble into Church each Sunday and get our spiritual vitamin fix; and then we think that we're ready to slop through the devil's pigsty for another six days. Oh, not that we want to be there, but we have no choice. That's just the way life is; it's the hand that was dealt to us. But God will see us through. He understands.

At least we hope so.

Let me tell you what God really understands. **He understands that His word has within it all the power that the Christian needs to walk in victory through that pigsty with which the devil has infested the world.** He understands that, inherent

in His word, is all the power of creation; and He understands that it is available to every Christian who truly loves Him and is willing to serve Him on His terms. He understands that He has granted the Christian the full power of His Holy Spirit if the Christian will only believe and take advantage of that which has been given him. **And He understands that the Christian who grabs hold of these truths and believes them will walk in absolute victory regardless of how egregious is the devil's tactics.** That is what the Lord understands.

UNMASKING THE DEVIL

It is time to unmask the devil! I'm not speaking of terrorists or those who peddle pornography or those who participate in abortions or those who initiate wars to fulfill their insatiable greed. The devil may be in hiding, in those areas, to the general populace; but I am speaking of unmasking the devil in the Church of Jesus Christ.

We have been duped into believing that salvation is enough. The devil doesn't want anyone to be saved; but if they are, he will then do everything in his power to cause them to believe that salvation is enough. And he is very successful, isn't he? But the Scripture does not

give us the option to receive Jesus as Savior without also serving Him as Lord.

Rom. 10:9-That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

If you confess that Jesus is Lord, then you must serve Him as Lord. Believing is where it all starts but then you must put your faith into action.

James 1:22-Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

So, we must serve Jesus as Lord. Now, if we begin serving Him as Lord then we must obey His commands. We must continue to grow in Him. We must learn to know the Lord. We must cultivate a relationship with Him. We must become radical disciples. It is in doing these things that we grow closer to the Lord, and we begin to understand His word, and we have discernment regarding spiritual things.

It is vital that we understand what is from God, what is from the devil, and what is from our self. Only that which is from God can bring us fulfillment, peace, love, joy, and growth. Everything else is the antithesis of that for which God stands. But the Church is full of pseudo-Christians, half-hearted Christians, and comfortable Christians who love the Lord but are only

willing to serve Him on their own terms.

How did the Church end up in such a sorry state? It goes back to the Church's leadership. Throughout the west, Churches are being pastored and led by men and women who are doing so in their own strength. They have no clue about the full power of the Holy Spirit. They have no idea that God is not satisfied with the work that they are doing in His name.

When Brother Yun, the great Chinese pastor and teacher, first came to the west, in 1997, he was amazed at what he saw. He had just spent nearly 20 years, in China, in perennial revival. Literally tens of millions of Christians were serving Christ in revival, under the power of the Holy Spirit. Miracles were commonplace; they were considered normal. Why? It was because the power of the Holy Spirit was prevalent in those Churches. **The Christians had yielded all that they were to the Lord. Nothing else mattered except serving God.** It was a shock to him to come to the west to find that many Churches were just going through the motions. There was no life at all. There was no power. There were no miracles.

God is not enamored with our powerless Church services. There is no such thing as serving God on your own terms and then asking God to bless what you are

doing. God doesn't bless what we are doing. He blesses what He is doing. God doesn't need our help running the world nor does He need our help running His Church. It is His Church, not ours. He wants to operate in that Church in His power; and He can only do so when we get out of the way. You must yield yourself totally to the Lord, friends; you must die to self.

Matt. 16:24-*"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

Are you in God's way, friend? If you yield totally to Him, He will conform you to the likeness of Jesus. He will make you a transparent Christian, one who is no longer in the way, but rather, one through whom He can and will do His work.

It is vital that we understand what the Scripture says about being separate. We are not to bring the world into the Church. The Church is to go into the world, not the other way around. We do not have to stoop to the world's low level in order to minister to those who are in the world. Isn't God able to do His work without having to compromise with the devil? Of course He is. What, then, is the problem? The problem is that we are working in our own strength, and we see that we are unable

to do what needs to be done. And instead of then yielding to the Lord so that He can do whatever He pleases, so that He can bring about His perfect will in His strength, we assume that we must yield to the devil in order to do God's work. Of course, we don't think we're yielding to the devil. We just think we've made a responsible, modern-day decision that must be made in order for the Church to continue to go forward. After all, things have changed; and we need to get with the program. What? God can't grow the Church unless you stoop to the edge of the cesspool to get help? Friends, we are being deceived by the very one who is our enemy and who wants to kill us. It is he to whom we have run for help. God, forgive us!!

How long would we last in a conventional war if we did what the enemy wanted us to do? The devil is the father of lies. Jesus stated clearly that he has been a liar from the beginning and that it is all he knows how to do. So, he is not going to tell us the truth. He is going to lie to us. What does that mean?

It means that when the devil tells you that you are not going to be healed, you can be sure that you are going to be healed. And when the devil tells you that you will not grow any closer to the Lord, you can be sure that God's will and desire is for you to grow closer to the

Lord. And when the devil tells you to stoop down to the world's level in order to minister to those in the world, you can be sure that you are to do the exact opposite.

And conversely, when the devil tells us to lower ourselves into the worldly vat wherein boils the devil's spirit, and we do so, we can be sure that our Churches are going to dissipate into nothingness.

The devil wants you to think that it is okay to come to Church on Sunday, listen to a little worship music, pay half-attention to the pastor's message, drop a few dollars into the offering basket, and then go home and plop in front of the TV set and get more involved in what is being transmitted there than what was being transmitted to you at Church. No! Absolutely not! That is an outright lie! The devil is the father of lies. Of course, he wants you to believe that. You have stepped right into his big, juicy demonic cowpie. And now you've got the stench of it spread all over you and you don't even know it.

Friends, the Church is Jesus' creation. It is the fellowship of the believers. It is the place where we come to worship God, to pay homage to the creator of all things, to yield ourselves to Him, to throw ourselves on His mercy. We are only there a few hours each week. Let us yield those few hours to

the God of all creation. Let us not come out of duty but out of love. And if we are in a weak-kneed, powerless, dead Church, let us pray the power back into that Church. Let us take the leadership of that Church to the Throne of Grace and pray until God gives us release.

Are you doing that? Are you praying daily for the leadership of your Church, or are you just complaining? God has granted you the authority to bring the power back into your Church; and He has granted you the authority to keep the power, and to increase the power of the Holy Spirit in your Church. It takes prayer. Do your part, friend.

It is time to throw the devil and his imps out of God's Church. They don't belong there and we shouldn't be allowing them in that holy place. Let us fill the Church with prayer. Let us fill the Church with pure worship. Let us fill the Church with authority, the authority given us by Jesus at the cross. Let us take that authority and demand the demons to cease and desist their demonic activities and let us throw them out of God's Church. And let us have Church services that are controlled by the Holy Spirit of God. It is God's Church. Please let us allow Him to do with her what He pleases.

DESTROYING THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL

Can we really throw the devil out of our Churches? Of course we can. Jesus destroyed the works of the devil at the cross. He gave us authority, as joint-heirs, to demolish strongholds and to cast out demons. Every time we come to Church, there should be a staff of prayer warriors taking authority over the evil powers of the air who intend to do harm to that Church service. Let it be known, friends, that the devil isn't going to walk away just because you don't want him there. You must rid the Church of him and his imps. You do so with prayer, fervent, powerful prayer. And you do so every time you come together.

The devil will never stop being the devil, but the Holy Spirit will never stop being the Holy Spirit, either. And He has far more power than all the devil's imps put together. Let the Holy Spirit have His desired place in your worship services.

The Church has the power to make manifest the destruction of the works of the devil. The Church, through powerful, fervent prayer can break the strongholds in parishioner's lives: addictions, divorces, abortions, and lethargy. Let

us, Church, take responsibility for those God has brought to us. Let us stand against the evil of the devil, knowing that we have full authority to call down all the power of God to break his hold on those who belong to God. Let us not shrink from our duty. Let us not turn our backs on our brothers and sisters – and our children.

Only believe!

OVERCOMING FAITH

Let us not succumb to that which is happening around us: a quickly-failing economy, terrorism, mass murders, corruption, and filth beyond comprehension. It is all the works of the devil; and he is being allowed to do his dirty work because the world has given him free reign to do so. But God knows all things; He sees all things. He is still absolutely in control of this entire world. He has not been blind-sided; He is not shocked, nor is He surprised. He is also not happy with what He sees. **And every true Christian who is serving God on His terms can ride above the turmoil, the despair, and the destruction being wrought by the devil.**

Faith always defeats the devil. That doesn't mean we won't be persecuted. It doesn't mean we won't lose our shirt in a bad economy. It does mean that the devil will

not achieve victory over us. **Life in Christ has nothing to do with economics. It has to do with faith, righteousness and eternity.**

Let us put our security in Jesus. Everything else in going to dissipate and blow away anyway. But that which we have in Jesus will last throughout all eternity.

Faith is being certain and being sure. Even in the face of death, as was Jairus, the synagogue ruler, who had just learned that his little daughter had died, Jesus smiled, laid his hand on Jairus' shoulder, and said, "Don't be afraid. Just believe!"

Don't be afraid, friends. Just believe!

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**BE RADICAL FOR
GOD!!**