

We Don't Get to Go Home Yet



Rob Pue

This past March, just literally DAYS before the Planned-Demic was announced and the nationwide lockdowns began, I was blessed to be visited by a dear friend who lives quite far away. I've had many friends over the years, though none of them what you'd really call "close" friends – and I've had even more "acquaintances" – but I've never had a friend like this before. If the truth be told, I've probably had more that really do NOT like me in this world, than call me "friend."

But indeed, this friend is one who has been closer than a brother to me. God introduced us about three years ago; and it was as if we'd known one another all our lives. Our close bond of friendship was instantaneous, and he's been an incredible blessing in my life and a great encouragement to me ever since.

This man has been a faithful minister of God for over four decades and has been through a lot. There's no question that he's "run the race" well, sacrificed tremendously, served the Lord and followed the narrow road faithfully. As we reunited after not seeing each other for about five months, it was as if not a day had passed... no awkwardness, no polite "niceties" necessary before our conversation naturally began to flow from deep within each of our hearts.

Then he told me how he had been standing on his back deck, just the very night before, gazing up at the stars and how he had prayed to the Lord, *"Father, I've lived a long life. I've*

worked hard, I've followed Your ways and taught and disciplined others to follow You, too. It seems I've done all I can in this world, Lord. I've been faithful to the work You called me to, but I'm tired. So tired. Please, Father, is there any way I could just come HOME now? My children are grown and out on their own, and it seems like my work for You here is through. I've done as much as any one man can do. Please, Father God... I'm ready, if it be Your will ... please let me just come home now, and be with You."

For just a moment, there was silence between us... and then I asked him, *"What time was it last night, would you say, when you were out there on your deck praying this prayer?"*

And then I informed him that at the exact time he was outside looking up at the heavens, crying out to God on his back deck, I was praying the exact same prayer, with just about the exact same words, from my own back deck, 1500 miles away. We were both asking our heavenly Father for the same thing at the same time, as we both stared up at His magnificent starry heavens. Yes, both of us asking our Father to please, please just let us come home now.

And we both received the same response: *"Not yet. Your work is not yet finished, and in fact, you have no idea what will still be required of you."* And is usually the case, the Lord caused Scripture to come to mind, from Galatians 6, *"...let us not grow weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."*

"Yes...alright, Father God, may Your will be done."

In talking with many of you over the past months, I have found that my friend and I are not alone. Many are tired. SO tired. Worn out. And as we see what lies before us in THIS world, we really don't want to have anything to do with it. We would much rather just go home and be with our Lord and Savior.

This world holds no attraction for those whose hearts are set on the things of the Spirit and on things above. Matthew 6 reminds us, *"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... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

And so, as Christ-followers, we've done just that, and we long for the time when we can return to the One Who created us, the One we have followed, loved and served as He was gracious to reveal more and more of Himself to us during our lifetimes. We often feel like orphans in an alien world, yet we know our Redeemer lives and that when we step out of this world, we will be welcomed into His loving arms, home at last. How we LONG for that day, but we must not get ahead of ourselves. Because God has placed us here, in this wicked world, and he's instructed us to 'OCCUPY' until He returns.

In Luke 19, we read of Jesus' visit to the home of Zaccaeus, whom the people deemed to be "a sinner," a "thief," even a "lost cause." But after spending time with Jesus, Zaccaeus humbly repented, cried out to the the Lord and was saved. And Jesus said, *"This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

Jesus demonstrated this life lesson for His disciples on their way to Jerusalem. And as they drew closer to the city, there was great anticipation among the disciples because they assumed, as we read in verse 11, that "the kingdom of God should immediately appear." It was then that Jesus told the parable of the talents – *"A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, 'Occupy 'til I come.'"*

We know the rest of the story... the people despised the

'nobleman' as well as his servants. But despite living in a land where their Lord was hated, and THEY were hated because of him, most of them OCCUPIED as they were told. The first servant with one talent had earned for his Master ten; the second servant had earned five; but the third servant hid his away because of cowardice and the fear of the people. This story is told previously in Matthew 25, and the end of the unfaithful servant is revealed: *"And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* He had NOT been faithful to "occupy."

As was often the case, the disciples didn't understand Jesus' parable. They were still expecting Jesus to immediately enter Jerusalem as a conquering King, but instead, He entered humbly, riding on a donkey's colt. Then came the woman who anointed Him with oil at Simon's house in Bethany. Then the Last Supper, followed by Jesus' tormenting time of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He was in deep turmoil in that Garden, as He knew what was about to take place, and He asked his best friends to watch and pray. *"Then saith He unto them, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with Me.'* And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, *'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'*"

Jesus prayed this prayer three times, so earnestly that he sweat great drops of blood. Yet His disciples, His best friends, did not understand the urgency of the situation. They couldn't even stay awake at the time their Lord needed them most.

Then came Jesus' arrest and trials, the beatings, the humiliation and ultimately, His crucifixion. All the while, the disciples – His best friends – followed at a distance. Except, of course, for Peter, who went a bit closer, but when confronted, denied Jesus three times, because he feared what

men would do to him for his “being with” Jesus.

It would do us all well to study, meditate and reflect on the life and teachings of Jesus, as well as what it meant when He went to the cross, died, was buried and rose again. In Matthew 16, Jesus warned, *“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Like the worthless servant from Jesus’ parable who refused to ‘occupy’ and serve his Lord while he was away, there are many today, who, because of the fear of men, will simply “hide” – they’ll hide themselves and their “talents” – accomplishing nothing for the Kingdom as they simply “sleep’ and await the Lord’s return. Or they’ll follow Him “at a distance,” one foot in the world, one foot – *hesitantly* – in the things of God. (That’s called being “lukewarm,” by the way... and by the way, that makes God sick enough to vomit).

And like the disciples who entered Jerusalem with Jesus that final time, there are many today who are eagerly expecting Jesus’ imminent return – the rapture. They long to go be with Jesus and they’re sure it will be any day now. Certainly we see the signs all around us that Jesus said to watch for, that would lead to His quick return. But as we know, what is “quick” to us is not necessarily “quick” to God. What if our Lord remains in His “far-off kingdom” for another fifty years before His return? Where do you see yourself in 50 years? (Remember, *“It’s appointed unto man once to die, and then the judgment.”*)

What if, during those fifty years, we continue to do nothing, refusing to “occupy” until His return? How many lost “talents” – or in this case, lost SOULS – will be charged to our account because we did nothing? Ezekiel 3:18, *“When I say*

unto the wicked, 'Thou shalt surely die;' and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." That, friends, is the cost of doing nothing. DEATH, when there COULD have been LIFE, if only you had been a faithful servant.



Certainly it's frightening to stand for Christ, to preach the truth and to share the Gospel in a world that hates our Lord and Savior – but that doesn't get us off the hook. We still have our work to do. WE may consider what's left of this wicked world to be "hopeless," but God doesn't. He's not willing that ANY should perish but that all should come to repentance. How will those perishing ones ever hear if WE never speak?

There are endless accounts in Scripture of God using those who hated Him and His anointed ones as His ministers – AFTER they came to know Him. Not the least of which was Paul, formerly Saul, who actively went door-to-door, pulling Christ-followers out of their homes and putting them to death. He thought he was doing a good thing. He even held the coats of those who stoned Stephen to death.

I, for one, need to remember that, before I condemn those lost and confused souls who are now marching with ANTIFA, BLM and other anarchist groups. Because if the truth be told, they truly KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO. They're victims of brainwashing and indoctrination by wicked, evil Leftists. NO ONE has bothered to tell them the TRUTH. And as a result, they'll gladly burn churches and kill Christians and believe they're doing "good" things. And remember, Paul called himself "the chief of sinners," yet he was transformed, he was washed, he was redeemed by the mercy and grace of God.

God's love is AVAILABLE to all, and He's ready to redeem and restore all who will come to Him in humble repentance and faith in what Christ did for mankind on the cross. If they refuse God's mercy and grace and instead, after hearing about God's offer of life, CHOOSE to believe the lies and remain in rebellious sin, then God's righteous judgment will fall on them. But WE must not "write them off" as "lost causes" if we've never bothered to speak God's life and truth to them.

But how will they ever hear of such an incredible gift of mercy if we're too afraid to stand up, stand firm and speak the truth that WE KNOW is true? Like Stephen and so many others before us, doing so – especially in such a time as this – may well cost us our very lives. But how will we be able to stand before our Lord knowing we've been lazy servants, even 'workers of iniquity' – because we were too cowardly and unbelieving to offer LIFE over death, to even the least of these?

Matthew 16:24, *"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If any of you wants to be My follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow Me.'"* OF COURSE it's not going to be easy. GOD never said it would be easy. He said it was going to be a narrow road, a narrow gate, a HARD way... not an easy, broad path, but one that FEW will ever find.

It's going to turn the world upside down – you'll be persecuted and hated of all men for His Names' sake, it will cause the loss of worldly friendships and even in some cases the breakup of families. It may cost you children, grandchildren, and some of your dearest loved ones. Many of you understand and have experienced exactly what I'm talking about. You've lost much for the Kingdom of God, you've been tested and gone through many trials and have survived, and you are tired... I understand. It's heart-wrenching. But friends, we don't get to go home yet. Our work is not yet finished. Jesus may come at any moment, or it may be in fifty years, or in 500 years. But He IS returning to gather His own to

Himself. All who will come. Meanwhile, WE must continue to OCCUPY until that time and be about our Father's business. Let us be found faithful in that day, whenever that day may be.

Finally, let us remember the words of Revelation, which describe the spiritual weapons of warfare we're to use against the enemy of our souls... we must be well trained in using these weapons in the violent times we live in today: Revelation 12:11, *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and loving not their own lives even unto death."* Cling to the blood of the Lamb, shed on Calvary's cross; always be ready to share your testimony of what Christ has done in YOUR life, which no man can argue; and always be ready to give your very life for the only One who can truly save it. Amen.

© 2020 Rob Pue – All Rights Reserved

E-Mail Rob Pue: Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com