

KINGDOM NEWS

The Kingdom is Yours; the power is Yours and the glory is Yours, forever.... (Matt. 6:13)

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Motto for the year of 2013

Come out from among them and be separated and I will receive you," says the Lord.
Know you not that you are the temple of the Living God? Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
(2 Corinthians 6:16-17, 7:1 KJV Adapted)

The Chief Cornerstone



I Was the Other Thief ...

I remember THAT day as if it were yesterday

...There I was wrestling within myself as to how to deal with my impending death, which was only hours away.

All my life I had been a thief, a subverter, a liar, a deceiver, a "taker." What was I to do? My father was a thief ... and his father before him. I had come from a long line of ungodly men. Wasn't I my father's son?

I had been caught before, but the sentence had never stuck. Boy, had I been lucky, I knew people in "high places." But this time, it didn't work. At some point, I knew that my way of life was wrong; but I didn't know how to do anything about it. It was the only way I knew.

Chief Cornerstone

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The Leadership Corner *Leadership Living, Inc.*

It's Time to Give God a Sacrifice

All scripture is KJV paraphrased.

The month of May represents the end of school and the beginning of a period of transition during the summer. With that in mind, it will be interesting to see what God has in store for us. He gave me a nugget to share as we approach this period.

The Lord told me that we are at a turning point. At the beginning of the year God laid on our hearts things He wanted us to pursue. He also let us know this year He would establish and grow us. As we reflect on these past four months, we may have had mixed experiences.

In some areas we may have experienced positive outcomes. However, in other areas, we may have experienced more challenges than we expected. One thing we want to understand is that God was leading and directing our steps at all times (as we have yielded to Him).

Now, in order to move into the transition period that will come this summer, there is something we must do. God will ask something of each of us. He will direct us to give Him a sacrifice. He is even now inviting us to yield to Him some area, issue, relationship, project, etc. He will direct us to stop doing a particular thing, or to start doing something new or different.

His request will take us out of our comfort zone (possible completely out of it). But, don't be alarmed. God has a specific

The Leadership Corner

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Boot Camp

Chosen ... Or ... Choosing?



Many are *called*, but few are *chosen*.⁽¹⁾ Familiar passage?

Upon the utterance of this reality, there is in the hearts (*of some*), worship that "*many are called ...*" While in the hearts of others, there is fatalism, that only "*... few are chosen*."

We each pick our posture, when dealing with this truth (*or any truth for that matter*).

Over the years, I've wanted to give the "fatalist" an audience. I've wanted to genuinely understand their disposition, although I, *myself*, felt quite differently.

They'd say, "What's the purpose? If God has already *chosen*, what's there left to do; *for those of us who are not chosen*?" "What? Have *they* (*who are not chosen*) no hope?" the fatalist would surmise. "God is not fair..." they assessed. "His ways are not equal..." they'd accused.

Not having sufficient light myself, to address the question. I placed the question before the Lord, some years ago. I, too, wanted to understand, what was really being said in the "*many are called, but few chosen*" reality.

Some years later, almost "out of the blue," the Lord said to me; "*JoAnn, many are called, but few choose*." I don't mind telling you that I was undone, by that revelation. It just kind of hung there ... in the air. Uttered, yet not quite understood.

Many were called at the proclamation of the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Jesus Christ. "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."⁽²⁾ this cry went out to all, who had an ear. But alas, not all who heard ... *chose*.

- Twelve were *called*, but at last estimate, only 11 *chose*.⁽³⁾
- The love of God *calls*; but "the *whosoever*" must *choose*.⁽⁴⁾

The Lord said to me, "Research the word *chosen*."

First, I looked at the Interlinear (Concordant) Greek source of the original scripture. It reads more this way: "Many for are *called*, few yet *chosen*."

It turns out that the Greek origin of the KJV word *chosen* in the scripture "*many are called, but few are chosen*;" comes out of the Greek origin of the KJV word *chosen* in the scripture "...*one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her*."⁽⁵⁾ Many were *called* to the "dinner," at the house of Mary and Martha, but Mary *chose* to sit at His feet.

While we're on the subject of "dinners;" it was at another dinner occasion (*to which many were also called*) when this same Mary, *chose* to sanctify a precious alabaster box of ointment, for the purpose of anointing the feet of our Lord.⁽⁶⁾ This particular act, I believe, speaks quite specifically of the heart of God, in our *choosing* Him. It is a most perfect example (*Thank You Lord!!*).

When Simon (a leper, a Pharisee and Judas' father), along with others, judged Mary for her "*choosing*;" and dare I say, they judged Jesus, for His "*being chosen*." Our Lord's response, to the Pharisee, was this: Simon, I came into your house and you didn't so much as offer me a basin of water to wash my feet, no kiss for my cheek, nor yet oil to anoint my head. But this woman "*chose*" otherwise. If you take a moment and read Luke's description of this occasion, I believe that you'll find that all were (*in one sense or another*) called to the dinner (except this woman). So we see how that many are "*called*." But this woman took this occasion to *worship ... to sell out ... to choose*. If you read it a second time, I believe you'll find that Mary was "*chosen*;" but not because God's ways are unequal; not because God is arbitrary in His Sovereignty. Mary was (in one sense) "*chosen*" because she "*chose*."

So let's look again at the opening scripture *and tilt it a little bit to the right*, it then reads "*many are called but few choose*." A fatalist's view of the scripture is "that it is unfortunate (or unfair) of God to create 'all of these people' and only choose a few of them." As if to say that everyone created deserves to be "*chosen*." As if to assume (*quite foolishly I might add*) that God's Sovereign graciousness in creation, somehow obligates Him to secure salvation for

As painful and frightening as it was, I knew that this judgment was *my due*. I hung there fighting within myself, trying to hold on to what little life I had left. And even that I didn't understand. Hold on to "*what?*" And why was I trying to "hold on?" What about that way of life did I treasure? It never made sense to me. But again, what was I to do, I knew of no other way.

Just across from me were two men.

The one, in the same state of confusion as I; also a thief, who had "turned his last trick." Another one like me who had "played his trump card, and still lost the game." Angry that he had finally gotten caught. He was a liar too. But this time, he was lying to himself. Somehow he didn't believe that he deserved this sentence. Bereaving his "unjust" fate; still searching for a favorable witness; hoping for a last minute reprieve. But none came. He had been judged, but was not accepting of his sentence. Surely someone had wronged him (*I heard him say*). "Hadn't some article of *justice* been overlooked?" He wanted to know. The bitterness of his gall had gotten the best of him. It had gotten the best of me too, I had momentarily gotten caught up in his revile. For we even began to slander the Man in the middle. ⁽¹⁾ But then ... I realized ... that I had seen this Man before. He often drew crowds ... healing the sick, ... casting out demons, ... confounding the Scribes and Pharisees. "But what was He doing here?" I thought. I couldn't remember the last time they hung a "healer" on a cross. Something was clearly out of place.

Ah yes, the Man in the middle ... a peculiar one He was.

He wasn't seeking to save His life. ⁽²⁾ But why wasn't He (*it frustrated me*); He seemed to have far less of it left than the two of us. The other thief and I had come to our crosses with our "heads held high;" with the "pride of life" still beating in our breast. But not this One, a specimen of humility and meekness He was, notwithstanding the injustice of it all. In His less than two score years, it seemed that He had lived His life to the full. And it seemed that He was still "headed somewhere." "But where?" I mused. "Where does one go from a cross?" I wanted to know. I got the sense that He knew something that I didn't know (*as a heart of repentance began to overshadow me*). For His eyes were fixed on something ... something out there ... something beyond the reach of my vision. From up there on that cross, our view of the horizon was about the same. But as I looked at Him, I could tell His eyes saw farther ... much, much farther ... beyond the horizon, even. There was something there that kept His gaze ... something beautiful ... something "*other*" ... or was it

Someone? ⁽³⁾ Whatever it was; or Whoever He saw, the expression on his face completely defied description.

Now, crucifixion was not altogether foreign in the Roman Empire. It was not uncommon to catch sight of treasonous men or incorrigible slaves, hanging on a cross, just outside the city. I had seen men crucified before, but none so eloquent as this One. He was a bloody mess. I had never seen a man so marred ... his visage was marred more than any man ... yet so whole. It was as if *life, or something*, shown through every bruise, every cut, and every tear in His flesh. I had never seen anything like it, and I had seen a lot in my life. But what had driven them to wound Him so? ⁽⁴⁾ What had He said? ⁽⁵⁾ What had He done? ⁽⁶⁾

There we were (the three of us), two of us dying and one of us, "living." For us the cross was our final judgment for a life squandered. But for Him ... His Cross was *something else*. It was an "office." And from there

- He operated in His office as Executor of His earthly estate, when He said "Woman behold thy son; and to His disciple, behold thy mother." ⁽⁷⁾ It was a Jewish custom and the responsibility of the first born to provide for His widowed mother. And that He did, most efficiently.
- He operated in His office as an Intercessor, when He said, "Father forgive them, they don't know the gravity and far-reaching effects of what they are doing." ⁽⁸⁾
- He operated in His office as The Son of God; who watched over the words of the Father to perform what God had prophesied and what was written. "After this, Jesus said, (*that the scriptures might be fulfilled*) I thirst." He knew that the scriptures had recorded this revelation of God to the Psalmist: They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. ⁽⁹⁾

"*HOW* is this!?" I kept asking myself. "Who" dies this way, I kept wondering. I was confused, because although He was on the same type of cross that I was on; it meant "something else" for Him.

Although I only saw the three of us hanging there, I got the sense, that there were more ... many, many more. That small space (*upon Golgotha's hill*), where we three hung, was quite crowded. It was filled with

"people" ... angels even. They were taking note of this One ... "how He died," or shall I say, "how He LIVED." They were taking note, and I too was taking note of Him. I had never seen a man more alive, on a Cross. Even so, I was confused, my head and my heart were in total conflict. My eyes saw *one man*, but my heart saw *another*. Visually this man was a wreck; his visage was marred beyond recognition.⁽¹⁰⁾ My heart saw a King, in all of His holy majesty. I had never seen anything like it before. This Man did more good on that Cross than men have done in a lifetime.

While He was dying "*with*" me; somehow I knew that He was dying "*for*" me. And for others like me ... thieves and liars ... takers and subverters ... unjust men who deserved, themselves, to die. But whom, He wanted, instead, to "live." How could that be? For scarcely for a good man, would one die. But this man was dying for criminals, like me; men who had long defied the Judge of all the Earth, and who thought that they had "gotten away with it." But, just now I know, we hadn't gotten away. We have been "found out" ... all of us. This Man's life judged us, without a word.

But also, just now, I know that it doesn't have to end the way it began. He was giving us an "out." The way out that I could not see years before, I see very clearly now.

Sir Sir, excuse me (*in the midst of your dying*) I have but one request.

The Man in the middle replied, "Yes? say on." I said (*in words, unworthily and far too vile for expression*), "Please ... please my Lord ... please remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." I will never forget His response.....

He replied, "Today!"⁽¹¹⁾ <cc>

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, SMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ Luke 23:39-41; Mark 15:32

⁽²⁾ Mark 15:31; Luke 17:33

⁽³⁾ Hebrews 12:2b

⁽⁴⁾ Isaiah 53:5; 52:14

⁽⁵⁾ Isaiah 53:7

⁽⁶⁾ Isaiah 53:9

⁽⁷⁾ John 19:26-27

⁽⁸⁾ Luke 23:34

⁽⁹⁾ Psalm 69:21

⁽¹⁰⁾ Isaiah 52: 10, 14-15

⁽¹¹⁾ Luke 23:42-43

purpose for this requirement. It is this sacrifice that will bring us to the places in Him that we need to go for the next phase of the journey.

During this month of May, God is directing us to give to Him something we hold dear. What is it that you and I value? What do we spend our time and/or our money on? What do we talk about the most? The sacrifice will be related to this coveted area of our lives.

We find that God did the same thing in scripture. He gave Abraham a directive in Genesis chapter 22. He told Abraham to offer his only son, Isaac, as a burnt offering. This request was so out-of-character for God. Why? God had never directed someone to make a human sacrifice to Him.

Still, He told Abraham to sacrifice the very person He loved and received as a blessing from God. But, what happened in this story? Even as Abraham was set to carry out the sacrifice and slay his only son, God stopped him.

God told Abraham that because he did not withhold what was dear to him, God would not withhold from Abraham an abundance of blessings (for him and for his heritage – of which we are a part). We know that spiritually, this request was a shadow of Jesus Christ.

So, how do we deal with such a request in our personal lives? And what might it mean? I will simply offer a suggestion that you can take to God in your private time. Each of us could make a list of the people and things we hold dear. We could then take this list into the presence of the Lord.

In His presence we could ask Him to show us what His directives are for each item and person. As He gives instruction, we would carry out His plan.

This exercise may prove to be more difficult than it seems because as humans, we don't know the deep areas of our own hearts. We would like to think that we could never withhold anything from God. Well, we will find out shortly.

If you and I will obey God's request, then we will experience Him in ways we never have before. And, we will see God move in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones such that total transformation will occur.

Are you up for the challenge?

Make the list and be ready to execute what God will say to you.

May goodness and mercy follow you all the days of your life!

Joyce M. White, LMSW

everyone (*irrespective of that person's choosing*). We're weird, that way; we love to banter about our "freedom of choice" when it comes to anything BUT GOD. We're free to choose, the clothes we wear; the food we eat, the cars we drive. But we do not regard our freedom to choose (or not) the God we serve. Nor do we regard God's freedom to choose those who choose Him. We want to do the "choosing" and somehow obligate God to "choose" us. Now if God behaved that way, we'd call Him a tyrant, an autocrat.

I submit to you that whoever wants to come to Jesus, can. I'll further submit to you that whoever "chooses" will find that they are "chosen."

Perhaps this is the appropriate place, to enlarge on the understanding of the term "to choose" or to "be chosen."

The 21st century reflection of the concept of "choosing Christ" or "being chosen by Christ" is thread-bear and quite impotent. So let us refresh the standard.

Since we so in love with John 3:16, let's go there.

When the scriptures say, "... whosoever believes" shall not perish. We find that the original language **does not** intimate that whosoever "mentally agrees that Jesus Christ is Lord, but continues in sin that grace may abound..." shall not perish.⁽⁷⁾ Because many will say to Jesus in that day, "Lord, Lord, didn't we... *choose You?*"⁽⁸⁾ (*italics added*) The original language of the famed John 3:16 actually says, that "whosoever believes INTO him, shall not perish." That word INTO brings with it terms of endearment, almost too sacred for words. It actually refers to the level of intimacy that is approved between a man and his wife. (wink ... wink...) To "believe into Christ" is akin to the phrase in Genesis, "Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived...."⁽⁹⁾

Sidebar: The "into" used in John 3:16 is the same "into" used on John 3:18 "God sent not his Son into the world" *How* did God send His Son 'into' the world? In one sense, the Father made His Son, subject to the natural laws that governed "life and death." He was born "of a woman" and "He died on a Cross." He was subject to parents and subject to magistrates, etc. So how we think that we can "believe on the Lord Jesus and continue to live life on our own terms," is a deception. It is a farce. Jesus had to "sell out" to get *here*, and we have to "sell out" to get *there*. This is essentially what Jesus

said to the "rich, young, ruler." And Jesus had far more to "give up" than we do; and He gave it up freely for our sakes. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God?⁽¹⁰⁾ I'm sorry! Are those *your* toes, I'm standing on? My apologies, they felt like *my* toes. It is important that we not go on believing that we can get to heaven from the "cheap seats." There aren't any cheap seats on this bus. Let everyone who names the name of Jesus, depart from iniquity.⁽¹¹⁾

This brings us to the reality that both the "believing INTO" and the "choosing and being chosen" all require of us the levels of intimacy "that would make a grown man blush." We are to come *into* such a communal relationship with Christ as to conceive seed... to bring forth ... to bear the fruit of Christ.

As you can appreciate, that level of intimacy can scarcely be the case with one who is of such a knowledge of Christ as that the only scripture one really knows is ... well ... John 3:16.

Our Lord's return is fast approaching and our "cavalier-2 hours on Sunday morning-so I can get home and *really* enjoy my day" disposition towards Christ will not do. We will certainly find ourselves upside down in the ditches of life, crying "Lord, Lord ... why hast thou forsaken me." Not realizing that the Lord forsakes those who forsake Him.⁽¹²⁾

Likewise, the Lord *chooses* those who *choose* Him. So don't be melancholy about your feelings of "not being chosen;" as if "choosing" were only God's duty. Choosing is *our* duty; and if we *choose* Him, we'll find that He too has *chosen* us.

I know ... I know... I get it. We don't like that idea. We'd much rather the "*for God so loved the world, and so do I*" approach to Christianity. We like it because it frees us to "*have our cake and eat it too.*" Unfortunately (or fortunately) cake is not on the menu. The way *IS* Christ, it is a way that only "sell-outs" can endure.⁽¹³⁾

Many are called, few chosen. Remember, the Lord *chooses*, those who *choose* Him.

Choose wisely.

I bid you, God speed. <(BC)>

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Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- (1) Matthew 22:14
- (2) Matthew 3:1-2, 4:17; Mark 1:14-15
- (3) John 6:70-71
- (4) John 3:16
- (5) Luke 10:42
- (6) Matthew 26:6+; Mark 14:3+; Luke 7:36-50
- (7) John 3:16; Romans 6:1
- (8) Matthew 7:21-22
- (9) Genesis 4:1
- (10) 1 John 3:1
- (11) 2 Timothy 2:19
- (12) 2 Chronicles 15:2b
- (13) 1 John 2:15

Legalism...

License...

Liberty...

"Legalism" is as much the enemy of liberty as is "license."

Legalism says "you are not free to sin." And hedges you in, with rules.

License says "you are free to sin." And repeals all personal responsibility.

Liberty says "you are free to not sin." And places you squarely in the Word of God.

Are You Sure?

There is a healthy contemplation that drives us to check our commitment to our various relationships with others. While I have your attention may I ask another question? Do you ever wonder if you're really saved? I don't mean to intrude ... okay maybe I do intend to intrude. Do you contemplate your loyalty and commitment to your relationship "with Christ" very specifically? Respectfully, we are not talking here about your relationship with a religious institution. We're asking about a very up-close and personal relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ. The scriptures encourage us to periodically check our "fruit." We are admonished to work out your own soul's salvation with fear and trembling. ⁽¹⁾

I can just imagine Jesus standing before the fig tree, asking "Hey guys, what type of tree is this?" His disciples replied (almost snickering), "My Lord, it's a fig tree." And Jesus asks again, "How can you tell, that this is a fig tree?" His disciples reply again (almost bursting at the seams), "Teacher, we can tell by the leaves."

Jesus once again, "Okay, let Me ask you guys one more question ... what is the purpose of a fig tree, if it won't bear figs." They all fell silent.

Jesus cursed the fig tree saying, "Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit, My Father will remove. It will not be allowed to continue to make demands of (or trouble) the ground." ⁽²⁾ He looked at the disciples and walked away en route to Bethany. ⁽³⁾

So I ask again, how do we know that we have a personal covenant with God?

May I make a few suggestions on ways to discover the truth? ⁽⁴⁾

1. How does your covenant with Jesus Christ affect your concept of God and your attitude towards Him?
2. How does your relationship with God affect your attitude towards Jesus Christ (Him as a Person and His Lordship over your life)?
3. How does your covenant with God affect your attitude towards the Holy Scriptures?
4. How does your relationship with Christ affect your attitude towards your "self-life" or your "flesh"?
5. How does your covenant with Christ affect your relationship with and attitude towards your fellow Christians?
6. How does your relationship with Jesus affect your relationship with and attitude towards the world?
7. Last, but in no way least, how does your covenant with Jesus affect your attitude towards sin?

Perhaps we should take the next couple of weeks or months and grapple with this? Try to answer each question thoroughly in light of the scripture's mandates on each of these respective relationships. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. ⁽⁵⁾

Be Sure!

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- (1) Philippians 2:12
- (2) John 15:1-2; Luke 13:7
- (3) Matthew 21:17-19
- (4) Gleanings and adaptations from A.W. Tozer's Man: The Dwelling Place of God, p.62-68
- (5) Hebrews 13:20-21

The Doctrine of Balaam - (Repeated)

Here is an excerpt from an article that has not yet been published....

.... The question at hand is this: "What does *mathematics* have to do with life?" I'd like to take a stab at answering the question, if I may. Here, the use of the term *mathematics* is intended to encompass the whole body of the laws of numbers (and all that they represent); from basic arithmetic to the most mind-numbing quantum calculations. Whew!!!!

With that in place, I submit to you that the collective body of *mathematics* (from its most basic to its most complex iterations) is one of the purest expressions of fundamental logic. "Logic" in this case is defined as "the relationship of element to element to whole in a set of objects, individuals, principles or events."⁽¹⁾ In laymen's terms, "*mathematics* is probably the most objective framework in which to understand relationships." And we know that "relationships" are the substance and fabric of philosophies, cultures, economies, theology, life, etc.

There is a branch of Philosophy called the *philosophy of mathematics* that studies the philosophical assumptions, foundations, and implications of mathematics. The aim of the *philosophy of mathematics* is to provide an account of the nature and methodology of mathematics and to understand the place of mathematics in people's lives. The logical and structural nature of mathematics itself makes this study both broad and unique among its philosophical counterparts.⁽²⁾

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Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ Second College Edition, the American Heritage Dictionary, Houghton Mifflin ISBN 0-395-32944-2

⁽²⁾ Collected 1/30/12 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_mathematics

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