

WALKING IN LOVE AND KEEPING THE FAITH

A scripture that I would like to share with you today is Matthew 9:35-38:

35And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. **36**But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. **37**Then saith he unto his disciples, **The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 38**Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

We, as the body of Christ, are to always be motivated with compassion for the needs of others. One way we can minister compassion is by earnestly praying for others. We need to pray not only for those who are part of one's own congregation, but also for everyone we come in contact with who needs the Lord for a financial, healing, or other kind of miracle, such as a miracle in their marriage and home.

We can also be a witness by sharing our testimony of how the Lord saved us, filled us with His Spirit, answered our prayers, or just by sharing some scriptures with someone who needs to be encouraged or someone who needs Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

It's God's desire that the body of Christ minister and function the way Jesus did when He was physically on this earth, and as the early church did throughout the book of Acts and in all the epistle letters. Our ministry individually and collectively, as the body of believers, begins with each one of us opening up our hearts to all that God would have for us by going through all the changes that God wants to take us through and into.

Change is good, for it forces and motivates us to get closer to the Lord and seek Him more. We have human tendencies not to want to change the way we are, or tend to think about God and others. We need to learn to flow with the changes, instead of fighting and resisting them. We have to change if we want to grow spiritually.

Reaching out to others that we may have disliked or misunderstood is one of the changes that God will have the whole body of Christ go through in the days ahead. It is crucial for a local group of believers to always be reaching out to other believers who may have different beliefs or doctrines. Doing this helps the local body from becoming cultish. We must always remember that other believers are God's children and we can glean some truths from them that will help us later on in life, because the Lord will bring the seed that they planted back to our remembrance.

We have to become mature enough that we look for the good in people and not the bad. When we are moved with compassion and love for others, it moves the heart of God. That's when we're imitating the attributes of our Father God, **for God is love**. Jesus told following story in Luke 15:11-32:

11And he said, **A certain man had two sons: 12**And the younger of them said to *his father*, **Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13**And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. **14**And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. **15**And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. **16**And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. **17**And when he came to himself, he said, **How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18**I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him,

Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, **19**And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. **20**And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. **21**And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. **22**But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet: **23**And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry: **24**For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. **25**Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. **26**And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. **27**And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. **28**And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. **29**And he answering said to *his* father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: **30**But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. **31**And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. **32**It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

You'll notice in verse 20, that the father had compassion on the wayward child. That's the way our Father God is. We, as the church, always need to rejoice when something good happens to someone else. We can't be jealous, envious, greedy, or prideful as the elder son was in this story. He bragged how he had never committed any of these sins, nor had he broken any commandments. Nevertheless, his fault was that he showed no compassion to those who did.

Luke 18:9-14:

9And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: **10**Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. **11**The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. **12**I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. **13**And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. **14**I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Galatians 6:1-3

1Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. **2**Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. **3**For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

Another act of compassion is to always be the one to help restore back to God those who have sinned, or who have gotten offended, hurt, wounded, or who have been mistreated by others in the body of Christ. So, let's do all we can to reach out to others through love and compassion, through phone calls, visitations, and sometimes by being bold enough to just go and pick someone up and bring them to church. Let's make sure to do all we can to keep unity in the body of Christ. And at the same time, let's make sure to keep ourselves built up spiritually and strong in faith. We can do this by reading our healing scriptures every day, claiming our inheritance in Christ Jesus, and praying every day in the Holy Ghost, as well as bowing our knees and lifting our hands before God in praise, worship, and thankfulness.

It's important that you keep yourself spiritually strong and built up so you can minister effectively to others. Your biggest battles will probably be in balancing these things out. For instance, if you're believing God for healing, you may not be able to stay in fellowship with a believer who talks the curse, sickness, and disease. Fellowshiping with them will not make it easy. There will always be some

people who will seemingly do everything they can to rob you of your faith and your pursuit of God. In order to protect your faith walk, you may find yourself needing to limit your time with them. Just make sure your heart's right with God and them and that God and you both know that if there's anything you can do to help that fellow believer, you would do all that you can to help them.

Always make sure in situations such as these, that you genuinely care for and love that individual. It's your responsibility to walk in love with everyone, and at the same time, protect your faith, ministry, and vision that God gave you. This is why prayer is so important. Because in prayer, if there is any ought that needs to be removed, the Lord will reveal it to you, as we read in 1 John 3:20-23:

20For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God. 22And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 23And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

If I can be of any further assistance to you in your walk with the Lord, please don't hesitate contact me.

Brother Rich