

Romans 14:19
So then let us
follow after things
which make for
peace, and things
whereby we may
edify one another.



John 8:32 and
ye shall know
the truth, and
the truth shall
make you free.

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RECOGNIZING OUR HOPE

Jim Stauffer

Rom. 5:3 *And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; 4 and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: 5 and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.*

If we fail to retain the love of God in our hearts, we can lose hope when we need it most, but if we do we can benefit from it during those very trying times.

G.K. Chesterton explains how hope works like this: *Hope means hoping when things are hopeless, or it is no virtue at all...As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is mere flattery or platitude; it is only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength.*

We must realize we are blissfully ignorant of what the future holds for us. But with the love of God in our hearts and because we have trusted in Him and obeyed His commands, we believe it will be in our best interest. We are as naive to the future as this young boy was to his team's future.

A man approached a little league baseball game one afternoon. He asked a boy in the dugout what the score was. The boy responded, "Eighteen to nothing--we're behind."

"Boy," said the spectator, "I'll bet you're discouraged."

"Why should I be discouraged?" replied the little boy.

"We haven't even gotten up to bat yet!"

Remember this passage. **Is. 49:23** *And kings shall*

be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah; and they that wait for me shall not be put to shame.

OVERCOMING A BAD BEGINNING

How many sporting events have you seen a team get off to a rocky start, find themselves trailing at halftime, but rallied to win the game? Or a runner back in the pack, but finishes strong to win the race. It happens. A lot.

Author Jim George was right when he wrote, "It's not how you start that's important, but how you finish."

Recently I was reading Mark's Gospel as part of our congregational Bible reading program. It's estimated that over 90% of Mark's narrative can be found in other accounts. However, there are two curious verses that only he records. **Mark 14:51-52.** *"Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked."*

Most commentators believe that "young man" was Mark. His mother, Mary, owned a large house in Jerusalem and was a disciple of Christ (**Acts 12:12**). It is suggested that Mark was awakened by the commotion of Jesus' arrest. In his haste he grabbed a bed sheet to wrap around him and followed in the

a bed sheet to wrap around him and followed in the shadows, listening and watching.

As a result, when Jesus was arrested, Mark was seized and almost arrested himself. But like the rest of the disciples, he deserted Jesus and fled into the darkness of the night.

Our next exposure to Mark is in **Acts 13** when he accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. But when the going got tough Mark deserted them and returned to Jerusalem.

When they were ready for a second journey Barnabas wanted to take Mark, but Paul strongly objected. In fact, the Bible says there was a *“sharp disagreement”* between them and they parted ways. It's not a very good resume' for young John Mark. First, he fled from Jesus. Then he folded on Paul. A rocky start to discipleship. A tough beginning. Not a great situation when you can't use the apostle Paul as a reference. However, Mark didn't quit. He didn't allow a couple of setbacks to define who he was. His failures were not final.

Barnabas, ever the son of encouragement, saw something special in Mark. And took him to Cyprus on a missionary trip. Peter later speaks of him as a son in the faith. But as the years passed, Paul changed his mind about Mark. When he faced the possibility of execution by the Roman government and people were deserting Paul because of the intense pressure, who could the apostle rely on? Paul instructs Timothy to bring Mark with him saying, *“because he is helpful to me in my ministry”* (**2 Tim. 4:11**). Two other times Paul mentions Mark in a positive light (**Col. 4:10; Philemon 24**), referring to Mark as a *“fellow laborer.”*

Maybe Mark records those two verses to say, “I was there, too. I ran. But not anymore.” Could it be his subtle way of reminding us that we can overcome a bad beginning? There are many lessons to learn from John Mark.

(1) Sometimes in our youth, we can make foolish mistakes, but they don't have to hinder future success or faithfulness to the Lord.

(2) It is possible to begin a ministry and for whatever reason fail to see it through. Yet, that does not negate the possibility for subsequent opportunities.

(3) Like Mark, we can learn from our mistakes, failures, and shortcomings. We can overcome humiliation, embarrassment, and defeat. And become a significant contributor to the Cause.

(4) We need men today like Barnabas who will encourage young men, even if some in positions of prominence question their worth because of their setbacks.

(5) Finally, it is worth noting that Paul changed his mind about Mark. As Mark forged on to overcome failure, his faithfulness and fortitude convinced Paul

that Mark was profitable for his ministry and accorded him the honor of being a “fellow laborer.”

Keep an open mind about others. Don't allow yourself to be prejudiced against others for their youthful indiscretions.

You can overcome a bad beginning. Keep moving forward. It's not where you began. But how you end.

Ken Weliever, The Preacherman;
thepreachersword.com

Where Are My Priorities?

It was a 99° September day in San Antonio, when a 10-month-old baby girl was accidentally locked inside a parked car by her aunt. Frantically the mother and the aunt ran around the auto in near hysteria, while a neighbor attempted to unlock the car with a clothes hanger. Soon the infant was turning purple and had foam on her mouth.

It had become a life-or-death situation when Fred Arriola, a wrecker driver, arrived on the scene. He grabbed a hammer and smashed the back window of the car to set her free. Was he heralded a hero? The lady was mad at me because I broke the window, Arriola reported. “I just thought, what's more important - the baby or the window?”

This story illustrates one who failed miserably to distinguish between what was truly important and something that was relatively immaterial. As Christians, we must make sure that our priorities are in the right order as well. Do we put the Lord first at all times? Many place Him first some of the time, but not all of the time. If we fail to have our spiritual priorities right, the results will be disastrous; we will lose our souls.

Notice a few of the passages in the Bible that teach us about our priorities.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (**Matthew 6:33**).

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (**Matthew 10:37**).

“So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Feed My lambs” (**John 21:15**).

Do we really put the Lord first in our lives? Is He our number one priority? If He is, there will be certain things obvious about the way we live.

Attendance. We will be present at all of the assemblies (**Heb. 10:25**). Sunday night worship and Wednesday night Bible study are very important to

those who really love the Lord. When it is time to assemble, those who value their relationship with God are always going to be there.

Studying. If our priorities are right, we will spend several hours each week meditating upon the word of God (**Ps. 1:2**). It is not hard to see what we value. Do you spend more in studying the Bible or watching TV? Do you read the paper from cover to cover each day, yet fail to spend an adequate amount of time reading the Scriptures? Answer these questions truthfully and you will see what is really important to you.

Giving. I have heard brethren say that we need to give until it hurts. The Bible teaches no such thing. It does tell us to give as we have prospered, not grudgingly nor of necessity but cheerfully (**2 Cor. 9:6-7**). If under the Old Law the Jews gave 10%, should we not at least give back to the Lord as much as they gave? If our priorities are right, giving as we have prospered will be no problem.

Visiting. All of us are busy each day. We get up each morning and head out to our jobs, returning in the evening tired from working all day. It is so easy to just relax and never call nor visit someone who is sick in the hospital or the weak Christian who has been missing services. Those who are devoted to the cause of Christ will exert the energy and find the time to make that call or visit (**Mat. 25:31-46**).

Where have you placed your priorities? If you have put the Lord first, notice the promise that He has made. *"So Jesus answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life'" (Mk. 10:29-30).*

by Jim Mickells

WHO IS MY MOTHER? WHO IS MY BROTHER?

"Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, 'Look, Your mother and your brothers are outside seeking you. But He answered them, saying, 'who is my mother, or my brothers? And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, 'here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God is my brother and my sister and mother'" (Mark 3:31-35). As Jesus trekked through Galilee, large, enthusiastic crowds followed—crowds so large that His disciples readied a small

boat for refuge in case the throngs of people became too large. Even the unclean spirits knew something unusual was happening; they said: *"You are the Son of God."* Followers from the north and the south were there. Jesus set the tone for His work as Savior when He called the 12 to be His apostles. These 12 came out of a larger number of those who followed Jesus (the *Synoptics* speak of the 70 who were sent out). Why did Jesus call *these* 12? Isn't the best answer because He wanted these men to follow Him? *"And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons" (Mark 3:13-15).* These 12 (and all disciples) were to respond with faith and commitment.

There was then, and always will be, challenges in following Jesus. In Mark's narrative we see Jesus' own family saying: *"He is out of His mind."* He has a large following; He is casting out unclean spirits; He says that all need to follow Him. He must be out of His mind. Let us take Him away from here as quickly as possible. Add to that, pressure from the religious leaders from Jerusalem. They said: *"He has Beelzebub,"* and, *"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."* You must not follow Him; He is in league with Satan. Can we feel the growing pressure? Have we begun to understand some of the stigma attached to Jesus and His call for disciples?

If Jesus had a demon, then why was He casting out demons? Can Satan cast out Satan? That would be a divided kingdom; divided kingdoms ultimately self-destruct. The works of Jesus served to bind Satan. The victory of Jesus over temptation, death, and the devil says that Jesus was able to bind the strong man—Satan. The result is that the house of the strong man—Satan—has been destroyed by Jesus. Now, victory is assured.

So, now, we are invited to be the mothers and brothers of Jesus. What does the family of Jesus look like? His true family believes and accepts His power, His teaching, His death, and the salvation He makes possible. The "will of God" is essential. Jesus believed earthly families were important; He surely loved His mother and brothers and sisters. But rejection is a part of following Jesus, too. When we follow Jesus, our earthly families might not join us. They may openly oppose us. We must not blaspheme Jesus by putting others above Him. Do we really want to be part of Jesus' family?

Randy Harshbarger

Psalm 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

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OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

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NEWS AND NOTES: REMEMBER THE SICK IN PRAYERS AND VISITS.

JAN PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER, JOANN MEYER, LINDIA JACKSON AND THE MOTHER OF ALMA BAUMGARTNER STEVE WIMP IS IN OVERLAND PARK REHAB CTR, ROOM 124

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WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP RON PECK TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON: ACCOUNTABILITY DEMANDS WE SEEK TRUTH



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10