

THE OPENING:

- ‘SOMEONE’S SITTING IN THE SHADE TODAY BECAUSE SOMEONE PLANTED A TREE A LONG TIME AGO.’ – WARREN BUFFET, INVESTOR
- ARE YOU THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO LIVES TO PLANT TREES FOR OTHERS, OR HAVE YOU BECOME THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO SITS UNDER THE TREE?
  
- IN TONIGHT’S MESSAGE, I WANT US TO SEE HOW IT IS NOT YET OUR TIME TO RETREAT AND TO RELAX, BUT **OUR TIME IS TO PREPARE & TO PERSIST FOR THE COMING KINGDOM OF GOD.**
  
- IN **LUKE 22:8**, WE SEE THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST (NAMELY PETER & JOHN) BEING SENT FOR A PURPOSE - ‘JESUS SENT PETER & JOHN AHEAD & SAID, “GO AND PREPARE THE PASSOVER MEAL, SO WE CAN EAT IT TOGETHER.”
- (1) JUST LIKE PETER & JOHN, JESUS SENDS US (YOU AND ME) TO PREPARE... (THE MEAL, THE ROOM, THE TABLE)
- (2) JESUS IS EAGER TO EAT WITH OTHERS! (**LUKE 22:15**)
- **Q:** IF GOD EXPECTS YOU/I TO PREPARE – THEN WHAT WILL HE FIND WHEN HE RETURNS? (**LUKE 18:1-8**)
- **Q:** CAN OUR FAITH BE VIEWED AS A TREE? YES!
- **JEREMIAH 17:7-8** “BUT BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD, WHOSE CONFIDENCE IS IN HIM. THEY WILL BE LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE WATER THAT SENDS OUT ITS ROOTS BY THE STREAM. IT DOES NOT FEAR WHEN HEAT COMES; ITS LEAVES ARE ALWAYS GREEN. IT HAS NO WORRIES IN A YEAR OF DROUGHT AND NEVER FAILS TO BEAR FRUIT”
- **MATTHEW 13:31-32** ‘HERE IS ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION JESUS USED: “THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MUSTARD SEED PLANTED IN A FIELD. IT IS THE SMALLEST OF ALL SEEDS, BUT IT BECOMES THE LARGEST OF GARDEN PLANTS; IT GROWS INTO A TREE, AND BIRDS COME AND MAKE NESTS IN ITS BRANCHES.”
- BUT THE GREATER QUESTION IS ARE WE LIVING UNDER THE TREE OF FAITH, OR ARE WE PLANTING SEEDS SO THEY CAN ONE DAY BECOME TREES?

## THE KEY POINTS:

- SINCE GOD HAS ALREADY COME TO THE WORLD, & THE WORLD REJECTED HIM, HOW THEN ARE THE DISCIPLES OF GOD PREPARING FOR HIS RETURN?
- **LUKE 22:24** “THEN THEY BEGAN TO ARGUE AMONG THEMSELVES ABOUT WHO WOULD BE THE GREATEST AMONG THEM.”
- **LESSON:** THE TABLE IS FOR GOD AND THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN INVITED.
- **Q:** WHY WOULD WE SIT AT A TABLE WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN INVITED TO?
- **GOD’S DISCIPLES ARE MEANT TO SERVE.**
  
- **LUKE 22:25-26** “JESUS TOLD THEM, “IN THIS WORLD THE KINGS AND GREAT MEN LORD IT OVER THEIR PEOPLE, YET THEY ARE CALLED ‘FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE.’ BUT AMONG YOU IT WILL BE DIFFERENT. THOSE WHO ARE THE GREATEST AMONG YOU SHOULD TAKE THE LOWEST RANK, & THE LEADER SHOULD BE LIKE A SERVANT.”
- **LESSON:** OUR PLACE IS NOT SITTING AT THE TABLE BUT AT WORK AROUND THE TABLE AS SERVANTS.
  
- **LUKE 22:27** “WHO IS MORE IMPORTANT, THE ONE WHO SITS AT THE TABLE OR THE ONE WHO SERVES? THE ONE WHO SITS AT THE TABLE, OF COURSE. BUT NOT HERE! FOR I AM AMONG YOU AS ONE WHO SERVES.”
- **LESSON:** GOD HAS SET THE EXAMPLE FOR HIS DISCIPLES TO FOLLOW.

## THE CLOSING:

HOW DOES GOD’S PERSPECTIVE HELP US TO LIVE FAITHFUL AND FRUITFUL?

- **LUKE 22:28-30** “YOU HAVE STAYED WITH ME IN MY TIME OF TRIAL. AND JUST AS MY FATHER HAS GRANTED ME A KINGDOM, I NOW GRANT YOU THE RIGHT TO EAT AND DRINK AT MY TABLE IN MY KINGDOM. AND YOU WILL SIT ON THRONES, JUDGING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.”
- **LUKE 22:69** “BUT FROM NOW ON THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED IN THE PLACE OF POWER AT GOD’S RIGHT HAND.”
- LET US NOT CHOOSE TO SIT UNDER THE TREE YET; BUT LET’S PREPARE THE EARTH FOR GOD’S RETURN BY CARING FOR OUR FAITH AND CULTIVATING THE DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIPS WE HAVE THAT ARE ALL AROUND US.

IN ORDER FOR US TO HONOR GOD WE CANNOT LIVE APART FROM GOD'S PLAN.

- AS CHRISTIANS OUR DESTINY IS TO SPEND ETERNITY WITH GOD, BUT FOR NOW OUR DUTY IS TO SEEK & TO SAVE THOSE FAR FROM US, & TO SERVE AND SUPPORT THOSE WHO ARE NEAR US.
- WILL YOU JOIN ME IN PREPARING THIS COMMUNITY FOR GOD'S RETURN?
- WILL YOU JOIN ME IN PREPARING THE CHURCH FOR THE HARVEST?
- WILL YOU JOIN ME IN PREPARING GOD'S PEOPLE TO WORSHIP THE LORD?

"NEVER LOOK BACK UNLESS YOU ARE PLANNING TO GO THAT WAY." – HENRY DAVID THOREAU, ESSAYIST AND POET

"UNLESS COMMITMENT IS MADE, THERE ARE ONLY PROMISES AND HOPES; BUT NO PLANS." – PETER F. DRUCKER, AUTHOR AND EDUCATOR