

- IN SPORTS, THE TEAM WITH THE MOST POINTS AT THE END OF THE GAME WINS. WHETHER YOU ARE PLAYING SOCCER, FOOTBALL, HOCKEY OR SOME OTHER GAME, THE GOAL IS TO WIN. THEREFORE, THE DIFFERENT PLAYERS HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER AND ADVANCE AGAINST THEIR OPPONENTS BY PLAYING THEIR BEST GAME.
- **Q:** DO YOU KNOW WHO YOUR OPPONENT IS?
- **Q:** DO YOU KNOW WHO THE OTHER PLAYERS ARE ON GOD'S TEAM?
- **Q:** ARE YOU AWARE THAT YOU AND I CANNOT WIN WITH OUT THE HELP OF GOD, AND OF THOSE WHO ARE PLAYING ON HIS TEAM?
- **Q:** DO YOU KNOW HOW THE SPECIFIC SPIRITUAL GIFTS OF GOD'S TEAM ARE TO COMPLEMENT OR TO HELP YOU IN WINNING?
- **Q:** AND WHAT DOES YOUR BEST GAME LOOK LIKE?

- **A: STORY:**
 - (1) TO ACCOMPLISH GOD'S VISION AND PURPOSE, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT WE DO NOT, AND WILL NOT GET THERE ALONE.
 - (2) WE ALSO MUST RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD. IN OTHER WORDS, I ANSWER TO GOD FOR MY ACTIONS, AND YOU ANSWER TO GOD FOR YOURS.
 - (3) BUT SINCE WE ARE PART OF GOD'S TEAM, WE WILL ALSO ANSWER TO GOD FOR HOW WE PLAYED TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF GOD & OTHERS.

- IN TONIGHT'S MESSAGE I BELIEVE THAT GOD WANTS US TO REALIZE THAT HE IS THE ONE FROM WHOM WE RECEIVE OUR MARCHING ORDERS.
- BUT HONESTLY, I BELIEVE THAT **GOD HAS CALLED FOR A TIME-OUT.**
- MAYBE GOD IS GIVING THE PLAYERS A LITTLE REST AND ENCOURAGEMENT; OR HE'S PLANNING TO GIVE A NEW PLAY; TO SUBSTITUTE OR MOVE A FEW PLAYERS AROUND. HOWEVER, GOD SEES US ALL MOVING FORWARD AS A TEAM, I WANT TO BE CERTAIN THAT I HEAR HIM, AND I FOLLOW THROUGH WITH HOW HE WANTS ME TO PLAY MY PART... AND I'M SURE YOU DO TO.
- IN LOOKING AT THE LONG-RANGE PLAN – WHERE WE ARE AT RIGHT NOW IS NOT WHERE GOD WANTS US TO BE.

- FOR THE CHURCH - THE GAP WE NEED TO OVERCOME IS **UNITY...**
- 'JESUS PREDICTED CHURCH GROWTH BUT HE PRAYER FOR UNITY.'
- **JOHN 17:21** 'I PRAY THAT THEY WILL ALL BE ONE, JUST AS YOU AND I ARE ONE – AS YOU ARE IN ME, FATHER, AND I AM IN YOU. AND MAY THEY BE IN US SO THAT THE WORLD WILL BELIEVE YOU SENT ME.'
- WE'RE HERE TO ENCOUNTER AND TO EXALT THE LORD OUR GOD; TO ENCOURAGE AND EQUIP LEADERS; AND TO MAKE THE GOSPEL VISIBLE AND AVAILABLE TO THE LOST.
- **LESSON:** ACKNOWLEDGE THE GAP BETWEEN OUR UNDERSTANDING & HIS.
- **LESSON:** MAINTAIN THE GOSPEL AND SEEK TO PURSUE GOD & HIS VISION.

THE KEY POINTS:

- MANY OF US DO NOT REALIZE THAT WE TOO ARE LOST.
- WE'RE STUCK IN THE BETWEEN MOMENTS OF KNOWING AND BEING.
- KNOWING THAT GOD IS READY TO MOVE HIS PEOPLE FORWARD BUT BEING READY AND WILLING TO LEAVE BEHIND OUR OLD WAYS.

WE NEED TO HAVE AN ENCOUNTER WITH GOD:

- GOD KNOWS HOW WE ARE TO EXPERIENCE THE INVISIBLE KINGDOM, BUT IT REQUIRES THAT WE INTENTIONALLY INVITE HIM TO OPEN UP OUR EYES, AND TO BRING CLARITY TO OUR SITUATION AS HIS PEOPLE ON THE EARTH.

THE TEXT:

JOHN 8:12 'JESUS SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE ONCE MORE AND SAID, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. IF YOU FOLLOW ME, YOU WON'T HAVE TO WALK IN DARKNESS, BECAUSE YOU WILL HAVE THE LIGHT THAT LEADS TO LIFE."

- WE OFTEN DO NOT REALIZE THAT WE ARE LIVING IN THE DARK – WE ARE ONLY OPERATING ON THE LIMITED AMOUNT OF INFORMATION THAT WE HAVE ACCESS TO – HENCE, MIGHT WE THEN BE CONSIDERED BLIND?

JOHN 8:23-24 'JESUS CONTINUED, "YOU ARE FROM BELOW; I AM FROM ABOVE. YOU BELONG TO THIS WORLD; I DO NOT. 24. THAT IS WHY I SAID YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS; FOR UNLESS YOU BELIEVE THAT I AM WHO I CLAIM TO BE, YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS."

- MANY OF US DON'T SEE HOW THE SIN OF THIS WORLD, THE WAYS OF THE WORLD, THE BELIEFS OF THIS WORLD, IS CAUSING US TO LIVE APART FROM THE DIVINE WILL OF GOD – MIGHT WE BE CONSIDERED LAME?

JOHN 8:31-32 'JESUS SAID TO THE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVED IN HIM, "YOU ARE TRULY MY DISCIPLES IF YOU REMAIN FAITHFUL TO MY TEACHINGS. 32. AND YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE."

THE NEXT STEP:

- **Q:** WHAT MIGHT BE YOUR NEXT STEP IN HONORING GOD?
STEP 1: PRESENT YOURSELF BEFORE GOD – DAILY READING AND PRAYER
STEP 2: PRACTICE DOING THE THINGS THAT WILL HELP YOU AND OTHERS TO GROW SPIRITUALLY
STEP 3: PRAISE THE WONDER-FUL WORKS OF GOD AND PURSUE HIS WAYS

WE MAY ALL MISS OUT ON GOD'S BLESSING UNLESS WE LET GOD HAVE HIS WAY:

- UNLESS YOU EAT MY FLESH - YOU CANNOT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE (JOHN 6:53)
- UNLESS YOU BECOME LIKE A CHILD – YOU CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM (MT.18:3)
- UNLESS YOU ARE BORN AGAIN – YOU CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD (JOHN 3:3)
- UNLESS YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS EXCEEDS THE RELIGIOUS – YOU WILL NEVER ENTER THE KINGDOM (MATTHEW 5:20)
- UNLESS YOU **REPENT** [CHANGE YOUR OLD WAY OF THINKING] **AND TURN TO GOD** – YOU TOO WILL PERISH (LUKE 13:3)
- UNLESS YOU **BELIEVE THAT I AM THE LIVING GOD** – YOU SHALL DIE IN YOUR SINS (JOHN 8:24)
- UNLESS YOU DENY YOURSELF [**GIVE UP YOUR OWN WAY**] – YOU CANNOT BE MY FOLLOWER... (MT.16:24)
- UNLESS YOU **PICK UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW ME** – YOU WILL LOSE (MATTHEW 16:24)
- UNLESS YOU HATE YOUR FAMILY AND EVEN YOUR OWN LIFE – YOU CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE (LUKE 14:26)
- UNLESS YOU **PRAY AND FAST** – DEMONS CONTINUE TO WIN (MT. 17:21)

THE CLOSING:

- YOU AND I WILL NEVER EXPERIENCE THE COMPLETE TRUTH – ACCORDING TO GOD - UNTIL WE FIRST CONFRONT THE LIES WHICH WE HAVE COME TO ACCEPT AS TRUTH, & WE BEGIN TO **BREAK-FREE** FROM THE LIMITATIONS WE HAVE CREATED - BY ALLOWING THE IDEAS AND WAYS OF THE WORLD TO DICTATE WHETHER OR NOT WE EXPERIENCE THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD’S KINGDOM.

- AS GOD’S PEOPLE - WE LISTEN TO GOD AND WE SURRENDER TO HIS WILL
- WE DO THIS BY PRESENTING OURSELVES BEFORE GOD UNTIL WE CAN PROCLAIM HIS HOLY WORD TO THE DARKNESS, TO THE LIES, TO THE EVIL THAT IS WORKING AGAINST US.
- WE DO THIS BY JOINING TOGETHER IN PRAYER AND PRAISE OF GOD.
- AND WE PREPARE FOR AND PURSUE THE VERY WONDERS OF A HOLY GOD.

- MAY WE BE MORE THAN JUST BELIEVERS/ THINKERS BUT TO REALIZE THE POWER OF GOD IN FOLLOWING/ JOINING TOGETHER, AND BY SEEKING THE KINGDOM OF GOD FIRST AS HIS UNITED DISCIPLES LIVING TO MAKE OTHER DISCIPLES.