

JESUS OUR SAVIOR AND DELIVERER

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Luke 12:27-36

"And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

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This passage of Scripture, the Words of Jesus, give us guidance to how we CAN be saved, overcome this world, and how we will be greatly blessed!

"A woman from the crowd shouts to Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" There she had, right before her eyes, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. Contrast what she said with what John the Baptist said when He saw Jesus coming. He proclaimed, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (**John 1:29**) She had before her Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and she thought it was most necessary to point out the blessedness of Mary. Jesus did not dispute the woman's claims of the blessedness of Mary but He did point out that her focus was not properly attuned to what most matters. What IS part of the gospel of Jesus Christ is what we fondly refer to as "The Christmas Story", the nativity of Jesus in the little town of Bethlehem, where baby Jesus lay in a manger, wrapped in swaddling cloths. The angel Gabriel even confirmed to Mary and to us that Mary was blessed of God saying, "'Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid,

Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.'" (Luke 1:28-35) How is that part of the story of the gospel [or good news] of Jesus Christ important? It points to the virgin birth of Jesus and the fact that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He would be fully man yet fully of God. It also is an image of how each of us is saved, how we are born-again, to where we too, once we believe on Jesus as the Christ our Savior, we carry with us Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9) or the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9). (For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.-1 John 5:7)

A similar changing of focus was needed for Jesus' disciples when they returned with joy after Jesus had sent them out to do His work because the demons were subject to them. Jesus said, "do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Jesus changed the focus of the woman by saying, "blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it", and He changed the disciples' focus saying "do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." If we could use one Scripture that best explains what Jesus was getting at for the woman and the disciples to recognize, I believe, is this, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Within our carnal bodies made of flesh and bone that slowly ages to which inevitably leads to death, and was born into a sin nature, of which left unchecked also leads to death, which is an eternal death where in the words of Jesus, "their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44), we have then within us a natural tendency to look straight ahead for what will bring us fulfillment and satisfaction, a satisfying of the carnal nature. That is, a selfish nature, that wants nothing more than to lift up the carnal host. Jesus said "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Jesus also said, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My

words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."

Jesus had much more to say than just "believe on Me." What we ultimately find in Jesus' teachings is that we are to always be looking unto Jesus, from His saving grace, to His raising us from the dead unto eternal life in Him.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**) Yes, we must believe that He existed, that He died on a cross for our sins, that He rose from the dead on the third day, conquering death, and then giving eternal life to all who will believe on Him but He also tells us to believe on His Words. Since Jesus tells us to repent, which is having a change of mind, a change of focus, just as Jesus pointed out to the woman and the disciples to have a change of focus, from having a focus on the circumstances of the world and the needs and desires of the flesh to having a focus on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. How is He a finisher of our faith? When we see Jesus, on the other side of eternity, outside of this time frame, we WILL be made like Him, for "when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (**1 John 3:2**)

The way I have been led to understand what this is all about is that we are presently called into living in the image of what is to become. We are being sanctified (or are being set apart in God's Holiness, in Christ Jesus) as we are being made into the image of Christ. As the Apostle Paul said in **2 Corinthians 3:16-18**, "Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." There is a glory in being saved by Jesus Christ, believing on Jesus for taking away our sins, because He took our sins upon Himself, and we are then born again (of the Holy Spirit) to where God gives of His Holy Spirit "to those who will obey Him" (**Acts 5:32**) and then when we see Jesus we will pass from that glory to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus.

Then, to continue in our passage of Scripture, Jesus said, "This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet...The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here." Many of the people of Jesus' time, especially the Jewish leaders, were looking for a great deliverer to rescue the nation of Israel from their bondage to the Romans. Yet Jesus came first as a

babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger, born in a nothing town of Bethlehem and then grew up in another nothing town of Nazareth. Here was Jesus right before them and the woman was looking elsewhere. Here was Jesus the Christ standing before the disciples and they were rejoicing over their accomplishments. How would you react to Jesus if He were standing before you? If the people of Jesus' time, if the religious leaders of Jesus' time, would not obey Jesus' words when He came to them as a Savior what would possibly be their actions if He came as a Conqueror. The answer is in the rest of our passage of Scripture.

"No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." Jesus over and over again tells us in His words that we are either for Him or against Him. We are either abiding in Him or in sin. Jesus tells us that our focus is going to determine our presence. If we are focused on Jesus, our presence will be full of light. If our focus is on the things of this world, our presence will be full of darkness. Later, in His dialogue, Jesus goes back to the same analogy of us being His light. In **Luke 12:35-40**, Jesus said, "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.""

The similarity in the Old Testament of what Jesus said about having your waist girded and to be ready was when the Israelites waited on the Passover. They had the blood of the lamb on their doorposts, and then while they ate the Passover dinner (which is analogous to us partaking of Christ in the present), they were dressed and ready to flee when they were going to be delivered through Moses. We too are called to be ready, waiting, and watching and continue to be looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Just as the Jews had to have faith that God would save them by the blood on the doorposts, we are to have faith in Christ Jesus to save us. Just as the Israelites had to have faith that God would deliver them from

Egypt, we must continue in that faith for when we will be delivered from this bondage that we live in on this wretched earth. **1 John 2:15-17** says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

I hope and trust that each of us is what the writer in **Hebrews 10:39** says, "But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul." Since Jesus warned the people of His time that they must be ready and waiting, we too must be warned that we should be ready and waiting. Yes we can be confident that "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" but we must continue in the faith that we have in Christ Jesus.

"And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— **if indeed you continue in the faith**, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister." (**Colossians 1:21-23**) Lastly may you be encouraged and assured to what was mentioned earlier that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." God has promised us that He is faithful for He will not disown His children. May we look for Jesus until we stand before Him and He says, "'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'" (**Matthew 25:31**)