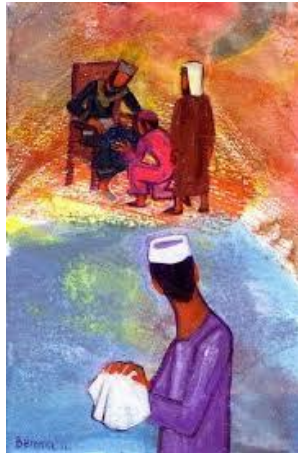


The Measure You Give



I once had a vision of Jesus, which was the driving light of my life. But somehow, that vision has grown dull. I had a confidence in God, which nothing was able to shake. But now there are these shadows of doubt and confusion.

Is it because the honeymoon is over and now I'm walking through the wilderness?

Or did I lose this vision because of actions of my own?

And he said to them, "Take heed what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. For to him who has will more be given; and from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

Mark 4:24

Put in simplest terms, the Kingdom of God consists of really two things;

receiving and giving.

We enter the Kingdom *by receiving life from God.*

We hold on to that life from God *by giving it away.*

If we try to take the life which God gives us and clutch it...we lose it.

He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 1:11-13

For those who received him, he came in and then he gave them him this power.

Now they have it.

But they will keep this power...only by giving it away.

And this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life.

1 John 5: 11-12

To have the Son and try to hold on to him and keep him like money in the bank is to lose him.

The only way we keep the Son is by giving him away.

Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and eat with him, and he with me.

Rev. 3:20

Again, we receive him.

We open the door. Jesus comes in. Now he's with us.

But he stays only as we give him out.

When we come to Jesus, he fulfills his promise again for us that when we come to him, he's with us.

We bring our troubled consciences, our broken hearts, our twisted minds, our sick bodies.

He touches us and gives us fresh life.

He gives us his body to eat and his blood to drink, and he sends us on our way rejoicing.

But, all these blessings he pours into us so generously again and again, remain ours, and increase in us, only when we begin to practice the fundamental principle of the Kingdom of God

That we get what we give.

Take heed what you hear. The measure you give will be the measure you'll get and still more will be given you. But to him who has will more be given, and from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

Now we all have a very difficult time, all of us, making that a reality in our living because from the time we were infants, we have learned to live by a totally different rule, the rule of Satan's kingdom.

In God's Kingdom, we get what you give.

But, in Satan's kingdom we keep what you have...and we have whatever we have by getting it and taking it. And once we have it, we build a wall around it. We guard it with a knife. We don't let anybody get near it.

We're trying to expand our own kingdom.

Life in this world, Satan's kingdom, is like a giant game of Monopoly. We start out with so much money. We start rolling the dice and with a combination of skill, luck and conniving, we try to beat the other guy. We get Baltimore, Park Place, New York Avenue, then we get Boardwalk and Park Place. Then we get some houses and Reading Railroad. Then we put on some hotels. And then, the other guy lands on our property and we clean him out!

The strange thing about *this* game of Monopoly is that even when we win, we lose.

Jesus says,

***Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth
where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break in and steal.***



Matthew 6:19

Things haven't changed. That's how it was then and that's how it is now.

Someone gets a nice shiny new car which only cost \$20,000.00. It's beautiful. But pretty soon... it will rust. So they say, " wait a minute, I'm going to take it to Ziebart- no rust"! But later, they park at the Kroger parking lot while getting some groceries. They come out to find that somebody plowed into the rear quarter panel and drove off. That's okay, they have insurance, it can be fixed. In reality, no matter what they do, within three, four, or five years, that shiny little car doesn't look like it did, and it doesn't behave like it did. In another few more years, it's in one of the junk yards.

Buying a house...it's the same thing. There is nothing wrong with having a house, but now there's the hassle of making the roof tight so it doesn't leak, of fixing the furnace, of mowing the lawn and on and on.

Now someone is super successful at business. It's marvelous. They own so much property, stock, bonds. They've got so much money all over they don't know what to do with it.

And then they die.

And what do we take with us?

We don't even take our bodies.

The only thing we take with us across to the other side is what we gave away.

***Make friends for yourselves, by means of the unrighteous mammon,
that when it fails. they may receive you into the eternal habitations.***

Luke 16:9

And so the Kingdom of God can surround and invade the atmosphere that the kingdom of Satan causes us to breathe and think. Because the kingdom of God operates on a totally different principle. The Kingdom of God operates on the principle of we get what we give.

We get what we give- both *negatively and positively*.

If we give judgment, if we're judging everybody, it comes back, we're getting judged.

If we give condemnation, we're sour and cynical and critical of everything and everybody and we can't understand- why everybody is so negative towards us... we're getting back condemnation.

If we give forgiveness, we show forbearance... it starts comes back to us.

If we give in mercy to people who are in need... mercy comes back to us.

That's the way it works in the Kingdom of God, like the law of gravity.

“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

Luke 6:37-38

Now, the reason we have such a hard time sustaining this vision of Jesus, the reason it keeps getting tarnished and weak, it shrivels, and it dies... is because, we try to take the vision of the Lord that God gives to us and conserve it the way we conserve things in this Satanic kingdom.

We hold on to our vision.

We live as if we're playing Monopoly. We're still shrewd, conniving, negative, cynical and seeking our own advancement in thousands of subtle ways, even in areas that we call spiritual or Christian... and we end up with grief and blindness.

Because when we're given the vision of the Lord and any blessing from God, that blessing remains ours only as we learn to give it.

We need to give it constantly. We can't give it too much. The more we give, the more we get.

Take heed what you hear the measure you give will be the measure you get and still more will be given you for to him who has will more be given. And from him who has not even what he has, will be taken away.

Now Jesus is practicing what he preaches. He's not asking us to do something he didn't do himself and we see in Philippians chapter 2, a perfect description of how Jesus lived that way.

***Who though he was in the form of God,
did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped***

“I have equality with God. Nobody is going to take this from me, it's mine! That's my right”!

That's not how he does it.

He empties himself.

He pours himself out. He takes the form of a servant.

Being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbles himself and becomes obedient unto death, even death, on a cross.

He gives, gives, gives.



***Wherefore, God has also highly exalted him,
and given him a name which is above every name.***

The measure you give is the measure you get.

That the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess and things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus offers up his life to the Father on the cross. And on the third day, the Father gives him life and raises him from the dead. He offers up to the father a corruptible body. And on the third day God gives him an incorruptible body as he raises him from the dead. He offers himself up in weakness and on the third day the Father raises him in power.

The measure you give is the measure you get.

So Jesus teaches us to live this way too. He's very clear about it.

He said, "A nobleman was called away to a distant empire to be crowned king and then return. Before he left, he called together ten of his servants and divided among them ten pounds of silver, saying, 'Invest this for me while I am gone.' But his people hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We do not want him to be our king.' "After he was crowned king, he returned and called in the servants to whom he had given the money. He wanted to find out what their profits were. The first servant reported, 'Master, I invested your money and made ten times the original amount!' "Well done!' the king exclaimed. 'You are a good servant. You have been faithful with the little I entrusted to you, so you will be governor of ten cities as your reward.' "The next servant reported, 'Master, I invested your money and made five times the original amount.' "Well done!' the king said. 'You will be governor over five cities.' "But the third servant brought back only the original amount of money and said, 'Master, I hid your money and kept it safe (wrapped in a napkin). I was afraid because you are a hard man to deal with, taking what isn't yours and harvesting crops you didn't plant.' "You wicked servant!' the king roared. 'Your own words condemn you. If you knew that I'm a hard man who takes what isn't mine and harvests crops I didn't plant, why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.' "Then, turning to the others standing nearby, the king ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one who has

ten pounds.’ “‘But, master,’ they said, ‘he already has ten pounds!’ “‘Yes,’ the king replied, ‘and to those who use well what they are given, even more will be given. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.’”

Luke 19:12-26 (NLT)

The good servant has 1 pound of silver to start with. He makes gains with it, by giving it away. He gives it away, and it comes back as two. He gives it away again, and it comes back as three. He gives it away again, and it comes back as four.

The wicked servant given 1 pound of silver hangs onto it and wraps it up in a napkin. He's going to preserve it. He's not going to lose it.



But he does lose it.

And now, the parable becomes reality.

Jesus comes into our midst and gives each of us silver.

Use it.

So how do we use this silver?

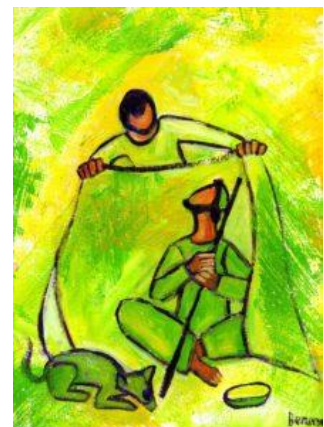
This pound of silver that we're given to use... is mercy.

We come with our broken hearts, and our troubled consciences, and our sickly bodies. We may come with our twisted minds, and all of our needs. And we lay these things out before him. All of us have something that isn't right. And we cry out to God for help, and we get help.

He's merciful to us beyond our comprehension.

Take this mercy, which we've been shown and now show it to each other. Show mercy to the person that we have a hard time accepting, that person who is always bugging us. Show mercy at home... to our mothers, and to our fathers, and to children, and to brothers, and to sisters. Show mercy at our jobs, or on our searches for jobs, or wherever we're dealing with people, every day. The more mercy we show...the more mercy keeps pouring into us.

Now we have two pounds of silver here, now we have three, now we have four. We come back to God and because we have been giving it out, we're in a position to receive a double portion of God's mercy.



But if on the other hand, after having received God's mercy, we wrap it up in a napkin, saying it's mine, then we are back to our old Monopoly ways. *You can't have it, it's mine!*

We're looking at this person with disgust and that person with cynicism and this person with absolutely a sour attitude, and this is how we go through our days... showing no kindness to our spouses, our parents, our children, or that aunt that hasn't seen us for three years, and she's only a mile away!

Then this mercy, which we've been shown... shrinks and shrivels inside the napkin. When we come back to God we're in no position to receive because the measure we give is the measure we get back. And even more is given us.

To him who has will more be given, and from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

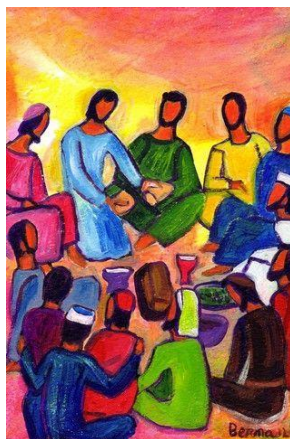
This pound of silver that we're given to use... is Jesus himself.

As we open our hearts, it's the Lord who comes into our midst. Jesus comes to us personally, through the Word, in hymns, in our prayers, in the Holy Spirit, coming among us. He visits us in the bread and wine. And he renews his grip on our hearts.

Christ in you the hope of glory.

He who has the son has life. He who has not the son has not life

The Son has come in. We've opened the door; he's eating with us and us with him.



We arise, we begin to share Jesus with others. The name of the Lord crosses our lips. We give each other encouragement to trust in him. And we continue to speak his name boldly and gladly.

Not only do we speak the name of Jesus, but we manifest the nature of Jesus in our actions. The way he is, begins to come through the way we behave.

And the more we give him, the more we have him.

We approach him again and because we gave him away, we're in a position to receive a double portion of his presence.

But if after having received the Lord, we wrapped him up in a napkin. If the name of Jesus now doesn't cross our lips until we sing a hymn in church. If we never talk about him because it's not

proper, because somebody might be embarrassed, because somebody might get nervous if we talk about Jesus. And if we do not manifest his love or his nature... then we're playing Monopoly. When we open our hearts to receive some more... we're in no position because, the measure we give is the measure we get. And even more is given to us.

***To him who has had more be given, and from him who has not,
even what he has is going to be taken away.***

This pound of silver that we're given to use... is hope.

Oh, how needy we are of hope, to have some vision of the glory that lies at the end of the road. And, so the Lord opens our eyes and we see the City of God waiting at the end of the journey. We eat the bread and we drink the wine; the body and blood of Jesus. We're getting a foretaste of a banquet hall of God at the end, and our hope is renewed.

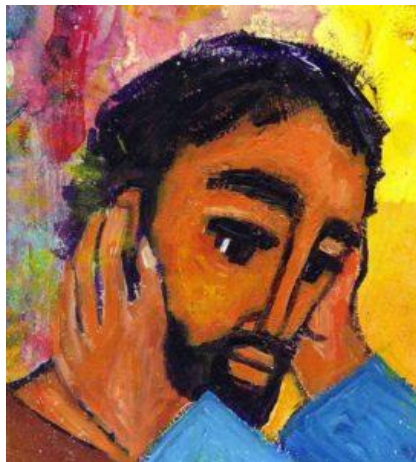
We have reason to live, something to go forward to now. We wake up with something to live for.

But if we don't show this hope after receiving it... then the hope shrivels.

What we need to do is take the hope and share it.

Give it to somebody else. Be an encouragement.

Encourage others. Many people just need some hope. Nobody ever gives them any hope. Nobody ever gives them any encouragement. They just struggle along with long faces and dull hearts.



And here we come, like a little ray of sunshine. We give them some hope, sometimes in the form of a few dollars that they need. Sometimes, it's in terms of a visit. Sometimes, it's a meal at our dinner table. Whatever it is, we give them hope... and as we do, the hope we have increases. And when we come back to the Lord, we get a double portion.

But if we wrap the hope up in a napkin and we go back to our old ways.

Here come those Christians. Hide the beer!

Here come the hypocrites. Pull down the shades!

You know so often we are a threat to people.

Oh no, not again. Here they come.

They see us coming up to ring the doorbell and they hide in the kitchen until we're gone.

If we go through our lives as wet blankets, then the hope that we wrapped in a napkin shrivels. And when we come to God for another shot of it, we're not in a position to receive because... *the measure you give is the measure you get back.*

And so...

The vision of the Lord for many of us has become dull.

It's obviously become dull- by the way we're living.

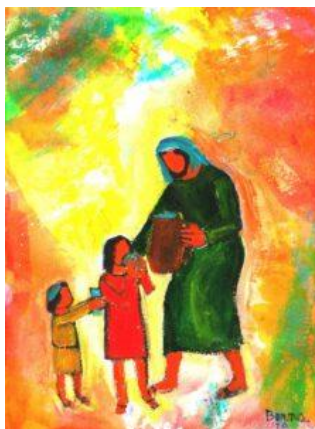
And, by the way we speak.

The vision will grow and increase in brilliance and in power as we give it away.

But if we take that vision and wrap it in a napkin, when we open up the napkin, it'll be so shriveled up it won't be good for anything.

God help us to take the vision and grant that it may increase as we live by the ways of the Kingdom, the law of the Kingdom and help us to quit playing Monopoly.

And he said to them, take heed what you hear the measure you give will be the measure you get and still more will be given you. For to him who has will more be given, and from him who has not even what he has will be taken away.



Prayer- Lord, thank you, thank you...what precious treasures you have given us. What you have measured to us is so wonderful, so beautiful, so life-giving. Lord, forgive us for hoarding them, for wrapping them in a napkin and allowing these gifts to shrivel, for letting the life you offer to be wasted. Help us to stop hoarding, holding back and hiding in order to gain something more for our own kingdoms and glory. Help us to give out in the measure you give us...to take the silver, the precious gifts you have given us and to invest them in others. Help us to use them... in acts of mercy, in proclaiming your name... in sharing the glory of who you are, in manifesting your nature wherever we go, and by encouraging others...bringing them hope in whatever ways we can. And yes, yes as we take the vision and give it away may it grow and increase in power... enriching not only us but all those we touch. Amen.

Maranatha Mirror

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THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
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