

The Faithless Are One Step Behind 8-8-10

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I want to greet you each one this morning in Jesus name. I am thankful for the triumph of our Lord and the lesson it talked about the council being defeated of the prophet and the triumph of God's will in the end. I've thought about it this week - this government is going to fail, this world will pass away. No matter how triumphant or powerful it may appear, it's all going to fall one day and the Lord's will will be done. One man told me many, many years ago that one man doing God's will is a majority wherever he goes. That's a blessing, it fits with the verses in the Old Testament about one will chase a thousand and ten will chase ten thousand. It's a blessing to be able to go into any situation, and if we are doing the Lord's will, "though hand join in hand" they will be defeated over those who are doing the God's will, no matter what the appearance may be. Right.

This morning I want to turn to John 10 start with the first verse:

John 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

I won't go into a lot of that other than the first verse - that's basically what I wanted to start with. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*" The Lord has painted a picture of a Shepherd. Most of us know about farming. I've been around cattle and things all of my life like that, and it's pretty neat. Whenever I was working over in Stark City taking care of cattle over there, we had several hundred cows and we sold the ranch and we sold the cows with the farm. That's been several years ago. Every once in a while, I'll just drive back by there and holler, and the old cows that have been there for years lift up their heads and start looking because they know my voice even after all this time. Or I can toot my horn and they know my 'voice.' That's why Jesus said this - because His sheep know His voice. They don't try to slip in another way or a secret way. They hear His voice and they follow Him. Later on the Bible/Jesus says, 'If they hear me, they will hear you.' And those that will not hear our words (because they are His words) are not hearing Him. That sounds arrogant to someone who doesn't have ears to hear. But when we speak the truth and we speak to men's hearts and their consciences, there are people that hear it, and there is a multitude that don't. They hear because they hear the Shepherd calling. We are the creation of His pasture, and even though we've gone away and followed His enemy and lived under that control, when He speaks, when He calls and we are listening, we can still hear His voice and He can call us out of those things. Call us out from darkness into light.

But he who climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. There are many ways that someone can climb in another way. There are many religious groups who try to put out a little formula and if you follow that formula they say you can climb in. There are many people who try to purify their lives so pure, and can accomplish it, but they are still trying to climb in another way. "Climbing in another way" is trying to get to God another way other than how He is calling you. It is so important that we hear the word of God and apply it to our lives.

I thought about this some this week, and I've thought about the apostles. You know sometimes we read in the bible how some men God calls or they hear Jesus and they get healed and some of them He tells them, "You go home." Some men He calls and He tells them, "You go preach - take this message and go." I haven't heard a lot of speculation about what all that means, but this week it came to my mind. The apostles, the twelve, you got Peter and his brother and they're working for their father. Some of the other brothers were fishermen, very solid, 'rock solid' men. Christ came along and He said, "Follow Me." Every one of the apostles that the Lord called were busy doing something. They were faithful, were loyal, were counted on, and He told them, "Leave that and come

and follow Me.” And He sent them out to go preach. As I thought about that this week, these were men with roots that were well established - solid - and He pulled them up by those roots and said, “You go preach.” He pulled the roots.

Then there was another group. I haven't done this completely thoroughly, but you see the demoniac living up in the caves disturbed by devils where no man could tame him; undependable unreliable, tossed to and fro by these devils, and Jesus came along and He healed him. What an example of someone that ought to just get out there and go preach! But what did He tell him? “Go home.” Some of them He went so far as to say, “Go home and don't even tell anybody what happened to you.” The two blind men were sitting; they probably just traveled hither and yonder where ever they went. Bartimaeus had probably been blind beggar all of his life. Jesus comes along, touches him and heals him, and what does Jesus tell him? “Go and tell everybody you can see?” No. He didn't say that to him. He said, “You go home and don't even tell anyone.”

The same Gospel applied to both of them; the teachings of Christ applied to both groups. One of them had established roots so deep, that even though they were able to obey and do all the right things in the gospel, when Jesus said ‘tear those roots up and follow me,’ they tore the roots up and followed Him. That was probably the hardest thing they could have ever done. The rich young ruler, an established man in the community ... rock solid ... everyone looked up to him. I can just imagine him when he answered, “I'm keeping the laws. I'm doing everything I'm supposed to do.” And Jesus said, “Will you hear My voice? Sell it and follow Me.”

Whenever the Lord calls, sometimes it goes deeper than just the outward proper. And I'm not talking about the phony Christianity, I'm talking about real - the kingdom of God Christianity. There are churches that are plain and that appear to be following the Lord all over the place. That are obeying the word of God. But are they hearing His voice? I'm not talking about some little voice saying you ought to go do this or go do that or guiding every step you make, but with counsel from the brethren and faithful men who have heard that voice, looking at your life, examining it where it is... sometimes the hardest thing we can do appears to be just exactly what our heart's desire is to do. These blind men, that's all they wanted to do is go everywhere; the bible says they blazed it abroad telling about Jesus, but what did Jesus tell them to do? He told them, “Go home and do not tell anyone.” He told them to go home and not tell anyone. That doesn't compute with us does it?

You see, it's about following Jesus, not how great an evangelist we are. Not how great a disciple we are, how disciplined we are or whatever we think we ought to be. It's being sober. Being sober is not just sitting around trying not to talk all the time or trying not to smile all the time. Being sober is being realistic, being real about the situation. Being honest about what is at hand. Being able to make a right judgment and not be swayed by emotions or feelings; not being tossed about to and fro, but being able to step back from a situation and make a sound judgment about it in spite of the enthusiasm we may have or in spite of how low we might feel. But to step back, analyze and make the right decision.

Some of these men God said, “You've been here long enough, tear up your roots and go.” We have talked about our missionaries and I've told some of them that whenever you are here long enough, to where it's the hardest thing in the world for us to send you off, that's probably when you are going to get sent. It's going to be like pulling good teeth. Every one looks up to you, everyone needs you, everyone depends on you to be a solid rock ... then it's probably time to pull you up and send you somewhere so you can start something else or be a blessing among people who aren't.

Some have spent their lives just going here and there and never really established themselves anywhere; they ran from a lot of their problems. They need to become rocks and just go home. They need to go back home. Putting into practice following Jesus; becoming that rock that can be uprooted one day and sent out. Becoming solid to where everyone depends on them. I think of that song, “Can the Lord depend on you? Faithfulness is but His due.” All of us come from different places and have different direction, but the teachings of the faith are still the same. We all comply to them. We all love our enemies, do good to them that hate us, pray for them who despitefully use us. We believe the purity of marriage. We believe in not laying up great treasures on this earth. We want to promote and hear the Gospel promoted. I've got a note here that says “the faithless are one step behind.”

The faithless are one step behind. Sometimes they are one step ahead, but the faithless are one step behind. In Numbers 14 there is

an example of this. Joshua and Caleb had just returned (and the twelve spies) - they had been over to the land of Canaan; they had returned and brought their reports. Caleb said, "Let's go, we can take this land, God's promised it to us; lets go." But the ten spies gave their evil report - they said, "Oh yeah, it's a wonderful land, it's beautiful, but there are giants over there and we are like a bunch of grasshoppers. They will stomp. I'm afraid. We are not going to go." God got angry and a judgment came; He told them, "Because you wouldn't go when I told you, because you wouldn't listen to me when I told you, you can't go. Only Joshua and Caleb are going to go." Do you know what they did?

Numbers 14:40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned. 41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper. 42 Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. 43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites [are] there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you. 44 But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.

What were they doing? They were trying to climb in another way. The faithless are one step behind. God said go up and they didn't have any faith and fell back. Then soon as God said do not go up, what did they do? They turned and went up. God says go forward, they go backwards. Go says go backwards they go forward. You'll find that all through the Old Testament. They can look as religious as they can, but they are going one way when God says go the other. Why don't they have victory? Because they are running one way as hard as they can, and God is saying, "Go the other way. Quit trying to run the wrong way!"

The modern church - have you ever noticed (we've talked about this and I've preached about it before) how they call us "Old Testament people" ... I guess because we look old in our manner; we are out dated, old fashioned, out of style because we aren't keeping up with the world and don't care. So they naturally associate that with the Old Testament. They tell us, "You need to keep up with the times this is 2010, that old stuff doesn't matter anymore." What I think is, "It's 2010! We're closer now to God's judgment than we have ever been; forget what this stupid world thinks! We'd better get back to what He thinks!" We are often accused of being Old Testament - "Oh, that's the Old Testament." No. What's happened today is those that are one step behind (or faithless) are following the Old Testament and they don't want to walk on the new path, in the new light. In the Old Testament divorce was permitted and accepted, divorce and remarriage; but in the New Testament, Jesus does not permit it. In the Old Testament they went to war, they established a kingdom on this earth, they conquered kingdoms physically, but Jesus said, "Love your enemies" and "Our kingdom is not of this world, it is the coming one." In the Old Testament they strictly paid their tithes and offerings, but in the New Testament Jesus just says, "freely give." They wore their silver and their gold and their jewelry and decorated themselves in the Old Testament, but Jesus says dress plainly and modestly and let it be the inward beauty coming out, not the outward adorning. In the Old Testament they were blessed with great riches and wealth, but in the New Testament Jesus says, "Sell what you have and follow Me. Don't lay up treasures on this earth." In the Old Testament they had justice: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Jesus said, "If someone takes from you, give them something else. Turn the other cheek if they slap you on one. If they take your coat away from you, give them your shirt also." What does that mean? It means there's a whole world of people back here living in the Old Testament, saying, "Lord, we're going to keep Your Ten Commandments, we're going to follow the Old Testament, we're going to just trade Jesus for a goat and say that He did all the dying but we're going to walk this path over here." Jesus is calling us to walk this New Covenant that He has given to us.

The faithless are one step behind pretending they have faith. They are trying to climb in another way. I don't know how many people I've observed after they get a divorce, they go to some church and some singles program there and get remarried again - those people will be the most zealous people in that church. Living in adultery that this church sanctioned to put back together. They'll be the most sold out people in the group. That's why half or almost half of these pastors in Evangelical churches are divorced and remarried. You know why? Because the Lord said, "Do it this way," but they did it "this [other] way," and to make up for them going the wrong way, they pour the fire on and say, "Let's go up the hill right now" because they did not hear the Lord. They know they are wrong and live in adultery. They know the way the way they are doing is wrong, so to make up for that wrong they turn around

and they run the other way as hard as they can ... one step behind ... faithlessly. I've seen it over and over and over again that instead of climbing in the right way and doing it God's way, they turn around and do it their own way and then try to make it up with something else. They are thieves and robbers.

When Jesus says go do something - go back home, do not say anything, you go back home and you make yourself a disciple - He'll come around again one day and say, "Here, I have a place for you; I have something for you." Anybody who will hear Him and follow Him and do it and listen, He's got a waiting list. I've got a long waiting list "this long" with places just for people who are ready to do that.

Hear His voice. Sometimes that means my world will be turned upside down. Sometimes that means that I have to stop and get some things in order, and I'm going to put them in order no matter what it costs. He hasn't given up on us. He hasn't given up on us; all He wants us to do is quit fighting Him and turn around and do it His way; But we stop our ears - one step behind. We close our eyes - one step behind. It might be a blazing example, but then He says, "Come over here."

May the Lord add His blessings to His words.

Deuteronomy 32:30 How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?

Joshua 23:10 One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he [it is] that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

John 10:1-5 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.