

# BEING CONSCIOUS OF THE GIFT OF LIFE

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Today I'd like to begin by reading the first several verses of EX. 19.

1. In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai.
2. For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.
3. And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:
4. 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.
5. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.
6. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

Friends, I chose this passage to begin today's message, because all of us have just completed the spring Holy Days. A time in which we have examined ourselves, and if you are like me, we realize that we are far from complete, and thus we are in need of, and ever so thankful for, the purifying blood of Christ's sacrifice, to purge us of our short comings.

And we pray earnestly for the spiritual strength and guidance that we receive from God's Holy Spirit, which gives us the hope of eternity, as an anchor for our souls, and which gives us real meaning and purpose of life itself.

And so at the Passover, we rededicated our lives to obeying God's voice, to keep the terms of the everlasting covenant, that we all entered into at our individual baptisms.

And so just like our physical forefathers, we are on our personal journey, out of spiritual Egypt, or Babylon the Great.

And as the scriptures suggest, we are to take heed of the examples and short comings of the Israelites, and learn from them, so we do not fall short and die in the spiritual wasteland of this present evil age.

For emphasis, let's reread verses 5 and 6 again. God told the Israelites.

5. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.
6. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

God called, or better stated drew Israel out of Egypt, since Moses' name means to draw out. Likewise, God has personally selected each and everyone of us, and has called us, and drawn us out of this world.

As part of God's church, His ekklesia, I believe that it is important for us, to remember, that out of all the billions of people on earth, God has specifically chosen us.

Just as Israel was the fewest in number of all the nations on earth, when God called them out of Egypt. Likewise, God has chosen to call and work with a very small number of people in this age.

And in the same manner that the nation of Israel was called to be God's special treasure, a kingdom of priests and a Holy nation, likewise with us also.

As the Apostle Peter has recorded as a reminder for us, we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that we may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now - the people of God.

In doing some personal soul searching, and pondering on the lessons we can glean from Israel's wilderness journey, it dawned on me, that the nation at large quickly forgot the fact that God was personally working with them, in order to help them reach their goal.

Let's look at one example that's found in the Book of Exodus. I'll begin by reading the last three verses of Ex. 13. [20-22]

20. So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness.
21. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.
22. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.

So what we learn from verse 22, is that God's presence was physically manifested to the nation of Israel during their journey. They could physically see that God was with them, every step of the way.

In fact, we learn from Deut. 2.7 and elsewhere, that God's presence was with the nation of Israel, continually for their entire 40 year journey.

Deut. 2.7 "For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing."

In the Book of Nehemiah, we find a good summary of Israel's 40 year exodus journey. I'd like to read part of that passage as well. Neh. 9.9-21

9. "You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt,  
And heard their cry by the Red Sea.
10. You showed signs and wonders against Pharaoh,  
Against all his servants,  
And against all the people of his land.  
For You knew that they acted proudly against them.  
So You made a name for Yourself, as it is this day.
11. And You divided the sea before them,  
So that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land;  
And their persecutors You threw into the deep,  
As a stone into the mighty waters.

12. Moreover You led them by day with a cloudy pillar,  
And by night with a pillar of fire,  
To give them light on the road  
Which they should travel.
13. “You came down also on Mount Sinai,  
And spoke with them from heaven,  
And gave them just ordinances and true laws,  
Good statutes and commandments.
14. You made known to them Your holy Sabbath,  
And commanded them precepts, statutes and laws,  
By the hand of Moses Your servant.
15. You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger,  
And brought them water out of the rock for their thirst,  
And told them to go in to possess the land  
Which You had sworn to give them.
16. “But they and our fathers acted proudly,  
Hardened their necks,  
And did not heed Your commandments.
17. They refused to obey,  
And they were not mindful of Your wonders  
That You did among them.  
But they hardened their necks,  
And in their rebellion, They appointed a leader  
To return to their bondage. But You are God,  
Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful,  
Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness,  
And did not forsake them.
18. “Even when they made a molded calf for themselves,  
And said, ‘This is your god  
That brought you up out of Egypt,’  
And worked great provocations,
19. Yet in Your manifold mercies  
You did not forsake them in the wilderness.  
The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day,  
To lead them on the road;  
Nor the pillar of fire by night,  
To show them light,  
And the way they should go.
20. You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them,  
And did not withhold Your manna from their mouth,  
And gave them water for their thirst.
21. Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness;  
They lacked nothing; Their clothes did not wear out  
And their feet did not swell.

In reviewing Israel's history, we find that even though God was physically present with them, having given them His Good Spirit to lead them, as I just read in verse 20.

And having performed all manner of miracles, to protect and preserve them, Israel as a whole, with very few exceptions, took it all for granted.

They took there calling completely for granted, and were not conscious of God's presence working with them. And this therefore was manifested in their lack of faith. And for the first generation this resulted in their death in the wilderness as well.

Friends, the point that I want to drive home, is that all of us have God's good Spirit working within us. In fact, God's physical manifestation for the nation of Israel, has become even more personal with us, since God the Father and Jesus Christ are now dwelling within us.

As I'm sure we all read at the Passover service in John 14.23;

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

Also in John 17, beginning in verse; 20

20. "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;
21. that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.
22. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:
23. I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

And verse, 26

26. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

As I mentioned before, in contemplating why the nation of Israel, so quickly and completely took God's calling for granted, it dawned on me, that they were not mindful of God's presence working within their lives.

And is led me to an even larger question, of why do I, continue to commit certain sins? And I guess this is a good question for all of us to ask ourselves, why do we continue to struggle, like the Apostle Paul said, and do the things we will not to do?

It is a struggle between our carnal self and God's Spirit dwelling within us.

And if you're like me, some days we truly feel like we are in the Spiritual zone, for lack of a better term. We are conscious of God's presence within us, and we feel really connected with Him.

And what a great feeling it is, being led by the Spirit of God. We feel whole, and at peace, and we feel like God's presence is being projected from within us.

And I ask myself, why don't I feel God's presence to that degree, all the time? And I believe the answer is that I lose the Spiritual focus, I lose touch with God's presence that is residing within me.

There is a particular verse in Proverbs chapter 4, that kind of jumped out at me recently, and I believe that it is relevant in addressing this spiritual battle that often rages within us.

In this chapter of Proverbs, Solomon is reciting instruction that he has received from his father King David. And as we know, over the course of his life, David was able to gain mastery over his thought process.

He overcame the carnal nature within. So much so, that God has qualified David to govern the entire nation of Israel, that is both spiritual and physical Israel, when God's Kingdom is reestablished on earth.

So David is a good source, for helping to teach us how to overcome as well. To that end, Solomon recorded the following instruction in Proverbs 4.23.

Reading from the NKJV it states "Keep your heart with all diligence,  
For out of it spring the issues of life"

Our heart in a physical sense pumps the blood to the rest of our body. Scripture tells us that the life is in the blood. So spiritually speaking, our heart must be pure and healthy.

For our spiritual life, which leads to eternal life, is largely dependent upon God's Spirit, actively guiding and directing our thought process.

I'd like to read this verse from Fred Coulter's Faithful Bible Version, for it relays this thought in a slightly different way.

It reads "Above all, guard the door of your mind with diligence, for out of it are the issues of life"

Simply put, development of our spiritual nature, and thus growing to spiritual maturity, is either greatly helped or greatly hindered by what we allow our minds to dwell upon.

Continuing this thought, verse 25 of this Proverb states; 25 "Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyes look right before you"

We should pay careful attention to what we allow our minds to ingest. Be it on television, the internet, or what we mentally consume in the course of our daily lives.

Verse 26 reads; "Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established"

Instructing us not to act hastily, by the carnal impulses that sometimes arise. But rather to weigh the course of our actions, based on Godly principles.

This concept of considering the path of our feet, is often mentioned in scripture. David prayed to God in Psm. 119.133 asking Him to "Direct my steps by Your word, And let no iniquity have dominion over me"

Another familiar passage is found in Prov. 3, verses 5 and 6 which reads;

5. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;
6. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Again, the emphasis is on be conscious of God's Spirit within us, and allowing it to guide and direct our thought process. As we often quote from Romans chapter 8, verse 14 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God"

We are instructed to "Walk in the Spirit, so we do not fulfill the lust of the flesh" Gal.5.16 Scripture often records that God's children down through time applied this instruction into their lives.

In the early chapters of Genesis we find that God's true servants are recorded as walking with God. Enoch walked with God for 300 years. And Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah also walked with God.

What does the scripture mean by the expression walking with God?

1 John 1.

5. This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
6. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.
7. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

As we find in Amos chapter 3, "Two cannot walk together, unless they are agreed"

If we are walking with God, we must be therefore conscious of His presence. We will then be walking in the same path as He is, and thus we are fulfilling our calling as Christians, by emulating Christ.

Again I believe one of the fundamental keys, is to strive to be conscious of the fact, that God the Father and Jesus Christ are residing within us.

- 2 Cor.13.5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

My friends, as we see here, being conscious of Christ dwelling within us, is a very important concept to grasp, and to apply in our lives.

And this also seems to be a flaw that Christ specifically addresses in His letter to the Churches.

Rev. 3.

20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.
21. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
22. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.""

God is knocking at the door of our mind, wanting us to consciously dwell with Him, on a daily basis.

What we must do, is make the mental effort, to acknowledge God's presence, dwelling within us, being more consciously aware of this great gift of His Holy Spirit, and thus to tap into this invaluable resource on a continual basis.

So in summary, the pillar of fire and of the cloud, that led Israel throughout their wilderness sojourn, is in a very real sense, been internalized in us, through the indwelling of God's Spirit.

Our responsibility therefore, is to be conscious of God's presence, and to be directed by it.

Jesus tells us in John 16.13 that the Spirit of truth, will guide us into all truth.

This promise of guidance is stated in a more poetic fashion in Isa. 58.11 where it states;

"The Lord will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought,  
And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden,  
And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail"

Another concept that may also help us to keep our daily life in spiritual focus and proper perspective, is found in Prov. 23.7, which simply states; "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he"

So we might ask, what is the proper way, that a Christian should view him or herself? There may be multiple facets to this question, but I'd like focus on one viewpoint that is sprinkled throughout scripture.

An example is found in Josh. 14.6 which reads; Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb said to him: "You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me.

So here we find that Moses is referred too as "a man of God" This expression is found 74 times in the NKJV.

Elijah and Elisha after him, are often referred too as a man of God. Moreover, king David is called a man of God in 2 Chron.8.14 and Neh 12.24, and 36.

The Apostle Paul, in 1 Tim. 3.6 addresses Timothy as a man of God. And in 2 Tim.3.17 Paul again uses the phrase, in referring too the Church as large, where he writes;

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

So we see from these examples that all Christians, might do well to consider themselves to be a man or woman of God.

Not in a prideful or puffed up way, but rather in humility, as a reminder of our great calling, and thus the holy responsibility we have, to be a light to the world, and an ambassador of God's Kingdom to come.

This is, I believe the way we should think of ourselves, as a means of reminding ourselves, of how we should be approaching life on a daily basis.

I also believe that this is how God desires to view us. That is, as one of His own children, being a man or woman of God.

Changing focus, just a little bit. The New Testament is also replete with the Apostles considering themselves to be bond servants. Which is a servant that is owned by His Master.

Paul, James, Peter, Jude, and John all call themselves servants, or bond servants of God in their various letters.

In fact all Christians are in a sense bond servants of God. Let's look at this point a bit closer.

1 Cor. 6.

15. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!
16. Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."
17. But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Verse

19. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God, and you are not your own?
20. For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

We have been purchased, or redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. We find further reference to this fact in 1 Pet.1, beginning in verse 17, which reads;

17. And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;
18. knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,
19. but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.
20. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

Throughout the bible, we find many, many examples of God's people calling themselves servants of God, or being referred to in like manner.

King David often referred to himself as a servant in the Psalms. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Daniel and Isaiah, just to name a few, are all called servants of God

So in a real sense, we are all bond servants to both God the Father and Jesus Christ. Additionally, Jesus Christ has also set us the example of being a bond servant to God's will.

In Acts 3, we find this fact recorded for us. Acts 3, beginning in verse 13.

13. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.
14. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,
15. and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

Jesus Christ was the greatest servant of all, freely giving up His sinless life, in order to grant all mankind the greatest gift, that of eternal life.

In John 5.30 Jesus stated that "I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me"

Jesus Christ always did the will of His Father, He in the Truest sense was God the Father's perfect Servant.

At the NT Passover foot washing service, Jesus left us the example of serving with humility. And thus in following His example, we serve God, by serving each other.

However, even though we should consider ourselves, to be servants of God, and of each other. If we practice humility and faithfulness in our daily lives, God will consider us to be more than just His servants.

For as we were reminded of in Rev.3.20, God wants to have an intimate and loving relationship with each of us.

John chapter 15, bears this point out, in verses 9-15

9. "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.
10. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.
11. "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.
12. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
13. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
14. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.
15. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

So here we find a true expression of God's love. If we are faithful servants, being a holy man or women of God, then God will consider us much more than servants.

We will be considered to be loving children and friends of God as well.

So to kind of rap things up, let's strive to be conscious of the gift that resides within us. Not taking our calling for granted, but rather using every day God gives us to refine our friendship with Him.

Seeking to be consciously led by God's Spirit throughout each day. And thus, setting a positive example by allowing the love of God, to be shed abroad in our hearts.

Realizing that we are both God's servants and also His holy representatives of the Kingdom of God, on earth.

i'd like to end this message by reading the first 13 verses of Philippians chapter 2, which kind of sums up the main points I wanted to share with you today.

1. Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,
2. fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
3. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.
4. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.
5. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,
6. but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.
7. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.
8. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,
9. that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,
10. and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
11. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;
12. for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Thank you for your time today.

Thomas Trinka

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