

TEXT - Matthew 7:12

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

These words of the Lord (The Golden Rule), should influence us as we contemplate on life and what we leave behind as a legacy to the world.

I was reading an article recently on Henry Dunant, who was born into a very wealthy Swiss banking family. He is not remembered for his banking skills and in fact was so unsuccessful in business that he was declared bankrupt in 1867. In those days, this was a life sentence to have to spend the rest of one's days in poverty and so he did.

But Henry Dunant left the world something greater than anything that a lucrative business could. He was the founder of the International Red Cross, which he began with very humble means, but a strong belief in our text word. For over 150 years and still to-day, through that teaching, has brought humanitarian aid to many thousands all over the world through volunteers following that teaching.

Because he witnessed the aftermath of the Battle of Sobferino and saw the plight of the wounded on both sides, he travelled and lobbied governments, churches and organisations to set up an organisation to bring comfort and help to soldiers and civilians affected by conflict. This was not done by having wealth behind him, but only by the strong desire and belief in Christ's teachings and those given by the Holy Spirit through the early Apostles. Romans 12: 14-17. *“Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.”*

In his zeal, he was instrumental in setting up the Geneva Convention and was part of the final laws to abolish slavery in 1875. This was all achieved while penniless and at times having to sleep on park benches. What a legacy he has left behind.

We know we all cannot become noble prize winners, but we can all leave a worthwhile legacy for the future that can continue on. The greatest example of this can be seen in life and community where parents, grandparents and teachers not only provide the children with food, clothing, education and a home in this life, but go the next step in providing an ongoing legacy for the world by instilling in them reverence for God, belief in His Creation, the love and Grace of the Lord, the value of church life, to love life, respect for people and property, courtesy and kindness to all.

By achieving this, what we leave behind, will be a legacy that will make the future world a better place, as more try to emulate the virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:13 *“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of stature of the fullness of Christ.”*

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

TEXT - John 5:24

"Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

All day long be urgent or solid to stand firm.

We who believe in the name of the Son of God and His word should be taking a big step from Death to Life.

It is well with us if we understand and grasp the words of Jesus in our text.

It starts with the hearing, and when we open up our hearts our faith is then blessed. When we ponder over the death of our Lord and ponder thereon, it fills us with uneasy sentiment. Most of all, the people in our day, when they think of the death, do not think of it seriously, but shun the issue and push the thought from their mind.

It is understandable that our life and lifestyle, as long as it suits us, we uphold it. There is also the earthly goal which we strive for. Therefore, we should not exchange the first one, as we have no permanent place of abode here on this earth. Sure, it is natural for us, if we live according to the life of Jesus, our life will be noted. We cannot yield or cover over our life like people who do not know Jesus, but we can be assertive and not yield to the tempter, but consider the facts as they stand. We must live a life in the shadow of the cross, and God will help us to be strong to live a new life with Jesus. He gave His only Son to the death on the cross so that we might have everlasting life.

Through Jesus we have a part of His life, and a strength through His death. "Who can separate us from the love of Christ?" So wrote Apostle Paul to the Romans, and he showed his faith in Romans 8:35-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." If we have risen from death to life our striving has been through the help of the Holy Ghost to live a life of candour or revelation. Our Christian life will always be menaced, and will always be in danger. Our faith must be kindled. Our life is often torn between Hearing and Doing and moves between Willing and Refusing. We should at all times be awake and active to know the difference between the two. We cannot deny the words of Jesus when He says, "*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*" We should give the Holy Ghost sufficient room in us and in the community; that means to give more time to the Holy Ghost in our prayers, and not to be troubled. The Holy Ghost is life and strength within us. Jesus says, "*All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*" (John 16:15). We shall in this life find life through the Grace of Christ.

Our thoughts are often for those that have gone to the Great Beyond. They are resting and our thoughts go out to them. We think of them in love. If they have lived according to their faith they will have nothing to fear. They are waiting for the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, "*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*"

Those who have gone to their rest and have not understood the great love of God, we commend them to the compassionate love of God. Let us be comforted with the words of the Psalmist who writes in Psalm 68:20, "*He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from Death.*"

Late Apostle Ernst Lenser
Germany.

TEXT - Hosea 1:8-11

“Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.”

The Prophet Hosea when he brought that prophecy stood in a street in Jerusalem, called strait, and he delivered that message to the people that God was so disappointed in them that He would say unto them that they are no longer His people. That happened we know when our Lord was on the cross, when the Jewish nation said that they would take upon themselves the blood of Christ for their generation and for all generations thereafter. Our Lord was saddened for He knew now that they were not the people of God. The promise was that there would be a greater promise to them in that same street, and that was on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit fell from heaven as flaming tongues of fire and sat on the apostles' head, and they were able to proclaim to the people that they were now to receive a better title than being the people of God. They were able to take hold of the title to be sons and daughters of God through the workings of the Holy Spirit. Now there was this greater blessing.

It is recorded that all of those that were assembled were Jews at that time from all the tribes, and there was a great dispute on who should become the next king, but they put those disputes aside and they elected one to be head over them and that was our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and He became Head of the Church. As He ascended to heaven He was anointed to be the Highpriest forever, was anointed to be the future King, and He was to become our Prophet forever. His words will stand forever, and if we give ourselves to those words then we will receive the great reward of the coming Kingdom.

We have heard that this will only be given unto us or be able to be obtained through a special gift that would come from the Head of the Church working through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Prophet Zechariah prophesied this on what that special gift would be, and we find written in Zechariah Chapter 4 verse 6 on as follows: *“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shall become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth.*

We see the prophecy that as Christ laid the cornerstone for this, He will finish it. No one else will interfere. It is His right and He will achieve it by His Spirit which is the Holy Ghost, and the blessing that is needed for the Church He saw in the headstone, shouting Grace Grace. It is only through the Grace of Christ that we will be able to be prepared to be part of this great promise. It is only through the workings of His Spirit which were described as the seven eyes of God going through the whole earth, for God sees everything, God's Spirit is everywhere. The Holy Spirit does not linger in one place. It is working everywhere within the world. Seven means complete. The complete Spirit of God is working for this great day when our Lord will return, where we can receive of that promise that has been given unto us.

This requires workings through mankind, earthen vessels chosen by God to take this Gospel of the Kingdom message out into the world.

The Apostle Paul wrote they are gifts from Christ after His ascension. Ephesians 4: 11-13 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”*

Let us never grow weary with all the gifts of Christ, given in love to the church as a preparation for the coming Kingdom.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

TEXT - Matthew 11:28-30

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Today's text is friendly, comforting and inviting, even when the Lord asks us to take His yoke upon us and to come to Him with a readiness to learn.

The Master does not order us to report for duty but invites us. How do we react to invitations? To which invitation do we give priority? Under what circumstances did Jesus give the invitation? Jesus had rebuked the unrepentant cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida and condemned Capernaum. Even after having taught in these cities and having revealed His Godly powers, especially in Capernaum (Matt. 8:5, 9:1, 9:18). He still found no faith in them. In fact Jesus had made Capernaum His own city (Matt. 4:13, to which He always returned. Because God had especially revealed Himself in these cities they had a special responsibility (Matt. 11:21-24). Two things are made clear: Firstly: even the mightiest revelations cannot convince overbearing people. The humble comprise God's kingdom. Secondly, for those who do not acknowledge His revelations it can become their condemnation. 'A prophet is never less recognized than in his home town.' Does that give us something to reflect on?

Jesus did not let this rejection deter Him from His task. He did not lose courage and give up! He praised God the Father, King of Heaven, for having revealed the secrets of His Kingdom to babes. Secrets are not revealed to the proud or worldly wise (1 Cor. 1:18). God's plan of salvation is not put out of action by the world's rejection. In spite of our unfaithfulness God remains faithful. In spite of our disbelief God still believes. He cannot deny Himself. God can overlook unworthiness and carry out His plan with the deserving and repentant. Let us reflect on unworthiness in ourselves and the congregation.

The Son, the Mediator, has been given complete power by the Father, Jesus' words make clear who is invited. He addresses the burdened and the labourers. Jesus wants to refresh all and give rest and peace. Those willing to learn and who are not stubborn become meek and humble by Him.

The more we realize our need and the more open we are to God, the more will God be able to help us through His Son. God does not ask for what He has not already given us. Those who have been generous with God will know that this is true.

His yoke is not a new burden which we cannot carry and will be crushed beneath but the means to a new life. The yoke lightens the load. Christ's yoke. His Spirit and His being - enables us to come to terms with the demands of life according to God's will. His yoke gives our aims meaning and strength to live according to God's laws. Without this yoke the cords would cut into our flesh and the circumstances in which we live would wear us down, hurting us and make us give up. Under the yoke we get help to deal with the problems of life. Last, but not least, Christ's yoke is a work contract.

Let us not be yoked together with unbelievers nor be bound by false yokes. Being Christian is not an aim in itself, but a call to the service of God and man. Without Christ's yoke we will not be able to accomplish anything.

Late Apostle Rudi Gassmeyer
Germany.

TEXT - Revelation 7:9

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands."

This text was explained to the Apostle John as those that have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, servants of God who will dwell among them, they shall hunger and thirst no more, and have no tears and be led by the Lamb to be led and given living fountains of water, to live eternally. In simple terms, those that have prepared themselves in this life, through Christ, to be His bride. We have all been taught how those white robes come about through the righteousness of Christ, but what of the palms that must also be in our hands? When we read early Christian history and visit the early Christian graves, we see that those grave-stones did not feature the cross as many do today. In its stead, we see the palm used and generally in the language of that country, the word - Christ. It appears our text was the basis of this custom. If we do more research, we will find that the early Church used the palm in Church life, to express the triumph of the Christian over death, through the resurrection. The palm was always used to identify and it became the sign of martyrdom, as this was considered in the light of victory, assuring all of the surety of that person's coming resurrection. It is no doubt the words of Psalm 92:12; *"The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree"*, played an important role in this symbol and belief in our text, as it linked the two together. The righteous robe through Christ and the flourishing after the resurrection in the Kingdom of God.

With this knowledge, we then must ask ourselves how this links itself to the Bride and what benefits are bestowed to the world by the palm tree. Solomon's Song which is a poetic description of the Bride of Christ, tells us in chapter 7:6-7; *"How fair and how pleasant art thou O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes."* This then leads us to consider the stature of the palm and its use. A palm is a tree that is straight, from the ground up to the first fronds. It is a very deep rooted tree, the roots usually go down deep to find the water. We see the first attributes of the Bride's stature. Deeply rooted in the faith of Christ, always seeking more and more of the water of life. From the roots we grow straight up towards the heaven, not being side tracked by sending branches out into the world to seek those earthly pleasures. The palm tree is renowned for its long life of fruit bearing, in some cases over two hundred years, telling us that each generation has an obligation to be fruitful and pass that on to the next to continue. A palm is fruitful in many ways and so must the bride. A palm brings forth fruit, it is used to make wax to preserve things. Sugar is extracted to sweeten the lives of others, also oil is extracted and used for sustenance, anointing and healing purposes, tannin for health, dye to make, design and cover up, resin to bind things together and arrack as a substitute for wine.

We can see very clearly that all of these things are also required, as the bride shows forth those gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The prophet Ezekiel had a vision of the temple of God that would be built in the world. Of course he was seeing the spiritual temple, the living Church. It is interesting that in chapters 40 & 41, he saw that palm trees featured in the design. The message of our text is clear if we are to be of that number, we are dependent on washing our robes in the blood of the Lamb but at the same time, we must be as the palm, upright in life and very fruitful, if we are to gain the palm to hold in our hand.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

Text - Luke 18:42.

“And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.”

Be Open-eyed

There was a blind man who sat begging at the road near Jericho. When he heard that there were crowds passing near him he asked what all the activity was. He was told that Jesus of Nazareth was just passing by. The man called to Jesus to have compassion on him. The people tried to silence him, but he called even louder. Jesus stopped, and asked this man be brought to him. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee", he asked, and the man bid Jesus give him back his sight that his life might be worth living. He must have known of Jesus, and believed in Him. Judging by what Jesus said to him, it becomes evident what the prerequisites that he be given his sight were: the word of the Lord and the man's faith. Together they brought help.

That which Jesus did then has become general knowledge today, but was known to a few only at the time. Those affected by Jesus' miracles knew, obviously. And those witnessing Jesus' work and who spread the news also knew, but, all the miracles of God. Some, reading or hearing about these wonders, ask why they are no longer performed today. But many an Apostolic Christian could testify of the wonders of God performed upon him because he believed. When the Lord takes His own home to the Father and they then see what He did for His children, there will be no end to their praise. Can we see the wonders God still does today? What God is doing is primarily spiritual wonders like the rebirth with water and the Holy Spirit, His forgiveness of sins, the partaking of body and blood of Jesus through the Holy Communion, and the spirit inspired word of God.

In the cities where Christ performed most of His miracles very few of the inhabitants, in spite thereof, changed their opinion, so that the Lord cried a woe over them (Mathew 11: 20 - 24). We the inhabitants of the present city of God do not only want to witness wonders but we want to follow the Lord and act according to His will.

Through a Revelation Jesus warned the Christian community in Laodicea of spiritual blindness, and ignorance of their spiritual condition: *“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,”* (Revelation 3:17). This admonition which was not directed at the general population but at the congregants of the Christian Church, is valid still today for the congregation of Christ. Satan is out to blind the children of God to the wonders of the Lord today and to infect them with the terrible illness of ignorance. Once affected one no longer recognizes one's own condition so that one is tricked into believing that one does not need the word of God.

In this state there is only one possibility and that is to seek the Lord to be healed. He who bids Christ be compassionate and accepts His word faithfully, will be helped to regain his sight. He who has His spiritual sight is able to see His true condition and distinguish the signs of the times of which Jesus Christ said: *“When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand”* (Luke 21:31). Those who come to the altar open-eyed pray the Lord preserve their ability to recognise Him and His wonders.

Bishop Edwin Riaz
Canada & USA.

TEXT - 1 Samuel 15:22.

"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

These words of the Lord through Samuel the prophet to King Saul, the first chosen King of Israel, were in response to events that shows us one of the greatest warnings in our lives today. The King had wished to go to battle against Amalek and had enquired of the Lord through the prophet. The Lord gave the commandment that the King should go against them but had to destroy everything that they had, even all that nation, including all the animals. We can read how the King and his army were disobedient to the Lord's command, which in itself was bad enough. We know he could have confessed his wrong-doing and called on the Love and Mercy of God for forgiveness, but he did not and in fact, took the next step, the step that lost him his kingdom. He tried to Justify what he had done, by trying to make it appear good, and declared to Samuel, that the animals had only been kept so that a sacrifice could be made to God. This prompted the reply in our text, which shows clearly that God is more pleased with obedience to His word, than a sacrifice to Him.

The next words of Samuel to the King are some of the strongest and most powerful warnings in the Bible. "For Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and Stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being King." Saul lost that natural kingdom on that day, by trying to Justify himself and his actions. We too, have been promised a kingdom, and this also is at risk if we too, make that same mistake as King Saul.

This is shown clearly in the Book of Revelation chapter 21:8, that there is no place in the New Jerusalem for sorcerers and idolaters. Sorcery is witchcraft and according to God, in His sight rebellion against His word is as witchcraft, stubbornness against His word is as idolatry. We have already seen these come about when we try to justify the things we do which are against God's word.

With such a grave warning, we should turn over the coin and see the correct way, which is given to us by Christ Himself when He promised "Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." Justification, Rebellion, and Stubbornness are foreign to becoming poor in spirit, the two can never mix.

Apostle Cliff Flor
North Queensland.

Text - Ephesians 3:14-21

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

1. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

To bow your knees, tilt your hat, to submit, this is not in fashion anymore. Many have had an anti-authoritarian upbringing, they are very self-assured and view the next person as well as father and mother very critically.

That is why quite a few are of the opinion that there is no one they have to submit to. Only if it is unavoidable e.g. their superiors or in the military where they are compelled to do so. But if they have a real father, they will submit themselves willingly and happily. If we want to know what a real father is we have to look to God. He looks after us, gives us the commandments which are very helpful if we adhere to them; He expects us to “keep our brakes on” or He will let us know if we are acting high-handedly and if need be, we will feel the consequences of such action. He will do anything to show us that we are His children and His beneficiaries. When we acknowledge this realization, we will bow our knees and will.

2. According to the Richness of His Glory

The strong ones own the world – God’s world belongs to the weak which get strong through faith! They are often very inconspicuous people, physically frail and living on the fringe of society. There are many examples of these. God has countless possibilities to give us strength. Strength is transmitted to us by the acknowledgement of His leadership, His support in all we endeavour, the community of the members, His creation, though prayer, church services, the Holy Bible and so much more.

3. To be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man

Physical strength can be achieved with training. Strength of the inner person is always a gift of grace. We can pray for it to the divine Father to be granted to us and others. But do we really want it? What are we praying for? It is God’s Spirit that makes it possible. The Sender is here! Is the recipient prepared for that?

4. ... That ye, being rooted and grounded in love

It is the actual strength of Christians that Christ lives in their hearts. We already teach the little children in their night prayer: “... no one shall live in it but Jesus alone.” If this is really true His love will reign with us and our deed will be a living sign of His love. Nothing can suppress this love! But what is it that lives in our hearts? Is it the urge for prestige, unbelief, greed, envy, doubts, lies and much more to find? This dampens the effect of Jesus and prevents us to recognize God’s work. But God wants us to understand.

5. ... what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height

Are there not only three dimensions for a room? But let us look at it spiritually. The length and the width indicate our sphere of activity on earth. We have been put in this place and should fulfil our mission. We can only suspect what is meant by height (heaven) and depth (hell). The depth belongs to the world. This only came into this world due to the sins of mankind! To God alone belongs the fourth dimension. He has the power to get us out and lift us up. That is why the cross was erected. Jesus the Saviour, the one of the depth, of the width and length leads us towards heaven!

6. ... and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge

Where I experience and recognise love, I do not need any law or regulations. Where I recognise love and pass it on with all my strength, it will lead me to the true divine understanding.

7.... That ye may be filled with all the fullness of God

If we take the above mentioned steps of faith and they become an important part of our lives, step by step we will reach the fullness of God. If we discover that this fullness is missing, it means that we will have to search untiringly for the reasons in prayer and assessment of our heart. Only then will our life be wonderful, worth living and really fulfilled!

You decide for yourself, what you want to fulfil you! If it is the “fullness of God”, then take the steps 1), 2), 3)

Apostle Gert Loose
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