

FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

8-3-25

REVELATION 3: 19 – “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent”.

REVELATION 3: 20 – “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me”.

PSALMS 25: 12 – “WHAT MAN IS HE THAT FEARETH THE LORD? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose”.

PSALMS 25: 13 – “His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth”.

PSALMS 25: 14 – “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and He will show them His covenant”.

PSALMS 25: 15 – “Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the NET”.

* “THE FEAR OF THE LORD”, is the “Beginning”, or “STARTING PLACE”, of an intimate relationship with God. “INTIMACY” ONLY COMES FROM A TWO WAY RELATIONSHIP.

For example, I know about the President of the United States. I can list information about his accomplishments at his political stance, but I do not actually know him. I lack of personal relationship with him. Those in the president’s immediate family and close associates, know him. If we were in the same room, I would quickly recognize the president, but he would not know me. Although I’m a citizen of the United States and I know about him, I could not speak to him as though he were my friend. That would be inappropriate and even disrespectful. I would still be under his jurisdiction and authority as president of the United States and under his protection, as “Commander in chief”, but his authority over me, would not automatically grant me intimacy with him.

I am sad over the same behavior in the “Body of Christ” today. I listen to believers talk about God, as though he was just a “Buddy”, that someone can “Hang out with” and have some “FUN” with. They casually tell us how God has shown them this or that or how God has blessed them with a miracle in their lives, they even speak about how much they desire His presence and hunger for His anointing.

Sometimes, within minutes, you will hear these individuals contradict themselves. They will say something that clearly reveals that the relationship with God is not unlike the relationship between a “A fan and his favorite celebrity”. They prove to be expounding upon a relationship that is just not there.

The Lord said, we cannot even begin to know him, in intimate terms, until we “FEAR HIM”. In other words, an “Intimate relationship and friendship with God”, will not even begin until the “FEAR OF GOD”, is firmly planted in our hearts.

We can come forward and answer every altar call, we can read the Bible daily and attend every prayer meeting. We can preach great and motivating sermons, work hard in the ministry for years, and even receive respect and admiration of our peers, but if we did not fear God, we are only “Climbing the rungs of the religious ladder”. What is the difference between these “Religious rituals” and suffering from a “Celebrity Syndrome (Worship)”?

WHO ARE “THE FRIENDS OF GOD”

There are two men called, “HIS FRIENDS”, in Scripture. This is not to say that there was not others – only that God specifically acknowledges these two, intentionally recording, their friendships. I believe, God did this so that we could benefit from the insight and received a clearer understanding, into what God looks for, in a friend.

(1). THE FIRST WAS ABRAHAM

Abraham was the first to be called the “Friend of God (2 CHRONICLES 20: 7). When Abraham was 75 years old, God came to Abraham and “Cut a covenant”, with him. Within the parameters of His covenant, God promised Abraham his “Hearts Desire” – a son, but before the birth of his son Isaac, Abraham made several mistakes – some of them quite serious.

But through it all, Abraham believed, and obeyed God, and was fully persuaded, that God would perform all that he was promised, by God.

When Abraham was 99 years of age, his wife became pregnant, and they’re promised

son, Isaac, was born! Can you imagine the joy, Abraham and Sarah experienced, after waiting for so many years? Can you imagine the love that they had for this “Promised child”?

THE TEST OF FAITH

Time passed, and this relationship grew, between the father and son. They became very close. The life of this boy meant more to Abraham, than his own life. His great wealth, was nothing, compared to the great joy of his son. Nothing, in this world, meant more to Abraham than his “Promised precious son”, given to him by God.

GENESIS 22: 1 – “And it came to pass after these things, that God did TEMPT (TEST) Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, behold, here I am”.

GENESIS 22: 2 – “And he said, take now thy son, then only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get the into the land of Mariah; and offer him there for a BURNT OFFERING upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of”.

Can you imagine Abraham’s shock at hearing these words? Never did he dream that God would ask such a hard thing of him. He was stunned. But Abraham knew that God did not make mistakes. There were only two options for a “Covenant man of God”: OBEY GOD: OR BREAK THE COVENANT WITH GOD. To break the covenant was not even a consideration, for this man of faith, because he was so immersed by this time, IN GODLY FAITH, TRUST, AND FEAR!

WE KNOW NOW, THAT THIS WAS A TEST BY GOD FOR ABRAHAM BUT AT THE TIME, I BELIEVE, THAT ABRAHAM ONLY KNEW THAT GOD WAS DOING A “NEW THING” AND THAT GOD ULTIMATELY WOULD KEEP HIS WORD.

IN THE MIDST OF THE MANY TRIALS AND TESTS – PUT UPON JOB – JOB SAID THIS:

JOB 13: 15 – “THOUGH HE SLAY ME YET WILL I TRUST IN HIM: BUT I WILL MAINTAIN MINE OWN WAYS BEFORE HIM”.

We don’t know God is testing us, until we are on the other side of it. It may be possible, to cheat on a test or with each other, but no one can cheat, on the exam God gives. If we have not studied and done “Our homework, by purifying our hearts and cleansing our hands”, we will not be able to pass God’s test, no matter how clever we are!

ABRAHAM’S FEAR OF GOD WAS CONFIRMED

GENESIS 22: 3 – “And Abraham rose up EARLY in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and took TWO OF HIS YOUNG MEN (SERVANTS) with him, and ISAAC HIS SON, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went into the place of which God had told him”.

GENESIS 22: 5 – “And Abraham said unto his YOUNG MEN, ABIDE YE HERE with the donkeys; and I AND THE LAD WILL GO YONDER AND WORSHIP, AND COME AGAIN TO YOU”.

Just as Abraham was about to kill his son “Isaac”, and offer him up as a burnt sacrifice, God stops him and provides a ram, caught in a thicket, to sacrifice instead!

GENESIS 22: 12 – “And he said, lay not thy hand upon thy lad, neither do thou anything unto him: FOR NOW I KNOW THAT THOU FEAREST GOD, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me from me”.

GENESIS 22: 14 – “And Abraham called the name of the place JEHOVAH - JIRAH: as it is said to this day, IN THE MOUNT OF THE LORD IT SHALL BE SEEN”.

“JEHOVAH – JIREH” – THE GOD WHO “SEES AND PROVIDES” BUT ABRAHAM’S SERVANTS DID NOT “SEE”, THE PROVISION OF GOD – ONLY THE RESULTS!

JAMES 2: 21 – “Was not Abraham Our Father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar”?

JAMES 2: 22 – “How faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect”?

JAMES 2: 23 – “And the Scriptures was fulfilled which saith, ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, and it was IMPUTED (ACCOUNTED) UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: and HE WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD”.

Notice, that Abraham was “JUSTIFIED”, by his corresponding works. The proof of his holy fear and faith in God, was his obedience to the Word of God. TO FEAR GOD IS TO BELIEVE GOD. TO BELIEVE GOD IS TO OBEY HIM.

James pointed out that Abraham’s obedience, fueled by his HOLY FEAR OF GOD, RESULTED in the FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD.

PSALMS 25: 14 – “The secret of the Lord is with them that FEAR HIM; and HE WILL SHOW THEM HIS COVENANT”.

Why is there an abundance of shallow preaching from the pulpits today? Why do Christians, lack the “Spiritual depth”, of their forefathers? It is result of a growing disease in the church. It is a virus called “An absence of the fear of the Lord”!

GOD’S WORD TELLS US THAT GOD REVEALS “HIS COVENANT” (SECRET BLESSINGS), TO THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.

This is the reason why Christ Jesus spoke in “Parables”. God reveals His secrets to those who “Fear him and crave his fellowship”! With whom do you share the secrets of your

heart? Acquaintances or intimate friends? With intimate friends, of course. Secrets, wouldn't be safe with mere acquaintances. Well, God does the same; He shares His heart only with those who fear Him and desire to be in fellowship with Him!

(2). THE SECOND MAN WHO WAS “A FRIEND OF GOD” WAS MOSES

EXODUS 33: 11 – “And the Lord spake unto MOSES FACE TO FACE, AS A MAN SPEAKETH UNTO HIS FRIEND. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle”.

PSALMS 103: 7 – “HE (GOD) MADE KNOWN HIS WAYS UNTO MOSES, HIS ACTS UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL”.

Because the Hebrew people did not fear God, they were denied intimacy with him. His ways and the secrets of His covenant, we're not revealed to the Hebrew people. They knew Him in much the same way, as I know the president of the United States. I know the president by his accomplishments, provisions, and acts. The Hebrew people were not privy, to the “WHY”, of God's covenant. They did not understand God's motives, intentions, and the desire of God's heart!

The Hebrew people, that wandered in the “Wilderness”, only perceived God's character, as it was displayed in the “Natural world”. They often mistook His methods, for taking or withholding, when they did not get precisely what they wanted. It is impossible to “TRUELY KNOW GOD”, merely by observing, what he does in the “Natural world”. That would be like knowing a celebrity, only from the media reports. God is a Spirit, His ways are hidden from the wisdom of the “Natural world” (JOHN 4:24; 1 CORINTHIANS 2: 6 – 16). God only reveal Himself to those who fear him. The children of Israel did not see the wisdom or understanding, behind all that He was doing. Therefore they were constantly “Out of step” with Him.

To fear God is to obey him, even when it does not seem to be to our advantage. When we fear Him, He calls us His friend, and reveals “THE WHY”, for the intentions and desires of His heart. IF NOT, WE WILL COME TO KNOW GOD BY HIS ACTS BUT NOT BY HIS WAYS!

Read carefully, Christ Jesus's words to His disciples, at the “Last supper”, AFTER Judas had departed to betray Him:

JOHN 15: 14 – “YE ARE MY FRIENDS, IF YOU DO WHATSOEVER I COMMAND YOU”.

JOHN 15: 15 – “Henceforth I CALL YOU NOT SERVANTS: FOR THE SERVANT KNOWETH NOT WHAT HIS LORD DOETH: BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS; for ALL THINGS that I have HEARD of my Father I HAVE MADE KNOWN UNTO YOU”.

I've heard the Scripture quoted, a number of times, as a promise of “Friendship with the

Lord". BUT there is a very definite "Condition" placed on this kind of friendship. THE CONDITION IS – "IF YOU DO WHATEVER I COMMAND YOU".

The Lord said, no longer do I call you "Servants". His disciples have been proven faithful, as "Servants", for 3 ½ years. They stayed with Jesus, when other disciples left (JOHN 6: 66). There had been a "Season", when Jesus treated them as servants. This was a testing, the same as of Abraham and Moses. The "New exam" had begun, now His words were prophetic. The "Exam", would conclude with the disciples steadfast obedience in "The Upper Room". "Divine order", would be established, and "The Upper Room" would reveal, the "Contents", of each human heart.

Jesus said for "A SERVANT does not know what his master is doing"; but I've called you FRIENDS, for all things that I HEARD from my Father I have made KNOWN, TO YOU".

GOD'S "FRIENDS" WILL HAVE THE GIFT OF "INSIGHT", BECAUSE HE SHARES HIS PLANS WITH HIS "FRIENDS"!

GENESIS 18 - Has 33 verses in this chapter.

THE FIRST 16 VERSES OF THIS CHAPTER, deals with how God is going to "SUPERNATURALLY BLESS", Abraham and Sarah with a child, even in they're old age. Sarah even laughed at the notion.

THE MIDDLE VERSE OF THIS CHAPTER, is GENESIS 18: 17, and look what it says:

GENESIS 18: 17 – "And the Lord said (To the two angels with Him), SHALL I HIDE from Abraham THAT THING (JUDGMENT) WHICH I (WILL) DO";

The answer was "NO"! THE LAST 16 VERSES, IN THIS CHAPPTER, starting with verse 18, and going to verse 33, in this chapter, deals with "The Judgment of God" and the coming judgment on the areas of "Sodom and Gomorrah". God shares His plans with his friend, Abraham – concerning THE COMING JUDGMENT, that was coning to the area and the cities of "Sodom and Gomorrah".

*NOTICE WHAT GOD IS DOING IN GENESIS 18 – EXACTLY HALF THE VERSES IN THIS CHAPTER DEALS WITH THE "SUPERNATURAL BLESSINGS", ON "GOD'S FRIENDS", ABRAHAM AND SARAH – AND EXACTLY THE OTHER HALF OF THESE VERSES, AT "THE SAME TIME", DEALS WITH "THE FIERY JUDGMENT" OF GOD ON THE WICKED", AND HOW GOD "RESCUES" THE "RIGHTEOUS" (LOT) AND HIS WIFE AND FAMILY – WITH THE MIDDLE VERSE BEING, THAT WHEN "THE JUDGMENT OF GOD FALLS", GOD WILL TELL HIS FRIEND(S)!

* THIS IS PROPHETIC TRUTH, FOR THIS "DAY" IN WHICH WE LIVE IN! IN "THE LAST DAYS", THERE WILL BE GOD'S "FRIENDS" THAT WILL BE "SUPERNATURALLY BLESSED OF GOD" AND AWARE OF THE TIMES OF

JUDGMENT. THE “SERVANTS OF GOD” AND THE WORLD, WILL BE UNAWARE OF THE COMING JUDGMENT – CAUGHT UNAWARE – AS “A THIEF IN THE NIGHT” (2 PETER 3: 10)!

* “Lot”, may have been considered “Righteous” by God, but he was also “Worldly”. He had NO MORE INSIGHT, of the impending judgment, than the “EVIL RESIDENTS, living in the the wicked cities! Although, he was “Righteous”, “Lot” was caught UNAWARE OF WHAT WAS ABOUT TO OCCUR!

“LOT” REPRESENTS “THE FLESHLY CARNAL CHRISTIANS”, WHO LACK THE BURNING HOLY FEAR OF GOD - AT THE TIME OF THE SEVERE JUDGMENT, FROM GOD!

This is seen, by where “Lot”, chose to dwell among the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the type of wife he chose, and the children that he would later father through incest – “The Moabites” and “The Amorites”. But what “Lot” had chosen, initially looked best for him and his family, but in the end, he was proven, to have chosen unwisely.

In contrast Abraham chose the “Separated life”. He sought “A city whose builder and maker was God”. “Lot” chose fellowship with the ungodly, over a “Separated life”. The “Ungodly ways”, of the “Culture”, that dominated the area, that “LOT”, lived in, was so pervasive, it whittled away his “Righteousness”. Eventually, that exposure to “Ungodliness”, “Bore fruit”, in “Lot’s” life, and in the life of his descendants.

“Lot’s Standards”, were not completely dictated by God, they were being dictated by the society around him. “The Day of Judgment”, would have come upon “Lot”, as “A THIEF IN THE NIGHT”, had it not been for the Lord’s mercy and God’s friendship, with Abraham. God sent angelic messengers”, Just as God will send “Prophetic messengers”, with warnings, to the “Carnal believers”, in the church, who remain oblivious, to the coming judgment of God, upon this world.

In the urgency and fury of the impending judgment, Lot’s wife, chose to look back. She had been warned, not to look back, as the Lord sent destruction upon the cities, that were full of evil. BUT “LOTS” WIFE HAD BEEN SO INFLUENCED BY THE WORLD, THAT IT’S PULL WAS STRONGER ON HER THAN THE FEAR OF THE LORD”! This is why Jesus warns in the New Testament believers, to “Remember Lot’s wife” (LUKE 17: 32).

Abraham feared God. He was God’s friend. “Lot”, lacked all but a small measure of this. He had just enough “Fear of the Lord”, to flee and immediate judgment, but judgment overtook those who followed him. “Lot” later proved to know neither “God’s heart nor His ways”. James bluntly addresses believers with such a heart:

JAMES 4: 4 – “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”.

