

***MAN,,, BY HIS VERY NATURE,,, HAS A TENDENCY TOWARD PRIDE AND SELF-PROMOTION!***

**THE CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH PRIDE,,, ARE REVEALED AT AN EARLY AGE. CHILDREN DON'T HAVE TO BE TAUGHT TO BE SELFISH OR TO LIE,,, THEY JUST DO!**

**THIS CHARACTERISTIC,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, IS FORMED WITHIN OUR NATURE,,, FROM THE STAIN OF SIN.**

**IF UNCHECKED,,, OUR PRIDE AND SELFISH DESIRES,,, WILL CONTINUE TO MANIFEST THEM SELVES AS WE MATURE,,, AND AT TIMES,,, IN UNHEALTHY WAYS.**

**MANY OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD TODAY,,, AND THE MAJORITY OF THE CONFLICTS,,, IN THE PAST,,, RESULTED FROM PRIDE,,, AND THE DESIRE TO POSSESS POWER,,, PROMINENCE AND PRESTIGE.**

**WHILE THOSE WHO FOLLOW CHRIST,,, HAVE THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,,, TO AID IN THIER STRUGGLE AGAINST,,, *SUCH WORLDLY AMBITIONS.***

**AS BELIEVERS,,, THEY ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO RENEW THIER HEARTS AND MINDS IN THE LOVE AND GRACE OF CHRIST JESUS.**

**THE GREATEST BATTLE WE HAVE,,, IS OUR CONSTANT STRUGGLE TO SURPRESS THE FLESH.**

**PRIDE TAKES ON MANY FORMS,,, AND IT CAN BE EXPOSED IN MANY WAYS,,, BUT IT OFTEN PRESENTS UNWANTED CONSEQUANCES.**

***OUR SCRIPTURE TODAY,,, REVEALS AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN JESUS AND TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES,,, JAMES AND JOHN. THESE WERE TWO OF JESUS' CLOSET DISCIPLES,,, AND THEY WERE BECOMING AMBITIOUS.***

**THEY CAME TO JESUS WITH A REQUEST,,, *TO SIT AT CHRIST'S SIDE IN HIS KINGDOM.* THEY WERE THINKING OF THINGS IN TERMS OF PERSONAL PROMINANCE,,, PERSONAL REWARD,,, AND PERSONAL SUCCESS WITHOUT SACRAFICE!**

THEY WANTED JESUS,, WITH A ROYAL COMMAND,,  
TO WAVE HIS HAND & ENSURE THEM A PRINCLY LIFE.  
SCRIPTURE SAYS,, THAT THEY SAID TO JESUS:  
*TEACHER,, WE WANT YOU,, TO DO FOR US,, WHATEVER  
WE ASK OF YOU!*

JESUS ASKED: **WHAT DO YOU WISH ME TO DO FOR YOU?**

THEY RESPONDED:

*GRANT THAT IN YOUR GLORY,, WE MAY SIT,, ONE AT  
YOUR RIGHT HAND,, AND THE OTHER AT YOUR LEFT  
HAND,, IN YOUR GLORY!*

JESUS SAID:

**YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU ARE ASKING! CAN YOU  
DRINK OF THE CUP THAT I DRINK,, OR,, BE BAPTIZED  
WITH THE BAPTISM,, WITH WHICH I AM BAPTIZED?**

THEY ANSWERED: **WE CAN!**

JESUS SAID TO THEM;

**THE CUP THAT I DRINK,, YOU WILL DRINK,, AND WITH  
THE BAPTISM,, WITH WHICH I AM BAPTIZED,, YOU  
WILL BE BAPTIZED,, BUT TO SIT AT MY RIGHT,, OR,, MY  
LEFT,, IS NOT MINE TO GIVE,, BUT IS FOR THOSE FOR  
WHOM IT IS PREPARED.**

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, THIS WORLD,, IS FULL OF  
SPIRITUAL DANGERS.

*IT'S GOOD TO WORK TO OBTAIN WHAT IS NEEDED  
PHYSICALLY,, BUT,,  
IT'S BETTER YET,, TO SPIRITUALLY WORK AND GROW  
IN OUR SALVATION,, TOWARDS GOD'S GLORY IN HIS  
KINGDOM.*

EVEN CHRIST'S APOSTLES HAD MOMENTS OF PRIDE,,  
AS EVERY HUMAN BEING DOES FROM TIME TO TIME,,  
AND THEY,, HAD MOMENTS,, WHERE THEY MAY  
HAVE WANTED TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES,, ABOVE  
OTHERS!

POWER,, MONEY,, FAME,, AND HUMAN PLEASURES,,  
ARE JUST SOME OF THE TEMPTATIONS,, THAT EVERY  
HUMAN BEING MUST OVERCOME,, IN ORDER TO DO  
THE WILL,, OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR.

WHEN JAMES AND JOHN ASKED TO BE EXHALTED ABOVE THE REST OF THE DISCIPLES,, IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM,, THE OTHERS BECAME INDIGNANT.

AND JESUS,, USED THIS,, AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TEACH THEM AND THE OTHER DISCIPLES,, WHAT IT WAS GOING TO COST,, TO BE HIS DISCIPLE,, TO DRINK THE CUP,, OF HUMILITY AND SUFFERING,, AND TO SHARE THE BAPTISM OF HIS DEATH,,

**IT MEANT,, THAT THEY WERE ALSO,, GOING TO BE MARTYRED.**

IT WASN'T AN OPPORTUNITY,, FOR THE OTHER DISCIPLES TO BE JUDGEMENTAL OF JAMES AND JOHN.

IT'S COMMON,, IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE,, TO BELIEVE THAT OUR HUMAN EFFORTS,, MAY LEAD TO FLAWED HOLINESS,, OR EVEN WORSE,, TO ALLOW US,, TO THINK THAT WE'RE BETTER THAN OTHERS!

SO BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, **WE'RE REMINDED,, THAT WE'RE NOT TO BE JUDGEMENTAL OF OTHERS,, BECAUSE,, HE WHO JUDGES,, WILL BE JUDGED!**

YOU SEE,, GOD IS THE ONE,, THAT BUILDS THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE,, NOT MAN. NOT ONE OF US,, HAS REASON TO BOAST. ALL THAT WE ARE,, AND ALL THAT WE ARE TO BECOME,, ISN'T DUE,, TO THE WORK OF OUR HANDS,, BUT,,

**BY THE GRACE AND MERCY OF JESUS.**

THE WAY OF THE WORLD,, IS "**A BROAD EASY ROAD**",, OPEN TO ALL OF HUMANITY,, AND IT'S ONE,, THAT CAN LEAD TO DESTRUCTION.

IT OFFERS EVERY WORLDLY THING,, THAT EXHALTS THE SENSES OF PRIDE,, AND TEMPORAL HAPPINESS.

GOD SENT HIS SON,, JESUS CHRIST,,

**TO POINT THE WAY** AND OFFER US,, **ETERNAL LIFE!**

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, HIS WAY IS DIFFICULT TO FIND,, DIFFICULT TO WALK,, AND IT TAKES YOU TO THE HEIGHT OF HUMILITY.

**IT IS THE NARROW WAY OF THE CROSS.**

IT'S REWARD,,, IS THE FREEDOM OF THE SOUL,,, THAT OFFERS PEACE,,, HOPE AND ETERNAL LIFE.

**HUMAN PASSIONS,,, OFFEND GOD,,, BECAUSE THEY CREATE FALSE GODS,,, IN THE FLESH AND MIND!**

**MATERIALISM,,, CAUSES ATTACHMENT TO TEMPORAL THINGS,,, AT THE COST OF DESPISING WHAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.**

**INJUSTICE OFFENDS GOD,,, WHO IS LOVE,,, AND IMPURITY STAINS THE SOUL,,,**

**AND ONLY GOD CAN CLEANSE IT.**

SCRIPTURE TELLS US; **THAT ALL HUMAN BEINGS HAVE SINNED AND FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD,,, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.**

HOWEVER; IT SHOULD BE COMFORTING TO KNOW,,, THAT **JESUS CAME NOT TO CONDEM,,, BUT TO SAVE,,,** TO REVEAL THE CHARACTER OF THE FATHER,,, AND TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM,,, HERE ON EARTH.

AS WE REPENT DAILY,,, AND HAVE A CONTINUOUS "**CONVERSION OF HEART**",,, WE FIND THAT CHRIST'S MERCY,,, IS INFINITELY GREAT,,, AND HIS GOODNESS,,, EXTENDS WAY BEYOND HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, JESUS WANTS TO SAVE THE SOULS,,, THAT HAVE COST HIM,,, SO VERY MUCH. BUT TO DO THAT,,, ,,,

**HE NEEDS YOUR COOPERATION!**

THAT'S WHY HE ASKS,,, **YOU**,,, TO PUT INTO PRACTICE WHAT HE SAYS TO US,,, IN THE SCRIPTURES.

ANYONE,,, WHO WISHES TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN,,, MUST WALK HUMBLY,,, WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE REWARD,,, AND HE MUST ALWAYS FEEL SMALL BEFORE GOD,,, AND WILLING TO SERVE HIS NEIGHBOR.

WHEN WE DO THIS,,, JESUS GUARANTEES,,,

**THAT YOUR LABOR,,, WILL NOT BE IN VAIN!**

**JESUS SAID,,, *I HAVE GIVEN YOU AUTHORITY TO TREAD ON SNAKES AND SCORPIONS,,, AND OVER ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY; AND NOTHING WILL HURT YOU. NEVERTHELESS,,, DO NOT REJOICE AT THIS,,, THAT THE SPIRITS SUBMIT TO YOU,,, BUT REJOICE THAT YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN.* (LUKE 10: 19-20)**

**JAMES AND JOHN,,, WERE LIKE CHILDREN,,, LOOKING FOR FAVOR,,, FROM A LOVING PARENT,,, AND,,, WE'RE NOT SO MUCH DIFFERENT!**

**(DANIEL 9: 18) SAYS:**

***WE DO NOT MAKE REQUESTS OF YOU BECAUSE WE ARE RIGHTEOUS. BUT BECAUSE OF YOUR GREAT MERCIES,,, WE SEEK THE GIFT OF GOD'S SMILE.***

***IF ONLY* WE WOULD PRAISE HIM,,, *WHEN JESUS SMILES AND TELLS US THAT WE'RE SAVED,,, AND THEN,,, LIVE LIKE THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED SUCH A WONDERFUL AND BLESSED GIFT,,, FROM THE KING OF KINGS,,, AND LORD OF LORDS! IF ONLY!!!!!!***

**WE SELDOM DO THAT ENOUGH! WE ALL TOO OFTEN,,, SEEM TO PREFER TO RECEIVE OUR SALVATION,,, THE OLD FASHIONED WAY. WE TRY TO EARN IT!**

**REMEMBER,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,,**

**(\*) THE BATTLE HAS ALREADY BEEN FOUGHT!**

**(\*) THE PRIZE,,, HAS ALREADY BEEN WON,,, THROUGH CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE WORK,,, ON THE CROSS,,, AND HIS RESURRECTION!**

**TO ACCEPT GOD'S GRACE,,, IS TO ADMIT,,, FAILURE,,, A STEP,,, THAT WE'RE HESITANT TO TAKE.**

**WE CHOOSE TO TRY TO IMPRESS GOD,,, WITH JUST HOW GOOD WE ARE,,, RATHER THAN TO CONFESS**

**"HOW GREAT HE IS!"**

**WE OVERWHELM OURSELVES,,, WITH CHURCH DOCTRINE,,, AND,,, WE BURDEN OURSELVES WITH RULES,,, THINKING THAT GOD WILL SMILE ON US,,, FOR OUR EFFORTS.**

**WELL,,, HE DOESN'T!**

**GOD'S SMILE,,, IS NOT FOR THE HEALTHY,,, THE TRAVELER,,, WHO BOASTS,,, THAT HE MADE THE JOURNEY,,, ALL ALONE. IT IS INSTEAD,,, FOR THE CRIPPLED LEPER,,, WHO BEGS GOD,,, FOR A BACK,,, ON WHICH TO RIDE.**

***THE SON OF MAN,,, HAS NOT COME TO BE SERVED,,, BUT TO SERVE,,, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE,,, AS REDEMPTION,,, FOR THE MANY.***

**THEREFORE,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, LET'S OFFER OURSELVES,,, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING,,, THAT WE WHO WANT TO BE FORGIVEN,,, MUST FORGIVE OTHERS,,, AND THAT WE WHO WISH TO GROW SPIRITUALLY,,, MUST BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT,,, SO THAT WE CAN BECOME A FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER. SO THAT,,, FROM OUR HEART,,, MAY COME GOOD WORKS,,, AS EVIDENCE OF JESUS' PRESENCE IN OUR LIFE.**

**LET'S NEVER FORGET THESE WORDS OF JESUS;**

***WHOEVER WILL BE FIRST AMONG YOU,,, SHALL BE THE SERVANT OF ALL.***

**THOSE WORDS WERE TRUE BACK THEN,,, AND THEY REMAIN TRUE TODAY AS WELL.**

**MAY THE PEACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,,, WHICH IS BEYOND ALL UNDERSTANDING,,, ENLIGHTEN OUR HEARTS AND OUR MINDS,,, SO THAT ALL WHO MEET US,,, MAY KNOW THAT CHRIST REIGNS IN OUR HEARTS AND THAT IT IS HE ALONE,,, WHO SAVES.**

***THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT  
+++ AMEN+++***

**( 1,464) WDS,,, 6 PGS**