

Concord Ministry

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If you want Peace, seek Justice for all
Walk in Righteousness, depending on the Love and Spirit of Christ, as His servant forever

Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

March 25, 2025

Dear Redeemed of the Lord,

“Ask and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. . . . If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! . . . In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 7

“Keep on asking, knocking seeking” is closer to what Jesus said. Maybe you knocked on the wrong door, try other doors. Maybe it was the wrong time. God knew you weren’t ready, maybe they were not. Try again. Maybe it looked like the right door, right time, but later you realized it was not. It was time to try elsewhere. We are pilgrim people, moving on toward our final destination, true home. Looking forward usually we do not see the hand of the Lord guiding us. Looking back, often we do. Looking back we might see the false paths, foolish errors, trials prepared us for serving God where we are now.

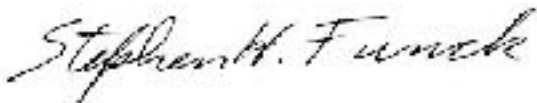
God gave Hezekiah what he demanded. The result was disaster. Jesus said “not my will but thine be done.”. God wants to give you the best. Is that money or salvation? Power or Love? Giving or getting? Your way or God’s way? If you want more? Thank Him for what He has already given.

God wants to give you good gifts. Ask for all He knows good for you. He wants most of all for you to look beyond the little temporary trinkets of this life. They are SO important to us. Surrender all, die to self. Real life is more than food and clothing. It is forever.

Jesus lived, God’s life among us. Poor, rejected, nobody, He died to everything and broke, ended, the power of Satan. He is the example of the life we are to live, following Jesus.

The following was in last Sunday’s lessons: “If someone who is righteous disobeys, that person’s former righteousness will count for nothing. And if someone who is wicked repents, that person’s former wickedness will not bring condemnation.” Ezekiel 33:12. Pray for wisdom and God’s Spirit.

In the name of Jesus, called by God to proclaim His Love for all,



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Pastor Stephen H. Funck

“King of Kings” ISBN: 9798373867931 Amazon print or kindle
The background of the life of Christ, footnoted with links to sources
He died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves,
but for him who died and was raised for them. 2 Corinthians. 5:15”

Many of us want to know God's way and hear gospel truth, but we avoid living it. Sadly, in today's church it is acceptable to enjoy sermons and worship, yet go home completely unchanged.

Paul preached a message of gospel power, and wanted that power for Timothy for a specific reason. "In the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless...not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people" (2 Timothy 3:1-5, ESV).

Here, Paul speaks of churchgoers and describes them as having only "a form of godliness." These Christians didn't mind going to the synagogue, reading spiritual texts or participating in religious activities. Yet Paul's advice to Timothy was, "Avoid them." He was saying, "It's dangerous to be around those people. You'll start to think their way is acceptable. They may look godly, but the Lord looks on the heart and sees unholiness and conceit."

Paul said these Christians were "always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). In other words, they listened to all the gospel teachings but never took them to heart. That made them powerless because they "opposed the truth" (see 2 Timothy 3:8).

Note how Paul begins this passage: "In the last days there will come times of difficulty" (2 Timothy 3:1). He makes clear that perilous times will wither a superficial faith. I am probably the least prophetic Christian alive, but even I can see bad times on the horizon. When global economies teeter, the average American faces financial disaster and political upheaval heightens, then something has to give.

What will most Christians do when things turn really bad? Are our hearts truly prepared to deal with hard times? Friend, if we are not living a life empowered by God, the problem is with us, not the Lord. Seek God and his Word, and he will empower us to endure to the end.

Rest assured that you will be tested if you try to walk righteously before the Lord. In fact, the deeper your walk with Christ, the more intense your testing will be. Scripture makes this clear. "The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits... Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help... And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time" (Daniel 11:32-35, NKJV).

A great time of testing is coming upon "those of understanding." Just who are these who will be tested? They are the righteous, those who do exploits for the Lord, who walk with God and have the wisdom of Christ. Now, you may be asking, "Why am I being tested? Why is this happening to me?"

Remember your school days? When a school test was given, it revealed how much you had actually learned from what you had been taught. However, Paul spoke of a different school, one where we are "learning Christ" and are "being taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (see Ephesians 4:20-21). If you belong to Jesus, you are in his school. You may have thought you had graduated, but that will not happen until you are in glory.

When I was in school, I hated unannounced pop quizzes. Yet the Lord has told us to be ready to be tested at any time, and these tests will continue until Jesus returns.

David often spoke of being tested and tried: "I know also, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness" (1 Chronicles 29:17). "You have tested my heart; you have visited me in the night; you have tried me and have found nothing; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress (Psalm 17:3).

Beloved, all who love the Lord will go through fiery trials. They will be purged of all that is not like Christ in preparation for the wedding of the Lamb.

The “Church” at Mount Sinai

Jesus Himself never set foot in a church. He attended synagogue services and assembled at the Temple.

Moses returned from atop Mount Sinai, radiating the glory of God. As soon as he arrived in the camp, he “assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel.”

The descent of Moses at the end of the previous Torah portion alludes to the second coming of the Messiah. Just as Moses assembled Israel at the time of his appearing, when Messiah comes again, He will gather together the assembly of Israel from the four corners of the world. Then the whole nation of Israel will be called the assembly of Messiah.

This concept helps us understand the meaning behind the New Testament word “church.”

As a noun, the Hebrew word means “assembly,” “congregation,” or “community.” The Torah refers to the community of the tribes of Israel as the “the assembly,” a common Bible term denoting all Israel. The word passes into the Greek Septuagint version of the Bible as ekklesia. The Greek word appears throughout the Greek version of the Old Testament to speak of the assembly of Israel or an assembly of worshippers in the Temple. However, when it occurs in the New Testament, English translators rarely render it as “assembly.” Inexplicably, English translators substitute the theologically charged term “church.”

The “church” translation of ekklesia has misled us. Because of the double standard in translation, it appears to most readers that “the church” first appeared in the New Testament, completely disconnected with the Old Testament and the nation of Israel. After all, the word “church” never appears before the book of Matthew. In reality, the word “church” does not appear in the Bible at all. By translating ekklesia as “church,” our English Bibles have led us to believe that “the church” is a new institution outside of Judaism and the Jewish people.

C.S. Lewis

We must simply accept it that we are spirits, free and rational beings, at present inhabiting an irrational universe, and must draw the conclusion that we are not derived from it. We are strangers here. We come from somewhere else. Nature is not the only thing that exists. There is 'another world', and that is where we come from. And that explains why we do not feel at home here. A fish feels at home in the water. If we 'belonged here' we should feel at home here. All that we say about 'Nature red in tooth and claw', about death and time and mutability, all our half-amused, half-bashful attitude to our own bodies, is quite inexplicable on the theory that we are simply natural creatures. If this world is the only world, how did we come to find its laws either so dreadful or so comic? If there is no straight line elsewhere, how did we discover that Nature's line is crooked?

From Present Concerns

Traditional doctrine points to a sin against God, an act of disobedience, not a sin against the neighbour. And certainly, if we are to hold the doctrine of the Fall in any real sense, we must look for the great sin on a deeper and more timeless level than that of social morality.

This sin has been described by Saint Augustine as the result of Pride, of the movement whereby a creature (that is, an essentially dependent being whose principle of existence lies not in itself but in another) tries to set up on its own, to exist for itself. Such a sin requires no complex social conditions, no extended experience, no great intellectual development. From the moment a creature becomes aware of God as God and of itself as self, the terrible alternative of choosing God or self for the centre is opened to it. This sin is committed daily by young children and ignorant peasants as well as by sophisticated persons, by solitaries no less than by those who live in society: it is the fall in every individual life, and in each day of each individual life, the basic sin behind all particular sins: at this very moment you and I are either committing it, or about to commit it, or repenting it.

From The Problem of Pain

On goodness

There is but one good; that is God. Everything else is good when it looks to Him and bad when it turns from Him. And the higher and mightier it is in the natural order, the more demoniac it will be if it rebels. It's not out of bad mice or bad fleas you make demons, but out of bad archangels. The false religion of lust is baser than the false religion of mother-love or patriotism or art: but lust is less likely to be made into a religion.

From The Great Divorce