

Keep Your Eyes on the Kingdom

Roger Kendall—December 6, 2013

It's a very sad situation how we must look at rest of the world. It's not what it used to be. This is not the greatest generation that we had during WWII where people rose to the occasion and got the job done in an efficient manner.

Today we're just in a world of confusion, of uncertainty. We really don't know from month to month exactly whether or not even our financial situation is going to be stable. We're looking at a time of big concern. This country is not improving. It's getting worse and worse in so many different ways.

When we think about the Feast, in terms of what it really means to us individually and personally, and also, of course, what God is going to be doing, it really was a time of refreshment. The Feast was a time of being restored in so many different ways, to be taught by God through the services and the messages and come away just absolutely inspired and filled with a picture of what it's going to be like in the future. We can contrast the present world with what it's going to be in the future. *It's just amazing what God is going to do!*

I have a question for you. Hopefully we can answer the question individually and collectively. What did you bring back with you from the Feast this year? We were there; we had a wonderful experience, but what did you bring back with you?

On the humorous side, I did talk to an individual that said he brought back four extra pounds. He gained a little weight. He was rejoicing and eating fine food, apparently, it was wonderful food. Beyond that, what did we bring back? *We brought back many wonderful memories!*

- we took a lot of pictures
- we were able to spend time together enjoying God's creation, whether:
 - ✓ at the beach
 - ✓ in the mountains
 - ✓ wherever it might be

God certainly poured out His blessing upon us!

- we also brought back with us:
 - ✓ sermon notes
 - ✓ messages from Bible studies
 - ✓ whatever we might have heard

That has helped us to clearly understand a better picture of what God is going to be doing in the next few years to bring about the Kingdom of God.

Hopefully, you brought something else back with you, and this is what I want to focus on. Hopefully, you brought back ***a sharper reality of the coming Kingdom of God!*** That's something that's

so very, very important for us who have to live in this world, because there is so much out there that will discourage us and will get us off the track. ***Keep your eyes on the kingdom***, not on what's going on in the world. Yes, we're to watch, and we're to be aware of things going on in the world. But our primary focus needs to be on the Kingdom of God, on a daily basis. I'm not talking about just on the Sabbath, but I'm talking about every day.

There's so much going on out there that we can't do anything about it. It's frustrating. You want to do something, but we have to wait; we have to be patient. What we need to do is to realize that we have our part to play. Keeping our eyes on the kingdom is so important, so that:

- we won't get discouraged
- we don't get distracted
- we won't get to a point where we lose faith and become disillusioned about what lies ahead

Many of us have been multiple years in the Church. I'm over 40 years in the Church. We've been to a lot of Feasts, and as we see what's happening we need more and more heartfelt prayer and study, focusing on those things on the Kingdom. Christ said that the way to the Kingdom of God is going to be fraught with difficulties and struggle.

Matthew 7:13: "Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it."

I guess we can apply that to things going on in the politics of Washington, D.C., today. Many are trying to solve the problems facing this country. They're going through the 'broad way that leads to destruction,' because they've left God out of the picture. They're continuing in their sins and they have broken the relationship with Him.

Verse 14: "For narrow *is* the gate..." This implies that the way is going to be difficult. When we go through a narrow place it means that it's going to be crowded, not crowded with people, but just tight. It's going to be difficult. There's going to be struggle, it requires diligence, and it requires strong effort on our part.

Verse 14: "For narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it." *Many are called, few are chosen, but even fewer remain faithful to the end!* You can see that there is a separation; 'many are called, few

are chosen,' because they refuse to repent, but many come into the Church with enthusiasm and zeal.

Just like the sowing of the seed: Some seed fell where people who received the Word of God with joy and great zeal, but something pulled them away from the Word of God, from their calling and from their destination in the Kingdom of God. They were pulled away. You can read in Matt. 13, that some got tied up in worldly sorrow—things of the world—and others, with just the trials and tribulations, and were not able to persevere. That's what Christ is telling us.

I want to encourage everybody to ***keep on keeping on***, to continue to ***focus on the future in the Kingdom of God and our place in it!***

We learned at the Feast each year that God has called us for a special purpose. He has called us to be under Jesus Christ and to rule over this world. How desperately this world needs the return of Jesus Christ! It is the only hope that the world has, as we all know. We're seeing what's going on in the world and we need to truly be yearning and groaning for the Kingdom of God. It is the only way.

Paul talks about the fact that we have been called for a special purpose and that we are going to be inheritors with Jesus Christ of the Kingdom. We have to keep that in our viewfinder. We have to keep that in front of us. We are busy in the world. It's so easy to get caught up in worldly pursuits and activities, which many are necessary, but we need to focus on the Kingdom.

Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying that we are the children of God.*" *This is who we are* begotten with the Holy Spirit, the down payment on eternal life. We're given His Spirit so that we can have the faith that we can trust and believe in the Word of God.

The sermonette was a fine message that really helps us to focus on the fact that we need to ***believe*** God and His Word and not have doubts and that *we are the children of God!*

Verse 17: "Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him."

Again, the struggle that we have in this world is going to continue. It's going to, in some cases, get probably worse and more difficult. As things become more suffocating and harder out there, as far as the coming times, we do know that we are in for more difficult times, as we look ahead. That's not what we should be focusing on. ***Focus on the kingdom!***

Verse 18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us." What glory we will have in the Kingdom.

Do you believe it? *I do!* I know that you do as well. We need to emphasize that. We've got to focus on this because it's so easy to get down and out.

Verse 19: "For the earnest expectation of the creation itself is awaiting the manifestation of the **sons of God.**" *That's us, brethren!*

Verse 22: "For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now." *I think that describes us a little bit!*

I yearn for the Kingdom of God. I want to get out there and do something. Don't you want to get out there and try to use the power of God's Spirit and the knowledge of what God has provide us with? to be able to help people under Christ? to be able to truly turn this world around?

Verse 23: "And not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship—the redemption of our bodies."

These Scriptures kind of point out that we are to truly be patient. Yes, we're groaning; we are urgently desiring the coming kingdom. Yet, we need to really continue to do our part, focus and keep our eyes on the kingdom.

God is continuing to teach us, to train us. This past Feast has been no exception to that. Truly we're growing in the love of God, we're growing in the knowledge and understanding of His great plan of salvation for the world and especially, our role as kings and priests in the kingdom. We have our assignments; God has revealed it to us. We have no excuse if we are not keeping that in the forefront of our mind.

I remember on the way home I was saying, 'Here we go back to Vermont.' Then my wife Emmy said, 'Yeah, back to the real world.' She's right; it is the real world, that's what we're living in. We're flesh and blood and this is the real world that we live in. But in truth, the real future is the Kingdom of God; that's what we need to focus on.

I'm emotional, and sometimes I get depressed, down and negative. Indeed, it happens to all of us. The key thing that we should bring from the Feast is *to keep it alive*. After a couple of weeks, 'Aw, the Feast was a long time ago.' We tend to forget what we experienced. Try to keep those memories and what we did at the Feast *alive and well*. We need to do that to overcome all the other negative things that are around us. There's:

- Bible study
- looking at our notes in other ways
- meditating on the Kingdom of God

Really stretch that out into these winter months so we can:

- overcome the negative things that Satan throws at us
- overcome the battle with our sinful nature
- overcome the world and all of its things that's out there

With that in mind, I'd like to give you three key points. These are somewhat broad points. Hopefully, we can focus in and get the main message across.

Three key points that will help us to focus on our goal: *The Kingdom of God*, to give us encouragement and to help us have confidence that this is truly what lies ahead. It's not some kind of imaginary thing that's just to boost us up in some artificial way, but it is the Truth. We believe in the Word of God. *We will achieve the Kingdom of God if we continue to walk in the true way of God!*

1. Remind yourself daily that your destination is the Kingdom of God

Not to build a better empire on this earth, not to build some kind of greater feat of accomplishment in this world, but ***your destination is to be in the Kingdom of God***, to be a true child of God. That is the key thing that you need, not only to remind yourself daily of your destination, but also, it's very important that God has given His Spirit to you; ***you are a child of God!*** You have been begotten.

I like the way that John expresses this in 1-John 3. He clearly points out that *we are the children of God*. He sets out very simply and says:

1-John 3:1: "Behold!.... [pay attention, be alert, wake up] ...What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him."

This is part of the struggle that we have. The world does not recognize Jesus Christ. The world does not recognize God the Father. Yes, there are religions of the world that profess the beliefs and attributes of God the Father, but they don't know God. They really don't know what we know, because God has not called them. They're not to know the 'mysteries of God' that we know. Consequently, there is a struggle that we have.

Verse 2: "Beloved, now we are the children of God... [John emphasizes it again] ...and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He [Christ] is manifested we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is."

The time will come when we will see Christ and God the Father face-to-face.

I can't imagine what that's going to be like. The emotion you get is kind of swell up when you're face-to-face with the living God. We're going to be able to do that because we will be spirit at the time. That's part of the image that we need to be keeping. That's going to happen:

- ***if*** we continue to keep on keeping on
- ***if*** we continue to keep the vision of the Kingdom of God firmly in our mind
- ***if*** we're doing those things that God would have us be doing

Let's turn to the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful, who truly looked forward to the coming Kingdom of God. He kept it in the forefront of his mind even though there was so much that had not been revealed to him. Let's read how Abraham looked at the coming Kingdom of God and how he dealt with so many things in the world.

Hebrews 11:8: "By faith Abraham, being called *of God*..." By faith, Abraham trusted God. He believed in what God told him. He accepted it and based on that faith, he went out and obeyed, knowing that the promises God gave him would be fulfilled. That should be our attitude as well.

"...to go out into the place, which he would later receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went, not knowing where he was going" (v 8).

That's physically speaking in one sense. Did God tell Abraham to pick up his family and to go, leave his family, his community? God said, 'I'm going to lead you into a dwelling place which is a temporary dwelling place, but I'm going to promise you an eternal kingdom.'

Verse 9: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, like a foreigner, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the joint heirs of the same promise; for he was waiting for the city with *the* foundations of which God is *the* Architect and Builder" (vs 9-10). Here, we can see what he was looking for, the city that God was putting together, building sometime in the future.

Verse 13: "All these died in faith, **not having received the promises...** They ***believed!*** They had *faith!* Not because of the fact that God worked miracles, but that ***they believed God!***

"...but having seen them from afar, and having been persuaded of *them*, and having embraced *them*, and having confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. For those who say such things make it manifest that they seek *their* own country, ***as promised by God*** (vs 13-14). That

needs to be our attitude right here. We need to truly believe in God's promises that He has given to us, deeply and truly entrenched in our mind and our very being.

Verse 15: "And if, on the one hand, they had let their minds **dwell fondly** on the place where they came from..."

We can also have the same problem. We can be dwelling more on the world, what's going on there and being concerned about that. Not that we don't have concern, but what's our focus? *Let's go back and give up this pursuit that God has given to us, we're not sure!* **No! They didn't!** They didn't take that attitude. They pursued deeply in their minds that God would deliver what He promised.

"...they might have had opportunity to return.... [they had plenty of opportunity to return, but they were faithful] ...But now, on the other hand, they are aspiring to a more excellent *country*—that is, a heavenly *one*. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God because He has prepared a city for them" (vs 15-16).

Here's Abraham's situation. We need to truly take on the same attitude and focus that Abraham had, not expecting it to come immediately, but to recognize that in the future, God is truly preparing a future for each and every one of us.

For that reason, we have to have priorities. We have to be able to understand and put into practice certain things in our lives ***so that we can focus on the Kingdom and make it a #1 priority in our lives.***

Matt. 6:31-33 is very interesting to read about trusting in God for our physical things:

- What's more important than being anxious for that?
- What did Christ say?

Matthew 6:31: "Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we be clothed?' For the nations seek after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But *as for you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness*, and all these... [other physical] ...things shall be added to you" (vs 31-33).

If we have our priorities right, we focus our minds on the Kingdom of God and His righteousness—that is our responsibility to grow in conversion—God is going to take care of our physical needs. Even though things are falling apart all around us, we know and *understand from God's Word that:*

- He will provide
- He will protect
- He will secure us

in this world! We are the called out ones. We are the chosen and we are being prepared for a future. God has promised to take care of us. We can hold on to that.

These words *seek first* gives us this emphasis of *a primary responsibility of diligence and hard work*. Just like we saw in Matt. 7, where Christ said that *narrow and difficult is the way*. This is the same thing. We have to seek it with diligence and also His righteousness. We want to accomplish God's will. We want to be able to do those things that God would have us do:

- to love
- to obey His laws
- to walk in faith
- to study
- to pray
- to continue to incorporate the very Word of God into our mind
- to keep it there, not let it seep out and take on other priorities that become greater than the Kingdom of God

I know of one man in the Church who told me that in order to focus on this very thing, he set his digital clock to go off at 6:33 a.m. in the morning so he would be reminded of Matt. 6:33: "...seek first the Kingdom..."

He wanted that in the forefront of his mind as he got out of his bed, to know that that was where he was headed. That was where he was going. He was going to work, going to other responsibilities, but the ***big goal*** was the Kingdom of God.

We need to remind ourselves daily. Where are we going? We're in some *holding pattern* right now in some respects. We are to be busy, we are to be doing things, but ***we're waiting patiently for the coming Kingdom of God.***

The Apostle Paul had some further insight into this and what we should be thinking about relative to the Kingdom. Paul writes to the Church at Corinth_[transcriber's correction]:

2-Corinthians 4:14: "Knowing that He Who raised the Lord Jesus *from the dead* shall **also raise us** through Jesus, and shall present *us* with you."

He starts out in this area. Keep that in mind. You're going to make it. You're going to achieve the goal. You're going to be raised to eternal life because:

- God loves us

- He's providing for us
- He's teaching us

We just have our part to play. We'll look at that, here in a moment.

Verse 15: "For all things *are* for your sakes, so that **the abounding grace may cause the thanksgiving of many to overflow unto the glory of God.**"

Because of that, we should just be rejoicing, giving thanks to God daily, for His promises and what He's doing. We can take confidence in that.

Verse 16: "For this reason, we **do not lose heart...**" Paul knew, of all men, what were the trials and difficulties that he went through as the apostle to the Gentiles? *He went through difficult struggles, trials, and persecution!* Yet, he's telling us, "...do not lose heart..." even though we have to 'slug it out' with this world.

"...but if our outward man is being brought to decay..." (v 16). We're all getting older, folks. We're getting older. Our bodies are breaking down. We're not going to live forever in this body, thank God!

"...yet, the **inward man** is being renewed day-by-day" (v 16). It's the *inward man* that we need to really be working on and rejoicing over, the fact that we are being renewed in the spirit and not in the flesh.

Verse 17: "For the momentary **lightness of our tribulation...** [it's interesting how Paul puts that] ...is working out for us an immeasurably greater *and* everlasting fullness of glory."

In other words, through the trials and difficulties that we go through, we can appreciate what God is going to be doing in the future. It will build into us bigger faith and trust in Him. Every time you go through a trial, we can thank God for bringing us through it.

Verse 18: "**While we consider not the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen...**" We need to consider "...the things *that are* not seen..." adequately and fully in our lives so that we don't let the things that are seen, block out the image and the vision of the Kingdom of God.

"...**For the things that are seen are temporary; but the things that are not seen are eternal**" (v 18). These are inspiring words for us, that we can keep on keeping on, to endure the difficulties:

- our health problems
- trials
- financial problems

- difficulties with family
- whatever issues with problems in the world

These are but a minor, temporary thing as far as what Paul is telling us. Don't let it cause you to lose sight.

Paul talks about trading in the physical body for the spiritual body. It's very interesting the way Paul expresses it. These are things that we need to think about, realizing that we can be thankful that we're going to be able to 'trade in' this old model and get a new model of a spiritual body:

- it's going to have all the 'bells and whistles'
- it's going to have all the things we could ever hope for
- it's really going to be exciting

2-Corinthians 5:1: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with *human* hands, eternal in the heavens.... [that's being reserved for us, an eternal spiritual body] ...For in this we truly are groaning, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven" (vs 1-2). I pray that the time will be soon that can have that eternal body and be with Christ.

Verse 3: "If indeed *that* being clothed, we may not be found naked. For we who are in *this* tabernacle truly do groan..." (vs 3-4). We just want to get going. We want to get the job done.

"...being burdened, not that we wish to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon so that the mortal *flesh* may be swallowed up by life" (v 4).

This physical body is death, is dying. The inner man, the spiritual body is what's growing in us. That's what we need to be concerned about.

Verse 5: "Now, He Who is working out this very thing for us *is* God, Who has also given us the earnest of the Spirit." Again, Paul reminds us that God has given us the help. He's given us His Word. He's given us the encouragement through His Spirit and leading us in Truth.

Verse 6: "Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in *this* body, we are away from *our eternal* home, *which is coming* from the Lord. (For we walk by faith, not by sight.)" (vs 6-7). Here's a key aspect where Paul compares this transition that's going to occur.

This overall Scripture is that we need to keep the invisible reality of the Kingdom of God. As I said earlier, the Feast just sharpened the reality of the Kingdom of God. We can carry that on through this year until we come to the spring Holy Days in about six months.

Col. 3—reminding ourselves daily of the Kingdom of God and to summarize this very point of seeking the Kingdom:

Colossians 3:1: “Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ, **seek the things that are above**, where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God.... [Paul writes us that this is our focus] ...Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth” (vs 1-2).

We’re not going to have to be putting up with this world a whole lot longer. We need to set our minds, our affection and our love on “...things that are above....”

Verse 3: “For you have died... [through baptism] ...and your life has been hid together with Christ in God.”

I really like this Scripture because of our life being *hidden with Christ in God!* What does that mean? You can go back into the Psalms and many times David said, ‘O hide me O God from...’ *all of the stuff that’s going on out in the world!* We are being *hidden* now! We’re not being harassed or persecuted. God is hiding us, keeping us safe and secure. We’re “...hid together with Christ in God.”

Verse 4: “When Christ, *Who is* our life, is manifested, then you also shall be manifested with Him in glory.” This should be our vision. This should be our desire for the future.

2. Remember your responsibilities in staying on course for the Kingdom of God

As we journey to the Kingdom of God, if we’re not doing those things that God would have us be doing, it would be kind of futile. In other words, we have to have the vision of the Kingdom of God. We’ve got to be doing, accomplishing and practicing God’s way of life in our lives; so that we can make sure that we arrive at our destination.

We’re on a spiritual journey. It’s clear that we’re looking for a future that’s based on being in a spiritual body. We’re now on a journey because God’s preparing us, but we have our part to play. It’s not a one-sided situation. God grants us all the help and the things that we need, but we’ve got to put them into practice. We’ve got to be utilizing the very power of God in our lives to grow in conversion.

The point I want to bring out is that we need to be *growing in conversion*, if you summarize all that we are to be doing: ***seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!***

His righteousness is the process by which we are *growing in righteousness*, being converted into the very likeness of our Savior Jesus Christ in

mind, action and attitude. God is writing His laws and His commandments into our very hearts (Heb. 10:16^[transcriber’s correction]). We need to be recognizing that.

Philippians 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus.” In other words, we are:

- to have His attitude
- to have His perception
- to be thinking like Christ thought when He was here
- to be doing those things that truly please God, according to His will

Doing God’s will is part of our daily prayer that we offer up to God: ‘Your will be done.’

We can see an important Scripture about doing God’s will and fulfilling His purpose. There are two points in Rom. 12: service and the transforming our minds and doing God’s will.

Romans 12:1: “I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well pleasing to God, **which is your spiritual service.**” We are:

- to be serving God
- to be serving one another
- to be presenting our bodies a living sacrifice

A *living sacrifice* is one that’s not being offered upon the altar, but one that is Holy and perfect, with no blemishes just as Christ was a living sacrifice.

Verse 2: “Do not conform yourselves to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind** in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God.”

I know that this needs to be in our prayers—‘Your will be done’—but then we need to ask God:

- What is your will for me today?
- What do I need to be changing?
- What do I need to be working on in my life that’s going to be pleasing to You?

As active participation of seeking God’s will in our lives, there’s so much out there that can distract us and get us going off in the wrong direction.

2-Corinthians 6:16: “And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’”

This points out that we are sanctified. We’ve been made Holy by the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit. We are a living temple of the living God.

That's quite a responsibility to understand that we are to be serving God, worshipping God; yet, we are the temple of the living Spirit of God.

Verse 17: "Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate," says *the* Lord, 'and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you.'" We can no longer wander into the world and be 'unclean' and to be filled:

- with wrong thoughts
- with wrong actions
- with sin
- dwelling the way that we once walked

We need to truly be converted and to be changed.

Verse 18: "'And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says *the* Lord Almighty." Because of what Paul just wrote, notice what he writes next:

2-Corinthians 7:1: "Now then, beloved, **since we have these promises...**" There are promises right there that God gave us. That:

- we are the children of God
- we have the indwelling of God's Spirit
- we are the temple of the living God
- He will be our God

Because of that, what did Paul say?

Verse 1: "...since we have these promises, we should purge ourselves from every defilement of *the* flesh and *the* spirit, perfecting Holiness in *the* fear of God."

There's a lot in this Scripture. You could take this Scripture apart and just do a Bible study on many aspects of it. What does it mean to:

- purge ourselves?
- be free from the defilement of the flesh?
- be perfecting Holiness?

It's all part of being converted, growing and applying ourselves!

I think the best description of what Paul is talking about is seen in Col. 3, remembering our responsibilities as we stay on course for the Kingdom of God. What are we to be doing as we travel to the Kingdom of God?

Colossians 3:5: "Therefore, put to death your members which *are* on earth—sexual immorality, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

Again, you can tear that Scripture apart and get a lot of the aspects of what Paul's talking about, here. It means to stop sinning.

Verse 6: "Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, among whom **you also once walked, when you were living in these things**" (vs 6-7).

Paul reminds us that that's where we came from, but that's not where we going. We're going to the Kingdom of God:

- we need to change
- we need to grow
- we need to overcome

Verse 8: "But now, you should also **put off** all *these* things: wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, *seeing that* you have **put off the old man** together with his deeds" (vs 8-9).

The *old man* being the carnal attitude, the carnal way that is in us. We have to put that off. In fact, we are to *crucify the old man*, as it says in Gal., *get rid of the old man*. It's a battle! How do we "...put off the old man"...? *By putting in the new man!*

Verse 10: "And have put on the new man... [which is Christ] ...who *is* being renewed in knowledge according to *the* image of Him Who created him." Here we see a process going on. We put off the old and we bring in the new, the very new Man: Jesus Christ.

Verse 11: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian *nor* Scythian, slave *nor* free; but Christ *is* all things, and in all." In other words:

- it doesn't matter your background
- it doesn't matter your social status
- it doesn't matter how rich or poor you are

It's a matter of whether Christ is in you are not! That's what's important. Paul continues to write, since you're putting on Christ, then:

Verse 12: "Put on then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections... [deep love] ...kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering... [patience] ...forbearing one another, and forgiving one another... [Christian faith in action] ...if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ forgave you, so also you should forgive.** And above all these things *put on* love, which is *the* bond of perfection" (vs 12-14). ***Indeed, we are being perfected in love, brethren!*** That love is from God. That love is in us. We need:

- to practice it
- to continue to love one another
- to serve one another
- to truly be doing God's will

If we're doing these things, we're going to be staying on course. We're not going to be pulled off and going the 'way of the world' because we're literally too busy. We're working. It's important to be working. The thing is, it's worse just to sit there and not have anything to do. That's the worst.

You ever been on a job site where you go in and you just sit there and you have nothing to do? It's terrible! We have work to accomplish. So, God knew we would need that. That's why it's important that we be doing those things that are pleasing to Him.

Wrapping up the second point: You are to dedicate your life to God. Then, be confident that you're going to get there. Don't get discouraged. Don't have doubts, fears and anxieties. *Believe!* It's amazing how that works. Ask God to add to your belief and your faith, because regarding confidence:

What did Paul say? Philippians 1:6: **"Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."**

This is a promise from God. *Believe it!* Knowing that God is not going to let down on His side of the covenant. Trust and have confidence in God Who will bring us into His Kingdom. We can have faith in that.

3. **Keep the hope of the Kingdom of God alive and well in your heart**

After going through the first two points—being focused on the Kingdom of God and being actively doing those things that will help us to do our part to achieve the Kingdom—we also have to recognize that God says that He's going to give you hope, so that you will:

- be encouraged
- lifted up by hope
- not fall under the prey of doubts and the things of this world

What is hope? *First of all, hope is a gift of the Holy Spirit!* It is an essential part of our vision to the Kingdom of God. Hope really is a part of faith, because *faith is the belief in God*. It has to deal with trusting God, but it also has to be the hope of God.

The hope is kind of the emotional side or the mental thinking side where ***we believe God!*** Our hope is in the Word of God, in that we emotionally and spiritually believe that God will perform what He has promised to do. We can rest on that.

Hope is an important part of our spiritual armor, spiritual make-up, and the help that we need in times when things get desperately difficult.

1-Peter 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto **a living hope** through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead." You can see that the Scripture is really built around the fact that:

- God has called us
- He's given us His Spirit
- He's promised us eternal life in His family

That is our living hope, that God will accomplish these very things in us; not because of who *we* are; it's because of Who God is.

Verse 4: "Unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us." Peter continues to encourage us focus on this incorruptible promise, this gift that God is going to make available to us.

Verse 5: "Who *are* being safeguarded by *the* power of God through faith, for salvation *that* is ready to be revealed *in the* last time." This is a very encouraging Scripture.

Real hope that we have in God is not wishful thinking. It's not like, 'Well, I hope it's going to be. Ya know, I kinda' think, but yeah, maybe yes, maybe no.' ***No!*** It's a confident powerful belief that lifts us up in desperate times and gives us the assurance and the positive expectation that God is going to do His part. ***We can appreciate that God's Word is undefiable! God does not lie!***

Rom.8 deals with hope and our dearest expectation to be in the Kingdom, to be there, to be actively participating in bringing the solution to this world that it needs so desperately.

Romans 8:24: "For **by hope we were saved...**" That is true! What does *by hope* mean? *Hope is that element that truly keeps us going sometimes when things get desperate!*

"...but hope that is seen is not hope; for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience" (vs 24-25). *Hope is a part of faith!*

We can see that Heb. 11 is part of faith and trusting in God. It's a little different in terms of its aspect.

Hebrews 11:1: "Now, faith is *the* substance of **things hoped for**, and *the* conviction of things not seen."

You can see that hope and faith does work together. Hope really is the anchor that really secures us to the promises of God.

Hebrews 6:18: “So that by two immutable things, in which *it was impossible for God to lie*...”

This is part of God’s character. ***God does not lie! There’s no part of deceit or misrepresenting anything! God is Truth!***

“...we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to **lay hold on the hope that has been set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul**, both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the *sanctuary* within the veil; where Jesus has entered for us as a forerunner, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec” (vs 18-20).

That’s quite the verse, quite the section to really read and to truly appreciate. We can add to that Rom. 8:28. It says that all things that happen to us are for our good. That’s something that we understand, that God is leading and directing our lives so that we can grow and become more like He is.

Hope gives us the zeal! It gives us the spiritual vision to keep on keeping on to the Kingdom of God and achieving the Kingdom. I hope through this postscript to the Feast of Tabernacles that we can truly:

- grab hold of the vision of the Kingdom of God
- hold on to it
- be reminded of it daily
- be doing those things that we need to be doing in our lives so we can make sure we’re going to be there
- have confidence in God as we continue to please God and do His will.

We need to recognize, last of all, that we need to keep the hope in our hearts alive. Don’t become discouraged. Don’t become doubtful, fearful or feel in some way that God is going to forsake you. He will not. He said, ‘I will never forsake you nor leave you.’

Rom. 8 is really is perhaps one of the most encouraging section of Scripture. This whole chapter 8 is just an incredible Scripture. As Paul ends up, it’s just absolutely very, very encouraging. That’s what I want to leave you with:

- encouragement
- steadfastness
- focus
- continuing to keep the Kingdom burning in our mind
- keep going forward with all that God would have us be doing

Romans 8:31: “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? He Who did not spare even His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not also grant us all things together with Him?” (vs 31-32). Paul is saying *to have faith, trust in the promises that God has laid before us!*

Verse 33: “Who shall bring an accusation against the elect of God? God *is the One* Who justifies. Who *is* the one that condemns? *It is Christ* Who died, but rather, Who is raised again, Who is even *now* at the right hand of God, *and* Who is also making intercession for us” (vs 33-34). *He is our High Priest, and He is there. We can go to Him in prayer, daily! He hears us!*

Verse 35: “What shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... [Will any of these cause us to be separated from the love of God?] ...Accordingly, it is written, ‘For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are reckoned as sheep for the slaughter.’ But in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who 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 created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which *is* in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vs 35-39).

Brethren, I hope these Scriptures that we have gone over today ***are inspiring and helpful and will keep us on the course to God’s Kingdom!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 7:13-14
- 2) Romans 8:16-19, 22-23
- 3) 1-John 3:1-2
- 4) Hebrews 11:8-10,13-16
- 5) Matthew 6:31-33
- 6) 2-Corinthians 4:14-18
- 7) 2-Corinthians 5:1-7
- 8) Colossians 3:1-4
- 9) Philippians 2:5
- 10) Romans 12:1-2
- 11) 2-Corinthians 6:16-18
- 12) 2-Corinthians 7:1
- 13) Colossians 3:5-14
- 14) Philippians 1:6
- 15) 1-Peter 1:3-5
- 16) Romans 8:24-25
- 17) Hebrews 11:1
- 18) Hebrews 6:18-20
- 19) Romans 8:31-39

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 13
- Hebrews 10:16

- Romans 8:28

RK: nfs
Transcribed: 04-22-18
Proofed: bo—4/26/18