

Forsake All That You Have

(Transcript)

By Warren Zehrung – 7/5/2014

Are we disciples of Jesus Christ, and are we students of Jesus Christ – with Him as our Head Master – our Rabbi (John 1:38)? We should be His students because He is the only perfect teacher.

We live in an evil and corrupt world. There is nothing that this world has to offer of a lasting nature. Fame, wealth and worldly pleasures are fleeting. We are told that we are to come out of the world and be separate.

In a heartfelt appeal, the apostle Paul pleaded with the Corinthian brethren to come out of the world – and to have nothing to do with the ways of this evil world.

2 Corinthians 6:

- 14** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what fellowship hath light with darkness?

That's right – this world is in abject darkness – and we are the children of light.

2 Corinthians 6:

- 15** And what concord hath Christ with Belial [the personification of evil.]? Or what part hath he that believes with an infidel?

'Infidel' One who does **not believe** in God's goodness.

The two do not mix – and if they do mix, there is nothing good that comes of it. God lives in us as we put on the attributes of Jesus Christ. Those in the world are putting God as far behind them as possible. When their ways affect us we become unclean – but our interaction with them does not make them holy.

Haggai 2:

- 11** Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,
- 12** If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.
- 13** Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.
- 14** Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.

2 Corinthians 6:

- 16** And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
- 17** Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

We are to be holy as only God is holy.

1 Peter 1:

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

2 Corinthians 6:

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

In rejecting God and His perfect way, those of this world have accepted Satan's premise that it is survival of the fittest. It is a dog eat dog world out there – and you must push others out of the way to have it your way. One of the behavioral traits that has become pervasive in modern society is that of **self indulgence**. We hear people say, "You only go around once – so get all you can get." They throw caution to the wind and live as if there is no tomorrow. The fascination of life's gratification brings a rejection of Godly principles. They do not worry about the consequences of their actions. It is the way of this world that leads to premature death.

Brethren, are we in it for the short-term, or are we in it for the long-haul? Jesus tells us that the Kingdom of God cannot be acquired by seeking power and wealth, or control and politics, or luxury and extravagance—but by laying those things aside. Jesus gives us the analogy of how the grass, the flowers and the trees continue to exist year after year – by the **design** of God.

Luke 12:

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Aren't people more important than grass? We are God's creation also. Jesus says that we need to get our priorities in order:

Luke 12:

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knows that ye have need of these things.

31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Have you asked yourself recently, "What cost Christianity?" There is a 'cost' for being a Christian. 'Christianity' is not something you join. Who today stores up – saves up – where rust and rot cannot corrupt? Where is it that your savings would be totally safe – there is no place on earth? Jesus gave us this instruction:

Matthew 6:

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Jesus should have added inflation and taxes – but, 'where thieves break through and steal' covers that.

Matthew 6:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Jesus is not saying that it is wrong to have a savings or retirement – He is saying that it is wrong for that to be the **most important** thing in your life. Just how much is stored up in your **heavenly** 401(k) plan?

Matthew 6:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Luke 12:

21 So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is **not rich toward God**.

The focus for Christians is a Godly life. Jesus put it like this:

Matthew 6:

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

What is your agenda? Which set of rules governs every thought and action of your life? Is your life's goal fully in accordance with God's plan?

Matthew 6:

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Jesus is saying that you cannot have it both ways. You cannot say, "I want it God's way," and then, at the same time, be scheming, political, lying and misappropriating.

Matthew 6:

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

'Mammon' is ill gotten material wealth, power or fame that has a debasing influence on those it touches. So – how are we to go about our daily lives in service to God?

Matthew 6:

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Don't worry inordinately about your everyday needs.

Life and the things of a Godly life are much more important.

Matthew 6:

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are ye not much better than they?

This is written for us. The Plan of God is for mankind – not the birds.

Matthew 6:

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

The lilies, ferns and flowers are incredibly delicate and intricate and beautiful... more so than any needle point or hand woven garment.

Matthew 6:

- 29** And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- 30** Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?
- 31** Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?
- 32** (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things.

What is first and foremost in our lives? What is of the highest priority to us?

Matthew 6:

- 33** But seek ye **first** the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Every day, seek first and foremost – the Kingdom of God. It is of the highest priority! We live according to the rules of the Kingdom – NOW.

Matthew 6:

- 34** Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

There is more than enough to contend with day-to-day, without worrying about the future. The entire world is in melt down all around us – let's get our priorities straight.

As Christians, we realize that our temporary lives are not our own—we have been purchased by Christ.

Jesus goes on to explain that those people who are His will make a conscious decision to make God's way of life their total priority.

Luke 14:

- 25** And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,
- 26** If any man come to me, and does not love-less his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own **life** also, he cannot be my **disciple**.

We must love God more than life itself!

Luke 14:

- 27** And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

'Bear His cross' Christ bore His cross – are we likewise bearing our cross and laying down our lives as Jesus commands us? So Jesus asks the question: Do we really have what it takes to be real mature Christians? Jesus explains that you cannot be a **half-hearted Christian**.

Luke 14:

- 28** For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?
- 29** Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,
- 30** Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.
- 31** Or what king, going to make war against another king, sits not down first, and consults whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?
- 32** Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an ambassador, and desires conditions of peace.

The **title** of today's sermon comes from this next verse:

Luke 14:

- 33** So likewise, whosoever he be of you that **forsakes not all that he has**, he cannot be my disciple.

'Forsake' means to renounce, say goodbye to, turn your back on, or as the French would say, "Adieu." Brethren, the question becomes: Have we forsaken everything that is an **impediment** to God's way of life? Have we forsaken all that we have – or do we allow ourselves a **worldly edge** to accomplish what is important to us. Do we allow ourselves to break God's rules 'a little bit?' God requires our full and complete loyalty and commitment.

From God's perspective – why would God the Father and Jesus Christ want us to be around in their Kingdom in the first place? Most of us would just mess things up in the Kingdom – because that is what we have done on the earth.

Without us God the Father and Jesus Christ were perfect and complete. Why did they come up with a plan to bring us into their God family? What do they see in us that we cannot even imagine of ourselves? God is a creator and a producer – not a user and a taker. God put within man the **desire to be creative** as well.

Jesus was a carpenter—but He did not build a wooden church building. He is building His Church—an eternal spiritual entity. If we have the eyes to see, there is a picture there of our future.

Mankind has tremendous creative ability—just look at the scientific inventions and building accomplishments that have been achieved when men have set their minds to it. We can fly – we can see atoms – we can go to the moon – we build powerful computers – we can see and speak to anyone on earth...

God tells us that our ability is only limited by our imagination. Man can achieve anything that he is able to conceive of in his mind. God said of man's ability:

Genesis 11:

- 6** ...Nothing will be restrained from them, which they have **imagined** to do.

And, that is in the flesh! If we can **think it** – we can accomplish it! But, God's promise to us goes well beyond this temporal life. His plan is that we attain to **eternal spiritual life** as children of God. Notice how our capability and potential will **increase** as spirit beings:

1 Corinthians 2:

- 9** As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

We cannot now imagine what will be within our grasp as **creative spirit-born** members of the God family with an eternity of **time** and the **resources** of the vast limitless universe at our disposal.

But to be a part of what God has in store for us we must now become like God is. We must love His law and His people as He does—without competition or strife. He is not going to have us messing up His Kingdom. Do we really want God's way of life with ever fiber of our being, or do we resent having to do things the "hard way?" Do we say, "I know God says to do it this way – but I've got to do it this other way to achieve what I want?"

We are warned in the Scriptures that it is possible to fall away from the truth of God and His good graces, and lose out on salvation. That thought is horrifying to consider. Extremely trying days lie just ahead for those of us in the Church of God. Everything that we hold sacred will soon be overthrown – everything, that is, except our faith, which must continue until the very end. Over and over in the Bible the brethren are admonished to live lives of **overcoming**, and remain faithful to the end.

Christianity, in spite of what some believe, is no bed of roses. There is no way that a novice in the Christian Faith can reasonably envision all the trials and tribulations he will experience during his course of conversion. We do not know everything that the future holds – only God knows.

What is clear is that Jesus warned that the **last Church era** before His return would let down and be in severe need of repentance. We are to live exemplary lives as examples and witnesses to those in the world. Here's a good question: How do we go about **forsaking all that we have?**

God the Father forsook all that He had. Sometimes we think that God is above the fracas – and that He does not make sacrifices. Well, Satan brought trouble right to God's door as well. Satan said:

Isaiah 14:

- 13** For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

- 14** I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be [like] the most High.

God the Father forsook all that He had. Had Jesus failed by not living a perfect life, the Father would have lost His only Son forever.

Jesus Christ also forsook all that He had.

Coming from heaven, Jesus laid aside His glory – divested His divinity – so that He might endure the shameful, ignominious death on the cross for my sins and yours. Many do not believe it, but Jesus could have **lost it all**, had He sinned. The spiritual penalty for sin is death, and Jesus would have died the second death, eternal death, had He sinned.

Hebrews 4:

- 15** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Romans 6:

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Revelation 20:

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Jesus Christ was crucified:

John 3:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he **gave** [up] His only begotten Son, [**forsaking all that He had**] that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

We cannot begin to **imagine** what it would have been like for the Father to lose Jesus. That is an understatement. God the Father – in His love for us – **forsook all that He Had**.

Jesus also forsook all that He had. Jesus **would not** ask us to do anything He and the Father had not already done. Jesus put **everything** on the line for us. He could have lost it all.

1 Peter 2:

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, **leaving us an example**, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, **should live unto righteousness**.

Living unto righteousness entails **forsaking all that we have** – just as **Jesus** and the **Father** have given us example. At great cost they both forsook all that they had.

Hebrews 12:

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

I received a response to this week's Countdown to the Return of Jesus Christ – that I'd like to share with you.

“How timely this Countdown is! It may be very soon that we must **forsake all that we have** physically. So many of us think we're ready to, we just need to know **beyond** any shadow of doubt that it's God saying "get out of here!" And praying for that, **that** He would save us from deception and from apostasy. If He leads us and we know that for sure, we will go. And **forsake** our **families**, our lifestyles, our **friends**, our comfort, our financial security, and the **roof** over our heads, and more...”

Forsaking all that we have is not a mere sentiment in the Scriptures. God has got to find out while we are on this earth if we are willing to put Him and His way **first** in everything. He is not playing games. The Bible does not say **many** are **called**, but **few are chosen** in vain:

Matthew 22:

- 11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:
- 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how came thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.
- 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 22:

- 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

There are so many warnings in the Bible about not coming up short. But, is there a possibility that we could fall away?

Hebrews 6:

- 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

I do not know anyone in God's Church that would say that this verse did not refer to him – because we all believe that we have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit. Continuing the thought:

Hebrews 6:

- 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,
- 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

If we do not put God **first**, we will not have a place in His kingdom – we must forsake all else in deference to God's way. Even Paul warned Timothy: And this is speaking of the Church brethren.

2 Timothy 4:

- 1 charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;
- 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

2 Timothy 4:

- 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

The threat is indisputable. But, it seems that everyone in the Church feels that they are safe and this verse does not apply to them!

Paul has to repeat himself – from his first letter to Timothy where he said:

1 Timothy 4:

- 1 Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Many people start off strong when they first hear the message of the Kingdom of God, but are unable to remain faithful until the end.

2 Timothy 4:

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

The amazing thing to me is that this is stated so clearly – and so few people apply the Scriptures to our day.

Brethren think, “Yeah, there were problems in the Church back then – but that does not apply to our day.”

Well, it does apply! And we’d be wise to hold fast to strong doctrine.

2 Timothy 4:

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

Paul **forsook all that he had** for the Gospel sake.

2 Timothy 4:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

And, it is the same with us. That is why before a person makes the greatest commitment of their lives, baptism, it is important to try to realize the seriousness and crucial nature of the course on which they are about to embark.

God asks us to make a positive, super-human pledge to stay the course no matter what impediments, obstacles and hurdles we encounter in our quest for the Kingdom of God.

Living the Christian life is more difficult than anyone can imagine.

In fact, it is so challenging that without God’s continuous support through His Holy Spirit, it is impossible to succeed.

2 Timothy 3:

12 All who will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Have we made the commitment in our mind and heart, “I will seek God’s Will and Way above everything else in my life – regardless of the price?” The apostles spelled out in no uncertain terms that entrance into the Kingdom of God would not happen without many tribulations. Paul says that “We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God.” A life of hardship for a believer is the rule, not the exception. The rigors—the pressures—that God puts us through are not to crush us, but to shape us over time so that we can share in His holiness. Even the apostles did not fully realize what they were getting into, and how demanding their future would be. Before their conversion, there was no way that the disciples could remotely conceive of the persecutions and martyrdoms that they would be called on to endure.

Brethren it was the same way with us. Before making the decision to be baptized and enter the pressure-cooker conversion process of being changed from carnal humans to becoming like Jesus Christ, we considered whether or not we had what it takes to stick it out to the end of our venture. We knew much of what was entailed.

Mark 13:

- 13** And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

God's way comes first and foremost, above all things. We know that – and there is no turning back. God's Way is more important than family, marriage, children, college or education, occupation or location, because it involves our eternal life in a most direct way. Jesus tells us to be sure that we will be able to finish what we begin:

1 Peter 1:

- 7** That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Let's realize as Paul did that human life is worthless and spiritual life is priceless. Paul said:

Acts 20:

- 23** ...Bonds and afflictions abide me.
- 24** But none of these things move me, neither count I my **life** dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy...

End **Forsake All That You Have**