



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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Prayer

Lord, I am very convicted by what I have read today. I don't want to allow any area of my life to be a bad testimony of who Jesus is. Therefore, I am asking You to open my eyes and show me those areas of my life that need to come up to a higher level. Please forgive me for being tolerant of low standards that are not compatible with the excellence of Jesus' wonderful name. Starting today, I want to move up higher. Holy Spirit, please help me as I start taking steps toward making serious changes in my life, my attitudes, and my actions, in Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.

Scripture

Genesis 35:1-29 (AMP)

1 AND GOD said to Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. And make there an altar to God Who appeared to you [in a distinct manifestation] when you fled from the presence of Esau your brother. 2 Then Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, Put away the [images of] strange gods that are among you, and purify yourselves and change [into fresh] garments; 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar to God Who answered me in the day of my distress and was with me wherever I went. 4 So they [both young men and women] gave to Jacob all the strange gods they had and their earrings which were [worn as charms against evil] in their ears; and Jacob buried and hid them under the oak near Shechem. 5 And they journeyed and a terror from God fell on the towns round about them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. 6 So Jacob came to Luz, that is, Bethel, which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people with him. 7 There he built an altar, and called the place El-bethel [God of Bethel], for there God revealed Himself to him when he fled from the presence of his brother. 8 But Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried below Bethel under an oak; and the name of it was called Allon-bacuth [oak of weeping]. 9 And God [in a distinctly visible manifestation] appeared to Jacob again when he came out of Padan-aram, and declared a blessing on him. 10 Again God said to him, Your name is Jacob [supplanter]; you shall not be called Jacob any longer, but Israel shall be your name. So He called him Israel [contender with God]. 11 And God said to him, I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you and kings shall be born of your stock; 12 The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and to your descendants after you I will give the land. 13 Then God ascended from him in the place where He talked with him. 14 And Jacob set up a pillar (monument) in the place where he talked with [God], a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it and he poured oil on it. 15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God had talked with him Bethel [house of God]. 16 And they journeyed from Bethel and had but a little way to go to Ephrath [Bethlehem] when Rachel suffered the pangs of childbirth and had hard labor. 17 When she was in hard labor, the midwife said to her, Do not be afraid; you shall have this son also. 18 And as her soul was departing, for she died, she called his name Ben-oni [son of my sorrow]; but his father called him Benjamin [son of the right hand]. 19 So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem. 20 And Jacob set a pillar (monument) on her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day. 21 Then Israel journeyed on and spread his tent on the other side of the tower of Edar. 22 When Israel dwelt there, Reuben [his eldest son] went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it. Now Jacob's sons were twelve. 23 The sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. 24 The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. 25 The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali. 26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob born to him in Padan-aram. 27 And Jacob came to Isaac his father at Mamre or Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. 28 Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. 29 And Isaac's spirit departed; he died and was gathered to his people, being an old man, satisfied and satiated with days; his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Worship Music

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Celine Dion](#)

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Martina McBride](#)

[Silent Night-
Martina McBride](#)

[I Can Only Imagine-
Mercy Me](#)

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[Virtue for Women-
Cathe Laurie](#)

Genesis 35. God Renews the Covenant at Bethel

Bethel was the place where, 20 years before, in his flight from Canaan, Jacob had seen the heavenly ladder and God had made him heir to the Abrahamic promises. Now God reassures him that those promises shall be fulfilled. Jacob set up a stone pillar in recognition of the place where God had talked to him. Later, on their way to Ephrath (Bethlehem), Rachel gave birth to Benjamin. She unfortunately died in childbirth. Jacob buried her and created a tomb.

Then Jacob moved on to Hebron, the home of Abraham and Isaac. Sometime after his arrival, Isaac died at the age of 180. Together Jacob and Esau buried their father in the family tomb.

(Halley's Bible Handbook; Henry Halley; 2000; Zondervan; Bible History & Commentaries; page 123)

Jacob Moves To Bethel; VV 1-6 This time Jacob obeyed God when He told him to go to Bethel. V 7 "El bethel" means the God of Bethel. "Bethel" means the house of God. V 8 "Allonbachuth" means the oak of weeping. VV 10-12 In Bethel there was a renewal of commitment-not of Jacob to God, but God confirming His promises to Jacob. V 18 "Benoni" means the son of my sorrow. "Benjamin" means son of the right hand. (Old Testament Study Guide; The Word For Today; Chuck Smith; 2005; commentaries; page 17)

Be Not Slothful in Business**Romans 12:11**

I'll never forget the time when, as I met with a head of government in a foreign nation, he looked me straight in the eyes and said, "I just don't understand many of the Christians I've met. To me, they seem to be some of the laziest people I've ever known in my life. I'm amazed that anyone would be satisfied to live with such low standards. Is this the way all Christians are?"

I was so embarrassed when I heard those words. I found myself wanting to apologize for the entire Christian community! But the truth is, I personally knew some of the Christians he was referring to—and I had thought the very same thing on many occasions! These people didn't seem to have enough gumption to get up and do something with their lives. It wasn't that they weren't talented, gifted, and knowledgeable. They were just satisfied with the level they had attained and had no desire to show any professionalism with their lives.

Honestly, it's a mystery to me how anyone can claim to be a Christian indwelt by the Spirit of God and yet be satisfied with such a low-level existence. Of course, I am very aware that many people weren't raised with the same high standard of excellence that my parents taught me. Perhaps some Christians grew up in an environment where low-level thinking was viewed as normal, and that's why they have accepted such a low standard for their own lives. However, other low-achievers can't claim a mediocre upbringing as an excuse. They just don't take advantage of opportunities to learn, adapt, and better themselves and therefore never experience needed change. This is usually a sign that these people have no inner desire to improve their lives.

You may send such individuals to school to educate them; you may even pay for them to fly halfway around the world to learn new and better techniques in their field of expertise. But if they don't possess the inner drive to improve themselves and to become more professional, it doesn't matter how much time or money you throw at them. It's all a waste unless they possess the desire to be diligent.

Such low-level standards should never be tolerated by a believer, a pastor, an employer, or an employee. Yet too often believers make excuses for their slothful attitudes and allow them to continue. As a result, the world frequently looks at the Church as a pathetic entity made up of a bunch of nincompoops who aren't serious about what they do or say.

I am certain that Paul's experience with low-achievers in the Church is one of the reasons he wrote the believers in Rome and told them to be "not slothful in business...." The word "slothful" is the Greek word *okneros*, a word that means lazy or idle. It carries the idea of a person who has a do-nothing, lethargic, lackadaisical, apathetic, indifferent, lukewarm attitude toward life. I find it very interesting that this word translated "slothful" is the identical Greek word used in Matthew 25:26 when Jesus tells of the "wicked" servant who was thrown into outer darkness because he produced nothing significant with the resources that had been entrusted to him. In these contexts, both "slothful" and "wicked" denote an attitude of apathy that should have no place at all in the life of a Christian.

But Paul goes on to say that we are not to be slothful "in business." The word "business" is the Greek word *spoudadzo*, and it means to do something with eagerness or to do something with diligence. It is the idea of acting responsibly, quickly, and with attentiveness. You could say that the word *spoudadzo* ("diligence") is exactly the opposite of a person who lazily strolls along with no passion or desire. Instead of being lazy and apathetic, a diligent person is excited and energetic, putting his whole heart into the project that has been given to him. He treats his responsibility as if it is important, and as a result of his excellent attitude, he does his job well.

Paul also says that we should be "... fervent in spirit...." The word "fervent" is the Greek word *zeo*, which originally meant to boil. This is the picture of a person so enthusiastic about his task that he can hardly contain his excitement. The desire to do his job with excellence and enthusiasm is constantly boiling inside the person who is diligent about his assignment. In fact, the Greek tense used here would be better translated, "... Be constantly fervent in spirit...." The word "spirit" does not refer to the Holy Spirit, but to the attitude of this believer. It means, "... Be constantly fervent in your attitude...."

Then Paul takes it another step by saying that we are to be "... fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." It is very plain what Paul is declaring here: A right attitude is one of the most effective ways for a person to serve the Lord. You see, when a believer does his job right and with an awesome attitude, it is a testimony to the name of Jesus. But when a believer does his work shabbily, he projects a sorry image of who Jesus is. This is exactly what happened in the case of that foreign head of government who asked me if all Christians were as mediocre as the ones he had encountered.

Paul uses the Greek word *douleuo* when he writes about "serving" the Lord. This word comes from the Greek word *doulos*, which means a servant who does the bidding of his master. The word *doulos* described a servant who was sold out, lock, stock, and barrel—totally committed to serving and pleasing his master. As a good servant, he would do his best to discover his master's desires and then explicitly do whatever was needed to fulfill those desires.

By using this word in this context, it is almost as if Paul is saying, "If you really want to please the Lord and be a servant that brings Him satisfaction, then do these things...." What things bring pleasure to the heart of Jesus? Let me repeat the qualities we've already discussed: having an attitude of excellence; doing your job with seriousness and responsibility; and being consistently fervent, committed, and enthusiastic in your attitude. When a believer steadfastly demonstrates these attributes in his life, he becomes a servant who truly brings satisfaction to the heart of Jesus Christ.

Don't misunderstand what I am saying. Your salvation is a free gift of God's grace, and nothing you do can buy you a special standing with Him. Nevertheless, how you serve God and the testimony that your life demonstrates to the world is very important to Jesus Christ.

So I urge you to take an honest look at yourself today. Ask yourself, When people look at my life, do they come away with a positive idea of what a Christian is like, or does my example leave people unimpressed with Jesus Christ? Then ask the Lord to show you any changes you need to make so you can move on up to a higher level of excellence in God!

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

Would you say that your life is a good testimony of who Jesus is, or does your example leave some people shaking their heads, wondering what is wrong with lazy, low-level Christians?

Perhaps you have a standard of excellence in some areas of your life but not in other areas. In your opinion, what areas of your life already portray excellence, and what areas do not?

Do you try to stay aware of how your attitudes, your dress, and your job performance are affecting people's opinions of Jesus? Are you continually striving to make sure your life gives an honorable impression of Jesus Christ to others? Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Matthew 25:19-30 (AMP)

19 Now after a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came and brought him five more, saying, Master, you entrusted to me five talents; see, here I have gained five talents more. 21 His master said to him, Well done, you upright (honorable, admirable) and faithful servant! You have been faithful and trustworthy over a little; I will put you in charge of much. Enter into and share the joy (the delight, the blessedness) which your master enjoys. 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, Master, you entrusted two talents to me; here I have gained two talents more. 23 His master said to him, Well done, you upright (honorable, admirable) and faithful servant! You have been faithful and trustworthy over a little; I will put you in charge of much. Enter into and share the joy (the delight, the blessedness) which your master enjoys. 24 He who had received one talent also came forward, saying, Master, I knew you to be a harsh and hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you had not winnowed [the grain]. 25 So I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is your own. 26 But his master answered him, You wicked and lazy and idle servant! Did you indeed know that I reap where I have not sowed and gather [grain] where I have not winnowed? 27 Then you should have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent away from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will be furnished richly so that he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away. 30 And throw the good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness; there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

(Word 9 Bible Software: Bible Software, multiple translations, dictionary, atlas, sermons of the past saints, concordance, 2005)
(The Everyday Life Bible; Amplified, 2005, Joyce Meyers, Scripture, Commentaries, page 59-60)