

VOICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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“BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT”

As people of faith, we want to overlook the scripture in the sermon on the mount about being poor in spirit but when we understand it, it takes on a new meaning. Poor in spirit means that we are spiritually bankrupt. Bankruptcy indicates the lack of. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven is a scripture indicating that God is in control of our lives. When self efforts and struggles to be spiritual fail, then we have emptied ourselves to the point that God begins to fill us with the Kingdom of God. I'm not saying that we're not to work or have works for the Lord in our lives, but rather that an emptied life invites the Kingdom's work in. When God works through us, it appears that it is our works when in reality, it is really God's works. A law of life is that you can't put something into something that is already full. This is not saying that God takes over our will but rather that our bankruptcy is an invitation for God to control our will through our submission. Preparing ourselves as empty vessels is a lot of work within itself. If you like working for God, get busy cleaning out the vessel of your life for the enhancement of the Kingdom.

Pastor George Ferrington

DEAR CHURCH, BRIDE OF CHRIST

This is a message from the Lord to us, His Bride. We are getting closer to the BIG DAY, the WEDDING OF THE CHURCH, THE BRIDE, TO OUR LORD. He is standing with excitement waiting for the Betrothed to come down the aisle. Let's get excited Church. These are perilous times and we should be prepared for them. He has given us the Word so we would not be caught unaware.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 says, **“But understand this, that in the last days there will set in perilous times of great stress and trouble—hard to deal with and hard to bear. For people will be lovers of self and utterly self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate (greedy) desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffers), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane. They will be without natural human affection (callous and inhuman), relentless—admitting of no truce or appeasement. [They will be] slanderers—false accusers, trouble makers; intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good. They will be treacherous betrayers, rash and inflated with self-conceit. They will be lovers of sensual pleasures and vain amusements more than lovers of God. For although they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it—their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession. Avoid all such people—turn away from them.”** We do not know the hour or day but it is evident by the signs that we are in the last days. As the Church, the Bride of Christ, we should be excited and inviting as many as we can to be a part of this big event, leading them to Jesus by the love of the Lord being portrayed in our lives.

Last month, I was praying and asking my Father to help me to understand what is going on in

my life. I felt like I was being bombarded from every direction. I saw a posted sign like we used to put up around our hunting club. It said, "NO TRESPASSING, VIOLATORS WILL BE PROSECUTED." During the course of the day, I continued to pray and ask for revelation. The Lord reminded me of an incident that happened on our club many years ago. There was a man trespassing on our property. I could hear him get on his four wheeler and leave, but I was unable to catch him. I knew who he was but until I caught him, I could not stop him. One day, I decided to go to the front of the club where he always went and wait on him. He did not see me until it was too late, he was caught. I told him I could have him put in jail because he was trespassing on private property that was legally posted. I let him go and told him not to trespass again. I asked my Father, "What are you showing me?" He said to me, "You are Mine, You are My Temple, I bought you with a price, and the enemy is trespassing on private property. You know who he is, but until you catch him, he will continue." I went to the Word.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "**Do you not know that your body is the temple—the very sanctuary—of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received as a gift from God? You are not your own, you were bought for a price—purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own. So then honor God and bring glory to Him in your body.**" Proof, I am private property, I belong to God, Jesus paid the price for me. Not only am I His, but He put up the posted sign, (to make known openly or publicly) because of the victory He had on the cross over satan for me. Colossians 2:11-15 says, "**When you came to Christ, you were circumcised, but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with Him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, Who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for He forgave all our sins. He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, He disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by His victory over them on the cross.**" Posted means publicly displayed, and that is what He did for US. Violators will be prosecuted. Revelation 20:10 says, "**Then the devil who had led them astray—deceiving and seducing them—was hurled into the fiery lake of burning brimstone where the beast and false prophet were; and they will be tormented day and night forever.**" This is our promise from our Father for satan at the end but even now we have the way to victory over satan trespassing in our lives. In Luke 10:18-19 the Lord said, "**I beheld satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I have given unto you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all of the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you.**" That is our promise from our precious Lord in His Word. He can not trespass against us any longer. When he causes pain in our lives, he is trespassing and that is illegal. Jesus has taken care of it; He bought us with the precious price of His Blood. Glory!

As I pondered and meditated on this, the Lord reminded me of a message He delivered three times to Mr. Gene and I one day while we were in the church studying. Three different people brought this same message, "If he can separate and divide, he can conquer." I know this is the main mission of the devil. In the Word of God, when it speaks of end times, divisions are always mentioned. The Lord is coming for ONE Bride. The Church, the Bride, must be in unity and the enemy knows this so he wants to cause division. Jude 17-25 reads, "**But you must remember, beloved, the predictions which were made by the apostle (the special messengers) of our**

Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. They told you that in the last times there will be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires. These people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God's Spirit in them. But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love. And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives. Now all glory to God, Who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into His glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to Him Who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power and authority are His before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen." We must be aware of the tactics of the enemy and not fall prey to his plans. He has no power over us that we do not give him. The Word says greater is He Who is in us than he that is in the world.

Church, we must be different from the world. The devil is using people to hurt people, usually someone very closely related to you or someone you are around all of the time. He causes hurt feelings, anger, frustration, jealousy, self pity, envy, strife, or any other negative emotion to make you take your eyes off of the Lord and look at yourself. This is how he is trespassing on posted ground. He gets you into the negative realm slyly and then the love of God is not operating to its fullest. Now, you are offended and will have unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, resentment or some negative emotion. When we take our eyes off of the Lord and look at ourselves, we are defeated. Our life is not our own, it is not about us, it is all about Him. He did not come to condemn but to save and He did it by His love. The only way we can walk a victorious life is to walk in that same love. Instead of being moved by the ploys of the enemy in this end time, we must move him by the love of God. Instead of having negative emotions, choose to let the love of God flow in every situation of our lives. Let's get ready for the BIG DAY. Get excited Church! He has already warned us so we can be prepared. Get prepared! Fill up on the love of God! Show mercy in the place of anger or discord. We are the Bride of the Lord! Remember, the posted sign said, NO TRESPASSING--VIOLATORS WILL BE PROSECUTED!

Much love to you all,
Your Missionary, Bess Graham

DOWN BUT NOT OUT

"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shown toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Hebrews 6:10-12) I have learned that service to God is a gradual process of learning and growing. It takes many victories, and many defeats, to achieve maturity in the Lord. Most never get there in this life because of the weakness of the flesh and the intrusion of the world. In this, I am reminded of the Apostle Peter's denial of Christ, and what Jesus said about it, **"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."** (Luke 22:31-32) In the New Testament, Peter is a good example of one who was down but not out. Jesus foretold the denial of Peter, but He also gave him hope that he would be restored. Jesus prayed for him, that even in failure his faith would not be lost. You know that today Jesus is our advocate with the Father, sitting at His right hand, ever interceding for us. Even in the midst of failure and sin, we know that our faith can be strong and victory can be ours.

There are many in the world today that have lost hope. The loss of retirement assets, jobs, family, homes, etc., can spell lost hope in the minds of those who do not have strong faith in the Lord. Even Christians are confused by the current world events. But I know in Whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. **"But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written; For your sakes we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death or life, nor angels nor demons, nor the present nor the future, nor any powers, Nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us**

from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:25, 35, 36-39) **“I can do all things through him who gives me strength.”** (Philippians 4:13) Our Heavenly Father has not created us to be failures. Sure, life deals us some bad hands sometimes. And we will get more of them because we are still alive; but it is how we play out that hand that makes the difference. The Gambler said that every hand is a winner and every hand is a loser. It is all in how you play it out—in faith or fear. **“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”** (Jeremiah 29:11) God did not position us to be moved by the world, but rather that we should be the movers and shakers to affect the world for Jesus. **“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphant procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.”** (2 Corinthians 2:14) **“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”** (2 Timothy 1:7) These scriptures are to edify you, so that you can be encouraged in whatever situation you are in. Know that God is with you in the ups and in the downs. Isaiah 43:2 says, **“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned the flames will not set you ablaze.”** God is our constant friend, counselor, and deliverer. He has said in His Word and we can believe it—He cares for us and He has made a way for us to be successful.

“Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the delight of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this. He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.” (Psalm 37:3-6) And finally, **“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 1:6) We know that Peter, after denying Christ three times, went on to become one of the greatest apostles. God does not consider our failures—He forgives them. He takes our victories, no matter how small, and He makes them a seed to grow a mighty tree, a foundation on which to build a great building, for His glory. Our lives are not our own—we are here to bring glory to the Father—in this life and throughout eternity.

Bro. Mike Woods

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**THE ACCEPTABLE
YEAR OF THE LORD**

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