

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: Complete Obedience

I. BARTLE HALL PROPHECY: A NEW APPROACH TO HOLINESS

- A. The prophetic word came forth in (Jan 1990 and Sept. 1996) of large young adult gatherings in Bartle Hall with prophetic worship that would be confirmed with signs and wonders. Over the crowd was a banner that read, "***Holiness unto the Lord.***" The Lord promised that in these gatherings young people would have revelation and impartation of a "new approach" to holiness as God released great grace to walk in the miracle of holiness and freedom from all compromise.
- B. This "new approach" includes the value, pleasure and confidence (in our weakness) foundational to the NT approach to holiness that is energized by encountering intimacy with our Bridegroom God. The only valid way to approach holiness is the way taught in the New Testament. However, throughout Church history this way has been obscured. God wants to renew us to this way. It is a "living way" or one that imparts the power, exhilaration and joy of God's life to our spirit.

¹⁹ ***Boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way... (Heb. 10:19)***

II. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: CORE VALUES OF THE KINGDOM

- A. The Sermon on the Mount is the "constitution of God's Kingdom." It is the litmus test to measure our success in life, spiritual development and ministry impact. Our foundational call is to live out the 8 beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12) as we pursue 100-fold obedience (Mt. 5:48; 6:22).

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Mt. 5:3-12)

- B. Jesus defined being "perfect" by the 8 beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12). Poor in spirit acknowledges our serious dilemma in needing a breakthrough in our heart. Mourning is to be desperate enough to be "extreme" in pursuit of it. Walking in meekness involves our strengths (time, money, etc.). Hungering and thirsting for righteousness includes embracing costly righteousness. Relating with mercy is treating with tenderness those who fail us. Being pure in heart pertains to our thoughts and motives. Being a peacemaker refers to the anointing to bring peace (reconciliation) to that which is out of God's will (restoring relationships, bodies, finances, legislation, etc.). Enduring persecution is part of the counterattack for plundering Satan's Kingdom

- C. We need a paradigm shift in our heart focus of the way to position ourselves for greatness.

¹⁹ ***Whoever breaks...the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom...but whoever does and teaches them...shall be called great.... (Mt. 5:19)***

1. God invites “whosoever” or literally everyone to be great in His Kingdom. We cannot repent of the desire for greatness because God designed our spirit with this longing. We must repent for seeking greatness in a wrong way. We must also repent for neglecting to seek greatness (simply because Jesus designed and called us to be great in His sight).
 2. Jesus revealed a new paradigm for greatness. We are to focus on being great in His sight rather than in the sight of men. Our greatness is fully manifest in the age-to-come not in this age. Our greatness is based on our heart responses not natural gifting and resources and thus, it is available to everyone (“whoever” of Mt. 5:19; 20:26-27; 23:12).
 3. God invites us to greatness without regard to our outward achievements or the size of our ministry impact but on the development of our heart in love, meekness, and revelation.
- D. Our greatness before God is manifest at the Judgment Seat of Christ where Jesus rewards us.
- ¹⁰ ***For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10)***
- ¹⁶ ***Those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD... (Mal. 3:16)***
- E. In our 70 year internship in this life, we have two issues to determine. First, do we want to be in God’s family. Second, do we want to function in Jesus’ government (initially for 1,000 years in the Millennium, then for all eternity). Our ministry in the Millennium has nothing to do with how much we accomplished outwardly in this age, but rather how much we developed inwardly. ***Premise:*** our calling in the age-to-come is far more important than our circumstances now. Our calling then is determined by the growth of our heart now, thus our difficulty works for us.
- F. Jesus called us to be perfect or complete in our obedience by seeking to walk in all the light that the Spirit gives us. The attainment of victory begins by declaring war against all compromise. Our primary objective in this life is to become complete in our dedication and obedience.
- ⁴⁸ ***You shall be perfect (walk in all the light you have) as your Father...is perfect. (Mt. 5:48)***
- G. The pursuit of “complete obedience” includes bridling our speech (Jas 3:2), disciplining our physical appetites (1 Cor. 9:27), managing our time (for service and prayer with the Word) and money (to increase the Kingdom beyond our comfort and honor; Mt. 6:19-21) and making a covenant with our eyes to refuse to look upon anything that stirs up lust (Job 31:1). This is not the same as attaining “sinless perfection” in this life. We focus on our responsibility to “contend” for complete obedience and rely on God’s grace to empower us to “attain” it.
- H. The easy yoke of Jesus is only found in seeking to obey Jesus 100%. The power of the Christian life is in consistently pursuing 100-fold obedience. There are powerful dynamics that occur in our heart when we soberly aim at pursuing 100-fold obedience.

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me... and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Mt. 11:29-30)

I. This pursuit is different than attainment. The 98% pursuit of obedience has a limited blessing on it. The last 2% is what positions us to walk with a vibrant heart. ***The cost of non-discipleship is very high.*** The call to be perfect (Mt. 5:48), is a key to living vibrantly. The luster of God's light on the inside will be diminished. Those with true repentance quickly renew their resolve to war against the sin they recently stumbled in.

J. When we obey the light the Holy Spirit gives us then He gives us more. David understood that when he walked in God's light then he positioned himself to receive more of God's light.

9 In Your light we see light. (Ps. 36:9)

K. The pursuit of "complete obedience" includes ***bridling our speech*** (Jas 3:2), ***disciplining our physical appetites*** (1 Cor. 9:27), ***managing our time*** (for service and prayer with the Word) ***and money*** (to increase the Kingdom beyond our comfort and honor; Mt. 6:19-21) and ***making a covenant with our eyes*** to refuse to look upon anything that stirs up lust (Job 31:1).

L. We see the pleasure of wholeheartedness because it brings brightness to our inner man. We lose the power of a vibrant heart by allowing compromise to go unchallenged.

34 The lamp (source of light) of the body is the eye (of the heart). Therefore, when your eye is good (single), your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad (lacks single focus), your body also is full of darkness...36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light. (Lk. 11:34-36)

M. Success or winning is to finish our life with a testimony of complete obedience (responsiveness).

5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death...before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (Heb. 11:5)

N. We have 3 dimensions of our calling in God (internal, external and eternal).

1. Our primary calling is our ***internal calling*** to be a faithful disciple of Jesus that deeply loves God and people and embraces what the world calls weak (humility, serving, giving, fasting, praying, etc.) without regard to honor or money or the size of our ministry.

2. Our temporal ***external calling*** includes our position (function) in the marketplace, a ministry organization or our home. This dimension is what most people focus on.

3. Our ***eternal calling (in the age-to-come)*** has a much larger impact than anything we will accomplish now. The apostles made many references to their calling in the age-to-come.

¹⁶ *Our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (includes ruling in the Millennium)... (2 Cor. 4:16-17)*

¹⁷ *If children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. 8:17-18)*

III. THERE ARE 3 AREAS OF LIFE IN WHICH GOD RELEASES PROSPERITY AND FAVOR

² *I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. (3 Jn. 2)*

A. Heart obedience: to establish a history in God of living in complete agreement with the Spirit. A vibrant heart is our most valuable possession. It is what Jesus died for and what we keep forever.

²³ *Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. (Prov. 4:23)*

B. Ministry impact: to make an impact on others by the power of the Holy Spirit

C. Blessed circumstances: to enjoy personal comfort (our eternal destiny in the garden of Eden)

IV. OUR PRIMARY CALL: A LIFE OF COMPLETE OBEDIENCE

A. Our primary life call is to establish a history in God of walking complete in our dedication without lacking obedience according to the light the Spirit has given us.

² *Count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience (perseverance). ⁴ Let patience have its perfect work (mature impact in us), that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (in our dedication/obedience to Jesus) ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask...and it will be given to him. (Jas 1:2-5)*

B. God gives us many opportunities to make decisions that prove our love to Him. We will make wrong decisions we regret, yet we have opportunity to change them. If we make right decisions in obedience, He gives us many opportunities to confirm them or prove them in our character.

³ *We exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope (confidence); ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 5:3-5, NAS)*

C. We are to ask the Lord for insight into areas where we lack complete dedication to Him. We ask the Lord to shock us now with insight in our lack of dedication instead of at the Judgment Seat of Christ. We come sit before the Lord like Mary of Bethany to worship, to receive revelation of His beauty, to gain insight into what we lack in our dedication and to intercede for others, etc.

⁵ *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask...and it will be given to him. (Jas 1:5)*

²⁰ *The young man said, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" ²¹ Jesus said, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (Mt. 19:20-21)*

²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴ and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Ps. 139:23-24)*

¹² *Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. ¹³ Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins...Then I shall be blameless, (Ps. 19:12-13)*

¹¹ *We also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹² that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him... (2 Thes. 1:11-12)*

1. Agreement of the heart or responsiveness to Jesus' leadership is the heart of the Bride.
 2. To live blameless is to live without compromise according to the light one has received. This is not the blamelessness of the gift of righteousness.
- D. Paul prayed that people become complete in their responsiveness to the Holy Spirit. To perfect what is lacking in others includes knowledge of truth, heart responses and ministry impact.
- ¹⁰ *Praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith? ...¹² May the Lord make you increase and abound in love...¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless (without compromise) in holiness before our God... (1 Thes. 3:10-13)*

V. BEING COMPLETE IN JESUS – 2 ISSUES (JUSTIFICATION & SANCTIFICATION)

- A. The Scripture presents two different aspects of being complete before God. First, the moment we are born again, we are instantly made complete in Christ in our legal position (justification) because of Jesus' work on the cross. Second, we progressively become "complete in our obedience" in our living condition before God (sanctification). Both are foundational truths.
- ¹⁷ *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away...²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)*
- B. We are automatically and fully complete in Christ by virtue of the new birth (Col. 1:20-22; 2:10).
- ¹⁰ *You are complete in Him... (Col. 2:10)*
- ²⁰ *Having made peace through the blood of His cross. ²¹...yet now He has reconciled ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight... (Col. 1:20-22)*

- C. Scripture uses 7 terms and over 50 references to exhort us to be complete in our obedience (2 Cor. 13:9, 11; Phil. 1:6; Col. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 13:20-21; Jas. 1:4); perfect (Mt. 5:48; 19:21; Jn. 17:23; Gal. 3:3; Eph. 4:13. Col. 1:28; 1 Thes. 3:10; Jas. 2:22; 3:2; 1 Pet. 5:10; Rev. 3:2); mature (Phil. 3:15); blameless (Lk. 1:6; 1 Cor. 1:6-8; Phil. 2:15; 1 Thes. 3:13; 5:23; 1 Tim. 3:2, 10; 5:5-7; 6:14; 2 Pet. 3:14; without spot (Eph 5:27); Worthy (2 Thes. 1:5-12; Lk 21:34-36; 20:35-36; Col. 1:9-10 Mt. 10:37-38; 22:8; Rev 3:4-5; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thes. 2:12); Stand (Lk. 21:36; 1 Cor. 10:13; 16:13; Eph. 6:10-14; Phil. 4:1; Col. 4:12; 1 Thes. 3:8; Rev. 6:17).
- D. Our primary objective and challenge in this life is to become complete in our obedience. We are to be complete in our dedication to God or agreement with the Holy Spirit's leadership.
- ³ *The testing of your faith produces patience (endurance). 4 Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (in our obedience)... (Jas 1:3-4)*
- ⁹ *This also we pray, that you may be made complete. (2 Cor. 13:9)*
- ¹¹ *Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace... (2 Cor. 13:11)*
- ¹² *Epaphras...always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Col. 4:12)*
- ²⁸ *We preach warning every man and teaching every man...that we may present every man perfect (mature) in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor... (Col. 1:28-29)*
- ⁶ *He who begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ...⁹ I pray your love may abound more and more...¹⁰ that you may be sincere and without offense (compromise) till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness... (Phil. 1:6-11)*
- ¹⁷ *That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:17)*
- ²⁰ *May the God of peace...through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is pleasing in His sight... (Heb. 13:20-21)*
- ¹⁵ *Let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. (Phil. 3:15)*
- ⁴⁸ *You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)*
- ²¹ *Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (Matthew 19:21)*
- ³ *Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? (Gal. 3:3)*

¹³ *Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... (Eph. 4:13)*

²² *Faith was working together with his works and by works faith was made perfect. (Jas. 2:22)*

² *If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the body. (Jas. 3:2)*

¹⁰ *But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (1 Peter 5:10)*

¹⁸ *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18)*

²³ *I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. (John 17:23)*

¹⁰ *May God...after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish...and settle you. (1 Pet. 5:10)*

¹⁴ *I bow my knees to the Father...¹⁶ that He would grant you...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts...that you, being rooted and grounded in love...¹⁹ may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:14-19)*

¹⁹ *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, (Gal. 4:19)*

² *You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. (Deut. 4:2)*

⁶ *They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Lk. 1:6)*

²² *Abstain from every form of evil. ²³ May God...sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord... (1 Thes. 5:22-23)*

E. The Church of Sardis was deceived by their reputation of being deep in God.

¹ *I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. ² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. ³ Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. ⁴ You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. (Rev. 3:1-4)*

VI. PRAYERS OF THE APOSTLES TO BE BLAMELESS (OVERCOME TEMPTATION)

¹¹ *We pray always for you that our God would count you worthy (by living blameless) of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness... (2 Thes. 1:11)*

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless (blameless in our character) before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, (Jude 24)

²⁶ That He (Jesus) might cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church...that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:26-27)

⁹ I pray that your love may abound...¹⁰ that you may be sincere and without offense (not offended at God nor offending God by sin) till the day of Christ ... (Phil. 1:9-10)

VII. OUR LIFE GOAL IS TO LIVE BLAMELESS IN OUR DEDICATION TO JESUS

⁷ Eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 1:7-8)

¹⁵ You may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world... (Phil. 2:15)

² A bishop then must be blameless...sober-minded, of good behavior... (1 Tim. 3:2)

¹⁰ But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. (1 Tim. 3:10)

⁵ Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day...⁷ And these things command, that they may be blameless. (1 Tim. 5:5-7)

¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of faith...¹⁴ keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing... (1 Tim. 6:11-14)

⁷ For a bishop must be blameless...not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money... (Titus 1:7)

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless... (2 Peter 3:14)

²⁰ The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" ²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Matthew 19:20-22)

⁶ They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Lk. 1:6)

²⁹ Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! (Deut. 5:29)

VIII. DAVID'S PURSUIT OF COMPLETE OBEDIENCE (PS. 101).

- A. Psalm 101 is the clearest statement of David's practical pursuit of a life in which he was complete and/or mature. David set his heart in his *personal life* to live in pursuit of full obedience (Ps. 101:1-4). David set his heart in his *corporate life* (team ministry) to build within his sphere with the core value of seeking God with full obedience and faithfulness (Ps. 101:5-8).
2 I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. 3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes... (Ps. 101:2-3)
- B. David's leadership: requirements within his "team life" (Ps. 101:5-8)
6 My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he who walks in a perfect way, he shall serve me. (Ps. 101:6)

IX. WALKING WORTHY OF OUR CALLING: BEING COMPLETE IN OUR OBEDIENCE

- A. We are to pray for the saints to walk in complete obedience and thus, to be found worthy of ruling in the age-to-come. The Church is to have a vision for full obedience knowing that it has continuity to the age-to-come. This purposeful living challenges aimlessness so common today.
10 When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints...11 Therefore we pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling... (2 Thes. 1:10-11)
9 We do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will...10 that you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him...11 strengthened with all might...for all patience (perseverance)... (Col. 1:9-11)
- B. Jesus exhorted us to pray for ourselves that we would walk in a measure of grace that enables us to stand against compromise instead of yielding to it so that we would be worthy of ruling with Him (Lk. 21:36; 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:10-14; Phil. 4:1; Col. 4:12; 1 Thes. 3:8; 2 Thes. 2:15; Rev. 6:17).
34 Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day (Second Coming) come on you unexpectedly. 35 For it will come as a snare (trap that cause some to fall away) on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things (snare of compromises) that will come to pass, and to stand (instead of fall in compromise) before the Son of Man." (Lk. 21:34-36)
17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand? (Rev. 6:17)
13 God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13)
10 Be strong in the Lord...11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 13...Take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Eph. 6:10-13)

¹² *Epaphras...always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Col. 4:12)*

X. THE END-TIME CHURCH WILL BE BLAMELESS OR COMPLETE IN OBEDIENCE

- A. John prophesied the End-Time Church would be prepared by the time of Jesus' Second Coming.
⁷ *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Rev. 19:7-8)*
- B. God will greatly increase the ranks of the faithful at the end of the age. Paul is not referring to the "glory" of being forgiven of all spots and blemishes but of the "glory" of overcoming them.
²⁶ *That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.* (Eph. 5:26-27)

XI. BEING COMPLETE IN OUR OBEDIENCE: RECEIVING THE CROWN OF LIFE

- A. My premise in this teaching is that being "complete in our obedience" is the main condition for receiving the crown of life which refers to walking in the fullness of our call in the age-to-come.
- B. The crown of life is a "crown for the way we lived" our life. It is not synonymous to receiving forgiveness but focuses on our place of function in the Millennial Kingdom.
¹² *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life (stephanos)...promised to those who love Him. (Jas 1:12)*
- C. The crown of life is only given to those who "endured temptation" or to those who seek to obey God in each area of their life by a sustained commitment to war against lust (1 Pet. 2:11).
¹¹ *Beloved, I beg you...abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul... (1 Pet. 2:11)*
- D. The Greek word for the "judgment seat" is the "bema seat" or the place to receive a reward. This concept refers to when an athlete stood before the Olympic judges to receive a gold medal. Paul viewed life as one long race that resulted in one appearance before Jesus, the "Olympic Judge."
¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10)*
- E. In our resurrected body we will all have different measures of glory (spiritual capacities).
⁴¹ *There is one glory of the sun...another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:41-42)*

XII. GOD'S LONG TERM PLAN IS TO PREPARE THE EARTH FOR HIS ETERNAL PRESENCE

- A. The centerpiece of God’s eternal purpose is for Jesus to come back to fully establish His Kingdom rule over all the earth as He joins the heavenly and earthly realms together. God’s purpose has always been for God and His people to live together in this way (Eph. 1:9-10).
¹⁰ That He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him. (Eph. 1:10)
- B. God’s long term purpose is to live with humans on this earth with an open display of His glory.
³ Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (Rev. 21:3)
²⁵ O righteous Father! The world has not known You...²⁶ I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them... (Jn. 17:25-26)
⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹ Jesus said, "...He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (Jn. 14:8-9)
- C. God can only make His habitation on earth after all the nations live in obedience to His Word. This will happen for 1,000 years (one day to God) during the Millennial Kingdom.
⁸ Do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord...a thousand years is as one day. (2 Pet. 3:8)
- D. The Lord has chosen to select “His leadership team” to bring all the nations to obedience in the Millennial Kingdom. He will choose this team from those who lived faithfully to God from the time of Adam until Jesus’ Second Coming (approx. 6,000 years). He will only select those who consistently valued obedience during their life on earth. This “Millennial leadership team” will be entrusted with leading the process that finishes the tasks of discipling all the nations in righteousness (Mt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 15:24-28). Because God only operates in truth, He only sets people in leadership over the natural realm in the Millennial Kingdom who loved, valued and fought for obedience while they lived in the natural realm. He wants people to govern who loved His ways when they were in the natural. We will train people in the Millennial Kingdom from our experiences of victory rather from a training manual in the resurrection.
- E. The Father has entrusted Jesus with the awesome mandate to prepare the way for His coming. Jesus with His “Millennial leadership team” will not fail in this grand mandate to prepare the way for the Father. Jesus selected only a few (12 apostles plus another 70 leaders) to help Him during His 3½ year ministry on earth and then to establish the foundations of the early Church. In a similar way, He will choose only a few (small percent of the total number of the redeemed) to help Him in government during the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus does not grudgingly pass on to us management responsibilities in the age-to-come. He delights to entrust His rule to us. He created us to handle such responsibilities and to find joy in them.
- F. The NT presents this life as the time of preparation for our ministry in the age-to-come. Our 70 year internship in this life is based on the understanding that our calling in the age-to-come is far more important than our circumstances now.

- G. The mystery of God's government is that He binds Himself in part to the decisions His people make. For example, Solomon forfeited the authority that God offered him in the age-to-come.
- ⁶ *He (Lord) said to me (David), "...I have chosen him (Solomon) to be My son...⁷ I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast (perseveres) to observe My commandments..."*
- ⁹ *David said..."As for you, Solomon, know the God of your father...if you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever." (1 Chr. 28:6-9)*
- ²⁸ *In the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the Throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mt. 19:28)*
- H. Note that David and the apostles had assurance from God that they would receive a crown or a position of authority in the age-to-come. Paul received this remarkable revelation in 2 Tim. 4:8.

XIII. JESUS AS A MAN LIVED PERFECT IN HIS OBEDIENCE

- A. Jesus as a Man lived without spot (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19) and was made perfect (Heb. 2:10) and learned full obedience through the things He suffered (Heb. 5:8).
- ¹⁰ *For it was fitting for Him...in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (Hebrews 2:10)*
- ⁸ *Yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (Heb. 5:8)*
- ¹⁴ *The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14)*
- ¹⁹ *The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:19)*

XIV. THREE DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS FOR OUR OBEDIENCE TO GOD

- A. *Affection based obedience* is obedience that flows out of experiencing His affection for us and feeling affection back to Him. This is the most powerful type of obedience and is also the deepest and most consistent.
- B. *Duty based obedience* is when we do not feel anything but we obey and read the Word, etc.
- C. *Fear based obedience* is motivated by the conviction that we will have negative circumstances if we disobey. We fear doing something that puts us to shame. Jesus taught on this.