

Week 2 October 29, 2023

Job 30.16-31

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## The Critical Journey...The Dark Night

**"How is it with your soul?** Do you feel crushed by life? What if there is a purpose in life's up and downs?! Could it be possible that God is speaking to you in these circumstances?

### I. Introduction to the Wall

We learned last week that we don't "level up" to move through these stages in a predictable way. God gently peels off the layers of our lives and begins to give us a glimpse inward. This, however, may lead to a wall as He asks us to yield more fully to Him – to trust Him with our lives and the process of sanctification. If we are willing to yield, the Inward Life leads to a place of being (Outer Life), from which we can serve with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength – knowing that you are the beloved of God!

The Journey Inward is often precipitated by a crisis. We find in this crisis that:

- Former answers are inadequate
- The spiritual crisis is so intensely personal, that it is difficult to share with others
- The crisis is so vague and unclear that it is frightening
- We enter a time whereby we must relinquish self and learn to rely on God
- It is uncomfortable: we search and don't seem to find; we grieve and feel alone
- This is a time of difficult personal transformation
- We rediscover on a different level about what faith and spirituality are all about
- We find inner healing, forgiveness, etc.

### II. Mark 10.17-24 One thing you lack:

- vs 17: the man is a true seeker – he really loves God
- 19: Jesus confronts the issue of the law; it isn't enough
- 21: One thing you lack:
  - Give up your treasure
  - Follow Me – we cannot predict the journey! We must simply yield to His hand.
- 22: Struggle to fully submit – note that Jesus doesn't run after him. He allows us room.
- 23-27: Only God can help us across this divide. We must enter the KOG as a child – trusting.

#### A. We must agree to "sell all"

In the first phase, we must give God permission to do a very deep, and sometimes painful, cleansing. This is where we submit what we know. This is where we make the

decision to sell all in complete obedience to Him. The cross represents our own death to self. We don't want to trust, to live by faith!

- B. In the second phase, we agree to "follow Him." Here we submit to what we don't know. Like the rich young ruler, we must come to the place of realizing that doing (keeping commandments, learning, etc.) is not the end of our journey, it is only a small stepping stone.

Jesus comes with the gentle, yet persistent call to come – follow Him. Herein, our journey must embark into the unknown. We enter into a relationship of trust and faith, knowing that all we encounter is useful in the hands of the Potter to mold and shape us into His image. We must not resist – we must follow, trusting His love. Out of this relationship we taste the magnificent fruit of His presence and provision!

You have come to the desert. All is gone that you have depended upon. Don't look back – go through the desert with Him. He will give heavenly manna for sustenance and water from a rock! But you must put your trust in Him as you walk through the desert, during days of darkness and difficulty. Understand that your days of darkness and bitterness are sacred experiences! They are producing a great glory in you. Only in them can you be transformed into the likeness of Christ.

### III. **Why this process?**

#### A. Inner Growth

- you rediscover on a different level about what faith and spirituality are about
- God gives deep inner healing
- You find that God loves you as you are (Jesus loves me this I know!). From the deepest part of your being you understand that "you are the beloved of God."
- Striving ceases – we find a deep calm and live out of our center which is now founded on Jesus.
- We can finally let go of grief, fear/worry, etc.

- B. We become an instrument of healing and reconciliation to the world. Living out the heart of God, we are empowered to minister healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation! Our "doing" is now an outpouring of who we are as the beloved of God.

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:<sup>[a]</sup> The old has gone, the new is here! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." (2 Cor. 5.17-20)*