

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS
Lesson 15-May 14, 2023

If you're in the resident congregation turn off your electronic devices and put them away. Let this be a place where you aren't distracted by the world.

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES

Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...an intimate, local Christian Church with a worldwide impact. My name is Pastor Rory Clark. Thanks for listening to this Bible lesson!

Happy Mother's Day to all the Moms out there, especially the single Mothers who have a double burden raising their kids. I salute my single Mother who has been in heaven for the last twenty-five years. It seems like only yesterday when she left. Make sure you honor your Mom today. Ephesians, Chapter 6, Verses 2 and 3 say...

EPHESIANS 6:2

Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise attached)...

EPHESIANS 6:3

...so that it may go well with you...and that you may live long on the earth.

The promise from God for honoring your mother is long life!

Makes sure your Mom knows how much you appreciate her, today and every day. Few people in this world will ever love you more than someone who carried you in their womb for nine months and who changed five thousand of your crap diapers while you were helpless. How would you be treating your Mom if you loved her unconditionally?

Why did God the Father create Barah Ministries?

The Father provides a place for you to get to know the most powerful being in the

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universe...the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...the One who has a glorious future...Matthew, Chapter 25, Verse 31...

MATTHEW 25:31

“When the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) comes again in all his glory...and all the elect angels come with him...He will sit on His glorious throne on earth during the one-thousand-year Millennial reign of Christ.”

And He'll be bringing us Church Age believers with Him.

God the Father created Barah Ministries so you could have a place to learn the truth of the Word of God. Hebrews, Chapter 4, Verse 12 tells us it's because...

HEBREWS 4:12

...the Word of God is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword...the Word of God piercing...dividing the soul and spirit...dividing the joints and the marrow...and the Word of God is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Word of God helps you get to the heart of things.

God the Father created Barah Ministries so you'd have a place to learn about the strategy of God's enemy, Satan, whom God made 'the ruler of this world.' Satan incites impatience in us. He wants us to live a "do it yourself" lifestyle instead of waiting for God to lay out a path for us. Satan inspires the thought, "If it's to be it's up to me!" Impatience is a sign of immaturity. It's the unwillingness to wait for God...it's a sign of unbelief...an unwillingness to trust God...and it's a sign that the flesh is rearing its ugly, bossy head. Impatience is an unwillingness to listen to the direction of the still small voice of God the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's half-brother James recommends patience in James, Chapter 1, Verses 2 to 4...

JAMES 1:2

Consider it pure joy...my brethren...when you encounter trials of various kinds...

JAMES 1:3

...knowing that the testing of your faith during trials produces endurance (which is patience in the face of difficulties).

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JAMES 1:4

And let endurance (patience in the face of difficulties) have its perfect result...so that you may be perfect and complete...lacking in nothing.

Let Satan be impatient. You relax and watch God work for you.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON
Who Are Your Real Friends?

LESSON INTRODUCTION

Great people surround themselves with great people. Be careful how you pick your friends! In today's lesson, we'll see the people that the apostle Paul surrounded himself with to help with his work for the Colossian church. And as we do every month, we'll celebrate the Lord's Supper to gain insight into how to handle betrayal.

OPENING SONG INTRODUCTION

Let's hear some music! Real friends are faithful, dependable, and reliable, and they won't betray us. What kind of friend are you? Here are a few artists you may recognize telling us the value of friends in the song **THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR**.

MUSIC

OPENING SONG

Let's Sing the Lord's Praises

THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

Dionne Warwick, Elton John, Stevie Wonder, and Gladys Knight

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We're grateful, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Father...thank you for reminding us we need others in our lives to be

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successful...thank you for reminding us the One we need most is Your Son...our Lord...Jesus Christ...thank you for telling us in the Word of God we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us...thank you for the reminder that apart from Him we can do nothing...thank you for providing us with Yourself and with God the Holy Spirit to round out our arsenal of support...

...as we learn today, help us to see with spiritual eyes and hear with spiritual ears the value of having people on our side...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

Who Are Your Real Friends?

LESSON PART ONE

We're closing out our study of the apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians. As you know by now, the letter is a warning to a small home-based church in first-century Colossae to be on the lookout for false teachers and false teaching. The church of the Colossians met in the house of Philemon...a name you'll be introduced to in our next letter of study.

Satan's infiltration force into this church will eventually take on the name of the GNOSTICS...a group that claimed to have specialized knowledge that would make the gospel "so much better." They contend if the Colossians would just add a few things to the gospel, they would be more spiritual. What they sought is to drag the Colossians into legalism, getting them to doubt the security of their relationship with the Lord and with their salvation.

A joy of Christianity is the relationship with other Christians who can be counted on...people in our lives who make the song THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR real. The passage we're about to study, for many Pastors, is a throwaway passage. They treat it as if Paul is just signing off on his letter. Paul is giving us insight into the support he has around him, teaching us what friends are for! Let's meet some of Paul's friends in the final passage of the letter. Colossians, Chapter 4, Verses 7 to 18.

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COLOSSIANS 4:7

As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord will bring you information.

COLOSSIANS 4:8

For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts...

COLOSSIANS 4:9

...and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

COLOSSIANS 4:10

Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings...and also Barnabas's cousin Mark sends his greeting (about whom you received instructions...if he comes to you, welcome him)...

COLOSSIANS 4:11

...and also Jesus who is called Justus...these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision (the Jewish race)...and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.

COLOSSIANS 4:12

Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

COLOSSIANS 4:13

For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

COLOSSIANS 4:14

Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings...and also Demas sends his greetings.

COLOSSIANS 4:15

Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house.

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COLOSSIANS 4:16

When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans...and you, for your part, read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.

COLOSSIANS 4:17

Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

COLOSSIANS 4:18

I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

A man is known by the company he keeps. First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 33 says...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:33

Do not be deceived... "Bad company corrupts good morals."

The apostle Paul is the most dangerous enemy of Satan's strategy against the human race. As a result, the whole world is against Paul. He needed faithful friends. It is not good for man to be alone.

What is a faithful friend? A faithful friend is trustworthy...reliable...and dependable. Who are your faithful friends? Who are the people who love who you are and who you are not? Who are the special people in your life who are astute enough not to point a finger at you, knowing when they do three fingers are pointing back at them? In Matthew, Chapter 7, Verses 3 to 5, the Lord says...

MATTHEW 7:3

"Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?"

MATTHEW 7:4

"Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?"

MATTHEW 7:5

"You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

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In this passage, Paul is either thanking or advising the ten people who are part of his support system. Paul surrounds himself with faithful people...and with *diakonos* (ministers)...the members of the team who kick up dust and make things happen. Some of Paul's friends stay, some pray, and some stray. Paul prefers faithful friends, people surrendered to do God's will. With reliable friends, you give them an arrow and they make it ALWAYS hit the bullseye.

Let's meet some of Paul's friends. They're all from the Lycus Valley...they're all Christians (some Jewish and some Gentiles)...they all work together...there's a the same supernatural bond between them as there is between all Christians.

There is Tychicus...a messenger for Paul. Along with Onesimus, he will be delivering three letters...Paul's Letter to the Ephesians...Paul's Letter to Colossians...and a personal letter...Paul's letter to Philemon. There is no way Paul would trust these two men if he did not consider them faithful. Proverbs, Chapter 26, Verse 6 warns...

PROVERBS 26:6

He cuts off his own feet and drinks violence who sends a message by the hand of a fool.

Proverbs, Chapter 25, Verse 19...

PROVERBS 25:19

Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble.

It's nearly impossible to trust unreliable people.

There is Onesimus...the subject of Paul's letter to Philemon. Onesimus is a runaway slave from Colossae who belonged to Philemon. He stole money and ran away twelve hundred miles to Rome, a place he could get lost where no one could find him. God found him!

Onesimus was a bad boy. He was out doing his thing and he got arrested. He ended up in a cell with Paul. In other words, God led him to Paul. He is evangelized by Paul, and he becomes a new believer in Christ.

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Paul asks Onesimus where he is from. Onesimus tells Paul he is from a Podunk town called Colossae. Coincidence? Hardly. Paul decides to use Onesimus to deliver the letter to the Colossians and he writes a letter to his dear friend Philemon asking him to forgive. We'll enjoy studying that letter.

There is Aristarchus, a fellow prisoner and a fellow Jew (a member of the circumcision as Paul put it)...a Jewish man with a Greek name. He has a long history with Paul for over twelve years. He got arrested with Paul in Ephesus...he went with Paul to Jerusalem and to Rome...he hung out with the person the Romans saw as a "bad guy."

There's John Mark, another Jewish believer. He was a part-time coward, a Mama's boy, Barnabas' cousin, and the writer of one of the four gospels. His mother is Mary, a wealthy woman with a big house where the apostles used to meet in what was known as The Upper Room.

Mark and Barnabas went on Paul's first missionary journey. Mark embarrassed himself on that journey, and he betrayed Paul. When the going got tough, Mark went home to Mommy (see ACTS 12 and 14). Mark ruined his reputation. Proverbs 22, Verse 1...

PROVERBS 22:1

A good name is to be more desired than great wealth...favor is better than silver and gold.

When Paul went on his second missionary journey, Barnabas asked if Mark could come. Paul said NO. Barnabas and Paul argued and split, and Barnabas is never heard from again in the Bible. It's a lot of work to get your reputation back. But Mark did...not with words, but with actions. As a result, God was able to use him to write a gospel letter. Mark spent time with Peter, another betrayer. God demonstrates what he can do with those who betray Him.

There's Justus (whose real name is Jesus)...another Jewish believer. He was what everyone needs as a friend...a solid person. There were no stories about him... there was no fanfare...he just did the work he was asked to do.

Epaphras was a Gentile believer. He was founder and Pastor of the churches at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. The letter to the Colossians came about when

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Epaphras asked for help on how to handle the infiltration of false teachers and false teaching.

There's Luke, the beloved physician. It's always good to have a doctor in the house. Luke was an amazing man...he was also a Pastor...an evangelist...a theologian... Paul's brother in union with the Lord...a historian...a missionary... the author of twenty-three chapters in the gospel of Luke and twenty-eight chapters in the Book of Acts. He accompanies Paul in all his journeys as Paul's medical insurance! In Second Timothy, Chapter 4, Verse 11, the apostle Paul reports...

SECOND TIMOTHY 4:11

Only Luke is with me...

When everyone abandoned Paul, Luke stayed.

There's Demas...a liability to Paul...not an asset. He's a party boy with a secret love for the nightlife and the ladies. Second Timothy, Chapter 4, Verse 10...

SECOND TIMOTHY 4:10

...for Demas...having loved this present world...has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica...

Everyone has betrayals in this life. People put knives in your back, and it's especially true for Pastors. It's a great way to learn what Jesus suffered. Eventually, we learn to accept betrayals with gratitude and compassion for the betrayer. The wounds heal...and if we choose...the wounds make us feel stronger, love deeper, with more compassion and prayerfulness. Betrayal is never fun.

There's Nympha. Her name means bride. She is the hostess with the most-est...she used her gift of hospitality to host a church in her home.

Finally, there is Archippus. Paul encourages him and admonishes him to complete the ministry given to him as Pastor at Colossae in Epaphras' absence. He is probably faltering because he is young. Paul surrounds him with a support system to help him succeed and to encourage him. Being a Pastor can be discouraging at times...it's tempting to give up.

As we reflect on Paul's close to this letter, we have some questions for reflection...

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What kind of people did Paul value as friends?

What kind of people did he entrust himself to?

What goes into making a good team?

Everyone needs friends. Paul had a team of friends that changed the world. You need a team like that, too!

When we return from the break, we'll take the offering and we'll celebrate the Lord's Supper. In the meantime, here's a song that's a tribute to an important group of ladies around the world...A SONG FOR MAMA.

FIVE-MINUTE BREAK

A SONG FOR MAMA

Boys2Men

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

Who Are Your Real Friends?

OFFERING INTRODUCTION

God surrounds us with people who value us enough to give. If you're listening more to the propaganda of the world than you are to the Word of God, you won't see the gifts God is giving you. God's message to you is...LIFT YOUR EYES! The Lord will be coming again on the clouds, and He will be coming at a time when the world is in chaos. The Lord gives us the hope of things to come in Luke, Chapter 21, Verses 27 and 28...

LUKE 21:27

"Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

LUKE 21:28

"When you see these things are beginning to take place, be elated and lift up your heads, because your deliverance is imminent."

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Believers in Christ are members of the Lord's kingdom and He will be coming for us at the proper time. Until then, don't stop giving. Christians already have the victory in life and we make a difference. Give like you know you've won. Let's welcome up Deacon Denny Goodall with one of his always inspiring, always valued, and deeply appreciated offering messages.

THE OFFERING

Deacon Denny Goodall

OFFERING VERSE

MATTHEW 5:16

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

OFFERING SONG

THERE IS NONE LIKE YOU

Instrumental Version

THE LORD'S SUPPER CELEBRATION

The Lord Wants Us to Stop Betraying Ourselves

Welcome to the Lord's Supper Celebration! As we remember the Lord, let's relax and enjoy memories of the things the Lord has done for us, especially His work on the Cross on our behalf. The Lord's Supper allows you to bring to mind the Lord and the Lord alone. Concerning the Lord's Supper the Lord commands...

LUKE 22:19c

"...keep on doing this (Lord's Supper Celebration) in remembrance of Me."

The Lord wants you to think about the SOURCE of everything special about you and everything special in your life. It's Him!

The Lord's Supper is a chance for you to experience with intensity and focus the real meaning of your relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe...the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is the most important relationship in your life. That's true if you are a believer in Christ...and it's even more true if you are an unbeliever.

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The Lord's Supper illuminates the power of a believer in Christ's union with Christ, the most valuable gift we will ever have. It is the Lord letting you know He is on your side.

The Lord's Supper is for those who are the born-again ones...those placed into union with Christ by God the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation...the baptism of the Spirit. God the Holy Spirit turned us into eternal companions of Christ.

The good news about being a companion of Christ is that the Lord stands between His believers and the enemy...He is our provision...He is our protector...He is our protection...even when the enemy is ourselves.

The subject matter of today's Lord's Supper is betrayal. The worst betrayal of all occurs when we betray ourselves. If you are being less than you're capable of, you're betraying yourself.

In your lifetime you have heard about the prince of betrayal, Judas Iscariot. He betrayed the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord Jesus Christ. All you can say when you think about this is WOW! And sure...he betrayed the Lord...but He betrayed himself as well, and that's even worse. By making one wrong choice he betrayed himself and sentenced himself to eternity in the Lake of Fire. He sided with the world instead of siding with Jesus. Judas rejected the free gift of salvation in favor of money. What is betrayal?

BETRAYAL

It occurs when someone pretends to be on your side when they're not...it's the ultimate violation of trust...it's intentional treachery...it's absolute unfaithfulness.

In Jesus' life, He endured the betrayal of the Jewish race, led by the religious leaders of His day. Matthew, Chapter 26, Verses 3 and 4...

MATTHEW 26:3

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest Caiaphas...

MATTHEW 26:4

...and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him.

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He endured the betrayal of one of His apostles...Judas Iscariot...Matthew, Chapter 26, Verses 14 to 16...

MATTHEW 26:14

Then one of the twelve, Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said...

MATTHEW 26:15

"What are you willing to give me to betray Jesus to you?" And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him.

MATTHEW 26:16

From then on Judas Iscariot began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.

The Lord Jesus Christ predicted His betrayal...John, Chapter 13, Verses 21 to 27...

JOHN 13:21

Jesus...became troubled in spirit and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you...one of you will betray Me."

JOHN 13:22

The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know which of them He was talking about.

JOHN 13:23

Reclining on Jesus' bosom was one of His disciples...the one who described himself as the one whom Jesus loved (the apostle John).

JOHN 13:24

So Simon Peter gestured to John, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking."

JOHN 13:25

John, leaning back on Jesus' bosom said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

JOHN 13:26

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Jesus answered, "It's the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when Jesus had dipped the morsel, He took it and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

JOHN 13:27

After the morsel was given, Satan then entered into Judas Iscariot (indwelling him). Therefore Jesus said to Judas, "What you do, do quickly."

It was a command, not a request. Here's how betrayers betray...Mark, Chapter 14, Verses 42 to 46...

MARK 14:42

(Jesus said to his sleeping apostles)... "Get up...let us be going...behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

MARK 14:43

Immediately while Jesus was still speaking, Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who were from the chief priests and the scribes and the religious elders.

MARK 14:44

Now Judas who was betraying Him had given them a signal saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one...seize Him and lead Him away under guard."

MARK 14:45

After coming, Judas immediately went to Jesus, saying, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

MARK 14:46

The mob laid hands on Jesus and seized Him.

What did Jesus say while experiencing this? Luke, Chapter 22, Verse 48...

LUKE 22:48

Jesus said, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

And in Luke, Chapter 22, Verse 22...the Lord said...

LUKE 22:22

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“The Son of Man is going away as it has been predetermined...but woe to the man by whom He is betrayed!”

This incident is easily seen as Judas betraying Jesus...it is seldom described as Judas betraying himself. Matthew, Chapter 27, Verses 1 to 5...

MATTHEW 27:1

Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death...

MATTHEW 27:2

...and they bound Jesus, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the (Roman) governor.

MATTHEW 27:3

Then when Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, saw that Jesus had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders...

MATTHEW 27:4

...saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to that yourself!” (in other words... “that’s your problem”)

MATTHEW 27:5

And Judas threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed...and he went away and hanged himself.

Judas went immediately to the Lake of Fire for rejecting a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He had a choice. He could have gone to the Lord to ask for forgiveness, and without question, the Lord would have forgiven him. He chose to take the cowardly way out, and He will pay for it for all eternity. Remember Peter’s betrayal of the Lord? Peter handled the situation exactly the opposite. How are we different than Judas? How often do we betray ourselves by thinking and doing things that are not in our best interest? The answer? Too often!

When you don’t have a relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you betray yourself. When you’re a believer in Christ and you don’t study the Word of God every day, you betray yourself. When you think you can lose your salvation, you betray yourself. When you don’t grow your spiritual life, you betray yourself.

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When you are less than your best at anything, you betray yourself. When you refuse to learn, you betray yourself. When you are stuck in an ineffective lifestyle, you betray yourself. When you think, "I want to do this on my own," you betray yourself.

Jesus Christ was betrayed by the Jewish race, by Israel, by Judas, and by every person who has ever committed a personal sin. Yet no matter what is done to Him, Deuteronomy, Chapter 31, Verse 8 reveals His attitude toward all of us...

DEUTERONOMY 31:8

"The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you...He will be with you...He will not fail you or forsake you...so do not fear or be dismayed."

The Lord never betrays His own. Isn't it about time you choose to stop betraying yourself?

THE LORD'S SUPPER CELEBRATION
Enjoying the Elements

Bread and wine. The Lord gave us these things to remember Him. We will enjoy the elements together in a few moments as we listen to The Lord's Supper Song.

Matthew, Chapter 26, Verses 26 to 28 tells us the reason the Lord wants us to celebrate this meal together...

MATTHEW 26:26

While the apostles were eating, Jesus took some bread...and after a blessing, He broke the bread, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take...eat...this is My body which is being broken for you."

MATTHEW 26:27

And when Jesus had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it...all of you..."

MATTHEW 26:28

"...for this is My blood...the blood of a new covenant...My blood...poured out for whosoever...for the forgiveness of sins."

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We celebrate to remember. Jesus Christ died as our sin substitute...Jesus Christ is risen from the dead to prove His Deity...Jesus Christ will come again to gather us unto Himself. Jesus forgives us once and for all time through His work on the Cross. We celebrate and we are grateful.

Enjoy the elements as we listen to Telly Leung remind us that we have a God who loves giving in the song ALL GOOD GIFTS.

THE LORD'S SUPPER SONG

ALL GOOD GIFTS
Telly Leung

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

The Good News of Jesus Christ's Salvation Offer to the Human Race

The closing moments of our lesson today could be the ten most important minutes of your life. We want you to know that...

GOD WANTS YOU!

He Wants You Make the Most Important Decision of Your Life

When food manufacturers noticed your fast-paced, mobile lifestyle, they came up with INSTANT food...instant coffee...instant oatmeal...instant potatoes...instant "TV" dinners...and instant gravy were among their initial culinary creations. Most of them were awful!

This message is for those of you who want an INSTANT relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...for those who may be wondering what's going to happen the INSTANT you close your eyes in this life. There is an INSTANT answer to your curiosity, and the Lord guarantees that in an INSTANT you can become a child of God.

You may not know your unfortunate circumstance. You were born a sinner...physically alive and spiritually dead...an ungodly, unrighteous unbeliever. **It's not your fault, but it IS your circumstance.** First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 22 says...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:22a

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For all in union with Adam at physical birth (and that is every human being who comes to earth) are set to die the second death in the Lake of Fire...

Because Adam was appointed by God as the head of the human race, his first sin was credited to the account of all human creatures, resulting in spiritual death. Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 12...

ROMANS 5:12

Therefore...just as through one man, Adam...sin entered into the world...and spiritual death entered the world through his sin...so spiritual death spread to all men...because all men were considered by God to have sinned when Adam sinned.

Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 23 says...

ROMANS 3:23

...all creatures have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 10 says...

ROMANS 3:10

...it is written, "There is no creature who is righteous (at physical birth)...not even one..."

Despite this unfortunate circumstance, there is good news from God that INSTANTLY frees you from sin, from spiritual death, and from the kingdom of darkness into which you were born. You're invited to be born again...the spiritual birth. You can change teams! God beckons you to come into a spiritual life in His kingdom of light...where sin is no longer sovereign over you. The Lord Jesus Christ offers you a "so great" salvation, and it is His will that you accept the free gift He made possible for you at the Cross. Second Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 9 says...

SECOND PETER 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise of salvation, as some accuse Him of... instead, He is patient toward unbelievers...NOT WISHING FOR ANYONE TO PERISH IN THE LAKE OF FIRE...but wishing for all to come to repentance (a voluntary change of mind about having a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ).

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If you end up in the Lake of Fire the INSTANT after your physical death, it will not be because the Lord wants you there. It will be your choice.

So, how can you get to heaven in an INSTANT when you close your eyes in this life? By obeying God's plan for your salvation! RIGHT WHERE YOU SIT, RIGHT NOW, you can be saved in an INSTANT. You can tell God the Father that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the INSTANT of eternal life for you. Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31...

ACTS 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved by God...you and everyone in your household who also believes."

To BELIEVE means to take God's word for it regarding what it takes to be saved...and God says the ONE WAY...the ONLY WAY to get to heaven is through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. John, Chapter 14, Verse 6...

JOHN 14:6

Jesus said to the doubting apostle Thomas, "I am the way (to salvation) ... and I am the truth (through the gospel message in the Word of God) ... and I am the resurrection life (eternal life) ... and no one comes to God the Father in heaven but through believing in Me."

Who is this God who saves you? The apostle Paul describes the Lord Jesus Christ in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verses 3 and 4...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:3

For I (the apostle Paul) delivered to you as of primary importance the gospel message I also received from God...that it was Jesus Christ who died for our sins according to the Old Testament Scriptures...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:4

...and that He was buried...and that He was raised from the dead on the third day...according to the Old Testament Scriptures...

The Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead proved that He is Deity, and it qualified Him to save you.

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Believing in Jesus Christ is your acknowledgment that you can't do a thing to get to heaven on your own. You can't buy your way into heaven...you can't "good deed" your way into heaven...you can't "be a good person" and get into heaven. You can only get to heaven by accepting the INSTANT gift of salvation from a God who loves you so unconditionally that He sent His Son to die for you on a Cross to pay your way into heaven. Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 8 says...

ROMANS 5:8

God the Father demonstrates His own unconditional love toward all mankind...in that while we were yet sinners (while we were unrighteous, ungodly, unbelievers), Christ died a sacrificial death for us.

God has an enemy, Satan, who deceives the whole world, including you, with a strategy to exploit human beings...RELIGION. The religions of the world deceive you into thinking you can work your way to heaven...that you can work to please God. No religious ritual has ever been good enough to do anything except waste your time. Religious rituals absolutely won't get you to heaven. They just make you look stupid.

It's wise to let God save you because once God does something, He never changes His mind. John, Chapter 10, Verse 28 says...

JOHN 10:28

"...I (the Lord Jesus Christ) give eternal life to believers in Christ...and they will never perish...and no one will snatch them out of My hand."

You can't lose your salvation. If anyone says you can, they are lying to you. There is no reason to be uncertain about what happens at the moment of your physical death. So, heed the warning in John, Chapter 3, Verse 36...

JOHN 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has the resurrection life right at that moment (IN AN INSTANT) ... but he who does not obey the command to believe in the Son will not see the resurrection life...instead the wrath of God (the Lake of Fire) abides on him."

When you reject a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible makes it clear there is a consequence. Matthew, Chapter 13, Verses 40 to 42...

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MATTHEW 13:40

...just as tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.

MATTHEW 13:41

The Son of Man (the Lord Jesus Christ) will send forth His elect angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks (unbelievers)...and those who practice lawlessness (unbelievers)...

MATTHEW 13:42

...and the elect angels will throw unbelievers into the furnace of fire (The Lake of Fire) ... and in that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Believers in Christ have a different fate. Matthew, Chapter 13, Verse 43...

MATTHEW 13:43

Then the righteous (believers in Christ) will shine forth as the sun shines in the kingdom of their God and Father.

What's your choice? You can choose to be for or against Christ.

A relationship with the Lord does not require blind faith. There is no such thing as blind faith. For the wise, faith is always invested after an examination. You have faith as a gift from God, and you can place your confidence in the object of your faith. To place your confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to let Him save you is a delicious move. You can reject a relationship with Christ, or you can make an INSTANT choice for Christ, and the result...your salvation...stands finished forever. Matthew, Chapter 13, Verse 44 encourages us...

MATTHEW 13:44

He who has ears...let him (really) hear (these things).

Some things that happen in an INSTANT are quite tasty!

Take a moment right now to wrap your taste buds around the only INSTANT thing that lasts forever...a relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

CLOSING SONG INTRODUCTION

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS
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Let's close with music! Whether you know it or not...whether you want it or not...the Lord has a deep, intimate, and personal relationship with you. He created you! And as Francesca Battistelli tells us in song...he knows you personally...she says...HE KNOWS MY NAME!

MUSIC

CLOSING SONG

Let's Sing the Lord's Praises

HE KNOWS MY NAME

Francesca Battistelli

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

Almighty God and Father...

Father, thank you for teaching us a lesson about friends and a lesson about betrayal...fill our lives with people who are on our side...and help us use discernment to recognize with spiritual eyes the people who aren't on our side...keep us far from them...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

DISCUSSING THE LESSON AND PRAYER CIRCLE

Join us Live or on Zoom
Immediately Following the Lesson

GOT BIBLICAL QUESTIONS?

Ask the Pastor
pastor@barahministries.com

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KEEP ON STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD!

Thanks for coming!
Thanks for watching!
Thanks for listening!

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