

## DYING TO SELF

**Sunday Morning: July 18, 2004**

**Text: John 12:24-27** "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour. 27. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour."

We did not tape last Sunday's message on dying to self and I thought it would be profitable for us to review it again, it's something we need to do daily and so a review of 'dying to self' will help all of us to see the significance of what dying to self means. Because we live in a time when all of us struggle with relationships and dying to self helps us in our relationships with the lost as well as with the saved because we're talking about a dead person. We're talking about somebody who does not respond to what we hear or what we see or what we smell or what we touch. A dead man has no senses and if we're dead to self, we're obviously not going to let our own desires, our own plans, our own purposes interfere with what God wants to do in our life. I was talking to Paul this morning and I don't have it in the notes (and we'll get to John twelve in just a minute) but I was talking to Paul and I was referring to him or telling him that the dead can't hear but he can only hear one person – the Lord Jesus. When Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth," did Lazarus hear Him? He sure did and he came forth. And when the Lord comes to take the brethren with Him, will the brethren that are not only dead in the grave but also dead to self here on the earth, will he hear that trumpet sound? Absolutely! And so, the dead can hear, but he can only hear one person and we don't want to be listening to ourselves. Anyway, let's just look at John twelve twenty-four through twenty-seven. This passage is talking about dying to self and if we don't die to self, we're going to be an awful lonely person. Another thing too about dying to self, it has to do with fruit bearing, being profitable, not only to the Lord but to others as well. The fruit of the vine is a blessing to many people and the fruit of the vine is of course the wine and we find that in Judges nine, thirteen where it says, "the vine said unto them, should I leave my wine that cheers God and man to be promoted over the trees, no." But anyway, this passage of scripture is talking about dying to self and bringing forth fruit. Remember Jesus took the Kingdom away from the nation of Israel because they wouldn't produce the fruits thereof. And you and I want to share in the coming Kingdom - we want to rule and reign with Christ, therefore it is important for us to bear fruit. And in verse twenty-four Jesus says

### ABIDETH ALONE

**John 12:24** "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, **it abideth alone**: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

I was thinking about abiding alone. It made me think about John fifteen verse four

### WITHOUT HIM WE ARE ALONE

**John 15:4-5** "**Abide in me**, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of **itself** (alone), except it **abide** in the vine (Jesus); no more can ye, except ye **abide** [present active] in me. 5. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth [present active] in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without me** (ALONE) ye can do nothing."

Abiding in Him is not to abide alone. If we're abiding in Him we're having fellowship with Him, we're not alone. And of course the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, alone, except it abide in the

vine. We have to be in the vine, we have to be allowing the vine to affect our life; it's the vine that provides the sustenance that allows us to produce the fruit to be a blessing not only to God but to others as well. And the word 'abide' is in the present tense. It's a continuous thing; it's not an event that you're put into the vine. And it says in verse five, "abideth in me", that is present tense and if we're without Him, we're alone. And this passage of scripture is encouraging us to bear much fruit, why? Verse eight

### GLORIFYING THE FATHER

**John 15:8** "Herein is my **Father glorified**, that ye **bear much fruit**; so shall ye be my disciples."

Disciples are fruit bearers. Disciples are a blessing not only to God but to others as well. And when you're discipling others, you're being a blessing to them. And we're glorifying the Father. So, what is the significance of dying to self? It means that we're abiding in Christ. We're abiding in the vine knowing that without Christ, we can do nothing. Now, in John twelve, twenty-five it says,

### FRUIT OF THE VINE

**Judges 9:13** "And the **vine** said unto them, Should I leave my **wine**, which **cheereth God and man**, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

### HATING YOUR LIFE NOW

**John 12:25** "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that **hateth his life** in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

"Unto life in the age", this is talking about the Millennium. What does it mean to hate our life? Well, we're to hate our life now. Well, we're not to hate our lives in the sense that we're going to take our life, by committing suicide. This is hating our life in the sense that we don't want to do what we want to do; we want to do what God wants to do for us. This word 'hate' is a very strong term. Our desire to do the will of the Father should be very strong as well. We should dislike our own plans and purposes. I have made choices in my life that were not very good ones. And if we depend upon our own strategy and our own wisdom, our own thoughts, we're going to make mistakes. And we want to allow God to make choices for us and it may look like a mistake but let me tell you, in the end, it won't be. So we need to deny ourselves. Mathew chapter sixteen verses twenty-four through twenty-seven talks about denying ourselves. That's what it means to hate our life. It means to deny ourselves. Deny our self that extra piece of pie, you know, things that we like. That's what we're talking about, okay.

### IS TO DENY YOURSELF NOW

**Matthew 16:24-27** "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his **cross** (daily, Luke 9:23), and **follow** me. 25. For whosoever will save his life shall **lose** [perish] it: and whosoever will **lose** [perish] his life for my sake shall find it.

We're not simply to deny ourselves; we're to also follow the Lord as well. There are two things involved here and by the way, these are disciples, these are ones who are following the Lord, these are the ones who are learning from the Lord and He's telling them to deny themselves. Now, to deny our self, or to not deny our self is to gain the whole world. There are people today that have desired to rule the world and they didn't deny themselves. People, dictators, today don't deny themselves. They want all the authority; they want all the perks to go with it as well. When we think about Communism – everybody is supposed to have equal but you know what? Not everybody had equal! There were some there that were more equal than others, right?

They lived in plush places and they had more food than they could eat, you know! So they didn't deny themselves. Verse twenty-six

### **NOT DENYING SELF**

26. For what is a man profited, if he shall **gain the whole world**, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

The word, 'soul' and 'life' are translated either way. "And what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" In other words, you can't pay for it. Dying to self is a self-discipline. It's a self-discipline that I can't pay someone to do. I paid somebody to paint the house, or not the house, but our kitchen and bathroom and breakfast room because I just didn't have the equipment, I don't have the ability physically anymore to really do a good job doing that, particularly with my back and so I paid somebody to do it. But you know what? You can't pay anybody to die for yourself! You can't pay anybody so that you can deny yourself. In other words, no one can deny themselves for you and vice-versa. Now, self-denial is rewarded.

### **SELF DENIAL IS REWARDED**

27. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

You live a life of denying yourself, you're going to be honored and rewarded for that. You're going to like the outcome. You may not have everything that some of the richest people in the world have today but in that age to come, you're going to like what you're going to have when those that have money and have everything today, they have their reward. Can you imagine having a reward that only lasts seventy years? I'd rather have one that lasts a thousand plus, you know! Who knows, exactly what the blessings are going to be like after the Millennium? but the point is this, dying to yourself is going to be rewarded and honored. If you honor God with your life, He's not going to forget you in the age to come. Now, in Mathew chapter six verse twenty-five, we're told that those who deny themselves, what is their attitude towards certain things?

### **THOSE WHO DIE TO SELF**

**Matthew 6:25** Therefore I say unto you, Take **no thought** for your **life**, what ye shall **eat**, or what ye shall **drink**; nor yet for your **body**, what ye shall **put on**. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

If you're dead to self, you're not going to be thinking about life as such. In other words, we may be sick and we may die because of what sickness we have, in other words, the Lord has said He will heal all of our diseases except the last one; of course it doesn't say that in the Scripture, but we know that that's a fact. He heals all of our diseases but the last one. We also know and appreciate the fact that our days are numbered and if we live a life that is sane, our days will go to the time and then it will be over. That's the reason why we need to reckon our days and make the most of the days that God has given us. So, we're not to be giving thought for our life. In fact the Lord says, don't worry about a man who can kill you, you worry about somebody who can kill you and cast you into Gehenna or cause you consequences because of the way you live. So, I think one of the tests we can use is, are we worried about what we're going to eat? Are we worried about what we're going to drink? Are we worried about our body, what we're going to put on? These are symptoms of not being dead to self. Mathew chapter six verse twenty-four

### **NO THOUGHT FOR TOMORROW**

**Matthew 6:34** Take therefore **no thought** for the **morrow**: for the morrow shall take thought

for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

If we're dead to self, we're not going to be worried about tomorrow! I can think of times when I've worried about what's going to happen tomorrow and usually it was not as bad as I imagined. But if I'm dead to self, I'm not going to be worried about tomorrow, I'm going to be concerned about my walk with the Lord and how I'm obeying Him and how I'm following Him and my performance today with Him. Am I living in sin? If I am I need to repent. If I'm being faithful, I need to continue in my faithfulness to the Lord. In other words, there are times when we do need to make adjustments in our lifestyle. I tell you, one thing that really messes us up, and that's when you go on vacation and when you're living out of a suitcase. It really messes up your time of devotions and your prayer life but you know what? When you get back home, you get back into the Word again, you get back to reading again, get back to your prayer life again, just don't let it linger. It's not that you don't have time to do it from time to time and I'm not saying I didn't pray everyday and I didn't read my Bible everyday but I didn't do it at the same time and it makes a difference in doing it that way. Another thing too, is Philippians chapter four verse six

### **CAREFUL FOR NOTHING**

**Philippians 4:6** Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

The word, 'careful' means 'be anxious.' Anxiety! I think this is one reason why we need to die daily and I don't know that it's just a daily thing, it could be a moment by moment or an hour by hour type thing of saying "God, I trust you to take care of this situation. I don't need to be anxious about this. I know you're going to take care of it." And so, if we're being anxious, we're always uptight over things, and then we are allowing the old man to become alive again. A dead man should stay that way. Now, how can we do this? Well, I think Philippians three ten gives us a little insight into how we can do this. Paul says

### **IT TAKES KNOWING HIM**

**Philippians 3:10** "That I may **know him**, and **the power** of his **resurrection**, and the **fellowship** of his **sufferings**, being made **conformable** unto his **death** (Abba, Father, not my will be done but yours);"

We need to study about the Lord and how He handled life's situations. There were times when He had to get away from the apostles, when He had to get away from the disciples. He needed some time alone. One thing about dying to self, it's a personal battle. I've already alluded to this already. It's not something that I can do for you or you can do for me. Dying to self is a personal battle and sometimes we just need to be by ourselves to deal with these things. Paul says, "that I may know Him;" and knowing Him is to see His example and to follow His example. We need to know the power of His resurrection. Jesus Christ is our High Priest; He's at the right hand of the Father. He is the One who gives us grace and strength and power for our infirmities. And we also need to appreciate the fellowship of His sufferings. Was Christ rejected? Was Christ offended? How did it affect Him? It didn't cause Him to quit. It did not cause Him to want to not do the Father's will and same thing for our own lives. We're going to have sufferings, we need to be made conformable unto HIS death and this is what he died to self as well. And when he died to self, He prayed, "Abba Father, not my will but thine be done." A life of dying to self is a life of crying, "Abba Father, not my will, Lord, but thine be done." And when we think about the power of His resurrection, I just wanted to included Ephesians one, nineteen through twenty

## TO KNOW THE POWER

**Ephesians 1:19-20** "And (know) what **is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe** [present active], according to the working of his mighty power, **20**. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*:"

What does it mean to believe in the present tense? It means faithfulness. We just don't know the power that is available to us if we're faithful to the Lord. Faithful in believing what He says, faithful in believing that if we will die to self, He will take care of my life, He will take care of my thirst, He will take care of my food, He will take care of my clothes. And I think that if they lived in Minnesota they would also include a house! I always think about that. I don't know if we could live in a cardboard box or I don't know if you can put on enough clothes when it's thirty or forty below zero or windshield. I guess you could slip into a door store front, you know and hide, but anyway, you don't have to worry about these things. The Lord knows what we have need of before we even ask Him. So we need to know the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who are believing, and confident in that believing. So therefore we don't vary, we don't change. And it's according to the working of His mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. Jesus Christ is our high Priest. We have exceeding great power at the right hand of the Father and the Father set Him close by. Why? So that they could communicate about whom? You and me! Because I'm coming to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord doesn't have to holler across the room to God the Father! You follow what I mean? They are there together for what reason? That we might experience the power that we need to live a life that would honor and glorify Him. Now, back to John chapter twelve, it says

## TO DIE IS TO FOLLOW

**John 12:26** "If any man serve me, let him **follow me**; and **where I am**, there shall also my servant **be**: if any man **serve me**, him will *my* Father **honour**."

So to die to self, is to follow the Lord and to follow the Lord means that we need to be listening to His voice. His voice we can hear. Of course, we can see Him too, but the point is this, following Him is through the reading of the Scriptures. That's basically how He leads us. To die to self is to follow, to die to self is to be where the Lord is, to die to self is to serve and it says, "him will my Father honor." I think of the word 'honor' as honor and glory in the coming Kingdom, but I looked up for the meaning of that word, 'honor.' It's 'to value.' We're to honor our father and mother; that means to value our father and mother. Honor them is not put them on a pedestal but to honor them or to show them value by how you respond to them. But anyway, the Father will honor those who will follow the Lord and be where He is and serve Him. In John ten twenty-seven

## TO FOLLOW IS TO LISTEN

**John 10:27** "My sheep **hear** [present active] my voice, and I know [present active] them, and they **follow** [present active] **me**:"

We need to be listening to His voice, present active. We know that He knows us, present active and they that are listening and hearing His voice are the ones who are doing the following with Him. And I just thought about this in Mathew chapter four verse nineteen, He said

## TO FOLLOW IS TO FISH

**Matthew 4:19** "And he saith unto them, **Follow me**, and I will make you **fishers** of (live, saved) men."

I don't know of any anglers out there trying to catch dead fish, do you? When I think about that, I'm thinking about fishing for whom? For those who have ears to hear, eyes to see! There is a time of reaching out and finding those who do not know the Lord, but I'm just thinking about, "I'll make you fishers of men" and when He sent the disciples out, whom did He send them out to? He sent them out to the nation, the house of Israel. Now, Jesus denied Himself. It's interesting here in John twelve twenty-seven

### **JESUS DENIED HIMSELF**

**John 12:27** "Now is my **soul troubled**; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but **for this cause** came I unto this hour."

"And what shall I say? Father save me from this hour;" is this what I need to say? And obviously the answer is "no." "But for this cause came I unto this hour." In other words, He was doing the will of the Father Himself. He had died to self. And I alluded to the fact that living an Abba Father life is to submit to the will of the Father. In Mark chapter fourteen verse thirty-four through thirty-six, it says

### **ABBA, FATHER**

**Mark 14:34-36** "And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding **sorrowful** (troubled) unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36. And he said, **Abba, Father**, all things *are* possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but **what thou wilt** (for this cause I came)."

Sorrowful means troubled and let me just say this, there's nothing wrong with asking God to change your circumstances. There's nothing wrong with asking God to heal you, there's nothing wrong with asking God to take care of you but we all must be willing to accept what God's plans and purposes are for us. When He says 'no,' we need to thank Him for that and trust Him for the next step that He has for us. So there's nothing wrong with praying about your circumstances, that's not raising your ugly head in \* (24:58) yourself but the point is, and He said, "Abba Father, all things are possible unto Thee take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but **what thou wilt.**" This is the cause that I came into the world. When I think about 'all things are possible unto Thee,' how strongly do we believe that? You know, if we really believe that, then we know that He can take care of any circumstance in our life, even if it means crucifixion. And I know that Peter was crucified and so the Lord didn't raise him in three days but one day he will be raised from the grave and he will be where the glory is just like he was on the Mount of Transfiguration. So dying to self is also implying confidence in God to make the right decision. Now, in Mathew chapter thirteen we find some that are unfruitful. We're talking about those who had fallen to the ground and died to self, they become fruitful, they become profitable and in Mathew chapter thirteen verse twenty it says

### **THE UNFRUITFUL**

**Matthew 13:20-23** "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21. Yet hath he **not root** in himself, but dureth for a while: for when **tribulation** or **persecution** ariseth because of the word, by and by he is **offended**."

I think that one of the things that we need to consider about being dead to self – how easily are we offended? How easily do others affect our lives? We often allow others to take priority in our life over the things of the Lord in our life. We will cancel anything that God has planned for us to do what? To accommodate our minds and our family often. So therefore we need to

evaluate certain things. There are times when we may miss church or whatever, or some event like this because of family situations, I'm not saying, we're not legalistic in this matter but the point is this, what is the norm? How do we let others affect us when we are going to be in the services to worship or when we're going to be where the Lord would have us to be in service of Him? And so, we know that we can be offended. If we're dead to self, we're not easily offended. Mathew tells us in chapter eighteen verse seven

### OFFENCES WILL COME

**Matthew 18:7** ". . . for it must **needs be** that **offences come**; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"

One thing we know for sure is that we're going to be offended. Now, how are we going to react to that offense? Are we going to quit, are we going to persevere and keep on? Psalms one nineteen, one sixty-five; a lot of people quote this verse but you know what? This verse doesn't mean anything if you're not dead to self.

### LOVE THE WORD

**Psalms 119:165** "Great peace have they which love thy law (precepts): and **nothing** shall **offend** them."

Do you know the word? Let me tell you, you're not going to be offended very easily. And you sure are not going to change, you're sure not going to quit! In verse twenty-two of Mathew thirteen it says

### MANY THINGS

**22.** He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, **choke the word**, and he becometh **unfruitful**.

There are many things that can cause us to become unfruitful. First of all, was being offended. Those who get offended and quit because of trouble do not bear fruit and it's the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches that choke the word and cause us to become unfruitful; but there are other things as well. Mark tells us in four nineteen

### LUST FOR THINGS

**Mark 4:19** ". . . the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

Desiring other things! And we become unfruitful. When I think of lust of other things, I think about the lust for power, the lust for recognition, the lust, in other words, to be promoted! We will compromise and become unfruitful so we can be promoted. Then in Luke eight verse fourteen

### PLEASURES OF LIFE

**Luke 8:14** ". . . and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

But what are we to be? We're to be fruitful. In Mathew thirteen twenty-three

### FRUITFUL

**23.** But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also **beareth fruit**, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Let me tell you. You can't understand the word of the Kingdom, you can't understand it without study. One of the things that we've been hearing on TV is that the British Open is being played and the thing that I hear them saying, the golfer saying, "I've got a game plan." A game plan! Do we have a game plan in our walk with the Lord? And some of the commentators say, 'well,

there you can see the pressure of the game that's caused a flaw or a chink or some mistake in his game plan.' And that can happen to us too. We can find ourselves in the rough or in bunker, as they would say, you know, they call them tombs! Over there they look like graves and right! Anyway, but we need to understand and have a game plan. And if we have a game plan, whose plan is it? It's the Lord's plan! And if we are hearing the word and understanding it, then we're going to bear fruit and we're going to glorify the Father in doing that. Now, how can we do that? Well, I want to conclude by looking at Colossians chapter three verses one through four. It says

### THE HIDDEN LIFE

**Colossians 3:1-4** "If ye then be risen with Christ, **seek** [present active] those **things** which are **above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2. Set your affection [present active] on things above, not on things on the earth.

To be risen with Christ means you have had to have died to self. You can't be raised, I mean, we're not talking about the resurrection and living in heaven here; we're talking about a risen lifestyle, now! This is not talking about in the resurrection because if you are raised in the resurrection, you don't need to seek anything above, you're amongst that which is above! You understand what I'm saying. So if you be risen with Christ, that is, if you have died to self and your life is a new life in Him, we need to seek those things which are above. That is, treasures above, positions of honor and glory in His coming Kingdom, seeking the Kingdom where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. This has to do with Him being our High Priest, the power of the resurrection. Verse two, "Set your affection [present active] on things above, not on things on the earth." In other words, our affections, our value system, is heavenly, not earthly. I was listening to a testimony of a man dying with cancer. He was sitting in his study as a seminary student and he said; I was looking at all the books that I have in my library, he said, those books don't mean anything to me anymore. He looked at his golf clubs over in the corner, he said, those golf clubs don't have the meaning they used to have in my life. Now, when we are looking at heaven as being close, our perspective of earthly things change. A new car means nothing, particularly if you can't drive it or you're not going to have it very long either. So we need to set our affections on things above and not on things here on the earth. It says, "ye have died," its translated in verse three, "for ye are dead." But it's actually aorist, "ye have died and your life is hid with Christ in God."

### YE HAVE DIED

**3. For [because] ye are dead, and your life is hid [(concealed by covering), kept secret] with Christ in God.**

The Word, 'hid' here is an interesting word in that it has to do with 'concealed by covering.' Your life is hid, it's concealed! Dying to self is a personal thing. It's something that you and the Lord are working on together and it's a concealed thing. Your life is hid with Christ in God. Now, this concealed thing, or this hidden life has to do with being crucified in Christ. In Galatians two, nineteen and twenty, I'll just read those two verses

### THE JUST

**Galatians 2:19-20** "For I through (the knowledge of) the law am dead to (the penalty of) the law (if I obey it), that I might live (justly) unto God.

### LIVE BY FAITH

**20. I am crucified with Christ:** nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith** of the Son of God, who loved me,



and gave himself for me."

I read verse nineteen because to be able to be crucified with Christ and to live by faith, you've got to experience verse nineteen. We talked about this last Sunday, didn't we? When it says, 'I through the law am dead to the law;' I told you about driving down the interstate and seeing the state patrol officer pointing his radar gun at our car and I thought I saw him up there, no big deal, I'm dead to the law, you know why? Because I was obeying it! We're dead to the law, if we're obeying it. If we are disobeying the law, you know what? Then I put on the brake and you know, and then when I get ten or fifteen miles down the road I pick up my speed like I had it before. You ever thought about? Sure! I've been there done that! I should be far enough away from the law that it doesn't effect me, but you know what? You're always looking in the rear-view mirror and you're watching the taillights of the people way down the road to see if they're stopping because they got caught. You know, you got all kinds of little mechanisms or if you've got a little box, you set it on the dash but anyway, when you know the law and you obey the law, you're dead to it; it doesn't bother you, it doesn't effect you. It's like a pinch doesn't affect a dead man. When you're obedient to the law, you are just. And if you're just, then you can apply verse twenty, I am crucified with Christ I am dead to self, nevertheless we do live, physically we're alive, yet not I but Christ liveth in me. I'm living the life that He lived because I have understood His life; I have known Him and I'm applying His life into my life. And then it goes on to say, and I live by faith. And you cannot live by faith, if you're not just. Now, verse four tells us

#### **WILL REIGN WITH HIM**

4. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

You live like this, you're going to be with Him in the glory of His coming Kingdom. You're going to be ruling and reigning with Him. So what did Paul tell us to do in Philippians three, thirteen and fourteen?

#### **DIE TO THE PAST**

**Philippians 3:13-14** "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I do, **forgetting** (dead, not influenced) those things which are **behind**, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14. I press toward the mark **for the prize** of the **high** above **calling** of God in Christ Jesus."

"Apprehended" or arrived. The dead have forgotten the past; we need to do the same thing. Did you know that we can let our past influence the way we live? We can live defeated lives. We made so many mistakes, we did so many things that were not pleasing to God or family - forget it! Don't forget it that you make the same mistake twice, okay? But the thing is, don't let it bog you down, forget it and get on with life! And what do we need to be doing?

#### **SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM**

**Matthew 6:33** "But **seek** present active ye first the **kingdom** of God (the above calling), and his righteousness; and all these things (our needs) shall be added unto you."

We need to be seeking first the Kingdom, present tense and that Kingdom is the above calling that God is going to have for those who are faithful; and His righteousness which is by faith, and what will happen? All these things, everything that we wring our hands over and fret over and are afraid of, what? Will be taken care of! So we can live a life that is not sensitive to things around us but only to His voice. We can live a life so that we're not calling the shots, but we're allowing Him to call the shots and trust Him. May the Lord help us to do that and you know what? We'll enjoy the Kingdom much better.

Father, I just pray that You'd bless the message to each of our hearts and lives and we pray Lord, You'd help us not to fret over things that other people fret over, about food and clothing and shelter. We know Lord, that if we don't work, we're lazy, then we don't deserve to eat. But Lord, we thank You that You will provide for us and that You'll care for us if we'll just honor You and Your word. Help us, Lord, to bear fruit that we might glorify You, Father and the Son. For it is in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we pray, amen