

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

50- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 30
The Clear Eye; Secret Worry; and the Supremacy
of Jesus Christ- Part 2

Church April 30, 2023

Matthew 6:22-34

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

25 "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

26 Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

27 And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?

28 And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,

29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!

31 Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'

32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now this morning, we are *continuing* to look at what Jesus taught about genuine Believers having a “*Clear Eye*” and how having that kind of Eye relates to the Warning by Jesus at the End of verse 24, when He said,

... You cannot serve God and wealth.

... and we are tying all of that together *within* the Truth of the Supremacy of Jesus Christ. So, let’s look again at what Jesus Himself said in verses 22-24:

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Now last time- we found out that Jesus put the strange Statement of, “*The Eye is the Lamp of the Body*” in between the two Teachings about Money; Possessions; and Wealth. And what Jesus was getting at here is this:

How you see Reality- determines whether you are walking in Darkness or walking in the Light

So, the Issue that has to do with the Eye is: How we “*see*”; or how we “comprehend” or how we “understand” the *ultimate* Reality in the Universe, which is:

The infinite Worth and Value of God

... and that Reality is set against the Worth and the Value that we place on Money; Possessions; and Wealth.

Jesus said that our Eye was “*Clear*” (literally, “*Single*”) when it is focused *singularly* on the Worth of God being *infinitely* Better; and much more Valuable;

than the Worth of Money; Possessions; and Wealth. And when that happens- Jesus said- our “*whole body*” or the “*entirety*” of that individual is “*full of Light*” or “*full of the Knowledge of the Glory of God*”.

But Jesus also said that our Eye is “*Bad*” (literally “*Evil*”) when the *lure* of Money; Possessions and Wealth *deceives* us; and we “*see*” Money and Wealth and Possessions as being *more* Valuable than God. And Jesus said that this causes our “*whole body*” or the “*entirety*” of that individual to be filled with “*Darkness*”- which signifies that the person *remains* Lost.

So, in this amazing Statement by Jesus we see several things:

- The Eye is the Lamp (the Illumination) of the entire Body
- Our Eye can be either Clear (Single) or Bad (Evil)
- The Eye- “Sees”; “Comprehends”; or “Understands”
- Money; Possessions; and Wealth have the Power to cause our Eye to be “Bad” (Evil)
- If the Illumination of the entire Body is Evil- then the Darkness is Great

And the Conclusion that Jesus made is that if the Object that has the ability to bring Light into the whole Body is “Bad” (Evil)- then that person CANNOT be saved- precisely because this overwhelming Darkness fills his Eye and becomes part of the whole person.

Now for many Centuries, the *overwhelming* majority of all Believers throughout the entire world have interpreted the Teaching of the Holy Bible about Money; Possessions; and Wealth to mean that genuine Believers MUST be financially and materially Poor- if they hope to escape the Lure and the Pitfalls that Money; Possessions; and Wealth make on human beings. And I know this is incredible unpopular to say, but I think it is both Honest and True:

If the Teachings of the entire Bible, when understood properly, do NOT mean that Believers are to forsake Wealth and be financially and materially “Poor” in this Life- then it is incumbent on those who do NOT believe this- to prove their Position in, by, and through the Scriptures.

... because that Position is set against about 1500 years of *collective* Teaching from the greatest; and most important; and most godly people throughout Church History. And that is *exactly* what I hope to do.

Let me put this another Way. It has only been about 500 years that the people of the Church have NOT been taught; and have NOT believed that being a “Blood-bought Christian” *automatically* meant that you would be financially and materially Poor. But we don’t believe or teach that today. And my Question is,

“Why?” Because what we teach today is 180 degrees *different* from the Position of the Christian Church during its *first* 1500 years in operation- it needs to be explained and proved from the Scriptures and from the Scriptures alone (*Sola Scriptura*) and defended- if necessary. And here are a few Examples why:

1. For the first time in the History of the Church- we have Pastors; Evangelists; and Teachers of the Gospel- who have personally become millionaires BECAUSE OF THEIR MINISTRIES. And that is a relatively new Phenomenon that has happened during my Lifetime.
2. The American Church- primarily of the Evangelical persuasion- have begun to “flex their muscles” and financially support Political and Social Issues as well as Politicians who move the political landscape toward one particular direction. And that is happening- even when an Issue has NOTHING to do with the Bible; or with Evangelizing the Lost; and even if an Issue opposes other Issues that are decidedly biblical.

The Point I’m making is that when the Holy Bible teaches about Money; Possessions; and Wealth- it ALWAYS *warns* the Believer about the insidious Effects that these three things can have on us. In fact, there is NO instance anywhere in the Bible that teaches that the more Money we have; or the more Possessions we own; or the more Wealth we accumulate- that this is a Sign from God that we are on the Right or the Correct Course. Those Passages that have to do with these three Issues ALWAYS cautions Believers to “take heed”; and to “be careful” that we *avoid* the intoxicating Effect that they can have on the human soul.

Yet today, the modern Church does *exactly* that. In far too many cases- what is taught and what is believed about Money and Possessions and Wealth- is that- the MORE the merrier. And because that emphasis is *decisively* AWAY FROM any Caution; and *decisively* AWAY FROM any Warning; and *decisively* AWAY FROM any Concern- and because that Emphasis is made on Purpose- it is absolutely a Requirement that I talk about these things with this *purposeful* Trepidation and Fear.

So, to whatever degree the modern Church *minimizes* or outright *eliminates* the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Warnings that the Scriptures make about these three Issues- let us- to that same degree- *re-emphasize* and *under-score* those Warnings. Because God knows us better than we know ourselves. And because God loves us MORE than anyone else. And because God wants the BEST for us; and He knows that the BEST He can give us- is Himself. And that BEST thing- Himself- will NOT be ours if we fail in this Area and are seduced by Money; Possessions; and Wealth.

We always need to remember that Jesus said a person can lose his immortal soul over having Money; and because of the accumulation of more of this world's Goods; and because of the increase of our Wealth. That these three things- MORE THAN ANY OTHER ISSUE- have the Power to *deceive* us; and to *destroy* us. So, let us discuss these Issues- Yes! And let us believe what the Scriptures clearly and repeatedly teach about these three Issues- Yes! But let us also refuse to allow our minds and hearts to say, "*This doesn't apply to me.*"- as though we are somehow *immune* to these Warnings. Because these Warnings DO apply to you. And they DO apply to me.

Now I have told you before that the Reason that so few Believers today will admit that they love Money; the Reason so few will admit to be Covetous; and the Reason that so few will admit that they struggle with the fact that Jesus said, "**You CANNOT serve God and Wealth**" is NOT because the modern Believer has, for the most part- found a Way to rise above the Temptation and Sin that are part and parcel to being Wealthy.

I honestly believe that the overwhelming *majority* of people who make up the modern church are MORE Worldly- they are MORE caught up with the Worries of the World; and the Deceitfulness of Riches; and the Desire for other Things (**Mark 4:19**)- than ever before. I truly believe that the Sin of Covetousness is much MORE *common* today than it has ever been; and I honestly think that Money; Possessions; and Wealth play a much LARGER Role in our Lives today than ever before. And therefore- we are so "neck-deep" in love with Money- that we truly cannot "see the Forest for the Trees."

Yet I will NOT teach; and I *refuse* to believe that the Answer to this HUGE Problem- is that we all take a "*Vow of Poverty.*" I believe with every fiber of my Being that Money; Possessions; and Wealth are as big an Issue with us Gentiles, who live in the United States in the 21st Century as it was for those Jews, who lived in 1st Century Palestine. And I also believe that these three Issues are serious Problems for us today- maybe even MORE of a Problem with us than they were with them- primarily because we live in a Nation that has invested fully in "*Capitalism*"; and whose entire Economy is driven by "*Consumer Spending.*"

Anytime I bring this Subject up- I get this Response:

"But Brother Blair- I'm NOT rich!"

... and they say this- *thinking* that this Statement eliminates them from being guilty of sinning against God because of Money; Possessions; and Wealth.

But I would like you to carefully read one of the most frightening Warnings that is found anywhere in the Bible about this Subject from the Apostle Paul in **1Timothy 6:10**:

For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Now please notice the people Paul was talking about here. He was NOT talking about people who were already Wealthy. He said,

... and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs

Those who “long” for Money; Possessions; and Wealth” are those who DO NOT already have it- but who desperately WANT to have it. And to *some* of them- Paul said that they

... have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs

Now this is NOT a Passage that teaches that saved people can lose their Salvation. It is simply talking about people- WHO SAY AND WHO THINK THEY ARE SAVED- who “*wander away*” from the Christian Faith because they “*longed for Money*”.

The frightening verse that addresses those who are genuinely Wealthy- is found in **Matthew 19:24b** where Jesus said:

... it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

... and there are NO qualifiers here. So, this is NOT addressing only the wealthy people- WHO LOVE MONEY. This Warning is addressing ALL those who are “rich”- whether they love their Money or not.

But as it pertains to Money; Possessions; and Wealth- I would remind you of the “*Origen Mistake*”. Now Origen (1185AD- 253) was one of the early great Leaders of the Christian Church. In fact, he was called, the “*Genius of the early Church*”¹. During his Life in Jesus Christ- Origen produced over 6,000 works that helped lay a firm Foundation for Christian Theology; Apologetics; and Homiletics. But Origen had a problem with Lust. And so, he attempted to solve his Problem by having himself castrated. And it wasn’t until *after* he had castrated himself that he

¹ <https://earlychurchhistory.org>

realized that his problem was NOT in the Area that he had cut off- but in his Mind and in his Heart.²

So, too, our Problem with Money will NOT be solved by simply becoming Poor. How do I know that? Because Paul wrote that the Problem with Money was in those who “**want to get rich**” (1 Timothy 6:9)- rather than with those who were *already* rich. So, the Problem that we all have with Wealth is NOT solved by merely having *less* of it. Jesus said this Problem is solved by having a “*Clear*” or a “*Single Eye*”. And last time- we saw that having an Eye that “sees” the magnificence of the Glory of God in the “Face” or in, by, and through the Person of Jesus Christ- will go a long way in strengthening our Resolve in the Fight against loving Money.

But Jesus went even *further* into this Issue by linking it to the human tendency to Worry. And the Act of “*Worry*” is what is also called, “*Anxiety*” by the medical Profession. And so, I want you to think about the Irony of the following Statement:

The Nation that is the strongest; the freest; and the most prosperous Nation in the History of the World- is the same Nation that produces the most people who suffer from Anxiety. And today, as we sit here in this Service- there are 55 Million Americans who have been prescribed Medication to treat their Anxiety.

... how could this be?

Now, first of all, we need to look at “Anxiety” or “Worry” the Way the Bible does- rather than the Way that Psychologists and Psychiatrists do. So, let’s see how the incarnate God- Jesus Christ understood Worry. He said,

- **For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life... (Verse 25)**
- **... who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? (Verse 27)**
- **... why are you worried about clothing? (verse 28)**
- **Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' (verse 31)**

... and then I want to look at just one short Passage of **Hebrews 3:12-14** that says:

² The Church Historian, Eusebius, wrote in Church History 6.8 about what Origen did: “While Origen was teaching in Alexandria, he did something that gave proof enough of his young and immature mind, but also of his faith and self-control. He took the saying, ‘There are those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake’ (Matthew 19:12) in too literal and absurd a sense and he was eager to fulfill the Savior’s words and also to forestall any slander on the part of unbelievers for despite his youth, he held forth on religious matters before women as well as men. So he quickly carried out the Savior’s words, trying to do so unnoticed by most of his students. But however much he wished it, he could not possibly hide such a deed. Demetrius learned of it later, since he presided over the community there. He was astonished at Origen’s rash act.”

12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

The writer of **Hebrews** infallibly says here that the "*Evidence*" or the "*Proof*" that you have become a "*Partaker*" of Jesus Christ- and the *unmistakable* Fruit that you are *united* to Him in "*Saving Faith*"- is that you *personally* possess both the "*Desire*" and the "*Ability*"- you have both the "*Will*" and the "*Power*" to "*hold fast*" the "**Beginning of our Assurance**"- FIRM until the End.

And that tells us that "*biblical Perseverance*" the Ability to "*keep on-keeping on*"- is a Requirement for Salvation. You see, when a person is truly converted- the Heart is changed so that now Life is lived- "by Faith". **Galatians 2:20** says,

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

But the Miracle of the New Birth also introduces the Believer to a Life of "*spiritual Warfare*". And that Warfare is called, the "*Fight of Faith*" or the ongoing Struggle to believe (in Jesus and in what the Bible teaches)- and to *keep on* believing- in spite of ever-changing and difficult Circumstances.

In **2Timothy 4:7**; **1Timothy 6:12** and here in **Hebrews 3:12**- this Warfare is called, the "Fight of Faith"- the ongoing Battle against Unbelief (an unbelieving Heart). And we see this Battle- this ongoing Struggle- in **Hebrews 3:12**:

- **Take care brethren...** (the Vigilance of the Battle of the Believer)
- **... that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart...** (there is the Enemy in this ongoing Struggle- the "unbelieving heart")
- **... that falls away from the living God** (the seriousness of the Battle)

In other words, the most basic, *fundamental* Battle of our Life is the Battle to Believe in the living God (and in what He said), and to NOT allow; or permit our heart to become an "**evil, unbelieving Heart**".

Because if Unbelief in the living God gets the upper hand in our Life- the Result will be a "hardening" of the "soft heart" that God gave us in the New Birth.

And that hard Heart will make us *unwilling* to repent and thus cuts us off from the Grace of God.

Now this will not happen to those who are truly “in” Jesus Christ. But the Reason it will not happen- is NOT because we are somehow *immune* from this. It won’t happen because we will take the Warnings that we find in the Bible- *seriously*. And we will *continually* struggle to *maintain* our Hope and our Trust in God and in what God has said. So, the Proof that we are “in” Jesus- is NOT that we escape Trouble or Temptation- it is NOT that we never have any Trouble; or Sorrow; or Pain; or Persecution- but that IN the Trouble; and THROUGH the Sorrow; and WHILE we are in Pain; and IN the Persecution- we *continually* fight to believe.

And those who have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth take this ongoing Battle- *seriously*. And so, they NEVER rest in what God has already done. They labor and struggle to draw on the Power of God to fight it; and to win it- with *persevering* Faith. And that is what God promises. **1Thessalonians 5:23&24** says,

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

Now the Connection between what we found out last time and today is the Truth that:

Beneath our Battle against Evil in our Heart (**an Evil Unbelieving Heart**) is the Battle against Unbelief

And that means that “*Unbelief*” is the *Foundation* of all Evil. In fact, it is the very *Essence* of all Evil. Because every bit of our own *personal* sinning- flows out from Unbelief in the living God- and what He has infallibly spoken to us- in Scripture.

And what Jesus says to us here in verses 22-34 illustrates this Truth with a *specific* evil Condition of the human Heart that is called, “*Worry*” or what medical Professionals call, *Anxiety*”.

Pause for a moment and consider all of the many different sinful Thoughts and Actions and Attitudes that flow out from a Heart that worries instead of trusting. And then think how many of those are connected directly to Money- or the lack of it. Greed; and the Sin of “building bigger barns”; Coveting; Feelings that God has abandoned you; even Lying and Stealing can be linked *directly* to a

Heart that worries about Money. And that tells us how many Sins could be *avoided* if we could *conquer* the Heart that Worries and *build* a Heart that *trusts* God; and that *hopes* in what He has spoken.

Now the verse that connects Worry to an evil, unbelieving Heart is **Matthew 6:30** where Jesus said,

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!

... in other words, Jesus said that the Root of Worry is a Lack of Faith in our heavenly Father and His promised Provision. So, as Unbelief gets the upper hand in our hearts- one of the Results is a Heart that Worries. So, when **Hebrews 3:12** says,

Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

... we now know that we can understand this to mean,

“Take care that there not be in any one of you a Heart that worries because of Unbelief”...

... so, now we know that the medical Condition called, “*Anxiety*” that has 55 Million people, who live in the most prosperous Nation on earth- taking nerve pills- trying to cope- we now know that the Heart that Worries- is simply one of the many evil Conditions of the human Heart that flows out from Unbelief. So, it is true to say that MUCH Worrying comes from LITTLE Faith! Unbelief in the living God produces a Heart that sins *greatly* against God- in several Ways- one of which is Worry. So, one of the Signs that we may have an evil, unbelieving Heart- is that we worry about things that God has already promised to do.

Now that is what Jesus is teaching us in this Passage. And that much is indisputable. I didn't write this. And the Reason Jesus is teaching this- is to illustrate the kind of person- who will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. He is illustrating in this Sermon what genuine Salvation looks like. He is illustrating what a Child of Abraham looks like; Jesus is showing everybody who is going to be a recipient of the Abrahamic Covenant. So, Jesus is putting forth the radical Proposition that being born Jewish; and having the foreskin of your Flesh circumcised; and trying really hard to keep the 10 Commandments; and going to Jerusalem every year; and sacrificing animals; and submitting yourself to the

Authority of the Levitical Priests; and handling all of your earthly disputes through the Sanhedrin Court- is NOT the Fruit of Salvation. The Fruit of Salvation is Belief- Belief in God; and in what God has said *infallibly* in Scripture.

Now what Jesus is boldly teaching here would have normally been considered to be Blasphemy. Because our Lord was telling them (and us)- that the First or the Old Covenant is now coming to a decisive End; and that a *greater* Covenant; an infinitely *superior* Covenant is being birthed- that will make the Old Covenant completely Obsolete! And we can clearly see the Animosity that the Jewish Leaders had against Jesus- and the Deacon, Stephen by what they got others to say about them in **The Acts 6:11,13&14:**

11 Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."

13 They put forward false witnesses who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law;

14 for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us."

... that's what the Jewish Leaders were MOST upset about! NOT His Miracles; NOT His supernatural healing Manifestations; NOT His casting out of demons. The Jewish Leaders were MOST disturbed that Jesus was teaching things that would "**ALTER THE CUSTOMS WHICH MOSES HANDED DOWN TO US.**" And that had to do with Jesus bringing in the New Covenant! So, the irony is that these Jews were fighting AGAINST the New Covenant- that the Old Covenant promised!

And *one* of the Characteristics that Jesus taught in this Sermon that all of those who will be a part of this new "*Kingdom of Heaven*" (as opposed to the "*Kingdom of Israel*") will have- is that they do NOT have an evil, unbelieving Heart that manifests itself by worrying about what God has already promised to do. But this *new* people; who will inherit this *new* Kingdom; will have a Heart that has been made soft and believing through the Miracle of the New Birth!

Now there are a couple of Ways that people *respond* to the Truth that worrying about what God has already promised to do- signifies a much *deeper* and much more *serious* Problem of their Heart. One Response would go like this: "*Well, this is certainly NOT Good News! In fact, it is very Harsh and Discouraging to learn that what I thought was a simple Struggle with an anxious Disposition is, in fact, a revealing of the true Condition of my own Heart and Relationship with God.*"

And my Response is this: "*Now you understand why God gave us His Word.*" You see, dear friends, being "*Fallen*" means that we are very capable to

mask our true Problems by labeling them with sweet and seemingly innocent Titles. So, for example, we call, “*Sin*”- “*Mistakes*”. Or we chalk our Sins up to the fact that, “*Well, nobody’s Perfect!*”. And so, left to ourselves- we would allow raw Sin to *dominate* our Lives and we would find a sweet Title to give it- that would never bring Conviction to our Minds in a million years.

Very few of us would ever call the seemingly innocent Act of “*Worrying about Money*”- a Symptom of an “evil, unbelieving Heart” that, when left untouched by the Spirit of God- will lead to us *proving* that our Salvation Experience was not real as we “fall away from the Faith”.

So, because God knows that we are NOT equipped to diagnose our own Sins- He gave us 66 Books by Way of Inspiration- where every Word is both Inerrant and Infallible. And God knows that as we spend Time in those Books- accompanied with Prayer- the sacred Writ of Scripture will do for us what we could NEVER do for ourselves- bring us under the Conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Now, by the Way- I have to live under the Authority of God’s Word the same as you. And so, I understand that you may be shocked to find out that your Worrying about what God has already promised- is NOT innocent; it isn’t small; it isn’t insignificant; it is very, very serious. So, I too might initially say with you, “*Knowing this isn’t Good News*”- at least not yet.

So, we must go to God’s Word and try to find out why a Good and Kind and Merciful God would bring us “News” that, *initially*, seems to us to be very Harsh and Hard. And so, we might look at **Hebrews 12:11** that says:

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

So, the Discipline of the Lord- that God said was designed to help us “**share in His Holiness**” (**Hebrews 12:10**) is designed to bring to us, the “**Peaceable Fruit of Righteousness.**” Okay, but why does it hurt so much to bring us the “Peaceable Fruit of Righteousness”? Because we are already “Fallen”; and we have Attributes and Characteristics that we don’t see; and probably don’t even know about; that would *prevent* us from “sharing in God’s Holiness”.

Now God *could* have left us the Way we already are. But in His Love and Mercy- God desires to give us what is BEST. And what is BEST- is Himself! But in order to do that- He must first *expose* and then *remove* an evil, unbelieving Heart- that we already have. And to do that- God must exercise His Discipline.

Now notice that **Hebrews 12:11** does NOT say that we automatically receive the “**Peaceable Fruit of Righteousness**” simply by virtue of the New

Birth. Instead, the writer *infallibly* wrote that we must, be “trained” by God’s Discipline”. In other words, BEFORE we can ever hope to have the “Peaceable Fruit of Righteousness” we MUST be trained by the Discipline that, at the first, seems very Sorrowful and NOT Joyful at all. Why? Because we begin our Journey with Jesus- as being already being “Fallen”- with the many Impurities and “false gold” that is found in the Lump from which we were taken- already in us.

And the ONLY thing that can remove those Impurities is Fire- the Fire of the Discipline of the Lord. And so, God turns up the Heat- NOT to kill us- but to burn away the Wood; the Hay; and the Stubble and other Impurities of the Lump from which we were taken. And the Fire is so hot and so consuming that the ONLY thing that can survive- is the pure gold.

So, the ONLY Way; the one, single Path; the ONLY narrow Pathway that leads to the fullness of our own Joy- is the Path that starts out as being Sorrowful.

This is the Reality that no genuine Believer is exempt from the “**living and active and sharper than any two-edged**” “Sword”- the Word of God- that pierces “**as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart**” (Hebrews 4:12). So, in, by, and through God the Holy Spirit- acting through the Divine Truth of the Word of God- the evil, unbelieving Heart of Worry is *exposed* and made clear in our Eyes. How? Because “**there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.**” (Hebrews 4:13)

What we have to get clear in our minds- is that none of us have “arrived” at the Mountaintop. We are born into this World already totally depraved and messed up. This is the Condition called, “Fallen”. And we don’t DO anything to be “Fallen”- we are born that Way. And being “Fallen” means that there are Attributes and Characteristics- that we already have- that lie deep inside of us- that are part of the Lump of clay we were taken out of. So, when God begins to sanctify us- to purify us- SO WE CAN SHARE IN HIS HOLINESS- we have a tendency to think that God is being Mean; or Harsh; or that He is angry with us- which is not true. God is actually loving us by *purifying* us- by using the Fire of holy Discipline- to bring us into a Place where we can share in the very Holiness of God! And God wouldn’t do that if He were Mean or Harsh or if He was angry at all with us.

So, the Knowledge that Worry (Anxiety) is a Symptom of a much *deeper* and much more *serious* defect of our Heart- may NOT initially be Good News to us. But if we can be trained by God’s Discipline- the Promise from a God, Who CANNOT lie- is that we WILL *overcome* an “Evil unbelieving Heart” and we WILL receive the “Peaceable Fruit of Righteousness”. And a *part* of that Peaceable Fruit of Righteousness- is a soft Heart that is both willing and able to Believe God and believe what God has said.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.