

Christian City Ministries

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Greetings in the wonderful name of Jesus! May His grace and peace be with you.

This is a more difficult letter to write than my other "group letters" have been. I suppose its being physically distant that makes the difference. Although it could be that there are new people in the Christian City family and not everyone knows one another anymore. Whatever it is, I know that our Lord has prodded me to write you and therefore, I'm here once again trusting Him to speak to you through this letter.

I've felt His urging now for close to seven weeks and during that time many topics have come to mind. One day I'm sure He wants me to write about "our purpose in life," then on another day I recall telling Jeremy and Justin that I'd write on the "Fear of God." Yesterday, I actually began a letter on "how to have the mind of God." After all, Nehemiah fasted and prayed until he had the mind of the Lord. Then, once he had achieved that state, he could boldly refute his adversaries. Remember how Nehemiah said, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us . . ." (Neh 2:20 I think).

I recalled how we are admonished to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2;6). Jesus only did what He saw the Father do (John 14:10). If you and I were to do that, we would have soundness of mind and possess the boldness we need to overcome our Fears and intimidation. The man who has the Mind of Christ cannot be intimidated or controlled by Fear. Jesus only spoke and acted as the Spirit of God led. He was never afraid, because God is never intimidated or fearful. There is none more powerful, mighty and knowledgeable than our God! (Please say that out loud)

I feel excitement in my bones as I write about this truth. You and I are to live, speak and do as Jesus did. He was the model we were to use to learn how to live in this world and bring people to Him for salvation. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21). And He gave us His words of encouragement: "Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist (Luke 21:14,15).

If we will only yield to the Spirit, giving Him control, He will tell us what to do and say. He will speak through us and work through us to glorify Jesus Christ. Your adversary will flee from you when you stand confidently in Christ, be it doubt, Fear, intimidation or whatever is buffeting you and keeping you from your

God given tasks. We can speak with boldness and authority when we know what He is saying! The surety of His word gives us a powerful boldness. God has assured us that when we know what He says, and when we believe He is always with us, we can boldly declare, "What can man do to me?" When we live in this confidence, we can not be intimidated or controlled by fear: "If God is with us, who then can be against us?"

There are modern-day Pharisees who do not yield too or follow the Spirit's leading. They can quote chapter and verse faster than most and are prone to come against anything they personally don't agree with. You know them, too, they run everything they see, read, and hear through their own religious parameters, looking for fault, rejecting everyone and everything that fails to fit into their personal doctrinal box. Folks, don't let them douse your fire or steal your joy! Following the expressed will of God requires more than mental assent, and intellectualism. The wisdom of God always comes from the Scriptures, but it has life breathed into it by the Holy Spirit. He is our ever-present help, and teacher, but how can He teach us when we refuse to be taught, thinking that *we know best? Let Him lead and direct you!* He is far more trustworthy, powerful, and knowledgeable than our brains can even imagine. Simply put, don't get caught up in fruitless discussions ruled by mental understanding of the Scriptures. Instead, let the Holy Spirit guide you into spiritual wisdom. 1 Cor. 2:12,13,16 tell us:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches But which the Holy Spirit teaches. . . we have the mind of Christ."

We know Nehemiah had the mind of the Lord. He stayed focused on what God had told him to do, and he trusted his God, he acted in faith. Our enemy wants to sidetack us to make us ineffective in our labor. Satan is persistent and very clever, He doesn't give up easily. We must be stronger in our resolve to obey God than he is in trying to keep us from it.

The enemy will stop at nothing to discredit you or give you a bad name. He will attempt to intimidate you into self-preservation at all cost. If you're concerned about "YOU", you won't be concerned about others or what God has asked of you. The whole purpose of fear and intimidation is to weaken us so we cannot accomplish the will of God and will quit trying to resist the temptation to fear and doubt. If we do not stand against satan and his unholy hordes steadfastly, we will give in and become quite useless to the Body of Christ. If the jerk of a devil can stop, postpone, or weaken us, then he keeps the Kingdom of God from advancing.

Tremendous resistance and opposition came against Nehemiah and his people. But they had the mind of the Lord, they believed, worked hard, and responded to God by acting on their faith in Him. Now I want to focus on "Breaking through Resistance" and stand on some evil spirit's neck for awhile.

Nehemiah's tenacity is a classic example of what believers are exhorted to do: "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but *I press on*, that I

may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me (Phil. 3:12). The key word is press. If Paul said by the Holy Spirit, "I press on," then, as with Nehemiah, he worked through frequent resistance. We don't just stumble onto it. We must *press into it*. Paul went on to say, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14, KJV).

Most agree that there is a high calling and a low calling. The high calling is a life lived on earth according to heaven's standards; it is seen as the kingdom of God manifested through an individual life. People who live in the high calling control their surroundings. By staying in their authority, they change the spiritual climate from oppression to liberty.

Darkness cannot overpower light. Light expels darkness. The brighter the light, the more darkness is displaced. This is how it is when we walk in the authority of God's kingdom. We place our surroundings under its rule.

Jesus could eat with sinners because He controlled the atmosphere. If you are stronger in God than the unbeliever is in the devil, you will control the atmosphere. If a sinner is more dominant in evil than the believer is in righteousness, the unbeliever will control the spiritual climate.

When you decide to live in the high call, you will face opposition and resistance. "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Again we are told, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Yet many Christians settle for and live in the low calling. Why? They do not want to face the resistance that accompanies pressing toward the high calling. They would rather conform to their surroundings than change them by godly confrontation. It is much easier to blend in than stand out. When faced with opposition, some settle for compromise and seek the path of least resistance.

I believe our unwillingness to resist may be partly attributed to the ease and security we build into our lives. We carefully design our lifestyles in order to avoid any form of hardship. Not that I advocate voluntary hardship, but I do believe that we trust our plans and programs more than we trust God.

We have insurance. If we get sick, we rush to the doctor without praying first, knowing our insurance will cover the cost. Our jobs provide a paycheck every week or two. If we lose our job, we have unemployment to fall back on. If that runs out, our system provides welfare. If welfare is unavailable, we may be able to find another program that will take care of us --- maybe even one that compensates laziness. We often fail to choose what is important. Too many people today will not pursue something if they have to work hard for it.

Not many Christians possess the persistently determined character necessary to obtain the high calling of God. When met with opposition, they turn aside to the path of least resistance. At first this escape route appears to be a good choice, with its promise of ease. But this road is paved with the characteristics of Lukewarmness: *compromise, apathy and self-preservation*.

Jesus instructed us to confront the mountains of adversity, then they will be removed. To paraphrase: *Blast the mountain, even if you have to do it stone by stone!* Like Nehemiah, true warriors in Christ press through the mountains, confident that nothing is impossible to those who believe (Matt. 17:20). The Lord

spoke through the prophet Isaiah saying, " When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you." (Isaiah 43:2 NKJ) In contrast, those traveling the path of ease try to go around their mountains, compromising, to avoid confrontation with the adversary.

The flow to the world's system is set by the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). Heaven's domain is in the direct opposition to this flow. To go heaven's way means we will constantly face confrontation from this world's system. Unfortunately, this worldly system is prevalent in the Christian community as well.

It's kind of like rowing a boat up-stream, getting tired, relax and quit rowing; Your boat drifts back down stream even if it is pointed up-stream! This illustrates what happens when believers do not press on. They still point in the direction of Christianity, but they are now flowing backward with the world. They become religious. They lose their power and are ineffective. Pastor Rusty many times reminded us that even sick and dead fish can float down stream. To quote the exact words of Jesus, they are "good for nothing" (Matt 5:13)! **WOW!**

This is not a good place to quit. There is so much more to tell. We at least need to touch on "being strong." Paul exhorted Timothy to *stir up the gift of god* (another topic I want to cover one of these days) then he quickly added, "you therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1). To press forward and overcome we must be strong. Paul told the church at Corinth, "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong" (my emphasis: 1 Cor. 16:13). A useful believer must be strong and not shrink back from difficult situations.

God told Joshua seven times to be strong and of good courage. Joshua 1:7 reads: "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you: do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go." God said to be strong and very courageous, for the purpose of keeping the Word of the Lord. Fear attempts to strip you of your freedom to obey the will or word of God. You and I must be strong and courageous at all times, or we will unknowingly drift off the narrow path and what we know is truly right. Discouragement is a killer of faith! If it is not strongly confronted by faith in God's Word, we will all draw back. Look at what the writer of Hebrews has to say: "Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone *draws back*, My soul has no pleasure in him" (Heb. 10:38).

It is also worth looking at Rev. 21:7-8 to see the opposite of strong, that is *cowardly*, as seen by God: "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. But the *cowardly*, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers [drugs], idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which is the second death" (my emphasis).

I find it very sobering that God groups cowards with all the commonly thought of "evil behaviors." Yet most of us excuse giving into our fears; claiming and referring to the cowardly behavior as our "weakness" or disease. May God firmly impress upon all of us that cowardly behavior comes from unbelief and it is unbelief that causes people to reject following Jesus Christ. A coward does not conquer. He will not receive that which has been promised. So stand fast in the faith, be strong! Don't allow satan and his hordes to terrify you. Be brave, be strong

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and courageous, ready to face and deal with any opposition. Resist the Devil, don't give in! You are more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus.

The suffering we face and endure comes when our own flesh or the influence of others, pressures us to go one direction while the will of God is that we follow His Spirit's leading and go the opposite direction. We are commanded to be strong and courageous so that we might keep the Word of the Lord. Peter said we should arm ourselves for this. Paul said to put on the full armor of God. Christians who are not armed to suffer through to victory are easily captured and held prisoner by Fear and intimidation. I've been there, it is no fun! I pray you will guard the purity of your heart and stay in your position of authority as God's child, joint heir with Jesus Christ and His servant. May you truthfully and boldly declare: "*The Lord is my helper, I will not Fear!*"

Please, never, ever, allow any previous failures to hold you back or make you draw back. Don't judge your future by where you have been or what you have done. If you do, you'll never get beyond your past! No matter what you've done, or how many times you've fallen, there is unfailing hope, forgiveness and restoration through Jesus Christ. God specializes in turning cowards into champions of the Faith! Hallelujah! Praise God! His power is perfected in weakness! You are in Christ, you have the victory . . . the Devil and his followers are the losers . . . we are winners through Jesus Christ.

JESUS LOVES YOU . . . SO DO I !

As Always,
your brother in Christ:

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