

## **The Blessing of Faithfulness** **(October 6, 2019 by Rev. Anthony Menzel)**

How is everyone doing with their devotionals?

I have decided to have two categories for adults: leaders versus non-leaders...

Sister Lorena already has done many, many devotionals, so I didn't want non-leaders to be discouraged regarding our competition...

(Answer any questions people may have...)

When I asked the Lord for today's message, I felt him leading me to talk about a message entitled "The Blessings of Faithfulness."

Many times we read the parable of the Prodigal Son to highlight God's great mercy.

However, as I prayed about today's message, I felt that there is an important truth that we need to remember about this parable that is often overlooked...

### Scripture 1: Luke 15:8-32

<sup>8</sup>"Or what woman, having ten silver [c]oins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds *it*? <sup>9</sup>And when she has found *it*, she calls *her* friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' <sup>10</sup>Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

### The Parable of the Lost Son

<sup>11</sup>Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. <sup>12</sup>And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*.' So he divided to them *his* livelihood. <sup>13</sup>And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with [d]prodigal living. <sup>14</sup>But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. <sup>15</sup>Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup>And he would gladly have filled

his stomach with the [e]pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

<sup>17</sup>“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, <sup>19</sup>and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” ’

<sup>20</sup>“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

<sup>22</sup>“But the father said to his servants, [f]“Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. <sup>23</sup>And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; <sup>24</sup>for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

<sup>25</sup>“Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup>And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’

<sup>28</sup>“But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup>So he answered and said to *his* father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’

<sup>31</sup>“And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. <sup>32</sup>It was right that we should make merry and be

glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ ”

The younger son was not getting any more inheritance from the father... Certainly the father would help him build up a business or farm of his own, but what he says to the older son indicates that he will not be giving anything else to the younger son...

We get more blessings when we are faithful to the Lord God...  
It is definitely worth being faithful to Him, as opposed to saying stuff like  
“I’ll wait till I am about to die to repent...”  
“I’ll serve the Lord when I am old...”  
“Church is for grandparents...”

### Scripture 2: Deuteronomy 28:1-15

“Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. <sup>2</sup>And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

<sup>3</sup>“Blessed *shall* you *be* in the city, and blessed *shall* you *be* in the country.

<sup>4</sup>“Blessed *shall be* the <sup>[a]</sup>fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

<sup>5</sup>“Blessed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

<sup>6</sup>“Blessed *shall* you *be* when you come in, and blessed *shall* you *be* when you go out.

<sup>7</sup>“The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

<sup>8</sup>“The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>9</sup>“The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. <sup>10</sup>Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. <sup>11</sup>And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD [b]swore to your fathers to give you. <sup>12</sup>The LORD will open to you His good [c]treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. <sup>13</sup>And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you [d]heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe *them*. <sup>14</sup>So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, *to* the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

### Curses on Disobedience

<sup>15</sup>“But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

We also have to remember that our best blessing is just being with the Holy Trinity...

### Scripture 3: Psalm 16:11

You will show me the path of life;  
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;  
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

### Scripture 4: John 15:13

<sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

### Scripture 5: Matthew 28:18-20

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go <sup>[a]</sup> therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." <sup>[b]</sup> Amen.

### Scripture 6: Matthew 11:28-30

<sup>28</sup> Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am <sup>[a]</sup> gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

\*\*\*The other thing I felt led to say is related to this last verse, and it has to do with being faithful...

I felt that the Lord Jesus wanted me to remind us to make sure we are focused on His agenda, not our own...

When we focus on what He wants us to do, we eliminate a lot of stress...

Thus, our yoke becomes easy, and our burden light...

However, when we add our own items to His agenda or give them top priority so that we are trying to complete two agendas at once, we are going to be stressed out...

### Scripture 7: Luke 10:38-42

<sup>38</sup> Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at <sup>[k]</sup> Jesus' feet and heard His word. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

<sup>41</sup> And <sup>[l]</sup> Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. <sup>42</sup> But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

### Scripture 8: Haggai 1-2:19

<sup>1</sup> In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: ‘This people says, “The time has not come, the time that the LORD’s house should be built.” ’ ”

<sup>3</sup> Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, <sup>4</sup>“*Is it* time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this <sup>[a]</sup>temple *to lie* in ruins?” <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: “Consider your ways!

<sup>6</sup> “You have sown much, and bring in little;  
You eat, but do not have enough;  
You drink, but you are not filled with drink;  
You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm;  
And he who earns wages,  
Earns wages *to put* into a bag with holes.”

<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Consider your ways! <sup>8</sup> Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the <sup>[b]</sup>temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the LORD. <sup>9</sup> “*You* looked for much, but indeed *it came to* little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the LORD of hosts. “Because of My house that *is in* ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. <sup>11</sup> For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of *your* hands.”

### The People’s Obedience

<sup>12</sup> Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai

the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the LORD. <sup>13</sup>Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, "I *am* with you, says the LORD." <sup>14</sup>So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, <sup>15</sup>on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

**2** In the seventh *month*, on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the LORD came <sup>[a]</sup>by Haggai the prophet, saying: <sup>2</sup>"Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: <sup>3</sup>'Who is left among you who saw this <sup>[b]</sup>temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, *is this* not in your eyes as nothing? <sup>4</sup>Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; for I *am* with you,' says the LORD of hosts. <sup>5</sup>'*According to* the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'

<sup>6</sup>"For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it *is* a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; <sup>7</sup>and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the <sup>[c]</sup>Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this <sup>[d]</sup>temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. <sup>8</sup>'The silver *is* Mine, and the gold *is* Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup>'The glory of this latter <sup>[e]</sup>temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

### The People Are Defiled

<sup>10</sup>On the twenty-fourth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, <sup>11</sup>"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, ask the



priests *concerning the law*, saying, <sup>12</sup>“If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?” ’ ”

Then the priests answered and said, “No.”

<sup>13</sup>And Haggai said, “If *one who is* unclean *because* of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?”

So the priests answered and said, “It shall be unclean.”

<sup>14</sup>Then Haggai answered and said, “ ‘So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,’ says the LORD, ‘and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

### Promised Blessing

<sup>15</sup>‘And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the LORD— <sup>16</sup>since those *days*, when *one* came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were *but* ten; when *one* came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were *but* twenty. <sup>17</sup>I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not *turn* to Me,’ says the LORD. <sup>18</sup>‘Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the LORD’s temple was laid—consider it: <sup>19</sup>Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded *fruit*. *But* from this day I will bless *you*.’ ”