

Working in the Master's Business

To be honest, I think my thoughts of working in the Master's Business has been evolving, particularly in the last five years. I chose this topic because I have come to realise that as a servant in my Father's house, I have a great deal of responsibility right now....to work at and train for ... the future rule of Jesus from Jerusalem. 1 Corinthians 6:2 reminds us that the believers will be assisting in the final restoration of the earth after the Great Tribulation, which is comprehensively explained by Matthew in Chapter 24.

After a tenuous start, I now find it reasonably easy to share, especially when ... as ladies in the Zoom groups which Tracy facilitates... there are practical discussions around our Christian walk, or, at work when the conversation turns into a discussion about current world events and what might happen in the future.

I think I should go back and explain a little of how this evolved. Before I launch into that, I pray as I present today that it will be 'real life stuff' that I share, rather than a heap of nice words and scriptures.

My first recollection of the "Kingdom of God," being a 'thing' was when I was in my early 50's.

As a child, I had been raised in a Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in our town. It was in this church I was taught about living a good life with the reward of going to heaven when I died. However, there was also the preaching about the fear of forever torment in hell if I slid down the wrong path.

After I was married, we moved to Brisbane to develop our nursing work, and we became involved in a great evangelical church which we attended until

2008. It was not until we had left did I have any exposure to what the kingdom of God was.

As you can imagine, since then I have been on a steep learning curve.

I discovered as I began to read the bible for myself that Jesus was speaking practically non-stop about the Kingdom of God, as he taught the crowds from his hometown in Galilee, south to Judah, and all around the Roman kingdom.

When I began to realise that he was very simply explaining the master plan given to him from his Father, and the very reason he was born as the human descendant of King David, there began to grow a real fire in my belly to also share this as well,... as I began to realise that God had a master plan.

Long before the opening pages of the New Testament, God had in his mind a blue-print for the redemption of man. Yes, Jesus was yet to be born, grow up, and to suffer terribly on a Roman cross for the sins of us all, however, there was also the fact that I eventually started to understand Instead of the believers living forever in heaven with St Peter as the gate-keeper we would be living in, and assisting with an earthly kingdom yet to be established from Jerusalem, with the returning Jesus as King.

I have to say that while I was very excited about wanting to be a part of this new kingdom, I wasn't sure I had much of an idea about what living a true godly life actually was ... in reality. I quickly came to realise that reading a few bible verses here and there may not be sufficient. I could no longer use the excuse that I was a good church goer, because even that was past history.

My subsequent repentance over the next number of years was a sorrowful and harrowing time. Father God was extremely merciful to me as I made right some relationships which I had severed in my previous church.

I was thankfully involved with a small bible study group where we studied the word together. We all began to unlearn many doctrinessuch as the trinity, predestination, an extra secret return which is called the 'rapture,' and that the heaven & hell version of teaching was simply not what the bible said. I still meet regularly with this group.

I began to understand that we can by the holy Spirit, come to know the 'will' of God our Father. This is not always easy. Sometimes it means praying and then stepping out. Sometimes it seems there are the detours that Paul in Acts 16 experienced, but eventually His will and guidance became clear.

In this, it is possible we can know his words of wisdom, so that we can comfort the weary. I can show mercy to those who are unloving and pray for them to discover the truth, only because I have known the mercy of God personally.

In all this, I do however, need to reverently fear Him, trust Him, very carefully rely on him every day for my ongoing walk, and not to depend on my own resources to get through the challenges of every day.

I wanted to know this too? What does it mean to be considered by God to be righteous like Abraham was? I really wanted to live a godly life genuinely and sincerely... untainted by the early church leaders who had obviously mixed Christianity with paganism.

I began to believe that the bible had more than enough material simply explained between its pages to teach me how to live a godly lifestyle, both now, and for the rest of my mortal days. I find the New Living Translation of the bible is a simple version which I use for this purpose, and the New American Standard Bible for the more theological study texts.

Between now and the return of Jesus, whether I am rich or poor, housed or homeless, comforted or alone, under the pressure of Christian persecution, playing and eating ice-cream with my grandchildren, or simply enjoying the sunset, I believe and know with all my being, that while I endeavour every day to allow the seed (or word) of the kingdom message which Jesus taught and his followers reiterated very clearlyto enter into my deepest being and become the very life that I live and breathe, then I am assured I am running the race right up to my full salvation and immortality.

So, in saying all thatwhich is really an introduction, I believe that for each of us on this 'journey to the kingdom', we can really put some context around how to work toward this great day event ...and for the thousand years that we will be helping Jesus to restore this battered world.

You know, I hear some people say that we can't work for our salvation, and while it is true that no amount of work can gain us the crown of immortality, I absolutely believe that we are called to work out our own salvation as Philippians 2 says. But more than that, Paul says to do so with fear and trembling. For (this work) is being achieved by God himself.... It is God who is working in us for his own will and purpose. In Matthew 6 we are encouraged to store up treasure in the right place... that is, our Christian wealth portfolio should be the one that is in heaven, not downtown where my job or business currently is, or the amount in my bank account.

So, how can I encourage us all to work in this business of Godliness?

I would like to consider the story that Jesus told us in Luke 19 for a minute or two, and link it to a similar story in Matthew 25.

We read in Luke that the Master of the House called his servants and entrusted them with his possessions (or his wealth), as he was going away into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

They were instructed to look after and to increase what they had been given to work with. The Master said to them, "Do business until I return."

He gave more to the servant with more ability, a little less to another, and just a tiny amount to the third servant. The Master here must have known the ability of each of his servants, or he would have divided out the amounts differently, and I'm sure he was hopeful that each person would put as much effort as possible into looking after his business interests, even though he was a long way away.

For me right here, right now, today, even though I'm not sure just how much God has entrusted me with, what I do know is that whatever that portion is, I have to work it out to the best of my ability.

Why is this? Because I have been trusted to do so.

It does not matter how smart I think I am... or not, because I have only been given what God thinks I have the ability (or talent) for.

Now, this is honestly a most daunting task! How do I know what I'm supposed to be doing in helping expand my Master's Business?

Well, just like the story, where the servants were stationed in life, was where they were working. It was like as though this was their 'sphere' or 'boundary.' Where you and I are situated, that is where we are... right now. We are in the sphere where Father God himself is. We could say we are living and working on His property.

As a female I will relate to other ladies here, so whether you are at home working, in a job, or juggling both, you (like me) have been given a portion of the Master's possessions to work with, and to expand on His own land.

When the Master returned in our story, the servants who had been working hard and doubled the wealth were commended as faithful, and given cities to rule over. The one who hid his portion out of fear was called a wicked servant and punished. His small portion was given to the servant with ten.

Now to the very similar story in Matthew 25...Please check it out if you are not familiar with this one. Here when the Master returned, the servant with the two and five talents were commended for making more, but the one (who by the way was only given a small amount), didn't do anything with the little he had, and because he was afraid, hid it away, and was preparing to give that little bit back when the Master returned.

I think in both the examples in Matthew and Luke, this relates to the Christian person who knows the good news of the kingdom, but is too afraid to share it with others, maybe because they can't remember all the answers to the questions that could be thrown at them. Well, I'm one of these people too. I have often stumbled over an answer, and sometimes when I think I've nailed it, the person has looked at me with pity.

So, it scares the living daylights out of me too, but, practice, practice, practice helps in the long-term.

Which is where my story goes....

Once I realised that as a Christian woman, I had been given a portion of God's own possessions to work with and to increase for Him, I began to realise that having a faith in Jesus was a good start, but more than this, I needed to learn

what it was to have the faith 'of' Jesus. This was so that I could know how he operated as he lived and taught the message of the good news of the kingdom to others.

So, what was this faith 'of' Jesus?

I would like to read a little from Sir Anthony Buzzard's book "Our Fathers who Aren't in Heaven." Under the chapter titled "The Faith of Jesus" Anthony writes,

"In every system of knowledge there is a fundamental idea to be grasped, a core concept around which all other data must be organised. This central, dominating idea will determine the character of the subject as a whole, and give meaning to every part of it. The core concept, the basic thesis, becomes the criterion by which all subsidiary ideas are evaluated.

The Christian faith comes to us in the Bible as a body of information challenging us to response and action. The source of that information is ultimately God Himself transmitting His Message through prophets and teachers, and supremely through His principal representative, Jesus the Messiah.

What, then, is the central core concept of the teaching of Jesus? What formed the heart of His Message? What one single idea underlies all His preaching and teaching? What primary idea must be grasped and believed by any who want to follow Jesus?

The answer to this question can be discovered by anyone with an ordinary ability to read any version of the Bible, and an earnest desire to find out what Jesus taught. The importance of Christianity's key idea –

the heart of the Gospel --- so impressed the writers of the New Testament that they emphasised it over and over again.”

End of Quote.

This, I realised, this was (for me) the secret. If I could discover what Jesus actually believed and lived out to the best of his ability every day, then I could confidently leap into the deep end and use his life as an example to help me too as I was growing.

Well, as Anthony goes on to say, Jesus knew of one Gospel only for Jew and Gentile alike. It is the gospel about the Kingdom of God. The good news of a restored earth with Jesus as King reigning from Jerusalem. Then, after a period of time, the earth to be given back to the Father.

So. It is of utmost importance to me that even though the coming kingdom was announced by Jesus over two thousand years ago in the fishing villages of Galilee, every day I am in training for its arrival when Jesus returns.

By taking careful notice of the words and parables he spoke, along with the encouragement and preaching of the disciples and Paul, I believe that my character is being renewed, and being formed to be a part of this messianic rulership from Jerusalem.

I learned that Jesus took great interest in the prophetic words, especially of Daniel and Isaiah, and he knew from the age of twelve that he was in fact the anointed Messiah written about in these writings. His character was formed by immersing himself in the teachings from these scrolls.

In John 8:28 on, it is recorded that Jesus told the people he did nothing on his own but only said what the Father had taught him. Jesus says, “And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him.”

I realised that this should be the blue-print for me in the training for, and the expansion of, the Master’s Business.

I can work on having the faith ‘of’ Jesus. The faith that he himself had.

For me, I need to do what pleases my heavenly Father too, and work in assisting others to be trained for this new future kingdom reality.

So, with this revelation, I now needed to make this training and working applicable to my everyday situation. My daily realities are individual to me, and will be different to your circumstances.

I realised that if I needed wisdom in a situation, the words of James encourage me to simply ask for it, and it will be given – liberally, and without reproach.

If I am struggling with how to truly love, the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 are simple, clear, and concise.

If I am being led along by what I watch on our modern-day screens, I need to step away and immerse myself in reading something more that Jesus would have done, or turn on my Dwell app and let it read the word to me.

By applying these principles to everyday life, it is often the very thing that keeps me from wandering away from continuing to engage in the business I am supposed to be working in.

Now, as Paul experienced and recorded at the end of Acts, some folks were persuaded by the things he was speaking, and some did not believe him. Paul knew that the hearts of some people were dull, their ears hard of hearing, and their eyes firmly closed. Yet, if they were to open their eyes and hear with their ears, and come to understand (this core message of the kingdom of God), then with their hearts open and a willingness to repent, then they would be healed.

Paul reiterated that this message was not just for the Jewish folk of the day, but for everyone who opens their hearts, eyes, and ears to this message of the kingdom.... right up to today.

Paul understood King David when he wrote in Psalm 127:1, that, "Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the Lord protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good." He knew that many would not be interested.

I have to realise as well, that of myself I cannot really do anything in the Master's Business without the help of the Holy Spirit's leading and guiding.

Along with many who have gone before, I have had my fair share of suffering and trials. Yet as 1 Peter 6 says, I have learned, and are still learning the hard way to rejoice, because I have now come to realise that true Christianity brings with it a life of persecution and troubles, yet much contentment too. That is hard to explain when things look bad, however, I know that the love and mercy of God himself is right there in the situation by the power of his holy spirit, helping me to navigate through.

I have had days when I have been as Psalm 130 says, "In the depths of despair." In these times it is important that I call on the help of my Father and my Lord Jesus to help me navigate through.

While God is love and full of mercy, he, as a Father also disciplines us. John 15 starts to make good sense when we realise that when Jesus spoke about his Father being the vinedresser, and he cuts and prunes whether we produce good fruit or not, it makes me understand that I have to stay right within his sphere (or vine), because without this nothing can be achieved. I then realise that as I commit my time, my thoughts, and my hunger for truth to him, then what I desire will be outworked in me....by Him. In all of this our Father is glorified, and more fruit is produced.

Hebrews 5 tells us that even though Jesus was the much-loved Son of God, he still learned obedience by those things he suffered. I also see that Christ had a godly reverence and fear of his God. So, if suffering in this life teaches me obedience, then I am (in a sense) happy in this.

I also read in Mark 10 that persecutions come to all Christians, so I should not be at all surprised when this happens.

Psalms 128 reminds me that those who follow his ways and reverently fear him, are joyful, and are able to enjoy the fruit of their labours, and be prosperous (maybe not necessarily financially, but happy and grateful for what God has provided).

In 1 Peter 6, verse 9 it says that at the end we receive, our eternal salvation. This is our reward for working faithfully in the Masters Business. In my medical business, there is not one week that goes by without my practice manager and I having to deal with challenging situations. These days, it is as we earnestly pray together, that we both see the wisdom of God being worked out.

If we endure through the good, the bad and the ugly.... working for the Master right up to our last breath and living each day as if it is our last, then the kingdom of God is indeed very near, as Jesus taught.

If I realise (as Paul did) that in life or death I am in the presence of God, then that old enemy death, really cannot sting as it tries to frighten me. For me, I have experienced two near fatal experiences, one in which emergency CPR was administered, so I can show compassion and empathy to others in my daily walk, and when they too experience the sufferings of this life, I can truly weep with them, and yet encourage them to lift their heads.

As Psalm 121 tells us, we look to the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let us stumble; he does not go to sleep while watching over us. He stands beside us as our protection. He keeps watch over us as we come and go through our lives – both now and forever.

I mentioned earlier about asking for wisdom, as encouraged from the book of James. For, if we feel we lack the wisdom to share the good news, Jesus will step in and help us find the words to say.... or not say. Sometimes, we know something needs to be said, but it may not be the right time. These days I try to be sensitive to the spirit's guidance and consciously pray as I am speaking, that if there is anything that should be said, or not said, that I would know how to proceed.... As the Master (who has entrusted me with his possessions) would do.

I have found this takes a lot of practice; however, I rejoice when I can honestly see progress in my responses to others, especially when I have shown a sensitivity to someone who has frustrated me in the past.

Paul says in Galatians 5:16, "So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves."

For me now that I understand my accountability towards the Masters Business, I now deliberately and purposefully look for an opportunity every single day to share the hope of the kingdom to whoever wants to listen... and also to join the training program. Time is short right now to encourage others, but just to think that after three trillion years in God's kingdom, that immortality is only the beginning! This is a mind-boggling thought... to live forever outside of time is barely fathomable. As Daniel reminds us in Daniel 12... we will shine like the stars forever and ever.

If I am alive during the Great Tribulation and before Jesus returns, I must be already fully trained and completely operational for the Master, for if I am not, I will not be able to withstand the enemy forces.

I will not be able to stand up for God and accept the loss of my head, if the faith of Jesus working through me, ...and the trust in my Father God... is not secure. I will waver and deny Christ just like our brother Peter, if I am not resolutely trained now... while life here is still relatively calm.

At the end of Acts we see Paul in Rome preaching about the kingdom of God for two more years in his rented house, unhindered. Wouldn't that be nice...

I am so respectful of Paul. A man who initially wanted to murder every Christian he could find, then after meeting Christ himself, completely repented and was obedient for the rest of his days, fulfilling the call he was given which was to take this 'good news' now to the Gentiles. He was a true worker in his Masters Business right up until the day he died.

So, finishing up, a few verses to encourage us as we work every day in his Master's Business:

Revelation 14 tells me that if I have the same faith that Jesus had, which leads to the total obedience that he had... and then lived out, then I could look forward to spending forever in the presence of God with Christ, and every other believer who had kept his commandments and laboured with and for him over their life time.

1 Peter 3:9 "Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you His blessing." Note here, this is what God has called us to do.

Galatians 6:9, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

James 1:12, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."

Hebrews 12, "... Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus..."

Hebrews 5:7-9, "While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears to the one who could rescue him from death. And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for God. Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him."

I see here clear examples in the daily life of Jesus. He prayed, and he pleaded with his Father..... loudly weeping..... to the one who he knew could rescue him. And it says that God heard his prayers. Why? Because of his deep reverence for God. Also, it says here that suffering was an important component of obedience.

Luke 12:32 says, "So, don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom." God takes pleasure in giving us the kingdom?

Of course!

Verse 40, "You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected." The Master will return and expect an account of what you and I have done while He was away.

In October of 2021, my husband was killed in a horrific car accident while he was at work in the back of an emergency vehicle. He was taking a patient to hospital. As he was taken instantly, for him and millions of others who have gone in this way, there is no time to consider..... well, anything.

So in summary, Jesus encourages, and even implores us to be faithful, sensible, and responsibly feeding others his core message, as we ourselves train for this future life in the kingdom.

Then in verse 43, "If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. But what if the servant thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,' and he begins beating the other servants, partying,

and getting drunk? The master will return unannounced and unexpected, and he will cut the servant in pieces and banish him with the unfaithful.”

Then Jesus becomes more forthright in his speaking.

Verse 47, “And a servant who knows what the master wants, but isn’t prepared and doesn’t carry out those instructions, will be severely punished.” Even if I have only been given one talent to work with, I had better be sure I am in the process of making it two!

Thankfully, Jesus is our ultimate and truly human example. As we discover what it was in his life that urged him on..... right to the point of suffering and death for usand then the reward of resurrection and immortality, we can trust that Doctor Luke is right in Chapter 14 when he says that we also will receive our reward at the resurrection as we determine to continually work these things through.

If, in our own lives if we are living and sharing this kingdom hope with those we love, care for and meet, we can be assured we are working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, and that when the Master returns, he will say, “Well done you... good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities.”

Come in to my kingdom, and let us all celebrate together!”

Blessings to you all from Australia, and I hope this has been helpful.

Jennie Wyeth

October 2022