

Let Us Heed

June 4th, 2006

1). As our preparations continue for the trip to Kenya and as we all focus on the work that is to be done there, and the prayer and fasting that is to be done here. All of which is exactly as it should be. I feel impressed today to sound a warning for those who remain behind.

a). And the warning very simply is this – that you should not relax or let down your guard in respect of the fellowship here.

b). It may be that taking the Kingdom message to Kenya, in its various facets is of a strategic importance that we can only dimly comprehend – and for our own sakes that would be a good thing.

c). But at the very least we will help establish Pastor George and his wife Monica in this word, and the impact the Lord may bring through their ministry alone may be enormous.

2). If it is not too arrogant for us to think so, we may consider that the enemy of our souls will not be best pleased with this effort. And we would rightly focus on the prayer cover and support that will provide for this mission.

3). In the midst of this I cannot escape from the notion that the attack of the enemy, should it come, will not be in Kenya – it will be here amongst you all.

4). If the enemy could destroy what is here there would be no more ventures such as this one into Kenya. Think of those in this country and around the world who would no longer have the support of the ministry of the word that the Lord makes possible through us.

a). Think of the impending impact of the video ministry

b). Think of those who are out there who are seeking and yearning for what God has opened in our midst who are still to walk through these doors.

5). And again, I feel impressed – I don't know how else to put it – that the most dangerous time for you will come at the conclusion of the Kenya trip.

a). There will be the relief that it is over

b). The excitement of hearing of all that went on

c). Just a sense of, 'Whew!'

d). It is at this point that there will be a temptation to take things easy, there may even be a vacation kind of atmosphere

e). And if this happens this will be the doorway through which the enemy may come.

6). Firstly I would like to exhort my fellow shepherds not to leave this flock unattended, not to stop watching. To be ready at every instant.

a). Beware of an overflow of business that will seek to place your attention elsewhere in order to distract you from your purpose.

b). Mr 14:27 *Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.'*

c). Jesus is of course speaking of Himself here and the consequence of His arrest and crucifixion, but there remains a truth here for us.

d). If there had been no need for shepherds God would not have provided them for His Church, and if the shepherd is removed from the equation, inevitably the sheep will be scattered. This must not happen.

7). And secondly, everyone has a responsibility to stay focused as we are responsible for our own actions. And to encourage us in this I would like us to look at some things in the Book of Hebrews.

8). And in particular I feel led to share with you the first two warnings that are given to Christians in this Book. Let us first lay some foundation.

a). Hebrews is a Book written to Christians who have received this message of the Kingdom and our inheritance within the Kingdom - Heb 3:1 ¶ *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,*

b). Those addressed here are ‘holy brethren’ who are described as ‘partakers of the heavenly calling’ – and by extension this would be us.

i/ The word ‘Hebrew’ = one who has crossed the river

ii/ Talk about the Red Sea crossing / Baptism

c). Hebrews is a Book that deals exclusively with the coming Kingdom

Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

d). Did you note the clearly stated subject of the Book – ‘the world to come’ – Remember our Timeline – and a change of rulership in that time when the world will not be subject to angels - Eph 1:10 *that in the*

dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.

e). The world to come will not be subject to angels, but to Christ and His coheirs. But this has not happened yet - Heb 2:6 *But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*

9). We are told that God has spoken about this subject through the Prophets and has now, in these last days, spoken of the same things directly to us through His Son - Heb 1:1 ¶ *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 ¶ having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"?*

a). And because God has spoken to us through the prophets and now by His Son we find the first of the warnings we are to heed –

Heb 2:1 ¶ *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*

b). The writer uses Israel at Sinai as our example showing that they heard the word of God concerning the earthly portion of the kingdom, they were not ignorant but had come into a mature knowledge of all God intended

for them - 1Co 10:1 ¶ *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 ¶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.*

i/ Let us be careful here with our interpretation of ‘lusting after evil things’ as we could easily just see this as a reference to their sexual immorality and idol worship.

ii/ And although they were most certainly guilty of these things this would be a too limited view.

iii/ Remember at Kadesh Barnea - Nu 14:3 *"Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"*

iv/ It is while standing on the very edge of the land of promise, in sight of the end so to speak, with just a few hundred yards left to go that they are deceived into thinking that the task is impossible and their eyes look back.

vi/ Notice God’s commentary on the condition of His people - Ac 7:39b.....*And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt,*

v/ In Hebrews we find - Heb 3:19 *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

vi/ And the admonition to us is - Heb 3:12 *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

vii/ Notice here God’s perspective on what is evil – it is unbelief. This is not talking of ceasing to be a Christian, such a thing would be impossible anyway, this is talking about giving up on what God has promised.

viii/ Church it is a truth - Ro 13:11b....*for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

ix/ We are on the very edge of the land so to speak, the end is in sight, and this may be the time when it seems the hardest to carry on, but this is not the time to give up - Heb 10:37 *"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

x/ Re 22:12 *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

xi/ According to our Hebrews 2 scripture, the Children of

Israel were punished for their transgressions against that which they had heard.

c). And the writer then asks that if this was the case for Israel how would we escape a similar end if we were to neglect ‘so great a salvation’ – the reward of the inheritance, the salvation of our soul, becoming a coheir with Christ – and this would happen if we were to drift away from this truth.

d). And here is our warning - *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away* – earnest heed – the thought behind these words in the original Greek would be literally, to pay attention to, superabundantly.

e). We cannot afford to be casual in our meditation and study of and prayer over that which God has spoken through the prophets - 1Pe 1:12 *To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into. 13 ¶ Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

f). And to us directly through the Son - Mr 9:7b... *"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"*

g). Mt 21:37 *"Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'*

h). And we need to do this ‘lest we drift away’ – in the original language this is not so much us moving as us letting go. Letting go in the same way that water would run through our fingers.

10). If we will give earnest heed to what we have heard and embrace with rejoicing the foundational truths that Cindy will share, not being complacent, not thinking we don’t need it, not thinking we’ve already got it, then I believe we shall be protected from this deceit of the enemy. Remember – Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

11). Our first warning has to do with focus – keeping the truth of what God has said ever before us and could be summarized in the scripture – Heb 12:2 *looking (from this world) unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,*

11). The second warning concerns being diligent to enter His rest – His rest of course is the Day of rest – the seventh day – the age to come – the

millennial Kingdom. And this warning moves beyond what we have heard to putting what we have heard into practice. It is organizing our lives in accordance with that which God has said.

a). Again our example is Israel - Heb 3:16 *For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

b). Why could Israel not enter His rest? – ‘because of unbelief’ – as we have already seen, not unbelief in who God is, but unbelief in what He had said about the land and their inheritance.

c). What we find then is their refusal to believe what God had said led to an action that was completely contrary to God’s will for them. They thought wrongly so they lived wrongly, with dire consequences. Please note they didn’t stop their religious practices they lost the purpose for them.

d). The substance of our second warning is found at the beginning of Chapter 4 - Heb 4:1 ¶ *Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.....11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.*

e). What we see here in Hebrews is the same thing the Lord Himself taught the disciples in - Lu 13:24 *"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*

f). Strive = Greek word – *agonizomai* = strain every muscle of one’s being. Compare the English word – agonize.

g). The thing that shocked me as I read this scripture is that it refers to ‘many’ who will ‘seek to enter’ – and this would of necessity refer to those with a knowledge of the Kingdom and the inheritance. And ‘many’ of those with this knowledge will not be able to enter.

h). The reason for this we can find in a parallel scripture in – Mt 7:13 *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*

12). We can conclude then that being diligent to enter that rest and striving to enter the narrow gate are speaking of the need for effort on our part to get to our destination. And this would of course be effort on our part in respect of the way we choose to live - Ro 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

a). We will put effort into faithful obedience – being doers of the word, that will take us through the narrow gate to that rest or we will be deceived into thinking that God won't really hold us accountable and therefore we don't need to make an effort. The greatest lie of all is, 'God understands why I don't do this'

b). Note the clear teaching of scripture - 1Co 9:24 ¶ *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

c). 1Ti 6:12 *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 ¶ I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,*

d). Php 3:13 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 ¶ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind*

13). What I believe then God is wanting us to see is that the Kenya mission is not an end but part of our journey.

a). My absence for six weeks is not an occasion for relaxing, but an opportunity to strive all the more.

b). We are at the moment of our greatest danger when we think there is none - 1Co 10:12 *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

c). We are running a race of endurance and during any race of endurance we will become tired and fatigued, we will look for opportunities to take a break, convincing ourselves it will only be for a while –
2Th 3:13 *But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.*

d). The thing that makes the difference between the champion and the also ran is the determination to carry on when every part of our being says, 'enough'. Some of us are already reeling under the weight of enormous burdens. In the midst of this let us remind ourselves of what scripture says

2Co 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

Isa 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

e). Do not let division or dissention arise within you personally or corporately, but maintain the unity that comes through the faith.

f). And guard your personal holiness.

g). We have learned how to wear the whole armor of God – there is no more urgent time to be properly dressed for the battle than now.

14). Leave Lord's Supper at the back.

a). Have everyone pray for the Elders

b). Have the Elders pray for everyone

c). As they finish to serve each other with the Lord's Supper.