The Things of the Kingdom of God

The word of Scripture tells us that the person who loves God with all their heart, who denies themselves and enters into a covenant of discipleship with Him, becomes a new creature and is translated into the Kingdom of glory. (Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14)

For that person all things become new, and these things are from above, from His Kingdom. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

The things from above, which God has prepared for us to walk in, are utterly different from the things of the world; they are things that never reach the mind of someone who is spiritually dead. (Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9)

Simple as they are, the things from above run counter to the things people go after, and to many of us they are foolishness. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14) The Lord Jesus gives us the example of the city of Jerusalem, which did not recognise the heavenly things He brought, things that could have given it peace. (If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luke 19:42)

With these words the Lord Jesus warns us in the most serious way that many of us will find ourselves in the same situation. For most people, the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 remains a mystery. (Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1)

Most people think they must have unshakeable confidence in the material things that may exist in the Kingdom of God, or in God's promises. Few understand that we must have unshakeable confidence in the heavenly things that concern the spiritual life of the Kingdom of God. (If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? John 3:12)

In Scripture we find the things of the Kingdom of God called the things of God or the things of the Spirit. These things are a faithful picture both of the nature of the Kingdom and of the heart of God.

The things from above fall into two categories. In the first we find the commandments of Christ, which are the raw material; in the second we find the things that make up the fruit of the Spirit, which are the finished product. The Holy Spirit urges us to keep the Lord's commandments, and if we let Him lead us, we will come to bear the fruit of the Spirit. Many have heard about the fruit of the Spirit, but few have experienced walking in the things from above that are the fruit

of the Spirit. They can only be truly known if we experience them by keeping the commandments of Christ, which are the raw material of the things from above. (Now the end of the commandment is charity. 1 Timothy 1:5; And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. 2 John 1:6)

The word of Scripture tells us to seek the things of the Kingdom of God, the things above, and not the things on the earth, the things below, because these things change our character and bring peace. (If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1, 2)

But to set your mind on the things above and then to seek after them, the first condition is that you know them. Sadly, we see that for many people the Kingdom of God and the things in it remain a mystery, and they never come to know them.

If we look more closely, we can see that most of those who say they are born again (a new creature) think about and go after nothing but the old things of the earth.

Reader, are you among them? If that is where you are, you are in great danger!

The apostle Paul weeps over these people, because their end will be destruction. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. Philippians 3:18-19)

These things from above, which God has prepared for us to walk in, are foolishness to the natural man. Many do not go after them because they do not understand that these are what lead us to perfection of character.

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that only the person who does not know the word of God belongs among the natural men. The natural man is anyone who rejects the things of the Spirit and does not go after them, even if he has been baptised and says he is born from above. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14; Matthew 13:19)

The natural man will not agree to give up an "old thing" that gets him by in this life (working cash-in-hand off the books, for example, or resisting) for a new thing of the Kingdom that will bring him plenty of "trouble" (honesty, which means paying taxes; not resisting). The natural man will not give **"all that he has"** for something whose purpose he does not understand.

Yet we must all understand that in order to be found worthy to dwell with God, a person must come to acquire the character of the Lord Jesus, that is, come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Let us take **longsuffering** as an example. It is a trait of the Lord Jesus' character and one of the things of great importance in the Kingdom of God. Let us ask ourselves: how can we come to

have it stamped on our own character?

Holy Scripture tells us that we must go through the school of patience, which has its perfect work, a school every one of us must pass through, because that is the only way our character is made perfect. (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2-4)

To arrive at this beautiful trait of character, one of the things we must do is not resist those who do us wrong.

Non-resistance is one of the things from above, and it must become a new way of life for us. When trials and troubles come, we must put it into practice, following in the footsteps of our spiritual fathers, who in turn follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 4:15)

If we look more closely, we will notice that many who think they know God and believe they are "born from above" resort to "resistance" as a matter of course (from words all the way to the courts). This is one of the earthly things with which many people solve their many problems in this world, and they see no reason why they should give it up.

To truly know God, we will have to give up the attitude of "resistance," which is from below, and replace it with non-resistance. (And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Matthew 5:40-41)

To those who have not yet practised "non-resistance," which is a heavenly teaching brought by the Lord Jesus, we can say from our own experience that only in this way will they come into the blessed place of experiencing longsuffering, one of the traits of character that define the Lord Jesus.

The natural man runs from suffering, from humiliation… yet this is the road to knowing God and to perfection of character. Let us imagine we are employed by a boss who insults us, cuts our pay and forces us to work longer, beyond our hours. What would we do?

Would we count it great joy to have this opportunity to cultivate longsuffering in ourselves? Or would we be resentful and resist at every chance we got, telling everyone what hard times we are going through? (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. James 1:2)

If someone insults you and anger rises up in you, what will you do? Will you fill your mouth with water so that you cannot speak, as some teach today? Or will you not resist, cultivating patience, as the Lord teaches us? This is the way to come to know the longsuffering of the Lord Jesus. (But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 1 Peter 2:20)

If we do not understand, and are not firmly persuaded, that **non-resistance is one of the things of the Spirit** that have not entered into the heart of man, we will certainly not sell all

that we have; we will not give up anger, which is one of the old things from below that keep our lives running as normal.

Only if we love longsuffering with all our heart, as one of the things hoped for, the things from above, and seek it like treasure, only if we live by the promptings and leading of the Spirit, only then will we know it; only in this way will we come to know the heart of God and become like Him. (And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God. John 17:3; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:24)

If we do not love and keep the commandment from above that tells us not to resist those who do us wrong, we will not come to experience longsuffering, still less peace and rest for the soul. (For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Romans 8:6)

Without longsuffering you will not be able to bless the one who curses you, you cannot be a peacemaker, nor can you feed your enemy. Nor will we know God, who is longsuffering, full of compassion, slow to anger and abundant in goodness. (The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. Psalm 145:8; The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Exodus 34:6)

If until now we have not loved the heavenly things found in the Kingdom of God, that is, the teaching of the Lord Jesus that tells us not to resist and not to go to law… if we do not find our delight in His commandments, then we are not drawn to the things above and we are not part of His Kingdom. (Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. Psalm 119:92)

If we have not yet sought and gone after these things from above, then we can be sure that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in us, because we are not going after the things of the Spirit and are not living by His promptings. (Romans 8:6)

There can be no talk of a new beginning, of being born again, if we have not cast off the old things and do not love the new things of the Kingdom. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

Personal reflection:

– Are you pursuing non-resistance, or is resistance your way of life? Do you seek longsuffering like treasure? Do you want longsuffering to be part of your character?

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