



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

December 2020

No. 420

ROUND TUI TS

(Part II)

Last month we noted how one primary contributor to our inability to get the things done that we should be doing is overestimating our ability to walk away from something and come back later to complete it. We convince ourselves we'll wrap this project up perfectly and completely, only then to walk away and allow it to grow into an overwhelming pile that has become a larger problem than it ever should have been. The second major reason we wait on these "round tuits" is because our priorities are not in order. In this spiritual case, the priorities in our minds are not aligning with God's priorities for us.

THE HARVESTER

141 County Road 474

Woodland, AL 36280

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Jesus told us we cannot have two entities treated with the same priority; one will take precedence over the other and get more attention (Mat. 6:19-24). In school or work, one of the most frustrating things to encounter is having multiple projects, assignments, or products due and being told the due date is simply as soon as possible. If you have two assignments, at best you can shift back-and-forth between the two, but one will be finished before the other. When you ask, "Which one takes top priority?", the most dreaded answer you can receive is "Both." God never has nor will make our worldly pursuits equal priority to our spiritual ones. Jesus plainly told us service to God is due first. Our love, service, and devotion to God is our top priority and responsibility (Mat. 22:37-40). It's important to acknowledge this is our goal, because our goals are what dictate how we spend our time and effort. It is easy to give lip service and proclaim to the entire world that God is the number one priority in our life, but if we take a hard, earnest look at our lives, is it evident? Or, do we find ourselves more like the man who could not accept the cost of following Jesus in Luke 9:57-62?

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Similarly to the fault of putting things off described last month, this man finds himself saying "I will, but first..." If God and service to Him is our top priority, there is no "but first,"

and there is no walking away to get to it later. There is no controversy in what should be our top priority and goal. We can find an innumerable amount of topics about which we can disagree, but you'll hardly find an argument among any who believe in God that God is to be our first and primary love, especially when Jesus explicitly makes this abundantly clear (Mat. 22:37-40). So although we agree on this, we say it aloud, and we sing songs proclaiming this mortal world is not our home and our thoughts are on things above, is this how our daily life goes? That is, not just on Sunday or during the service, but in our Monday-to-Friday week also. Day by day, hour by hour, is God at the forefront of our thoughts? When we make decisions about the words we say and actions we take, are they guided by what we say is our top priority - to serve God?

What realistically is at the top of our priority list in any given time; what worries you? Again, hour by hour in a typical day at school, work, or at home, what receives our concern and attention? If we're brutally honest with ourselves, it's often the work duties, our schedule, finances, and frankly, things out of our control. What motivates us to choose what we do next? Is it what God wants us to do, or is it what we want to do? Too often we allow our love and service to God to move down the list. Maybe it's because we're tired, or maybe the "due date" on all of our other concerns feels closer and more pressing. However, if God is our priority then we can't simply "get to Him" later when the day is over. Our meditation and service to heeding Jesus' words and examples in devotion to God is not something we simply wedge into our schedule after we've done everything else.

Here's a good indicator of how much of a priority God is in our life: How do you evaluate a day? What makes it a good day or bad day? Unfortunately, it's the mortal things that we let inform that decision. The ease of the workload, receiving compliments, knocking out other to-do list items, being pain free, getting time to relax, and all the rest are what often aid us in that determination of whether we had a good day or bad day.

Where is God in this evaluation of how our day went? Perhaps we struggle to appropriately make our relationship with God a priority because it's hard to define. After all, how does one measure a relationship with God? Although we cannot ever fully fathom and comprehend God's eternal design and plan, and at best we can recognize to tremble before His glory and holiness (Exo. 33:17-20; Isa. 6:3), a day designed on attempting to understand God and His works will bring us closer to Him. Solomon begins to lay out a blueprint for us that we can use as a daily guide in Proverbs 2:1-6:

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

Solomon observes that with a goal directed at reverence to God - that is to understand and better respect - we progress by seeking knowledge and understanding. As noted earlier, this is how Paul said we best redeem the time we have (Eph. 5:15-17). Knowledge and understanding do not simply come to us. It is an active pursuit that requires time, effort, and dedication. It's also noteworthy that although the journey in this pursuit of knowledge and understanding may not fit the world's definition of fun, it brings us closer to God in appreciation of the hope that His grace has given us (Rom. 5:3-5).

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

The Harvester

141 County Road 474 * Woodland, AL 36280

Phone: (256) 449-9221 * Email: theharvesteronline@gmail.com

Web Page: www.churches-of-christ.org

Solomon continues this blueprint for making daily progress in Proverbs 2:7-9:

He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

Those who focus on walking uprightly daily will gain understanding. Summarizing this daily design, to serve God and be closer with God we need a more perfect understanding and respect for Him. This requires a daily search for knowledge and wisdom, and this wisdom is obtained through a deliberate attempt to walk uprightly. These should make up our daily priorities. This is where we should allocate our time and energy. If we look at where we put our time, worry, stress, plans, and even money, it turns out they do little or nothing to bring us closer to God and an eternity with Him. It's like that box that you still haven't unpacked.

If you've ever moved, you know that in the process of unpacking, there's always a least one box full of things that you tell yourself you'll unpack and organize eventually - when you get a "round tuit." Months, years, and even decades may pass, and the box is still sitting there unpacked. What's in that box? It's nothing important, because otherwise you would have unpacked it by now. However, if you humor yourself and open it up to look inside, you'll find many things that once meant something more to you. These are things you really wanted or you worked hard and often on to make, repair, or buy. It took your time, effort, and/or money, but ultimately it doesn't affect you now; it's still packed away in that box. Much of our life on this earth is that unpacked box at judgment day. We spend substantial amounts of our time and thought on things not drawing us nearer to God, however we think they're so important right now. If we're not getting to the important things which affect our soul, we're only filling up a box we'll never unpack in the grand scheme of eternity.

This past season of spring cleaning occurred during an unusual time that the vast majority of us have never experienced. We had a spring cleaning like no other, since we were essentially locked in due to the coronavirus pandemic. Locked in your place of living with little option other than to directly confront the piles of clutter that have accumulated likely brought many of us to the same question: “How did I let it get this bad?” Sure, we do not enjoy digging through the mess and asking ourselves why we didn’t simply put this away or toss it out earlier, but it’s just physical clutter of this world. However, these are not the questions we can afford to be asking ourselves upon judgment. When we fail to get things done, it is either because we put something off and never came across that more convenient time or “round tuit,” or we spent all of that time and energy prioritizing filling that useless box we’ll never unpack in eternity. Perhaps it’s a combination of the two. Lord willing, in a few short months we’ll be spring cleaning once more. A place for everything, and everything in its place. Sin’s place is out of our soul, right there and then before we start a pile of sinful clutter that turns into a mountain. Our priority is drawing nearer to God daily, not when we find that “round tuit.”

BEN

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month’s questions?

1. What did God initially give man to eat?
PLANTS AND FRUIT (Gen. 2:9,16)
2. What was the name of Abraham’s nephew?
LOT (Gen. 12:5)
3. Which king in the Old Testament built the first temple in Jerusalem? SOLOMON (2 Chr. 3:1)
4. Where was Jonah when he prayed to God with the voice of thanksgiving? IN THE FISH’S BELLY (Jon. 2:1,9)
5. What event did Peter, James and John witness in a mountain with Jesus? TRANSFIGURATION (Mat. 17:1-2)

JUDAS

We all know that Judas Iscariot was the one who betrayed Jesus. He was tempted by thirty pieces of silver to lead the enemy to Him.

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him. (Mat. 26:14-16)

Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve. (John 6:70-71)

And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; (John 13:2)

But we should also look at the rest of the story. David foretold of Judas, and Zechariah prophesied about the situation:

For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. (Psa. 55:12-14)

Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. (Acts 1:16-18)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
December 2 - 6	Rich Hill Liberty, KY	Timothy Lewis, Thaddeus Eubank, James McDonald, Jerry Burton, & TBA

Masks are recommended at these meetings. Information may be subject to change. Please check the website calendar for the latest updates.

And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD. (Zec. 11:12-13)

The final part of Judas' story involves him realizing what he had done; he had sold the life of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. He felt remorse almost immediately after seeing Jesus captured and felt like he could not live with the guilt.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. (Mat. 27:3-5)

We know that for us to have forgiveness of sins, Jesus had to be the ultimate sacrifice. Judas started off on the right path. He was a trusted follower and companion of Jesus as a part of the inner circle of disciples. This story shows us that even people who begin in the right direction can stray. It is a warning that we all need to watch out for temptation, because Satan is always working to make us go astray.

Based on a sermon by MIKE DANIEL
(Winston, GA)