

September 22, 2020

Have you ever wondered if you were of any use to the kingdom of God? Perhaps this question has never crossed your mind. That is okay. One thing is certain and that is before you knew Jesus as the Savior of your life you were of no use to the kingdom of God. It is only after we are transformed by the power of God through Jesus that we are useful to the Body of Christ. How does this happen? For what is it that we are suddenly useful? Please read with me from Philemon 10-20.

10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, 11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me. 12 I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will. 15 For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, 16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. 17 If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me. 18 But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account; 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well). 20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

Spiritual parenting is something of a lost practice in the Christian community. I want to caution everyone; not all people are called to be teachers, mentors, and spiritual parents. However some of you reading this are called to teach, mentor, and parent. James writes, “Let not

many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment” (James 3:1).

Of course if we are teaching, mentoring, and spiritually parenting we are talking about disciple making. Make no mistake about this Christians are called to make disciples. Jesus commands, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:18-19). This means that we mentor our disciples.

Moreover we are called to teach and direct the learning of those given us by God. Our example should be one that others will want to emulate. The author of Hebrews instructs, “Remember those who lead you, who speak the word of God to you; and consider the results of their conduct, imitate their faith” (Hebrews 3:7).

We should respond to our teachers and leaders obediently. Again from Hebrews we read, “Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 3:17).

Our former condition was that of being useless within the kingdom of God. That is we were useless until God gave us a purpose through Jesus His Son and our Savior. We spent our days before knowing Jesus searching for an escape to the way of life we lived. We were searching for escape the emptiness in our hearts, escape from our guilt and shame, escape from spiritual loneliness. We were searching for an escape from being slaves to sin. Jesus teaches, “... everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin” (John 8:34).

False teachers “Promise freedom while they are themselves slaves of corruption; because by what a person is overcome, by this is the person

enslaved” (2 Peter 2:19). As a consequence of our slavery to sin we were completely useless in God’s kingdom.

Our condition through Jesus is very different. When we know Jesus by faith we are transformed and set free from sin. We are liberated. Paul, the Great Apostle, declares, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death” (Romans 8:1-2). Again Paul writes, “The Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17). We become free people. Those who are disciples of Jesus are free indeed. Jesus admonishes all who would be His disciples, “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

We are set free from sin to be useful in God’s kingdom. We are useful as ministers, elders, deacons, teachers, mentors, spiritual parents, and as a friend to other Believers.

Are you still living in the bonds, the chains and shackles of sin? Does sin control you and enslave you? Are you tired of living a life that is useless and unproductive? You can be set free from the chains that bind you. You can be a person who is useful to others, to the kingdom of heaven, and to yourself. All you need to do is to turn to Jesus this very moment, as we pray.

Gracious Lord and Savior, I pray that all who read these words will believe in faith that Jesus died to set them free from sin. I pray that each will become useful in Your kingdom through Jesus Christ, amen.

Pray and ask God to give you a spiritual mentor or someone to disciple.

Until the nets are full,