

The Sojourning Mission of the Ekklesia

I. MISSION IN LIGHT OF SOJOURNING IDENTITY

- A. In light of the sojourning identity of the ekklesia, we are going to look at mission within this context. As a pilgrim nation we are a people without a land. We walk out the time of our sojourn in submission to the rebellious nations of the earth, bearing witness to the long-suffering and patience of God towards the wicked.

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Phl 3:20-21 NASB)

- B. Moreover, this is the primary context for the mission of the church. We acknowledge the sovereignty of God in allowing these nations to persist until the day that He has appointed to judge them and to vindicate and reward the righteous.

¹ Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. (Rom 13:1 NASB)

- C. Within this context, the church is called to allegiance to the Messiah, always maintaining clear in our hearts and minds that we don't partake in the goals nor the pursuits for wealth and comfort of the nations of the earth. Thus, the common confession of all of the ekklesia is that Jesus is Lord since allegiance to any other king is treason.

⁹ ...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; (Rom 10:9 NASB)

⁹ ...God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² So then... work out your salvation with fear and trembling; (Phl 2:9-12 NASB)

- ⁹ ..."If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand (i.e. outward sign of allegiance, cf. circumcision), ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." ¹² Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. (Rev 14:9-12 NASB)***

- D. So the ekklesia is called to persevere through the trials, tribulations, and persecution of this present evil age (*cf. Gal. 1:3*) as we await the coming Kingdom. This kind of strict allegiance to Jesus has always resulted in persecution and resistance from those who love this world. However, historically, the resistance both from within and from without has produced greater devotion to Jesus and greater clarity regarding our identity and function.

⁴ therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. ⁵ This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. ⁶ For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷ and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, (2Th 1:4-7 NASB)

II. WORSHIP IN LIGHT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. Within this context the ekklesia essentially has a three fold mission. **Worship, evangelism and discipleship.** These three make up the **sojourning mechanism** which keeps the ekklesia walking on a narrow path with endurance, faith, and vibrant hope.

- B. This framework – describing the function and mission of the ekklesia – establishes worship as the primary mission of the church. While the neglect of any one of these key elements is always detrimental for any community of believers, it is essential to understand the central role of worship within the life of the believer.

"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship does not. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever... All of history is moving toward one great goal, the white-hot worship of God and His Son among all the peoples of the earth. Missions is not that goal. It is the means. And for that reason it is the second greatest activity in the world."¹

- C. Within a Platonic framework – i.e. immaterial/holy heaven and physical/corrupt earth – worship is approached as the acknowledgment and confession of the ontological attributes of an immaterial God who dwells in an immaterial heaven.
- D. However, within a Biblical worldview, we worship a real Person who is seated in the height of the heavens, reigning over His creation with all power. When our worship is directed towards a real God who really fashioned the heavens and the earth and has absolute sovereignty over them, then our **worship is simply the most normal response to revelation.** The revelation of God who created the heavens and the earth, and who is committed to lovingly restoring them instead of annihilating them, yields authentic **gratitude, thanksgiving, loyalty, and devotion.**

¹ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 17-18.

² *...and One sitting on the throne. ...* ⁸ *And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (i.e. 'other than' based on redemptive history) is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY (i.e. is reigning over the heavens and the earth in wisdom and love), WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."* ¹⁰ *the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,* ¹¹ *"Worthy are You (i.e. proven throughout redemptive history), our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power (i.e. acknowledgment as being the Lord of all); for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." (Rev 4:1-11 NASB)*

- E. Biblically, worship is always directed towards the God who is enthroned in the heavens. The revelation of the sovereignty of God, ruling over the heavens and the earth, leads to the logical conclusion that He is patient and merciful towards the wicked, has promised to cleanse the earth from wickedness and tyranny, and sustains us in the meantime.

⁹ *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You (i.e. proven at the cross) to take the book and to break its seals (i.e. to rule over the earth); for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."* ¹⁰ *"You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (Rev 5:9-10 NASB)*

- ¹⁵ *Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." ...* ¹⁷ *saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign."* ¹⁸ *"And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth." (Rev 11:15, 17-18 NASB)*

- F. Worship also serves a very necessary and practical function within the church. As we sing to God within a Biblical context and framework, it actually anchors the heart in faith to the age to come. Throughout the prophetic writings the primary description of the age to come is the joyful singing that will take place in the resurrection.

³⁰ *And the LORD will cause His voice of authority to be heard, And the descending of His arm to be seen in fierce anger, And in the flame of a consuming fire In cloudburst, downpour and hailstones. ...* ³² *And every blow of the rod of punishment, Which the LORD will lay on him, Will be with the music of tambourines and lyres; And in battles, brandishing weapons, He will fight them. (Isa 30:30, 32 NASB)*

¹ The wilderness and the desert will be glad, And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus ² It will blossom profusely And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, The majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the LORD, The majesty of our God. ³ Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble. ⁴ Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. ⁶ Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah. ... ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD will return And come with joyful shouting to Zion, With everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away. (Isa 35:1-6, 10 NASB)

¹ Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants. ... ³ The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word. ... ¹⁴ They raise their voices, they shout for joy; They cry out from the west concerning the majesty of the LORD. ¹⁵ Therefore glorify the LORD in the east, The name of the LORD, the God of Israel, In the coastlands of the sea. ¹⁶ From the ends of the earth we hear songs, "Glory to the Righteous One," But I say, "Woe to me! Woe to me! Alas for me! The treacherous deal treacherously, And the treacherous deal very treacherously." ... ²¹ So it will happen in that day, That the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high, And the kings of the earth on earth. (Isa 24:1, 3, 14-16, 21 NASB)

⁷ And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. ⁹ And it will be said in that day, "Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation." (Isa 25:7-9 NASB)

- **³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them , ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Rev 21:3-4 NASB)**

G. So, as the Spirit testifies regarding the coming Kingdom in the midst of worship, joy is released in the hearts of the saints to strengthen them in faith regarding the assurance of the coming Kingdom and resurrection.

⁹ For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will (i.e the Kingdom and the resurrection) in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. (Col 1:9-12 NASB)

- ***¹⁶ Let the word (i.e. or 'the promise') of Christ richly dwell within you (plural), with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Col 3:16 NASB)***

III. EVANGELISM IN LIGHT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

- A. The fundamental message of the Gospel – having been developed in week 6 – is always in light of the age to come. Thus the proclamation is always in light of the age to come. Evangelism is simply the proclamation of the 'good news' of the coming Kingdom, the resurrection of the dead, and the day of the Lord.

² And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. ... ⁶ Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. (Luk 9:2, 6 NASB)

⁴² "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. (Act 10:42 NASB)

- B. This Gospel is universal 'good news' for all people of all time. Death, sickness, and suffering are the primary problem of all men throughout history. The good news for the sick and dying is that they will be raised up on the day of the Lord. The good news for the poor and oppressed of the earth is that they will be vindicated, and judgment will come one day.

³ and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" ⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. (Mat 11:3-5 NASB)

- ***⁴ Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. ⁶ Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy... (Isa 35:4-6 NASB)***
- ***¹ The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed (Heb. 'mashach') me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, (Isa 61:1-2 NIV)***

- C. However, the root of death, sickness, oppression, and suffering is sin and wickedness. So, any good news must include a solution to the problem of evil. This solution is two fold – the day of the Lord will abolish sin and tyranny from the earth forever. However, prior to the day of the Lord Jesus commanded that repentance and the forgiveness of sins be proclaimed to the nations as an invitation to take part in the Kingdom and resurrection.

²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ... ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luk 24:26, 45-47 NIV)

- ***⁹ Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders (1Cr 6:9 NIV)***

D. The ekklesia functions as a witness to the day of the Lord in our proclamation as well as in our conduct. While it is foolish to imagine that we will inherit the Kingdom even if we preach a right Gospel, but walk in wickedness ourselves. Simply 'witnessing' with your lifestyle is not effective.

¹⁴ ["Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.] ¹⁵ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. (Mat 23:14-15 NASB)

IV. DISCIPLESHIP IN LIGHT OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

A. In light of the day of the Lord, the coming judgment, and restoration we also order our lives to walk out the time of our sojourn in a manner worthy of the Lord and of our inheritance in His Kingdom.

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. (Tts 2:11-14 NIV)

B. This present age is defined by waiting, and so discipleship is simply the discipline of waiting for the coming Kingdom while we live our lives worthy of our calling.

⁷ And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. ⁹ And it will be said in that day, "Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation." (Isa 25:7-9 NASB)

⁸ "Therefore wait for Me," declares the LORD, "For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal. (Zep 3:8 NASB)

- **²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (Rom 8:23-25 NASB)**
- **⁵ Therefore do not go on passing judgment (i.e. since your Father is not passing judgment yet) before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. (1Cr 4:5 NASB)**
- **²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Phl 3:20-21 NASB)**
- **⁹ For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. (1Th 1:9-10 NASB)**
- **⁷ Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. ⁸ You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. (Jam 5:7-8 NASB)**
- **²⁷ And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (Hbr 9:27-28 NASB)**

C. So, discipleship is the ordering of our lives to wait for the day of the Lord. Both corporately and individually, we give ourselves to patient longing for the resurrection and coming Kingdom. **While it is the sacrifice of Jesus alone that qualifies us to have a part in the coming Kingdom, the manner in which we walk out holiness and sanctification in this age has a radical impact on the role which we have in the coming Kingdom.**

¹⁹ "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Mat 5:19-20 NASB)

D. Since it is the plan of God to have righteous and humble saints ruling the earth under the leadership of Jesus, in this age we are being conformed into those who will rule in this manner.

³ Gird Your sword on Your thigh, O Mighty One, In Your splendor and Your majesty! ⁴ And in Your majesty ride on victoriously, For the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; Let Your right hand teach You awesome things. (Psa 45:3-4 NASB)

¹⁵ "Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding. ... ¹⁷ "At that time they will call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart. (Jer 3:15, 17 NASB)

- E. Because discipleship is simply a means of training for a future assignment, most standards of discipleship appear arbitrary and relatively powerless within a Platonic worldview. Discipleship within a Platonic framework is ultimately training for a very non-human experience in 'heaven'. However, within a Biblical worldview, knowing that the saints will inherit this earth with actual roles – it gives us strength to persevere during times of temptation or tribulation.

⁴ therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. ⁵ This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. ⁶ For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, (2Th 1:4-6 NASB)

V. LIVING AS IN THE DAY TIME

- A. So, since we are called to inherit the earth within a real government, we conduct ourselves as in the age to come. Ultimately our conduct must be conformed to the age to come if we are to be counted worthy of it.

⁸ Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law... ¹¹ Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep (i.e. rise from the dead. cf. Dan. 12:3, Eph. 5:14, John 11:11, I Cor. 15:51); for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹² The night is almost gone (i.e. the age of darkness), and the day is near (i.e. the resurrection). Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us (i.e. who are going to inherit the resurrection) behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. (Rom 13:8, 11-13 NASB)

- **¹⁶ Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; ¹⁷ For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him. ¹⁸ Though while he lives he congratulates himself-- And though men praise you when you do well for yourself-- ¹⁹ He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light. (i.e. the resurrection) (Psa 49:16-19 NASB)**
- **¹³ For You have delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living (lit. 'life'). (Psa 56:13 NASB)**
- **¹⁵ How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O LORD, they walk in the light of Your countenance. (Psa 89:15 NASB)**
- **² And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. (Mat 17:2 NASB)**

- ¹⁶ ***In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. (Rev 1:16 NASB)***
- ⁴ ***they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev 22:4-5 NASB)***
- ¹ ***"Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ² "For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you. ³ "Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising (i.e. coming up from the dust, cf. Dan. 12:3) ... ¹⁹ "No longer will you have the sun for light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, And your God for your glory. ²⁰ "Your sun will no longer set, Nor will your moon wane; For you will have the LORD for an everlasting light, And the days of your mourning will be over. (Isa 60:1-3, 19-20 NASB)***
- ² ***For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. ... ⁴ In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. ... ⁶ In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. ⁷ For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light... ⁹ And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one. (Zec 14:2-9 NASB)***

B. So the standards of righteousness and justice which will be enforced in the coming Kingdom are the way that holiness and consecration are defined in this age. The Sermon on the Mount is an illustration of the saints living as in the daytime.

³ ***"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Mat 5:3-12 NASB)***

- ***⁶ He will bring forth your righteousness (lit. 'justice') as the light And your judgment as the noonday.*** ***⁷ Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.*** ***⁸ Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing.*** ***⁹ For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land.*** (Heb. *erets*, the earth) ***¹⁰ Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there.*** ***¹¹ But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.*** (Psa 37:6-11 NASB)

C. Since the day of the Lord will reveal the secrets of men, we pursue righteousness and humility of heart, not simply of outward deed.

¹⁴ For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ***¹⁵ in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness (i.e. giving evidence) and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,*** ***¹⁶ on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.*** (Rom 2:14-16 NASB)

⁵ Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. (1Cr 4:5 NASB)

D. In this way, the suffering and mistreatment of this age serves to expose wicked and self-centered motives of the heart, thus conforming us to the Great King and servant of all in the age to come.

¹ Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? ***² Or do you not know that the saints will judge (i.e. rule over) the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? ...*** ***⁷ Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?*** (1Cr 6:1-2, 7 NASB)

³² But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened (i.e. belief in Jesus as the Messiah), you endured a great conflict of sufferings, ***³³ partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.*** ***³⁴ For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.*** (Hbr 10:32-34 NASB)

⁸ Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. (Hbr 5:8 NASB)

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us (i.e. in the resurrection) ... ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body ... ²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good (i.e. in the resurrection) to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; (Rom 8:18, 20-23, 27-29 NASB)

- E. Jesus exhorts His disciples to servanthood, meekness, and love because as those called to reign with Him these are the leadership requirements in His Kingdom. Discipleship and servanthood are mostly disregarded within the modern church because an etherealized heavenly destiny leaves little to prepare for in our minds.

¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." ... ²⁴ Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. (i.e. place of authority in the Kingdom) ²⁵ Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them (i.e. demand servitude); and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶ But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. (i.e. the one who will have greatest honor in the Kingdom is evidenced by their humility and servanthood in this age) ²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. ²⁸ You are those who have stood by me in my trials. ²⁹ And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luk 22:15-30 NIV)

³ **Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God,** ⁴ **got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.** ⁵ **Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded (which was the job of the lowest servant).** ⁶ **So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?"** ⁷ **Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now (i.e. the present evil age, cf. Gal. 1:4), but you will understand hereafter (i.e. in the Kingdom)."** ⁸ **Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!"** **Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me (i.e. no place in my Kingdom)."** ... ¹² **So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"** ¹³ **"You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am (i.e. the Messiah).** ¹⁴ **"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.** ¹⁵ **"For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."** ¹⁶ **"Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.** ¹⁷ **"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. (Jhn 13:3-8, 12-17 NASB)**

- F. Likewise, the apostles both model and exhort servanthood and meekness within the ekklesia for this reason. Jesus displayed his apostles as least so that He might glorify them and those who believe by their word in the Kingdom of God.

¹ **Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.** ² **In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy (i.e. representative of the One who sent him). ...** ⁸ **You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you.** ⁹ **For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death (NLT 'like prisoners of war at the end of a victor's parade'); because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.** ¹⁰ **We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.** ¹¹ **To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless;** ¹² **and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;** ¹³ **when we are slandered, we try to conciliate (NIV 'answer kindly'); we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.** ¹⁴ **I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.** ¹⁵ **For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.** ¹⁶ **Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me. (1Cr 4:1-2, 8-16 NASB)**

³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name (i.e. governmentally), ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; (Phl 2:3-12 NASB)

²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings (i.e. the blessings of the resurrection and the Kingdom). ²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷ No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (1Cr 9:22-27 NIV)

VI. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DISCIPLESHIP

- A. So, we embrace a watchful lifestyle – as demonstrated in the Sermon on the Mount and other apostolic writings – since this is the way that we condition our hearts internally for a rich welcome into the coming Kingdom.

⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature (i.e. the resurrection) and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith (i.e. faith in the Kingdom and resurrection) goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (i.e. the cross). ⁹ But if anyone does not have them (i.e. does not ‘make every effort’ to attain them), he is nearsighted (i.e. seeing only the present age) and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, ¹¹ and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2Pe 1:4-11 NIV)

- B. Likewise, we embrace the trials and tribulations of this age knowing that these **condition our hearts externally**, and expose areas of pride and unrighteousness hidden in the heart which are otherwise unknown areas of offense and enmity towards God. God is the God of the cross, and every area within me that hates the cross, despises what He is like and must be crucified if we are to inherit the promises.

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith (i.e. in the resurrection) develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ... ¹² Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (Jam 1:2-4, 12 NIV)

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice (i.e. the coming salvation. cf. v. 5), though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith (i.e. rejoicing in the promise of the resurrection) --of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1Pe 1:6-7 NIV)