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NEWS & EVENTS – JULY 2021

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16 "Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light. 17 "For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light. 18 "So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him."

19 And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd. 20 And it was reported to Him, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You." 21 But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

22 Now on one of those days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they launched out. 23 But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger. 24 They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. 25 And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" Luke 8:16-25

The Fear of the Lord is manifested when we are careful how we listen. The multitudes came to carefully listen. They heard a Voice that was divinely and distinctly authoritative. We cannot be casual with the Word of God. It comes to expose the darkness. The one who comes to Jesus is weary of the darkness. Their lives are stalked by it. They need a word of hope. Then there are the ones who were too familiar with Jesus. Family relations are often too familiar in the family. Our eyes have become so used to the darkness, our ears are dulled and they do not hear with intent to obey. To hear the word of God casually, without the intention of obedience, runs the risk of being estranged and alienated from Jesus. The disciples witnessed that people came to carefully listen to Jesus because they knew they lived in darkness. But they had heard and seen Hope. They were drawn to it. When the family of Jesus came with the desire to see Him it wasn't with the intent to carefully listen to His word. They came to subdue His authority, diminish it, and hide Him away. You can't cover the Light once it's been lit. Darkness cannot overtake the Light. The Lord's illumination first comes to our family. It is there the Light becomes too bright for darkened senses. Too much light in darkened environments takes some getting used to. When our eyes recoil at the brightness, our ears seem to hear better. Then it is the time we should be careful how we listen. Obedience to the Lord secures our connection to the Lord. Those who hear the Word of God and do it will exhibit a family connection. The next episode in the narrative tells us how Jesus illustrated this lesson to the ones He spent time with the most.

Mark's gospel tells us that when Jesus and His disciples entered the boat to cross the lake it was evening. Darkness descended along with a fierce and fearful wind. The lives of experienced fishermen were at imminent risk of loss. Death was on the water. And Jesus was sleeping...think about that for a minute. When their lives were imperiled, when everything around them was raging, the Lord was silent. What they had learned about Jesus in the day, while the Light was shining forth had been forgotten. When they roused Jesus, they declared that they were perishing. *Silly disciples...* can you truly perish in the Presence of the Lord?

Jesus speaks with authority...this is what the disciples had been learning. The Word of God commands the nighttime tempest to stand still...and the wind and the sea carefully listened to the edict of King Jesus, Maker of Heaven and Earth. Those disciples would never forget that night. It was a night when faith was tested. Today you can be in the midst of a night like that. Evil seems to be casting off all restraint. Sin's enticements are sucking us in until we are blown away in the wreckage. Our families are swamped. When you are in the grip of the fear of evil the Word of God still speaks. The Fear of the Lord is manifested when we are careful how we listen. Do you tremble at God's Word? Or are you still trifling with it?

Charles Spurgeon wrote the following words of encouragement...*When ye hear of wars, and rumours of wars, let no agitation distress you, but be quiet from fear of evil. Whatsoever cometh upon the earth, you, beneath the broad wings of Jehovah, shall be secure. Stay yourself upon His promise; rest in His faithfulness, and bid defiance to the blackest future, for there is nothing in it direful for you. Your sole concern should be to show forth to the world the blessedness of hearkening to the voice of wisdom.*

Let's be careful how we listen. The wind's a little louder these days.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam