

Sunday, September 15, 2013

Remember (8)

Fifth Verse: *“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them, those who are mistreated, since you yourselves are in the body also.”* (Hebrews 13:3).

This wonderful verse was part of the concluding exhortations of the Epistle of St Paul to the Hebrews. In general these exhortations urge the believers to love one another with practical love. Why does the Apostle ask us to remember those who are chained with such fervent brotherly love?

1- **Brotherly Love starts with empathy towards others**, understanding of other people’s feelings, their circumstances and needs because we are members of the same body and supporting one another (1 Corinthians 12). Love connects us together like the nerves that connects the members of the body and make them feel each other. If there is no love among us, we would lack feeling each other’s pain. Thus all our spiritual practice would lose their meanings and rather becomes unaccepted by God, as the Bible says, *“You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”* (Revelation 3:1)

2- **Coming in contact with those who are suffering is coming in contact with Christ Himself**, touching the wounded members of His body as Thomas did (John 20:28). This contact can be done by visiting, and fulfilling the needs of, those who are in prisons, visiting the sick in hospitals, or caring for the elderly in nursing homes.

3- **Those who are in chains are not only the imprisoned and the diseased with severe illness, but also those who are in the shackles of sin**, bad habits, harmful relationships, or addictions of any sort. We ought to remember them in our prayers and care for their salvation as much as we could. We ought to offer them the sweet Christ who liberates all from their chains. We must offer them love, guidance, the life-giving words of the Bible, and we must do so in humility and wisdom.

4- **We must conduct ourselves according to the teachings of the Lord Jesus and according to Him as our role model. As He suffered for our sins and bore our pain, we must also remember those who are imprisoned and humiliated**, remembering the great verse from the book of Galatians, *“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”* (Galatians 6:2).

As Christ bore our burdens, we too are committed to bear the burdens of others following the example of our Lord and Savior.

When we remember those who are in chains and humiliated, we no longer become entrapped in our own selves nor consumed by our own selfishness, only then we become open towards others. This helps us to grow and enriches our characters, and this is what the bible commands us to do,

“Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4).

5- **We must recognize that the flesh is weak**, easily falls sick, suffers, gets wounded, or gets broken. **Therefore, good health and living free of disease is only temporal.** As long as God gives us good health, we should be compassionate towards those who are in chains and humiliated, we must extend a helping hand and carry some of their burdens.

6- **We should not think that coming on contact and helping those who are in chains and humiliated would bring sadness to the heart. Quite the contrary, giving to others in that manner, brings joy and true happiness to the heart**, as Jesus said, *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* (Acts 20:35). The acts of giving move the Holy Spirit within us, and when He rejoices within us, He fills our hearts with Joy.

(To be continued).



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