St. Mt 16:13-19 STATUS GO

I'M CERTAIN THAT THERE IS NOBODY IN THIS CONGREGATION WHO IN ANY WAY IMAGINES THAT OUR CONTINUING MINISTRY IN THIS CONGREGATION IS GOING TO BE EASY WITHOUT PASTOR KEN LEADING THE WAY. THROUGHOUT HIS WHOLE MINISTRY HERE, HE HAS HAD A VISION -- & BY GOD'S GRACE AND POWER WE HAVE RESPONDED TO THAT VISION. WE HAVE FOCUSED ON THE REALITY THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD & WITH PETER & THE APOSTLE PAUL WE ARE READY TO COMMIT OURSELVES TO THE PROPOSITION THAT WE CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH XP WHO STRENGTHENS US – THAT FLESH & BLOOD HAS NOT REVEALED THIS TO US, BUT THE FATHER IN HEAVEN. WE ARE NOT A CONGREGATION WITH TUNNEL VISION. WE HAVE A FOCUS ON THE STATUS GO AND NOT ON THE STATUS QUO. GOD-IN-XP HAS BLESSED US IN SO MANY WAYS & CONTINUES TO BLESS US..... LAST MONDAY AT OUR CHURCH COUNCIL MTG. THE TREASURER ANNOUNCED THAT WE ENDED THE YR. IN THE BLACK & NOT $20,000 IN THE RED! *THANK YOU, GOD!* THEY ALSO VOTED TO BEGIN A NEW, REALLY LITURGICAL WORSHIP SERVICE BEGINNING THE 1ST SUNDAY IN LENT AT 5:30 P.M. THAT TELLS ME THAT THIS IS NOT A CONGREGATION THAT HAS ITS HEAD IN THE SAND. WHEN GOD SPEAKS TO US, WE SAY, WE'RE HERE WHICH MEANS WE'RE READY! THIS IS THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF REAL FAITH & THAT IS YOU CANNOT BE CHOSEN & FROZEN AT THE SAME TIME. WE ARE HERE TO EMBRACE EACH OTHER & CONFRONT EACH OTHER & ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO GET OUT THERE INTO OUR COMMUNITY & THEN INTO THE WHOLE WORLD WITH THE GOOD NEWS OF THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, LIFE & SALVATION THROUGH XP, OUR LORD. LIKE PETER, WE MUST KEEP ON CONFESSING THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD & THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS THE STATUS QUO IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. WE DO NOT HAVE A TRICYCLE RELIGION WHERE CAN JUST STOP & LOOK AROUND. WE HAVE A BICYCLE RELIGION WHERE IF YOU STOP, YOU WILL FALL. WE FOCUS ON THE STATUS GO! GOD HAS SO RICHLY BLESSED US WITH A STAFF THAT IS DETERMINED TO KEEP RIGHT ON MOVING IN THEIR VARIOUS MINISTRIES. THAT GOOD WORK THAT GOD HAS BEGUN FOR US THROUGH PASTOR KEN & DOROTHY, HE WILL KEEP ON BRINGING TO COMPLETION UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS XP – WHEN AT LAST HE WILL RETURN IN ALL HIS GLORY AS KING OF KINGS & LORD OF LORDS. THIS IS THE WHOLE PURPOSE & LEGACY OF EVERYTHING WE ARE ABOUT & THE GATES OF HADES SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.

OUR FOCUS IS & MUST CONTINUE TO BE ON WHAT HAS TO BE DONE NOW – NOT TOMORROW, BUT NOW! CAN YOU IMAGE WHAT PETER WAS FEELING WHEN JESUS TOLD HIM, I WILL GIVE YOU THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, & WHATEVER YOU BIND ON EARTH WILL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN, & WHATEVER YOU LOOSE ON EARTH WILL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN." WHAT AN OVERWHELMING RESPONSIBILITY.

IN MY OWN THOUGHTS & PRAYERS & MEDITATIONS, I DO NOT EVEN WANT TO TRY TO LOOK AT THE FULL PLATE THAT IS BEING PLACED IN FRONT OF ME & THIS CONGREGATION. BUT I AM ALSO REMINDED THAT I AM TO LOOK ONLY AT ONE DAY AT A TIME & THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE. IF PETER OR THE OTHER DISCIPLES KNEW WHAT LAY IN FRONT OF THEM, THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE CONTINUED. INSTEAD, THEY FOCUSED ON TODAY – TODAY'S TASK – INSTEAD OF TOMORROW'S TROUBLE. EMMETT FOX ONCE SAID, MORE PEOPLE DIE FROM DREADING TOMORROW THAN THEY DO FROM DOING TODAY. SO LET'S ASK GOD NOT TO ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE SCARED INTO HENNY PENNY & SAY THE SKY IS FALLING & EVERYTHING IS COMING APART. WHAT KEEPS THIS CONGREGATION ALIVE & TOGETHER IS PEOPLE LIKE YOU WHO GET UP EVERYDAY & DO TODAY'S TASKS & DO NOT WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW'S TROUBLES. YOU KEEP YOUR PLACE IN LINE & DO WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO -- & THAT'S WHAT HOLDS THIS CONGREGATION TOGETHER. THAT'S THE KIND OF FAITH THAT WILL CONTINUE TO BUILD THIS CHURCH. IF WE LOOK AT WHERE WE HAVE TO GO, WE WILL FAIL. BUT IF WE FOCUS ON WHAT GOD IS CALLING US TO DO TODAY – THEN TOMORROW'S TROUBLES WILL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.

WE MUST FOCUS ON JESUS / THE MESSIAH / THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD! HE IS IN CHARGE OF HIS CHURCH – HIS LIVING STONES. HE WILL PROVIDE & THE VERY GATES OF HADES WILL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT! HE IS THE LORD OF LIFE -- & WE MUST FOCUS ON HIM & NOT ON THE SIZE OF ALL THAT LIES BEFORE US. THIS IS WHAT HOLY CROSS MUST PRAY ABOUT & TALK ABOUT IN THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE OF OUR LIFE..... I LOVE THE STORY ABOUT A CHRISTIAN WHO WAS DEEPLY DEPRESSED / DESPONDENT / LOW! ON SUNDAY MORNING HE MUSTERED ALL HIS ENERGY & CRAWLED OUT OF BED. HE CAME TO CHURCH, HOPING TO BE LIFTED OUT OF HIS FUNK. LATER HE SAID, THE SERMON DIDN'T HELP ME ONE BIT! HE LEFT THE CHURCH EARLY – WENT OUTSIDE – KEPT HIS HEAD DOWN & LITERALLY RAN HEAD-ON INTO AN OAK TREE – SKINNED HIS FOREHEAD – KNOCKED HIMSELF ALMOST UNCONSCIOUS. HE SAID, ALL MORNING I SAID TO GOD, 'O GOD, I NEED A MESSAGE / I'M LOW / I'M DOWN / GIVE ME A MESSAGE. THEN HE LOOKED AT THOSE WHO HAD GATHERED AROUND HIM & SAID, DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE MESSAGE FROM GOD IS? IT IS *KEEP YOUR HEAD UP!* ..... LET'S KEEP OUR HEADS UP & FOCUS ON JESUS. HE IS OUR *SURE FOUNDATION!*