

## Resting in God

“Determining that the proper path for others is more important than your own comfort”

### Study 21

*Hebrews 12:12-13 (New Living Translation) So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. 13) Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.*

Even today the ruts from the wagons that traveled the Oregon trail westward are evident in some places. For two thousand miles they weave their way through mountain passes, over rugged terrain, and sometimes through land that is as marker-less as a blank sheet of paper. To the people heading west, these ruts were an unmistakable, and reliable path to follow. In many instances, they were the only map available.

Between 1843 and 1868 it is said that almost 500,000 people relied upon these indistinct ruts to lead them safely through an unfamiliar and sometimes very frightening land. Traveling, around fifteen miles a day, sometimes barefoot, knowing that the trail they were on was leading them to their desired end, was one less concern they had to deal with.

The life that Jesus lived is our benchmark way of life. His definitive pattern of living is a path to all of the freedoms we have been given and all of the eternal benefits that are ours in Him. He lived so we could live. He died so that we would be able to understand that this life is no longer our own, but it is to be lived for others.

Until those who we are called to can see Jesus for themselves, we are to show them the way to Him. We are to clearly mark the way into His presence by the way that we follow Him. Others are to follow us straight into his arms. As Paul said that others should follow him as he follows Christ, we are called to do the same.

*Matthew 11:12 (New International Version) From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.*

Forcefully advancing the kingdom of heaven means living above the lower kingdoms and leading others from the low form of life they represent. It is following Christ and having others follow you to His love.

How much of your heart is focused on the spiritual well-being of others. Even if you do care for the souls of others, how selective are you as to who you pine for. Do you care that only family, friends and all of those other “good” people make it past this world and into eternity with God, or have you submitted your heart to be widened to care for those who Jesus cared for? Do you weep for those who intend on harming you? What about those who hate you and desire to kill you?

Advancing the kingdom of heaven is not creating a path for only your choice of people to follow. In his mercy for others, that same mercy that has been given you, Father God may place you in the midst of those who like you as little as others before them liked Jesus. He may even ask you to submit to the same outcome that He had.

Advancing the kingdom is living in the light of Christ and showing others the path out of darkness by the power of God. It is trusting God to reveal Christ through you no matter where you may be, in whatever circumstances you find yourself in. The closer you are to living as Jesus lived, the closer you are to being hated as He was and possibly sharing the same fate as He did.

*Hebrews 4:9-10 (New International Version) There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10) for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.*

Living past the hatred that Jesus felt, and sharing the same fate as He did is not quite a piece of cake, but it is bearable for those who have embraced His life with every fiber of their being. He endured the cross for the joy that was to be His after the pain was over because he loved those who hated Him more than He loved His life. He rested with His Father through the pain, except for the predicted moment His Father had to turn His back to fulfill all things.

His Father is now our Father, a Father who has promised to never turn His back on us. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. We can rest in that fact, now and forever.

Today, ask Jesus who He died for. Ask Him to give you the same heart that He has for those who hate Him and possibly hate you. Ask Him also to give you whatever is needed to mark out a straight smooth path for others to follow, no matter who they might be. Trust Him to give you His strength and ability to love them as He does.

For thought or discussion:

Who follows you

Where are you taking whoever is looking to you for guidance