

COMPROMISE

(mdb)

Compromise: A concession to something detrimental or pejorative
(Tending to make or become worse)

- American Heritage Dictionary

Dear brothers & sisters in Christ, let me greet you in the words of the Apostle Peter -

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

- 2Pet 1:2-4 NKJV

I want to look with you at one of our greatest battles in our Christian walk - compromising with the things of the world.

The Scripture we read above declares – *“His Divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life...”*

Do we really believe that? Or are we still looking to see what the world has to offer. Of a Truth... to rely on, seek after, or desire, anything other than what God gives us is to compromise.

God has given us His holy Word, His commands through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit to guide us, and His great grace: the ability to keep His commands, follow His Son and walk according to the Spirit.

To settle for anything less than God's best for us is to compromise. To give our time, our energy, ourselves, to anything or anyone other than God is to compromise.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

- Deut 6:4-9 NKJV

Jesus quotes from this in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke – ***“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,”*** affirming this universal, timeless commandment; and each time follows it up with – ***“And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”***

These are things we are to be teaching our children. It seems so simple, yet by our behavior, actions and deeds, we've increasingly been teaching the younger generation to love money, entertainment and lust more than God, and themselves much more than others. We have taught them by our words and attitudes to have prejudice, and even to hate others who are different in some way. I am writing here to professing Christians. What example are we setting forth for our children? Does our walk line up with what we teach them? Does our walk line up with the Word of God? Are we walking in the way of righteousness and holiness and bringing up our children ***“in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*** (Eph 6:4)

Our Lord Jesus left no room for us to compromise in our Christian walk. He put great responsibility upon us to ***“train our children in the way that they should go.”*** (Prov 22:6), with a stern warning to those who take God's charge lightly – ***“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”*** (Matt 18:6)

Four decades ago the following words were spoken, that sadly are still true today -

“Christianity is so entangled with the world that millions never guess how radically they have missed the New Testament pattern. Compromise is everywhere. The world is whitewashed just enough to pass inspection by blind men posing as believers, and those same believers are everlastingly seeking to gain acceptance with the world. By mutual concessions men who call themselves Christians manage to get on with men who have for the things of God nothing but quiet contempt.”
- A.W. Tozer

Dear saints, we cannot afford to compromise with the things of the world. ***“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”*** (James 4:4)

God has given us His written Word: We must study and meditate upon it. He has given us His Holy Spirit to ***“teach us all things and bring to remembrance all that Jesus taught”*** (John 14:26) and to ***“lead us into all Truth.”*** (John 16:13): We must daily interact with Him. The Word and the Spirit are the lamp and the oil we read about in the parable of the ten virgins awaiting the return of the Bridegroom. This is a picture of Christians awaiting the return of Christ to the earth. Some were ready, some were not. In which group will we be found when He returns?

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶ “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹ “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ ¹² But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

¹³ “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” - Matt 25:1-13 NKJV

This parable is an exhortation and a warning to Christians not to become slack or comfortable to the point where we are not pressing in, where we are not keeping watch, & continually putting on the full armor of God... and teaching our families the same. As a whole the Church, especially in the Western world, has become apathetic, which Webster defines as *“free from passion.”* In short - We've *“Lost our first love.”*

In another parable: of the sower of the Seed in Matthew 13, we read about 4 different kinds of people, all of whom actually did receive the seed of Christ, but 3 of those groups of people fell away. The devil got to some right away by confusing them and they lost the seed that was sown (vs 19). Some fit into the category of those who *“heard the Word and immediately received it with joy”*, yet stumbled when tribulation or persecution arose because of the Word (vs 20-21). Perhaps they were falsely taught that because Jesus suffered they wouldn't have to, while the Bible declares that *“all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”* (2Tim 3:12), and *“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”* (Acts 14:22). But I believe for most of us, it is the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches that are our greatest challenge.

“Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”

- Matt 13:22 NKJV

Friends, it's not hard to get caught up in the cares of this life. Problems abound. Bills are constantly due. The media barrages us incessantly (if we let it) with what the world deems as important in this life, most of which has no eternal significance. We often envy what others have, or seem to have. What is hard is bearing fruit when we're filling our spirits with garbage rather than drinking the Living Water and feeding on the Bread of Life that nourishes that Seed that was sown in us. Jesus said – *“I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”* (John 15:16).

As we abide in Him, nurturing that Seed, we will bear much fruit (John 15:5). But what did Jesus say happens to those who were part of the body, who were in the Vine, yet bore no fruit - they are ***“cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”*** (John 15:6-7)

If we are going to survive, and overcome, and be good examples to our family, we cannot afford to compromise with the things of the world. We really must be diligent in our walk with the Lord.

We must ***“Be diligent to present ourselves approved to God, workers who do not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”***

- 2Tim 2:15 NKJV

We must ***“Love without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; ¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.”***

- Rom 12:9-12 NKJV

Some man-made traditions have led many to believe that "they have made it", that "their eternal future is secure." But as we see in the parables above, such an attitude can be deadly. In Revelation chapter 3 Jesus rebukes the Church for being lukewarm -

“These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

- Rev 3:14b-22 NKJV

Many teach that Rev 3:20 is talking to the unsaved, so that they may 'receive Christ into their hearts' and be saved... But it's not. It is being spoken to the churches, to God's Elect. If we, as professed Christians, haven't opened the door and fully allowed Jesus to be Lord in our lives, how can we expect others to receive His atoning sacrifice and commit their lives unto Him.

These warnings are written to the Church, as are all the promises and warnings in Revelation 2 & 3. We need to be purchasing from Him refined gold of purity, white garments of righteousness and the eye salve of understanding **now**. We need to be purchasing oil (the Holy Spirit) for our lamps each day. The Apostles never let themselves get comfortable in their walk with Christ, they never took God or their salvation for granted. Paul, after all he had been through for Christ, and all the fruit he had borne for the Kingdom of God, writes -

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.”

- Phil 3:12-19 NKJV

Paul's example was of a man who forsook all to follow Christ, and to teach the Word of God by both word and action. He practiced what he preached. He refused to compromise. He never ceased pressing in to know Christ. I wonder what the contents of a letter written by the Apostles to the churches in America would be today...

Recently came across this quote -

"Apathy is not so much a physical issue, nor is it merely a symptom of boredom, as it is a problem within our spirit. It is a collapse of the will to vigorously press forward under the burdens of contrary forces and constant repetition of tasks until we either no longer care about activities or their outcomes, or we mechanically go through the motions in a state of sleepwalking where we perform the tasks necessary but are not really consciously involved as we ought to be. What can easily be a danger in the workplace has become a subtle poison in the work of the Lord and the life of the local Church."

"Apathy is cultivated over time in a heart that has lost its first love for Christ and forsaken His Lordship over their lives."

- Dr. Charles L. Dear

We have a responsibility to teach the younger generations to walk in the ways of the Lord God. And to do so, we ourselves must keep our lamps trimmed & burning as did the five wise virgins (Matt 25:7), and partake daily of the Bread of Life (John 6:51,56) and *“abide (or remain) in the Vine” that we may bear fruit.*” (John 15:4)

We must *"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."* (Col 1:10). If we ourselves are lukewarm in our Christian walk; if we aren't *"working out our own salvation with fear & trembling"* (Phil 2:12), and being diligent in seeking His face and studying His word, how can we expect our children & grandchildren to believe and trust and hope in Him. We must be ever pressing in, *"forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward"*, lest we fall short.

"Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, ⁴ God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"

- Heb 2:1-4 NKJV

I want to finish with this passage from Paul's letter to Titus. May it speak to us and stir up our hearts and cause us to strive to attain to this model of what the Church has been called to be.

Qualities of a Sound Church (NKJV)

"As for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: ² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; ³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— ⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

⁶ Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, ⁷ in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

⁹ Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."

- Titus 2:1-10 NKJV

Imagine being around people such as these, at home, at work, in church... men & women who set solid examples for their children, and those around them, by their behavior and refusal to compromise. This is what God expects of those He has called to be united together in Christ. Men & women, husbands & wives, fathers & mothers, employers & employees... abiding by the Word of God in all manner of holiness and righteousness.

Lord God, we acknowledge You this day, as our Father and our Creator. Jesus, we acknowledge You as Savior and Lord. Lead us by Your Holy Spirit into all Truth. Help us to be all that You've called us to be in Your body. Give us the strength to turn from the enticements of this world and to trust in You fully. Give us each day of Your substance, the Bread of Life, as we seek first the Kingdom and Righteousness. Keep us from temptation, as we choose not to compromise with the things of the world. Deliver us from the evil one as we humbly serve and love You with our whole heart. We long to be pleasing in Your sight, and to be good examples to the younger generation. May our song be as that of King David -

***"I will sing of mercy and justice;
To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.***

***² I will behave wisely in a perfect way.
Oh, when will You come to me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.***

***³ I will set nothing wicked before my eyes;
I hate the work of those who fall away;
It shall not cling to me.***

***⁴ A perverse heart shall depart from me;
I will have nothing to do with evil."***

- Psalm 101:1-4

Revive us, O Lord. Grant to us the passion and love for You we had when You first saved us. May the hope and joy we find in You be evident to our children and all who meet us. Be first in our lives, the center of our marriages, the ruler of our hearts. We praise Your Holy Name. Be glorified in Your Church.

Amen.

Michael

***"Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
²⁴ And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way."***

- Psalm 139:23-24