

HOLD FAST

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“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

- Heb 10:23-25 NKJV

“You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast.”

- Deut 10:20 NKJV

“You must fear the Lord your God and worship Him and cling to Him. Your oaths must be in His Name alone.”

- Deut 10:20 NLT

Hold fast: Cleave to. Cling to. Follow hard after. Abide in... Him.

Dear friends, in a world where so many things compete for our attention, we, as Christians, must take this charge ever so seriously. And even more, now, as the Day of the Lord seems to be approaching quickly. The enemy of God and of our souls would have us relax our grip on our Lord and His Kingdom, tempting us with the worldly 'gods' such as money & power & status among man, as well as 'gods' of lust, sex and sensuality. These are the things Christ came and died to set us free from; things which we used to serve and follow after; things which only bring death; things which themselves are perishing.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

- 1 John 2:15-17 NKJV

We who have decided to follow Jesus are to let go of these corruptible things and grasp the eternal things of God. Oh, the promise we read above – ***“he who does the will of God abides forever.”***

I love Jesus' declaration after His encounter with the Samaritan women at Jacob's Well. Our Lord said His sustenance, His food, was to ***“do the will of God.”***

“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” (John 4:34)

Indeed, Jesus now ***“lives forever.”*** And He has invited us to join Him in ***“immortality”*** by making Him our daily sustenance; our ***“daily Bread.”*** As we partake of Him we are doing God's will, and we too will reap the reward of ***“everlasting Life.”***

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever.” – John 6:51 NKJV

May our desire be for that spiritual Bread, rather than that which our human appetites crave.

Those in the world will think we are strange, and may ridicule us. They cannot understand those who ***“do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.”*** (1Pet 4:2 NIV)

Continuing in his letter, Peter reminds and cautions us who strive to live for the *“will of God... “For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you.”*

- 1Pet 4:3-4 NIV

“In the past” means these has set aside (repented of) those things which mark immaturity and foolishness. Specifically, Peter is writing these words not to the church-goer, but to the ***“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.”*** (1Pet 1:2 NKJV)

The Apostles, in their epistles, were always addressing those who had truly begun the journey of discipleship. And the exhortation was to “hold fast” to what they had attained, even as they strove to be perfected. Was not this Paul’s confession, as he wrote about the True Christian goal... ***“that I may know Him (Christ) and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”*** (Phil 3:10-11 ESV)

And he continues -- addressing again not the casual church attender, but the ***“saints”, “God’s people united with the Messiah Yeshua”*** (Phil 1:1 CJB). That “united” being yoked to Jesus death by our baptism, separation from the world and consecration to Him. To this level of attainment let us hold fast, ***“not shrinking back to destruction.”*** (Heb 10:39) -- ***“Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.”*** - Phil 3:15-16 NRSV

May we lay hold of the Truth of God’s Word, be ever pressing in and be counted with those who ***“formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath.”*** (Eph 2:2-3 NAS)

These passages remind us that we ourselves once lived as those in the world still do now, and as well caution us to expect persecution. But that *is* the world. Many of us used to follow after these false 'gods' and live recklessly. And now we are called to ***“be renewed in our minds”*** and exhorted to ***“hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering”***, without trying to live with one foot in God’s Kingdom and the other in the world.

So we repent, turning from destructive behavior, and seek to find our place in the body of Christ. And here we must be perhaps even more careful to hold fast to the Truth of God, for even from church pulpits false doctrines arise which are pleasing to the ear, but are not of God. The Scripture forewarns us -

“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.”

- Deut 13:1-4 NKJV

Over the centuries, and I believe even more so now, doctrines have arisen which focus on what we can get from God, rather than on God Himself. Among them the 'faith and prosperity' message and some of the physical 'healing' ministries which I've personally seen operate, as well as other doctrines that seek to glorify money & power & status among men, rather than the giving of glory & honor & praise to the King of kings.

We are to cleave tight to our hope in the Eternal promises of God, and let go of those worldly things which are perishing. Fame & fortune & earthly possessions will not endure forever. Indeed, they will pass away. But that which is of Christ will never fade away. The Apostles and early disciples knew this. Peter prayed that we would persevere through this life, holding fast to our hope in Christ, that we might receive the fullness of the promises of God -

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.”

- 1Pet 1:3-9 NKJV

Throughout life's trials, which will either refine our faith or destroy it, we must hold fast to the One who is able to keep us by His power. Regardless of our circumstances, whether we perceive them to be good or bad, the charge is eternal -

“You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.” - Deut 13:4 NKJV



I love how Strong's defines the Hebrew word for 'hold fast' - '**dabaq**' - to cling, cleave, keep close, and yields the noun form for 'glue' and also the more abstract ideas of 'loyalty and devotion'. (Heb #1692)

In the Greek, we have the word **“tēreō”** which is translated – keep, preserve, hold fast. With the idea of guarding, not allowing to escape. (Gr #5083)

In Genesis, when God presented Eve to Adam, he said concerning their union - ***“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” - Gen 2:24 KJV***

That word "cleave" again is the Hebrew word '**dabaq.**' As a husband and wife are to become “one flesh”, so too we are to become intimately “one” with our God. His Word is to be adhered to us. Jesus prayer is that we should be one with Him and the Father as They are One. He says to you and to me - ***“Abide in Me, and I in you.” - John 15:4a***

Truly, this is the most incredible promise in the Scripture. To be one with Jesus, even as He is One with God. Do we see that this means to be one with God as well? If a man had said this I might doubt, but it was the Lord Jesus Himself who uttered these words, in His prayer to God -

“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; ²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one.” – John 17:22-23 NAS

One. “unity”, “concord” in the Greek. As Adam & Eve were united and called one by God... as Jesus said that He & the Father are One (John 10:30) ... Some are destined to become one with Them. And we shall cling to one another, Eternally inseparable.

Yes, we are commanded to stick to our God like glue, allowing nothing to tear us away. Temptations, trials & testings will come, Jesus told us they would. And God will allow these to see where our hearts truly lie. And we must adhere to His Word, regardless of circumstances.

God gave the above commandments in Deuteronomy 10:20 and 13:4 to His people Israel as they journeyed in the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land. When Jesus addresses the New Testament end time churches His charge is the same. As we journey through this life with the hope of dwelling with Him in His Eternal Kingdom, we are commanded to do likewise.

To those who remained pure even in the midst of the church which tolerated sexual immorality He says -

"But hold fast what you have till I come. ²⁶ And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— ²⁷ 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'— as I also have received from My Father; ²⁸ and I will give him the morning star."

- Rev 2:25-28 NKJV

To the church that had great fame among men He admonishes -

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. ³ Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you."

- Rev 3:2-3 NKJV

Even to those who were walking worthy of His Name he warns -

"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."

- Rev 3:11 NKJV

And to each of those seven Christian churches, these words of instruction and encouragement are followed with great and wonderful promises to those who do indeed hold fast to the Truth, cling to Him, truly repent, and overcome. The wisdom of these commands, the understanding of what we must do, comes as we obey and walk according to the Holy Spirit -

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

Let us be aware that we can be deceived by the world, and even in the church, if we are not careful. May we be ever pressing in to know Christ, strengthening our bond to Him, that we be found *"blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, ⁹ holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."* (Titus 1:7-9 NKJV)

In Numbers 25, many of God's chosen people sinned greatly against Him, bowing down to other 'gods.' Verse 3 says *"Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel."* The consequences - He destroyed them.

Yet not all loosed their grip on the Holy One of Israel. The Scripture tells of those who chose to cleave unto the Lord God even as those around them committed fornication and worshipped false gods. In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, there were those who held fast to the One True God.

"Your eyes have seen what the Lord did at Baal Peor; for the Lord your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. ⁴ But you who held fast to the Lord your God are alive today, every one of you." - Deut 4:3-4 NKJV

Those who held fast, kept close, clave to the Lord preserved their lives. Dear saints, that charge is for us as well, in even greater measure, as we fight to stay alive spiritually. Paul exhorts all Christians in his letter to the Philippians -

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of Life.”

- Phil 2:12-16 NKJV

May it be said of us, as the Scripture declares of King Hezekiah -

“He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast (clave) to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments.” - 2Kings 18:5-6 NKJV

Amen.

“Yahweh your God is the One whom you must fear and serve; to Him you must hold firm; in His Name take your oaths.”

- Deut 10:20 New Jerusalem Bible

Lord Jesus, we chose this day to accept Your command; to turn from our own perceived strengths and cleave to You, our Rock. We resolve to let go of the false gods in whom we've trusted, repenting of known sins, ceasing to walk after the lusts of our flesh, and hold fast to You, our Provider, our Redeemer, our King. Be the Ruler of our hearts this day and forever. Guide us by your Holy Spirit as we take time to listen and hear. Reveal to us Your Truth, and Your plan for each of our lives.

Thank You, Lord for all that You do for us. Thank You for Your love, mercy and grace. May all we are be a witness unto You as a light shining brightly in the darkness. May all we do serve to strengthen Your body and bring glory to Your Holy Name. Amen.

Friends, that is my personal prayer.

God bless you & keep you & guide you, always.

Michael

“Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.”

- 1Thess 5:16-22