

FAITH: Try it on everything!

*“Our Now and Then Kingdom...
An Autobiography in Five Easy
Chapters!”*

Jeremiah 8:18 - 9:1, Luke 16:1-13
September 22, 2019

The way you do anything is the way you do everything. Listen to this autobiography in 5 short chapters...a story of moving from being a child of this cultural generation to a child of the light...as Jeremiah says.

And, be aware: Children of the light...there is no such thing as a now and then kingdom...the way you do anything, is the way you do everything!

Chapter I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost, I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter II

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it there.
I still fall in...it's a habit.

My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

Chapter IV

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

Chapter V

I walk down a different street.

Jeremiah joins himself to the suffering of the people, and there he finds a compassion that flows from within, through him for all the people... a compassion bigger than his own could ever be, calling him to respond. He trusted himself...within God's embrace.

-Jesus says if you are not trustworthy in the little things, little will be entrusted to you.

-Trustworthy with a lot, much will be entrusted to you. And be shrewd about that!

Don't let those of this cultural generation be the only ones shrewd enough to use the resources at hand to assure a hoped for outcome in the future.

-Children of the light, it is time to tame the shrewd!

-Children of the light...there is no such thing as a now and then kingdom... the way you do anything, is the way you do everything!

Don't be fooled!

- Don't let yourself become part of a polarized culture that pits people against each other,
- looks the other way rather than see the suffering,
- gives in and up rather than over and above!

Join yourselves together realizing you cannot serve two masters!

So often life pits us against each other.
Sidewalks are filled with holes...crowded with people!

So often we live as if there weren't enough to go around...around the table or around the world.

We accept things the way they are rather than the way they can be.

We focus on what we don't have rather than what we do.

We don't use what we have wisely/shrewdly
...time, talents, or money...what we do have, shrewdly.

We dismiss others...their ideas, their needs, their grief.

The culture tells us the life we want, well, it's up to us to get it, take it!

Make it on your own. Look out for number one.
Pick yourself up and push that guy out of your way. It's the land of the free. So, get going! We have equal rights!
(Remember, equal and equitable are not the same thing.)

The culture's got it partly right:
how we live the life we have is up to us.

We have equal rights...
to be honest or not, free or not, generous or not, fair or not.

But are we really "free" when we choose poorly, self-centeredly, less than shrewdly?
I don't think that we feel free inside in those times.

Do we have the right to take what we want?
It's amazing *what we* can manage to get when we want something badly enough...
whether that's a new thing or a new relationship...amazing! Shrewd even! Each of us
can be shrewd.

How must God feel when God sees us choosing worldly comforts and short-term gains in lieu of inner-health and well-being...in lieu of integrity, just relationships ...inner peace, bringing outer peace?

We know the right purposes which call us to be shrewd. Jeremiah says the balm is all around us to make us well...
to heal and lead us...so

why don't these poor people chose to be well?
Why don't we?

Luke's parable implores us to deeply, honestly look at how we live our own lives.

To be a Christian in the world requires each of us to be shrewd in our own daily lives at home, work, and play.

God wants us to be cared for, have a job, a roof, a family...
we can/all can have these things and still serve God
if we are shrewd.
And it begins by being shrewd in the little things of life.

-If we can't manage the little money things,
how can we handle the big money things?
-Can't handle little emotions, how big emotions?
-Can't handle little conflicts, how big conflicts?

-If you aren't seen being wise in matters that affect you,
who will trust you in matters that affect others?

You will ultimately be diminished.

We have to decide who and what we will serve. The scripture says wealth or God...I
might add
optimism or pessimism,
peace or war,
community support for those who are in so much need or tax cuts,
church or ...?

You can't have a community (whether that's country, neighborhood, church) if you're namby-pamby about it...

and that often means being shrewd about what you are willing to spend your time and money on.

It may come down to God (that be just and right relationship with all) ...OR

convenience foods,
OR cigarettes,

God OR alcohol, cell phones, vacations, God...
or your preconceived ideas, prejudices, defensiveness.

You can't have a community/the type of community you want if you're not willing to
pay for it...to pray for it...
to have all people in it.

It is the little things that build up community, and our very lives.

Little things begin to have a big affect.

Like a butterfly flapping its wings.

Like the African proverb: together, the ants eat the elephant. **Whoever is faithful in little is faithful in much!**

Some things are legal, but that doesn't make them right.

Many of our choices are justifiable, but that doesn't make them right.

We are a part of a system we may not be able to "change" in one big sweep, but we can do right
and create moments of freedom and justice.

What you do matters! ...to you! ...to God!

We have it within us to be shrewd and can make choices which build up the kingdom rather than tear it down.

In those healed choices, no matter how little or how big, you are transformed, reformed...You are **a living salve, a balm, and a healed**

you living out into the world changes everything!

Because of you...here and there, now and then, everywhere and all the time...there is a new creation.

Don't you see it? It's everywhere!

What is it you would like to grieve right now vs. deny and hold to help you find your own healing?

In what ways are you already wise with the little things of your life?

What real impact can you have as you manage your life shrewdly with the power of faith helping you?

You and God working together...try faith on everything!
A balm for the world.

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