

# You and your house

So very long ago, Joshua testified, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord'. Like Joshua, we are all part of a household. And in the same way that every individual person is different, every household is different and unique. Each Christian house is built upon the same foundation. Nevertheless, each house has a unique and distinct ministry as part of the Christian community. The New Testament has a lot to say about salvation in our houses. The Lord desires that every individual person lives in a house which has found salvation. In this way, we can testify like Joshua, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord'.

In the New Testament, the household of Cornelius was most certainly unique and distinctive. It was unique in so far as he was a Gentile presenting offerings and alms for the Jewish people. When this man was praying, an angel told him to enquire of the apostle Peter. Cornelius sent men from his house to Peter, requesting that he come to them. This was at the command of the angel who said concerning Peter, 'He will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and your household'. The detail of the meeting between Cornelius and Peter is quite profound. And the outcome of this meeting was the word of the Lord going forth to the Gentiles. There can be no doubt that the individual faith of Cornelius was the catalyst for this eventuality. Nevertheless, salvation came to his whole household that day. The Lord has placed us all in households, regardless of whether we are married or single, young or old. In the same way that every individual has a work to do, there is a work for every house in the Lord's kingdom.

## References:

Josh 24:15  
Acts 11:14  
Acts 10:1-2, 5  
Luke 19:9

## Further Study

Acts 10

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 1

# Inquiring who is worthy

When Jesus spoke those famous prophetic words, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few', He had households in mind. It was in this context that He appointed the seventy and sent them out in pairs ahead of Him, to every place where He was going to come. Jesus directed them to go to houses and say firstly, 'Peace to this house'. If a man of peace lived there, the blessing of peace rested on the house; otherwise, it returned to the messenger. Like the twelve, these messengers were sent to enquire of households. Jesus instructed them to 'inquire who is worthy'.

This phrase immediately draws our attention to the proclamation, 'Worthy is the Lamb'. This is not so much a description of moral excellence, but rather, that those who receive the word of a messenger are accounted worthy. They are of the same character as the Lamb Himself. Indeed, if a house received the messenger, then the blessing of peace remained upon that house. However, if the household did not receive the messenger, then he shook the dust off his feet and continued. The messenger is the heir of the harvest and, as such, he brings the life of that very same harvest to the household. The messenger is to lay down his life for those to whom he brings the message. He has been sent by the Lord, even as the Lord Himself was sent by His Father. We know that Jesus was sent to 'His own', but 'His own did not receive Him'. It is the character of a worthy house to receive the word and obey it. When the word of the messenger comes, the kingdom of God comes near to the house.

## References:

Mark 9:37    Matt 10:11  
Luke 10:2, 5    Rev 5:12  
John 1:11

## Further Study

Luke 10

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 2

# The messenger

A 'worthy house' is a house that has received both the messenger and his word. The people in that household are committed to hospitality and friendship with those who bring the message. And in this way, a household becomes a light in its community. It is a place where neighbours and friends may come and be connected to the messenger. These are truly worthy houses. Messengers are appointed by Christ and, in this sense, they are the heirs of Christ. They are custodians of the word of life. Having been sent by the Lord, they are not simply coming with information. They are bringing the very substance and life of the word to a worthy house. The messenger is the slave of Christ to whom He has given authority. He has presented himself to be a slave of righteousness. Every messenger is himself a disciple and a slave. A true messenger does not come in conceit and self-interest. They come to bring the word of life to the heirs of salvation in a household.

When Jesus sent messengers, they went from house to house inquiring, 'Who is worthy'. Jesus encouraged them, saying, 'The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me'. According to this model, Jesus appointed and sent the twelve and the seventy, sending them ahead of Himself to every place where He was going. It was not an easy task. Jesus said, 'Behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves'. The messenger goes in a vulnerable manner. The success of his sending is entirely dependent upon those to whom he is sent. What a joy it must have been to enter a house and remain there.

## References:

Matt 10:11

Rom 8:17

Rom 6:18

Luke 10:3, 16

1 John 1:1

## Further Study

1 John 1

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 3

# Receiving the messenger

When Jesus sent out the seventy to find worthy houses, He directed them to look for a son of peace. If they found such a man or woman, then they were to invoke the blessing of peace upon that house. In this way, the messenger was free to enter the house and bring the word of life to all who were of that household. When we are inquiring who is worthy, this is the first characteristic that we are looking for. A house of peace is hospitable and opens wide to the messenger. Nevertheless, a worthy house not only receives the messenger, but likewise, it receives and obeys his word. When a worthy house receives the messenger, it receives him as Christ Himself. The messenger is honoured because he brings the word of Christ in the same meekness and humility as Christ Himself.

The words of Jesus are true; 'You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain'. It is the work of a messenger to bring the word and lay it down to a household, in the faith that they will receive it and bring forth the fruit of it. When the word is received in a household, the life and power of that word becomes the possession of the house. It is the burden and hope of every messenger that a worthy house will, therefore, become a firstfruits house like the houses of Stephanas and Epaphroditus. The one thing that we can be sure of is that these worthy houses brought forth the fruit of the word of the messenger. In this way, they truly became firstfruits houses.

## References:

John 15:16    Rom 16:5  
1 Cor 16:15    Luke 10:1, 6  
2 Cor 6:13

## Further Study

Matt 10

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 4

# Receiving the word

We must be careful not to screen or vet the word of the messenger. By this, we mean that his word is to be received by the head of every household. There must not be any intermediate grouping of people who screen the word before it reaches the son of peace in a house. It is the responsibility of every man in his house to hear and receive the message for his own household. This is the definition of a worthy house. The messenger is the labourer who has been sent forth into the harvest. The amazing irony is that having received the word, we ourselves can become messengers of it. While we may not be part of the twelve or the seventy, a worthy house is to bring forth the fruit of the messenger's word. This is the definition and character of a firstfruits house.

There can be no doubt that the apostle Paul modelled his own ministry upon the sending of the twelve and the seventy. We find that he travelled two-by-two, firstly with Barnabas and then with Silas. Paul accounted for Stephanas and Epaphroditus as the firstfruits in Achaia and Asia. It is unlikely that these two men were necessarily the first converts or disciples of the apostle. There can be no doubt that they brought forth the fruit of the word which Paul delivered to them. They were both dedicated and addicted to the ministry and deaconing of the saints. Paul directed the church to be in subjection to such men and everyone who helps in the work and labours. In the same way, Paul referred to Fortunatus and Achaicus. He testified that this kind of household refreshed his spirit. We are to acknowledge such men.

## References:

Rom 16:5      Mark 9:37  
Acts 13:2     Acts 15:40  
Luke 10:1-2, 6  
1 Cor 16:15-18

## Further Study

Acts 13

## Daily Proverb

Proverbs 5