



Reflections

On

A Common Rule for Monastics: -

The Good News

The Holy Gospel
(Chapter 6)

To follow Christ binds us to His Word.

Paragraph 6, Lines 1

God had so much love for the world
That He sent His Son, the Begotten One, to us;
That we, every man, woman, boy or girl
May have eternal life, if in Him we trust.

Love gives - and gives, and gives Its best
So pure and without condition.
If we accept this Love, we'll be blessed.
To accept this gift is a wise decision.

The Love He gave is known as the Word
And eternal life with Him is The Good News.
This ever present Love is the best news I've ever heard.
It can't be diminished, even if we choose.

Follow Me. Feel my Love, and heed my every Word,
To which you will bound by Love,
Yet free from things that are considered absurd -
Guided by His Spirit to do as Jesus would.

The Good News, to me is actually GREAT News. We often speak and sing of "No Greater Love..." This is what the Good News is all about. The Good News tells us that God is a good, good Father, who is not full of love, but who **is** love. His love cannot be quantified; hence he cannot be filled with it. He simply is love.

What does this love mean to me? It means that I am wrapped in the comfort and protection of the Creator of the world, who has my best interest at heart. It means that no matter my failings, His love does not diminish. It means that I will experience this love eternally. **That's Great News.**

This is great news because it means that when I stumble, for whatever reason, Love causes my fall to be broken by a comfortable bed of mercy and forgiveness ^{Paragraph 4, Line10}. That is **Great News**. Love didn't stop there. It gives me strength to get back up, aided by the Holy Spirit.

Even if I ran away from this love, and later did some searching of the soul, then decide that I need this love, Love is there with open arms. What comforts me is that my return was expected. Love is more willing to accept me, perhaps more than I am sometimes willing to return to Him. For a personal testimony, ask the younger son in the Parable of the "**Loving Father**", in Luke 15:18.

The focus verse of this reflection speaks of being bound to Jesus' Word because we follow Him. My understanding of the word bind, from which we get the past participle bound, is to secure something to another thing so that, even under abnormal circumstances, they would still be safely tied together. Binding also suggest that the tie is so tight, there is little wiggle room, a slim chance of breaking free. Another use of bind has to do with oaths. When we make an oath we are tied to what we promised and to untie (unbind) ourselves cannot be a unilateral decision.

This is how we, as followers of Christ, must be chained to His word. No matter the situation, we live His Word and speak His Word, because we believe His Word. I would like to suggest that we must be so tightly tied to His Word, that when you see us (His followers), you see the Word. We must be so securely woven with the Word that breaking free is not ever considered. Know too, that the One to whom we are bound, even though He has given us free will, would not wish to see us unbind ourselves. There would be no celebration like the party in Heaven when a soul recognizes the Truth. There will be no feasting on a fatted calf. My hope? Let's keep the celebrations going by staying bound to the Word.

When we are bound to the Word of Jesus, we would be uncomfortable if we were bound to something else. It's like straddling the fence; which can prove painful. Or it may be like serving two masters, which is frustrating. The wise choice for followers of Christ is to wholeheartedly embrace His Word and be bound to it.

In order to know His Word, we have to study His Word. We must set aside regular time to delve into the Truth, discover our True Self and be imitators of the Word. This may require a routine on our part. Do not look at it as developing a routine, but as building a relationship.

The question was asked, "how can a young man keep his way pure?" The answer was given: "by guarding it according to Your **Word**." ^{Psalm 119:9}. Being bound to the word assures us that while on this pilgrimage, if we sincerely adhere to It, our chances of living contrary to His will is lessened.

This being bound may be a challenge. However, in my vocation, it is my desire and intention to build the relationship with the Word by intentionally doing what we all seek to do: pray, study and serve. The more I do it the more I would know It, the more I would live It and the more I would share it. The more I know, the more I would begin to think like Christ and the more I am willing to imitate Him. The journey to Christlikeness, may be rough, filled with obstacles and many distractions, inclusive of naysayers. However, the One to whom we are bound, is more comforting, is bigger and more powerful than all else. We have already won, if we take His invitation to heart. He said, "Follow me!"

But this command I gave them, 'Obey my voice (be bound to His Word), and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk only in the way that I command you (be His Follower), so that it may be well with you.' ^{Jeremiah 7:23}

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