**January 2021**

**Proceed with caution**

Foundation Scripture

Proverbs 14: 16 (NLT)

Proverbs 22: 3 (NLT)

Matthew 10: 5 - 8 & 16

*“Behold I* ***send you forth*** *as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore ‘****wise’*** *as serpents and ‘****harmless’*** *as doves”* (unmixed, simple or innocent).

Psalm 118: 6

The Lord is on my side, I will not fear: what can man do to me?

***Wise*** means: thoughtful – implying a cautious character.

* We have been sent forth – “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel*”.
* But ***beware*** of men (pay attention to or be cautious about). ***NOT FEAR***.
* Why? - Proverbs 29: 25 (the fear of man brings a ***snare*** – a noose for catching animals or a hook for the nose).

***Alert but not alarmed.***

There is no place for fear in the walk of faith.

Beware of false prophets

Matthew 7: 15 – 20

* Disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves.
* You can ***identify them*** by their fruit.
* A good tree will always produce good fruit.
* By their ‘***fruits’*** you shall know (identify) then, ***not by words***.

***Galatians 5: 22-23***

Love, joy, peace

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

* A pastor without love is not a shepherd but a butcher.

Matthew 24: 1 – 14

* ***Take heed*** that **no man** deceives you (behold, look or beware).
* They shall deceive through words – “*come in my name,* ***saying***”.
* And many false prophets (pretenders) ***shall rise*** and deceive many.
  + Deception leads to sin (The word is a lamp Psalm 119: 105).
  + When sin abounds (increases), the love of many shall grow cold.
  + No love, no faith, no faith, no grace.
  + James 1: 12 – 17 (KJV & NLT).
* ***This gospel of the kingdom*** must be preached – not man’s tradition.
  + The king’s domain (Your kingdom come Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven – Matthew 6: 10).
  + Matthew 4: 23
  + Mark 1: 14
* We are in the days that Jesus was referring to.

Man is the delivery system of deception in the earth today

***Accuser means:***

To charge with some offence or to object – just like a courtroom scene.

* Satan directly deceived Eve in the garden (Genesis 3: 1 – 7 NLT).
* Satan tried this delivery method on Jesus and failed (Matthew 4: 1 – 11).
* The deceiver hasn’t changed – he’s gone out into the whole earth to deceive the nations (Revelation 12: 9).
* ***However, his delivery method has*** – ***men.***
* He is the accuser of the brethren and he is unrelenting in his accusations (Revelation 12: 10 – 11).
* But we overcome by the blood of the lamb and by the ***word of our testimony***.
* The Pharisees (Jewish leaders) were false teachers and false accusers.
* False accusers come with the territory. Remember, we are operating in the enemy’s kingdom (the world system).
* We are in the world but not of it (John 17: 15 – 16).

**Attempts to discredit the ministry of Jesus.**

***Passover –*** *(March / April)*

***Festival of weeks*** - Shavout (50 days after Passover) May/June

***Day of Atonement*** – Yom Kippur – the holiest day of the year, one of repentance and forgiveness (September)

***Feast of Tabernacles or Booths*** (Sukkot - Sept/Oct – lasts for 7 days) – celebrate the gathering of the harvest as well as the Jewish exodus from Egypt and their time in the desert on the way to the promise land.

***Dedication*** / ***Festival of lights*** (Hanukkah) December – not a Biblical feast (celebrates rededication of the second temple in Jerusalem).

* John 7: 12, 20, 47 - 52 (accusers)

Satan attacks and deceives leaders to influence people through false narratives. Remember, strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

* John 8: 6, 13 & 45 - 52
* John 9: 1 – 41 (Jesus heals a blind man)
* John 9: 16, 24 & 33 - 41
* The blind man’s parents feared the Jews (John 12: 42).
* The blind man boldly testified and was cast out.
* Jesus returned to open the eyes of his heart – salvation. ***Do you believe***.
* Who is he Lord that I might believe – not perform for him.
* When we are ‘***blind***’ our sin remains (2 Corinthians 4: 4).
  + *The god of this world system has blinded the minds of them which believe not. Only the light of the glorious gospel can shine upon the hearts of men.*

John 10 – is the key to understanding the ‘***thief***’.

John 10 is a continuation of John 9 (John 10: 19 - 21).

However, John 10: 22 is a new theme – Feast of the dedication (December / winter).

Jesus is the ***door*** (entrance, portal or gate).

* John 14: 6 – He is the ***way*** (no man comes to the Father but by him).
* There are not many ways to God – there is only ***one*** way.
* The Lord is our Shephard – no other (Psalm 23, John 10: 11, Hebrews 13: 20, 1 Peter 2: 25 & 5: 4). He is the good, great and chief Shepherd.

John 10: 8 – 10

All they that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not ***hear them***. The thief peddles false teaching and deceives by satanic influence.

The context of John 10 is “hearing his voice”.

The thief comes not, but for to ***steal***, and ***to kill*** and to ***destroy***.

* The thief must steal the word first.

The hired hand cares not for the sheet, just their wages.

* False teachers are liars like their father the devil (John 8: 44).
* Mark 4: 14 – 15 (Satan ***immediately*** comes to take the word that was sown in the heart).
* If he can’t steal the word, he cannot overcome. He remains defeated.

***2 Corinthians 2: 17 (NKJV)***

For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

**Why does Satan try to steal the word first?**

A seed is much easier to pull up out of the ground then a full-grown tree with roots.

God changes us with seed – the Word of God. This is a foundational parable.

Mark 4: 1 – 20 (Satan comes ***immediately*** and ***takes away*** the word that was sown in their hearts.

* A ***parable*** is a comparison – an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

***John 6: 60***

Many of the disciples when they had heard this said, “***this is a hard saying, who can hear it.***”

* Take way means – to lift up, to loose, remove or make to doubt.

***Seed stealers***

-False teachers

-False prophets

-False accusers

-Deceivers

(Both within and outside the church).

* Matthew 13: 19 – When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and understands it not, then comes the wicked one and catches away.
* Luke 8: 12 – he takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved (***Christianity is right believing***).
* Delivered from the power of darkness (Col 1: 13 & Acts 26: 15-18).
  + 1 Peter 5: 8 – 9
  + The devil walks about seeking whom he may ***devour*** (drown or swallow up). He has legal right to roam the earth for a season.
  + Whom resist the devil steadfast in the faith.

The gospel is good news. If we are not telling good news, we are not preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

**The benefits of God’s Word**

1. The gospel of Christ is the ***power*** of God unto salvation
   * Romans 1: 16.
   * 1 Corinthians 1: 18 (Dynamis – miraculous power or ability).
   * The word is the gospel of grace (Acts 20: 24 & 32 & Galatians 1: 6 – 7).
2. The word is spirit and it is ***life***. Abundant ***life*** comes from the word (John 6: 63 & 10: 10). *Zoe* life – the God kind of life.

The spiritual force of faith enables us to access the grace of God.

1. The word produces faith (Romans 10: 8 - 17)

Faith is the “***substance”*** (confidence or assurance).

* + Faith comes by hearing the word.
  + It is a spiritual force that comes from the heart, not the head.
  + Circumstances don’t produce faith, but they can produce patience and endurance (resilience).

1. The word (truth) will set you free (John 8: 29 - 32 & John 17: 17).

The Word ***(truth)*** will not only set you free, it will ***keep*** you free.

1. Meditating on the Word and doing what it says will cause you to prosper and succeed (Joshua 1:8 - 9).
2. The word is ***life*** to those who ***find them*** and ***health*** (medicine) to their flesh (Proverbs 4: 20 - 23).
   * Healing pleases God. Sickness and disease are a curse.
   * Healing belongs to every believer who will ***take*** the promise of God.
   * Isaiah 53: 3 - 5 and 1 Peter 2: 24.

How your body feels has nothing to do with whether or not the word of God is true. The word is true regardless of how you feel. ***The word never changes***. **Isaiah 40: 8** – “*The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God shall stand forever*.”

1. The word will renew your mind
   * Romans 12: 1- 2 & 1 Corinthians 2: 12 - 16.
   * A word ruled mind. Don’t become a victim of the world’s way of thinking.
2. The word is a lamp and a light (Psalm 119: 105 & 130).
   * Jesus said “I am the light of the world (John 8: 12).
3. The word is the sword of the spirit (attack & defend). Our fight is spiritual, not natural (Ephesians 6: 17 & 2 Corinthians 10: 3 – 5).
4. The word discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4: 12).

***Jeremiah 17: 9-10***

The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it?

* + The word is ***alive*** and ***powerful*** (active or operative).
  + ***Piercing*** means to penetrate or reach through.
  + 1 Thessalonians 5: 23 (spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless).
  + ***Discerner*** – only used once in KJV means decisive or judging.
  + Psalm 139: 21 - 24 (David’s heart cry to God).

1. The word will keep you from sinning.
   * Psalm 119: 9 - 11 (***hid*** – esteem, lay up or protect like treasure).
   * Titus 2: 11 – 13 (NLT - we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures).
2. The word will release angels assigned to protect you.
   * Psalm 91: 10 - 12
   * Psalm 103: 20 – 21
   * Psalm 34: 7
   * Hebrews 1: 13 - 14
   * Matthew 18: 10
3. The word reveals Jesus – full of grace and truth.
   * John 1: 14 – 17
   * John 5: 39
   * Luke 24: 27
4. The word is eternal and unchanging
   * Psalm 119: 89 (***settled*** - to appoint, to establish or to stand firm).
   * Matthew 24: 35
   * Hebrews 13: 8.

**Five methods Satan uses to stop or limit the word.**

If any doctrine makes provision for the flesh, it is not of God.

If satan can’t steal the word directly from the heart, he will use circumstances, people, pressures of life and things to distract and deceive, resulting in the word becoming unfruitful. His method of operation has never changed.

Mark 4: 16 - 19

1. ***Affliction***, ***or***
2. ***Persecution***

***Matthew 5: 10***

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

* The word is received but it doesn’t take root.
* Affliction means - pressure, anguish, burden, trouble or tribulation.
* Persecution means – to pursue in a hostile manner, to harass or mistreat.
* Result = ***offended*** – to entrap, to trip up or to entice to sin.

***Offence*** is a stumbling block. It’s the bait of Satan. ***Offence will come,*** ***don’t take the bait.***

* Not established in the heart (Psalm112: 7 – 8).

1. ***Cares of this world***

* Distraction or anxiety.
* Philippians 4: 6 – 8 (Be careful or anxious for nothing).
* 1 Peter 5: 6 – 7 (Must ***cast*** the care – throw upon or place upon).
* If you know God loves you, then you know that he cares for you.

1. ***Deceitfulness of riches***

* Delusion of wealth, money or possessions.
* The rich young ruler who came to Jesus was deceived by riches (Luke 18: 18 – 23). “*What shall I do to inherit eternal life.”* Possessions had him.

1. ***Lusts of other things***

* Longing, desire or craving for ***things***.
* Matthew 6: 33 - seek first the kingdom and the things will be added.

The word is your weapon system and the enemy is trying to destroy it.

Result:

* They must ***enter in*** first to impact. We must guard our hearts.

***Luke 8: 14 - 15***

“And bring no fruit to perfection.

Bearing good fruit can take ***time*** and ***patience***.

* The word is ***choked*** (to strangle completely, to drown, to crowd or suffocate).
* It becomes unfruitful – it was fruitful to begin with.

Proverbs 14: 12 & 15

There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

* Jesus is ***the*** only way. His word is ***the*** only truth. His Spirit is ***the*** only life (John 14: 6).

Matthew 16: 5 – 12 (NLT)

***Take heed***

To stare at, discern clearly or behold.

***Beware***

Pay attention or be cautious.

Jesus said beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.

* Must be aware of deceptive teaching of religious people.
* Are you being fed theword of God – "*Peter, feed my sheep”.*
* Does the word you hear set you free ***or*** keep you in bondage?
* Matthew 24: 4 – 14.
* Offence (stumbling block) will lead to betrayal and hate for each other.
* This creates fertile ground for false prophets to rise (religious imposters).
* Then deception and then sin, resulting in the love of many growing cold.

***Sozo***

To save, deliver, heal, protect, preserve and make whole.

* He that endures (to remain or abide) shall be ***Sozo*** (saved).
* ***This gospel of the kingdom*** shall be preached in all the world for a witness (so that all nations shall hear it), and then the end shall come.

1 Thessalonians 5: 16 - 21

* ***Prove*** means – test, discern or examine. To scrutinise or recognise as genuine.

1 John 4: 1 - 6

* ***“Try”*** – is translated from the same Greek word “***Prove***”.
* Test the spirts whether they are of God.
* Test all things through the word of God.

**Bible examples to warn and guide us**

Acts 13: 6 – 12 (Barjesus – a false prophet).

* Paul and Barnabas under the leading of Holy Spirit preached in Cyprus.
* Sergius Paulus was an intelligent man (an official in the Roman empire - A proconsul of Cyprus). Historical records confirm this.
* ***Elymas*** means wizard.
* Clearly, he was seeking truth (That’s why Elymas had attached himself to the governor. Saturn wanted to govern through him with lies and deceit).

Elymas was a John 10: 10 thief. His intent was to steal the word of God.

* But Sergius Paulus ***desired*** to hear the word of God (to search for intensively, to crave).
* Elymas wanted to turn away the deputy from the faith (steal the word).
* Paul discerned and bound the demonic spirit.
* The power of God caused the deputy to place his faith in Jesus Christ.
* ***Astonished*** at the doctrine of the Lord (struck with amazement).

Acts 20: 28 – 32 (false teachers)

* Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, knowing that bonds and afflictions awaited him – because of the gospel he preached.

Teachers must ***guard*** themselves first. Beware or cautious.

* Teachers must pay careful attention to their own lives also.
* Paul warns the Ephesian church elder (Acts 20: 17) including Timothy, that false teaching is sure to come.
* ***Grievous*** wolves – vicious, weighty or burdensome (John 10: 8).
* They draw away disciples after themselves. Men exalting men.
* Paul ***warned*** day and night for three years (to admonish, exhort, advise or caution).
* The answer – the word of his grace (v32). Keep your eyes on Jesus and not men (1 Timothy 4: 16).

**Paul’s warning to pastors**

1 Timothy 4: 1- 6 (JKV & NLT)

* Some shall ***depart*** from the faith (draw away, desist, desert or refrain).

***1 & 2 Timothy*** and ***Titus*** are “pastor letters”.

* They depart from the word because it is stolen from the heart.
* Beware of doctrines of devils (deceptive spirits and teachings). They are lies and do not agree with the truth of God’s Word.
* Seducing spirits – imposters, misleaders, deceivers. Counterfeit Christianity.

Timothy was a Pastor (bishop or overseer) of the Ephesian church. Paul wrote two letters to encourage and warn him. Timothy travelled with Paul, who was also his mentor (father) in the faith.

* + Forbidding to married.
  + Abstaining from certain foods.

2 Timothy 3: 1 – 5 (JKV & NLT)

* What is the fruit of their lives telling you?
* They will act religious but reject the power.

2 Timothy 4: 1 – 5 (KJV & NLT)

* Paul’s exhortation to Timothy – Preach the Word.
* Stay with the truth. It keeps you from error.
* Some will reject the truth and chase after myths.

Titus 3: 3 – 11 (NLT)

* Avoid foolish discussions (***heretic*** –a followers of a false doctrine).
* Avoid people that cause division and strife. People like that have turned away from the truth and their own sins condemn them.

**Watch their doctrine and live**

* By their ***fruit*** you shall know them. They are not just false in their teachings but false in their lives.
  + Matthew 7: 15 – 20

***Galatians 5: 22-23***

Love, joy, peace

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

* Do they display the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22 -23)?
* Trees don’t bear fruit overnight.

**Compromised lives**

1 John 2: 15 – 17

* Love not the world – things of the world are not of the Father.
* (1) Lust of the flesh (2) lust of the eyes (3) the pride of life.

2 Peter 2: 1 – 3 & 12 - 19 (NLT)

* Peter reaffirms Jesus’ warning about the fruit of false teaching. But his focus is not so much on compromised teaching, but compromised lives.

***John 15: 5***

Good fruit comes from abiding in Him.

* Three categories relating to character and conduct
  + Pride (power/ control).
  + Immorality (sexual sin).
  + Covetousness (money / greed).

***2 Corinthians 2: 11***

Lest satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices (evil purpose).

2 John 5 - 11 (NLT)

* Don’t invite deceivers into your home or encourage them.

2 Corinthians 11: 3 – 4 & 12 – 15 (NLT)

Galatians 5: 7 – 10 (NLT)

* A warning about false teaching. It like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of do. False teaching is a cancer in the church.

Romans 16: 17 – 18

* Take note of those that cause division and offence and avoid them.
* They deceive through words but they do not serve the Lord Jesus.

The greatest defence against false teaching is a local church community that knows, enjoys and lives the word of God and holds its leaders accountable.

If the blind lead the blind, they both fall into a ditch.

Pastors should be with the people. Shepherds should smell like sheep, because they live and walk among the sheep.

**Examples of false or deceptive teachings**

***John 8:32-34***

Only the truth you ***know*** shall set you free and keep you free.

***John 8: 44***

The devil is a liar and the father of lies. There is ***no truth*** in him.

Someone’s ***experience*** is not always truth.

There are many ways to God

* John 14: 6
* John 5: 39 - 40
* Acts 4: 10 – 12
* Acts 26: 14 – 18
* Philippians 2: 10 - 11

We must earn our salvation (be good and do good)

* Ephesians 2: 8 – 9
* 2 Timothy 1: 8 - 9
* John 3: 3 (must be born again).
* Matthew 7: 21 – 23
* Galatians 2: 21 & 3: 11 – 14 (the law is not of faith. Works can’t save you).

We are unworthy sinners saved by grace

* Ephesians 2: 1 – 7 (NLT) trophies of grace.
* Hebrews 4: 14 - 16
* Hebrews 8: 12

God does not want you to prosper.

***No Sorrow***

No pain, toil, labour, hardship or grief.

* Money is the least in the kingdom of heaven (Luke 16: 10 – 15 NLT).

***Luke 8: 1 – 3***

Many contributed of their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples.

* The blessing of the Lord makes rich and he adds ***no sorrow*** with it (Proverbs 10: 22). ***Rich*** means to accumulate.
* The blessing of the Lord (Deuteronomy 28: 10 – 12).
* 1 Timothy 6: 7 – 9 (Don’t ***long*** to be rich).
* Psalm 112: ***Wealth*** means sufficiency or enough.

***Delights*** – to incline to, be pleased with or to desire.

* + If he delights greatly in the commandments of God, he is a giver.
  + Matthew 6: 33 – seek first the kingdom and all these ***things*** shall be ***added*** (increase) unto you.
  + Humility is not living in poverty.

Faith begins where the will of God is known. Jesus came to do the will of the Father. He spoke only what the Father said.

We can’t always know the will of God.

* The word of God is the will of God.
* Romans 12: 2 (***Perfect*** means complete).
* 2 Timothy 3: 16 - The word is our teacher.
* 2 Peter 2: 4 (Ephesians 3: 20) - His word is His promise.
* 1 John 5: 14 – 15 (1 John 3: 22).

God is sovereign and in control of everything.

God will allow what ***we*** will allow. But ***He*** will never do anything that is a violation of His word or something He has already forbidden. That’s impossible.

* God has given man free will to choose.
* Deuteronomy 30: 19 – 20.
* 1 Timothy 2: 4 & John 5: 39 – 40.
* Proverbs 21: 1 – God reserves the right to guide the hearts of kings.

Sometimes we have to deal with our past to go forward with God.

2 Corinthians 5: 17 (***passed away*** mean perish. ***Old things*** mean original)

Colossians 1: 19 – 23 & 2: 6 – 10 (NLT)

* God finds no fault with us – without spot, wrinkle of blemish. We are faultless before him because of Jesus.
* Acts 26: 14 - 18
* Philippians 3: 13 – 14.
* Hebrews 8: 12
* John 8: 11- “Neither do I condemn you: ***go*** and sin no more”. Proceed forward not backwards.

God doesn’t always heal.

This false and deceptive teaching suggests that Jesus has to do something today for you to receive your healing (*you ask and He assesses your request!!!).*

The redemptive work of the cross is complete. We ***have*** been redeemed from the curse. Healing has already been made available to mankind. But the ***grace for healing must*** be received by faith (must draw from that ***heavenly deposit***).

True riches

Healing always comes, but it’s not always received. It’s as much God’s will to save as to heal, however not all will be saved just as not all will be healed.

***Luke 5: 22 - 24 (NLT)***

The power that saves is the same power that heals.

* I will, be clean (Mark 1: 41 & John 6: 38).

***Matthew 8:7***

I ***will*** come and heal him.

***Mark 5: 36***

Don’t be afraid. Only believe.

* + Faith pleases God (Hebrews 11: 6).
  + God is no respecter of persons. He’ll do it for anyone.
  + Unbelief prevented people receiving healing from Jesus, not the Father’s unwillingness (Mark 6: 5 – 6).

Faith for healing ***MUST*** be based solely on the Word of God, not your or someone else’s experience.

Only God knows the heart of man. Ours is not to judge but to believe.

* Isaiah 53: 4 – 5

If God is not healing today, then *Jehovah Rapha* is no more. That’s not possible for God ***cannot*** change.

* Matthew 8: 16 - 17
* Luke 4: 18 - 19
* Acts 10: 38 & 1 John 3: 8 (Luke 13: 11)
* Mark 16: 18
  + Healing ***always comes*** according to God’s word.
  + However, healing is ***not always received***. Faith must be in operation. We must believe ***it is*** His will.