

Devotions for Friday, September 16, 2020

*Bread for the Journey*

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### *Testing Time*

*5 Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith. 6 As you test yourselves, I hope you will recognize that we have not failed the test of apostolic authority.*

*7 We pray to God that you will not do what is wrong by refusing our correction. I hope we won't need to demonstrate our authority when we arrive. Do the right thing before we come—even if that makes it look like we have failed to demonstrate our authority. 8 For we cannot oppose the truth, but must always stand for the truth. 9 We are glad to seem weak if it helps show that you are actually strong. We pray that you will become mature.*

*10 I am writing this to you before I come, hoping that I won't need to deal severely with you when I do come. For I want to use the authority the Lord has given me to strengthen you, not to tear you down. (2 Corinthians 13:5-10, New Living Translation)*

In the early days of my education we called it a “Pop Quiz”. Wanting to judge how much we might have actually retained from classes so far, our teacher would order us to take out a sheet of paper, write our name at the top and answer a series of straightforward questions. I found the idea of an unscheduled exam stressful. They were intended to be helpful.

The Apostle Paul is inviting you to give yourself a Pop Quiz. *“Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves.”* What questions on such a quiz would you find helpful, to *“know that Jesus Christ is among you”*?

Perhaps as you sip your coffee this morning, in this devotional moment I invite you to take out a sheet of paper, write your name at the top and answer these questions.

1. *Are you grateful?* To know that Christ is with you is to know that grace has been lavishly poured over you, like the water of baptism. It is to know that your sins are forgiven, that you have been claimed by God as God's own child. Are you grateful?
2. *Are you loved today?* To know that Christ is with you is to know that there is nothing in all the world that can separate you from that love. No matter how difficult your life might be in any one moment, no matter how insufficient you might feel on any given day, you are loved by the One who created you. The One who knows you best, the One aware of what makes you you, inside and out, that One loves you. No one else's opinion really matters. You are loved! Do you know that?
3. *Do you have a purpose today?* To know that Christ is with you is to know that Christ will work through you. The Christian loves the neighbor according to Jesus in Matthew 22:39. Are you ready to do that this day. You may have no idea right now who that neighbor will be, or what form love will take. Be prepared to respond to the Christ who is with you and who presents you with an opportunity to be the agent of grace and love to another this day. It may surprise you just how much you are needed today, even as it reveals to another that they too have encountered the love of Christ, through you.

How did you do on the test? I pray that you passed with flying colors. Would you pray with me?

*Thank you God that your grace has set me free. Help me to live in that reality every day, but especially this day. Thank you God that your love for me never fails, that you never stop loving me. Help me live in that reality every day, but especially this day. Thank you God for the opportunities you give me to “pay forward” the love I have received from you and from others. Give me eyes to see and ears to hear the one who needs this love from me everyday, but especially this day. I pray this gratefully and lovingly as your daughter/son. Amen!*