

Saints Triumphant

November 15th, 2009

Grace, mercy peace to you whose names are written in the book of life and are waiting to be delivered from this sinful world:

Daniel 12: 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Shine Bright as Eternal Stars!

Live like you know it.

Lead the Lost Home

Introduction: Mass media has brought the power of the Stars to new heights. This past month Oprah Winfrey and Pres. Obama went to Europe to sway the Olympic Committee to bring the next Olympics to Chicago with their celebrity star status. It works in our country apparently more than other places. Celebrities tell us what to drink, who to vote for and even the ethics of stem cell research and the beginning of human life. You and I may say that we don't care if Taylor Swift has a milk mustache or what jeans Brett Favre wears, but celebrities in our country are influential. They are the stars. In our text for today the Lord calls us believers the true stars. Are we the people of God shining bright and leading the world to God? Are we influential? We are to be eternal stars influencing others, leading them to righteousness, leading them home to heaven and eternal life. Shine Bright as Eternal Stars. Live like you know it. Lead the Lost Home.

1) Live Like You Know It.

Anticipation is a great gift. Some people have it some don't. Anticipation overcomes the unexpected. With anticipation it's as if you see into the future so that there is no unexpected. You know in advance where your opponent will be, where your finances will be, where your family will be in the future. It's almost not fair. For those who anticipate there is simply no surprise. In the world of sports, the defense anticipates the pass and steals it away. In finances the family anticipates expenses and emergencies and is able to cope with the "unexpected". No surprises.

To make us bright Stars in this world the Lord has given to us an advantage to overcome—the sinful lust of human nature, the world and the schemes of the devil himself. The advantage is knowledge about tomorrow. Already in 600 BC, the Lord gave Daniel and His people this special knowledge. He told them the coming days will be filled with evil, hardships and difficulties for God's people. But he told them also that the end of those harsh days for God's people will come soon. Those times of trouble and persecution will not last forever. God will send one of his top angels to put an end to all of God's enemies.

Who will be delivered? God tells us all whose names are written in the book will be delivered. There it is another advantage. Not only do we know that this bad situation for God's people will come to an end, we also know that to be a member of God's family you need your name written in the book. How do I get my name in the book and keep it there? Our Lord gave the apostle John another picture of heaven, and this book, in chapter 21 of Revelation, when he was shown a picture of the New Jerusalem – our home in heaven:

NIV Revelation 21:27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This book in which are all those who will be delivered on the last day and be raised from the dead to live forever in heaven belongs to the Lamb of God – it is called the book of life. We know the identity of the Lamb of God, the owner of the book of life. John the Baptist pointed Jesus out to his disciples by calling, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Jesus Christ, the

spotless and holy Lamb of God takes away all the sins of the world by His sacrifice of his righteous life on the cross. By our performance we have a bad record. By our sins we are on the books for a huge debt to God for our crimes. But our Lord has brought his payment for our sins to us as a gift. To get our sins blotted out and our names written in the book of life Jesus tells us we are to be baptized and believe in His life's sacrifice for us.

NIV John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

NIV John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

What a tremendous advantage! Insider information! Use it! Now live like you know it! Live like you know that this troubled world will not last forever. Live like you know that the last day will see the demise of God's enemies and the deliverance of his people. Live like you know that your name is written in the book of life and your bad record of sins has been blotted out because you have been baptized and you have been given the gift of faith to believe in Jesus' sacrifice for you. Turn that knowledge into anticipation and be an eternal star for the Lord's Kingdom.

2) Lead the Lost Home

One of the great things I have seen in Wisconsin growing up, and on the night I said to my wife "I love you" for the first time, was the expanse of bright stars filling the night sky. There was just so many of them, they were impossible to count. In the big city, I could easily spot the brightest star in the north, now at times there are so many bright stars it can be confusing. Can you imagine if all the brightest stars were in one quadrant of the night sky all pointing us north?

The Lord tells us that those who lead others to find God's righteousness here on earth and into heaven will shine bright forever in unbounded time. The Lord is talking about his people being stars, influencing and leading the lost home to God's righteousness, forgiveness from their sins and being clothed with Christ's righteous life – which is the requirements for heaven –having your name written in the book of the Lamb. Can you imagine if we all were united and pointing everyone in our life to Jesus for forgiveness, peace, joy and hope for tomorrow?

I have told many of you before that one of my great joys in the ministry is conducting the baptisms on your behalf. I know that in heaven those young ones will throw a party for me and thank me for my wisdom and leadership for them. But wait a second, how did many of those people ever come to me for baptism and the gospel? You, you parents brought your children to God's righteousness. You parents lead your children to hear and study God's Word faithfully – giving them the same advantage you have of anticipation and no surprise life. And all of you by your offerings of time in the work of God's Kingdom, your money and your abilities all lead people to God's righteousness. The apostle Paul put it better than I ever could, as you know this passage is one of my favorites, as it is always on the tip of my tongue in my prayers for you–

NIV Philippians 2:14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe 16 as you hold out the word of life-- in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

As believers in God's Promises, you and I have a tremendous advantage of knowing the future end of this world and our salvation. Shine bright as an eternal star for God's Family – First live like you know it in true wisdom and second- Lead others to God's righteousness as you hold out the Word of life to everyone around you. AMEN.