What it means to keep and to be kept

Written By: Tommy Romans January 2023

In this Newsletter, I want to deal with One precious little 4 letter word and that word is - “KEEP”! This blessed word in all its forms is used over 400 times in scripture all through our Bible – that’s more than once for every day of the year! This anointed Word is full of power, commitment and determination! It deals with God Keeping His Word and promises & Keeping us. But on the other hand just as important, it deals with us in our obligation to Keep God’s ways, Keep His commandments and do His will. This Word KEEP in definition means: “To hold on to and not let go. To retain in one’s power and possession. To guard and protect. To maintain. To not lose or part with!!”

THINGS WE CHERISH & HOLD ON TO

In the natural, there are things we have been given to us by friends or loved ones that are very sentimental to us and we cherish them. We never want to lose or part with them. How many of you have ever been given something that was important, something that was to you of great value? They gave you something from their heart they really wanted you to have. It meant something to them but they thought enough of you, they gave it from their heart so you would always remember them by! I really love you and I want you to have this. Down through the years of this writer’s life, my Dad and my Mother have given me and left me precious things that today, many years later, I really cherish and hold dear in my heart and will never let them go!

Probably 20 years ago or more my Dad told me – Son, I’ve got a beautiful made old antique iron bed that I use to sleep in many times when I was a kid. It belonged to my grandmother. My Dad was born in 1925 and that would put the old bed being made back in the mid to late 1800’s. Son, if I give it to you will you always KEEP and Hold on to it and not let it go? I said yes Dad I will always Keep that bed to remember you by. It graces our guest bedroom in our home. My precious Dad has since gone to be with Jesus and Mom now and when I walk by the old bed, O the memories that flood my mind as I lay my hand on the antique rail and think of him.

A few years after I was saved and married, I stopped by to visit my sweet Mother. She said – Son, I made you something. She went in the other room and brought back a beautiful Cross she had crocheted. She said to me – Honey, I made you a bookmark, put this in

your Bible and Keep it! I pick it up often when I study for my messages. I hold it in my hand and look at the intricate design of the fine thread she painstakingly worked and weaved together to form the Cross. Momma had me in her heart as her blessed hands worked with much patience in making that cross for her only Son! I often think of how my Dad and Mother raised me in Church and taught me the ways of the Lord. My Dad taught me to respect others and always be honest. That surely means everything to me now! I think of the many times Mom would read to me the Bible and wrap her arm around me and hug me. These things I will always cherish and by God’s Grace I will never forget or part with them.

My Book Mark



 I could never forget my Christian raising I had growing up – the love, the teachings and prayers of my wonderful parents. I am now almost 69 years old now and I want to tell you I am wonderfully and truly Blessed! I’m grateful for the godly heritage and spiritual influence they left me that is forever in my Heart – I shall forever KEEP and Hold on to them till the day my Lord calls me home!! Mom, Dad, I love you and I thank you for all you’ve done for me and left me! I will see you both soon!!

LET’S LOOK AT THE KEEPING POWER

OF GOD!

 **KEEP** is one of the most important words in all of scripture! Look your Bible through and you’ll not find a more beautiful word that carries such a sweet sense of peace and security. This word is not weak or passive, but it is full of strength and power! Rest assured dear reader, when you give God something, He will KEEP it. The Lord will Keep you if you want to be kept. Let’s look at the great Apostle Paul: What about it Paul, will God Keep us when we commit ourselves to Him? After almost 30 years of ministry he will tell you – yes my God will KEEP what you commit to Him!

**II Tim. 1:12** – Paul’s final letter to Timothy before he died he said – “For the which cause I also suffer these things: Nevertheless I am not ashamed: For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He (my Lord) is able to KEEP that which I have committed unto Him against that day – or until the day Jesus calls me home!”

What are you saying Paul? The devil hates me. He not only hates me but he hates you. He’s hit me with everything he’s got. The enemy of my soul has thrown every trial and temptation he’s got to discourage me, divert me, reroute me, pull me away from God, knock me down to stop me and get me to give up and quit – **BUT** I Know; I still Believe; I am Persuaded; I’m not Ashamed and I am Committed! I’ve got a made up mind to serve the Lord. HALLELUJAH!!

GOD IS FAITHFUL

Always remember – Our God is Faithful! The Lord is Just – He never fails – He never grows weary – He never changes – He’s the same right now as He was the day He called you and saved you from this world of sin! Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever. The rivers may change their course, mountains may crumble into the sea but God will never leave you or forsake you; He’ll never walk out on you. His mercy is everlasting, His Grace is abundant, His love is strong and enduring but it’s up to us to stay committed! We must forever HOLD on to what He gives us and shows us; KEEP it and don’t ever let it go.

JABEZ – THE SINCERE MAN WHO WANTED GOD TO KEEP HIM AND BLESS HIM

**I Chronicles 4:9** – And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.

 **10** And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested. “And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: (Why was he more honorable? Why did God take notice of this man?) And his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.” Jabez means: Sorrow. Scripture says he was more honorable than his brethren because he was a praying man with humble sincerity. He had a heart for God. He wanted to be blessed and **Kept**! This man found honor with God. You must remember, back in early Bible days, people named their children after some major event or experience that happened in their life. It was their way of always remembering a certain event. What kind of sorrow his mother experienced when she had him is not known. She could have been very poor and needy. She could have almost died in childbirth from pain and complications, but she wanted to memorialize her experience by calling his name Jabez. As long as she lived, every time she saw her son, she would think back of how God came through and helped her bring him into the world.

 By his own name, he too would think of the time when he came into the world, how his mother suffered to have him. No doubt in my mind, this mother was crying and praying to God to help her. Lord, help me have this child and not lose it! O God, would you help me, bless in this time of sorrow, I’ve had a hard time, I’ve tasted the tears of suffering, but O God turn it into joy – Bless the fruit of my womb! Later, this man – Jabez would look back to his mother, to that day she held on for him and wouldn’t let go. She didn’t give up and God honored her with a remarkable young man that had a heart for God. Her travail was rewarded. No doubt she lived to see the hand of God upon her son and watched the Lord bless him! Hallelujah!

 Don’t tell me you can’t rise above the ashes and the hardships of home and family and be something for God – no matter what the circumstances or trouble! With God’s hand upon you, you can rise from the low estate of nothingness and poverty. Listen, God can lift you from the place of sorrow and weakness if you’ll seek Him and pray. **Ps. 10:17** – Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart.

 Look back to **Vs. 10** “And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying – Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed.” (You can see and feel the very heartbeat of Jabez. It is the language of a most ardent and affectionate desire.) “and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me,” (Jabez had a heart for God – Lord, I don’t want to do anything or go anywhere unless your hand is upon me and leading me) “And that thou wouldest **KEEP ME** from the evil, that it may not grieve me.” (What are you saying Jabez? Lord, I don’t want to make a choice or undertake anything without you. I might have had a hard start in life - came from a poor family, a rough and bad background and people may think I’ll never mount to anything, but O my God I believe and I want my future to be Blessed! I want to end in Victory. Jesus, I want my life to be prosperous and never have to suffer grief because of sin. It’s in my heart to follow you and your every command. I want to do your will that it may go well with me!) We make choices today that affect us tomorrow. We are what we are today, and where we are as a result of what we believed and did yesterday! We need to be very careful what we do or allow! It is so sad that people cannot go back and change or undo their life of failures that’s ended in a mess because of their self will! They wanted the world more than God. They chose their path and followed their own will without praying and asking God’s advice and blessing. They never enquired of the Lord and sought His face and as a result many battles in their life have been lost. Even though there is forgiveness and mercy, yet many would like to pick up all the broken pieces and start over. For now they would have had peace instead of turmoil, have God’s blessings in place of reaping the curses of sin.

 O Jabez, how your heart convicts us in this modern church age of lukewarmness, in a world full of pleasure seekers who are entertainment minded. They see no danger in the things of this world. Jabez did not want that. No doubt he read the histories and records of the failures of many and saw the heartbreak and disaster they suffered. He chose not to take their selfish route. Lead me and guide me O Lord. Give me strength and **preserve** me from the evil that it won’t grieve me. I surely don’t want to end up in trouble without you! There is no doubt, Jabez had a good prayer life. He was sincere and desired Spiritual things when the rest of his brothers didn’t. This is what made him stand out in just two scriptures in the whole entire Bible. Jabez in essence was saying – “Lord, if the rest of my family doesn’t want to serve you, I do! Somewhere down the road they’ll run into evil and trouble, but I don’t want it to happen to me. O God, I want your hand upon me. Lead me and KEEP me because I don’t want to come down to the end of my journey and look back with grief and regret on a broken life because I didn’t serve you!” AND GOD GRANTED HIM THAT WHICH HE REQUESTED.

 This writer’s heart bleeds right here for those of you who are reading this Newsletter. I want to ask you, What do you desire for the Lord to do for you? What is important to you? Has God done something for you that you count dear? Has He GIVEN you something that you value and cherish? What is it right now that is special in your heart (in the view of eternity) you would like for the Lord to do for you?

 Notice one more time in Jabez’s prayer to the Lord: His mother had named her son a name that meant sorrow and grief because of her pain and labor in bringing him into the world. Jabez said – Lord, don’t let me experience the grief which my name implies. I never want to suffer because of sin. My Mother may have called me grief and sorrow because of her suffering, but that doesn’t have to be my destiny in life. I’m going to serve you Lord and have your blessings and hand upon me! The Bible said – And God granted his request!

 I don’t know how long Jabez’s mother lived after she gave birth to him. She could have been up in years, but it came time for her to die. Lying there on her sick bed, I imagine seeing her sons gathered around in the room. I can see each one as they got ready to leave, make their way to her bed, lean over and kiss her on the forehead saying, “Mom I love you,” and they all walk out of the room. I can see Jabez lingering behind. He waits to be the last one. There is something special in his heart he wants his Mom to know! As he gently makes his way to her side, the warm tears well up in his eyes. He wipes them from his face as they flow down his cheeks. He wants a private moment with Mom. He sits down beside her frail body. He sees the years of toil on her frame, all the worries through the years that have brought wrinkles to her brow. He reaches out and his dear Mother takes him by the hand and squeezes it in hers. There’s so much she’d like to say, but the weakness wouldn’t allow. As her eyes look into his, she says to him - “Son, you will never know how proud I am of you! You turned out to be a wonderful blessing to me! You brought me gladness and joy when I saw God’s hand upon you. I’m getting ready to go. I’ll soon be leaving you and I have no regret! I now can say – it is worth all the toil and grief. My life and work was not in vain! Son, just **Keep** praying! Let the Lord lead you in everything you do. I may have suffered and had a hard time but you’ve made Momma proud. That prayer you started out with years ago, God has honored and it has brought you through. Jabez, Son, remain faithful, **Keep** on going and Momma will see you again someday soon!

 In ending this Newsletter, think back to where you started and look where you are today. Now viewing the direction you are going, where will you end? How will you finish? It is so good to know that God is with you. What a comfort and consolation to have the God of Glory to go with you in this life till the very end. Jude said it so well: **Jude 1:21** – **Keep** yourselves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life. God wants you Blessed and Kept from evil, but you have your part to play. You see, God can’t Keep if we don’t Keep. There are some things that we must do. **Pro. 4:20** – My son, attend to my Words; (give your whole undivided attention to) incline thine ear unto my sayings **21** – Let them not depart from thine eyes; KEEP THEM in the midst of thine heart. **22** – For they are life unto those that find them and health to all their flesh. **25** – **KEEP** thy Heart with all diligence (constant, careful effort) for out of it are the issues of life. May God Bless all my dear Readers!!