

(3.3) Listen to My Words With Humility: So Many Pay No Attention

My son, hear My words! They surpass the wisdom and learning of worldly wise men *because My words are spirit and life*¹ and cannot be fully understood by worldly standards nor are they to be used vainly *since the quiet words of the wise are better heeded than the shout of a ruler of fools.*² Such worldly ones lack the humility and love needed for understanding.

Your word tells us: *Blessed the one whom you guide Lord, whom you teach by your instruction, to give rest from evil days, while a pit is being dug for the wicked.*³ Such a blessed one will never find himself in desolation.

I, the Lord God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the Prophets⁴ and continue to do so to all peoples but many are deaf to my words because of their hardened hearts. As the Prophet Jeremiah says, *they did not listen to me, nor did they pay attention. They walked in the stubbornness of their evil hearts and turned their backs, not their faces, to me.*⁵

Many listen more willingly to the world than to God and are inclined to follow the desires of their flesh than God's good pleasure. The world promises things of temporal essence and of little value and yet these are sought eagerly. I, the Lord, promise things most excellent and everlasting, and yet men's hearts remain indifferent. Who is there that serves and obeys Me in all things with that great care with which the world and its lords are served? Isaiah singled out Sidon for such behavior when he said, *Be ashamed, Sidon, fortress on the sea for the sea has spoken.*⁶

And if you ask the reason, here is why: For meager compensation men will do much, while for eternal life, many will scarcely lift a hand in effort. A petty gain is sought after and for a few coins men sometimes quarrel shamefully while for some mere a trifle or nebulous promise men will hustle day and night.

It is shameful! For an unchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honor and never ending glory, they are unwilling to endure even a little fatigue. Be embarrassed sluggish and complaining servant, that so many are ready to toil for the passing things than you are for the eternal ones. They rejoice more in untruthfulness than you do in Truth.

Oftentimes, they are disappointed of their hopes; but my promise deceives no man, nor sends away him that trusts in Me. What I have promised I will give; what I have said I will accomplish, if provided you continue to remain faithful in My love until the end. I am the Rewarder of all the good, and the mighty Justifier of all the faithful.

Write My words in your heart, and think diligently on them for they will be essential in time of temptation. What you fail to understand when you read, you shall know in the day of visitation. I visit My chosen in two ways, namely, with temptation which aids in correcting faults and with consolation which aids in spiritual progress. These are the lessons: one to admonish vices, the other to urge an increase virtue.

¹ John 6:63

² Ecclesiastes 9:17

³ Psalm 94:12-13

⁴ Hebrews 1:1

⁵ Jeremiah 7:24

⁶ Isaiah 23:4

Scripture is clear: *whoever rejects Me and does not accept my words has something to judge him; the word that I spoke will condemn him on the last day.*⁷

A Prayer for the Grace of Devotion

O Lord, my God, You are all my good, and I recall the words of Abraham: *See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes.*⁸ I am your most poor servant, a wretched being, poorer and more contemptible than I can conceive, or dare express.

Yet, remember, O Lord, that I am nothing, that I have nothing, and can do nothing, however, *I am content with weakness, with mistreatment, with distress, with persecutions, and difficulties for the sake of Christ; for when I am powerless, it is then I am strong.*⁹

You alone are good, just, and holy, and *I know that You can do all things, and no purpose of yours can be hindered.*¹⁰ You give all things and you fill all things, leaving only the sinner empty. *Remember that your compassion, O Lord, and your kindness are from old,*¹¹ and fill my heart with your grace so that your works be fruitful. How can I endure this life of suffering and sorrows unless I be strengthened by your mercy and grace?

*Hide not your face from me lest I become like those who go down into the pit.*¹² Do not delay Your visitation or withdraw Your consolation as *I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for You like parched land.*¹³

O Lord, *teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good spirit guide me on level ground.*¹⁴ Teach me to live worthily and humbly in Your sight for you are my Wisdom, knowing me in Truth, knowing me before the world was made and before I was born in the world. *You have told me what is required, only to do the right and love goodness and to walk humbly with You.*¹⁵

This article is based on Book 3, Chapter 3 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal reflection on his writing; if any of it helps give credit to Thomas of Kempis; if any of it fails the responsibility is mine. (rfm)

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⁷ John 12:48

⁸ Genesis 18:27

⁹ 2 Corinthians 12:10

¹⁰ Job 42:2

¹¹ Psalm 25:6

¹² Psalm 143:7b

¹³ Psalm 143:6

¹⁴ Psalm 143:10

¹⁵ Micah 7:6