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Traveling Light

Every spring, I look forward to scouring my house and searching for things I can give away. I know this is a good exercise for me and for the one who will receive my "extra possessions." But in the back of my mind are the words of Scripture, which say, "If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry." (Luke 3:11) Down deep, I know I have not given away what I could.

In a previous communication, I told you about the Dalits, or Untouchable People of the Hindu caste system in India. How thousands of them are now coming to faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, as they break through the lie that they are somehow born unequal to others in their society. Dalits are told by the Hindu caste system that they are not worthy of any education, entrance into the Hindu temples, and that their only value is cleaning latrines and streets for the upper castes.



Dalits cleaning sewer

What the Dalits see in Jesus is beautiful. In fact, they see more easily certain facets of Jesus that we in the West sometimes overlook. As the Dalits praise God for their new lives in his grace, they sing songs that extol their close affinity to the character of Jesus. One such song proclaims, "Jesus was a Dalit just like us; he had no place to call his home; he had little to no possessions, and was despised by the religious and political authorities of his day; and he died a criminal's death. But through his resurrection, he triumphed over the powers of the world; he provided access to the throne of God for all humans."

The older I get, the more I want to rid myself of unneeded possessions and travel more lightly through this world. Undoubtedly, God is working in my heart, quietly reminding me that through the narrow gate of eternal life, there is nothing we can take with us other than our faith. Nevertheless, as I sort through all my "things", I wonder, how did they all get here? Why have I been holding on to them so tightly for so long?

Then the bold truth of Scripture hits me. To the degree I am trusting in God, and filled with the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit in my inner being, I am more content, at peace, and less in need of material things to give me satisfaction. Contrarily, the less I am trusting in God's promises, and just dabbling in the indescribable work of the triune God in my life, the more I need material things to give me temporal and momentary satisfaction.



Jesus traveling lightly

Often, we in the West overlook parts of Scripture which remind us that Jesus traveled so lightly through this world. When Jesus sent out the twelve apostles on their first serious mission adventure, he told them, "Don't take any money in your money belts - no gold, silver, or even copper coins. Don't carry a traveler's bag with a change of clothes and sandals or even a walking stick." (Matthew 10:9,10a) Being dependent on God for our needs is not easy. It takes a lifetime to get used to this essential rhythm of Christian life. However, as we deepen in our relationship with God, the benefits are enormous. We become less anxious in our relationships. We smother other people less and begin to give our loved

ones, especially, more freedom. We begin to simplify our lives, and find more space to love and pray for others, including ourselves.

God has his ways. He is always hovering over us with his love. Obviously, it saddens God when we ignore him and make such little time in our lives to even acknowledge him. Nevertheless, God is persistent, and he tries to break through and reach us all the time.

If during these tumultuous and unusual days, you are finding yourself with fewer possessions, don't panic. It is most likely God at work trying to help you rearrange your priorities, allegiances, and loves. In fact, it may be the opportunity of your life to draw closer to God and to participate in heavenly treasures.

When Jesus went to the cross to die for our sins, he took nothing with him.

Those who arrested him even tried to take his blood out of him with beatings and cruel disrespect. But beatings, nor hard times, nor human-to-human cruelty can take away our faith. It is the most precious thing we have been given.

When Jesus was on earth, he left us with these words, "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be." (Matthew 6:19-21)