

**"THIS IS PRISON, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?"**

**--WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT?—**

**--Let Me start by saying I am coming from a heart full of love for each of you yet I may upset myself and you. I am definitely going to hold myself accountable and I pray we can ALL walk out of here in love, respect, and spiritual yearning for growth because of the Word, the Spirit and craving revival.**

**--I know some are wondering what makes me qualified to be up here.**

**(Share about degrees in Theology and Christian Counseling—then rip up)**

**Chap asked me awhile back but I did not feel ready or called. One Saturday I sat down and listened to God intensely and this is a message He gave me so "Here I am use me"**

**--I know most of us are Christians on this journey and trying each day to walk closer to God and have Godly character. This message is for us all.**

**--Do you recognize this title, this phrase? I have been incarcerated over 37 years and I have heard it said a lot. People use it to excuse their language, lying, stealing, etc. It is like because we are in prison, we are allowed not only to do these things but expect them from each other.**

**--I don't know about you, but I have to ask forgiveness daily and thank God His mercies are new every morning. Chap asked us in January some very good questions.**

**What does our walk with God look like?**

**What should it look like to walk with God?**

**Is your walk with God only when you have time?**

**Is your walk with God only when you think you need Him to get out of a situation?**

**Does your walk look like it or does it say you deny His existence?**

**Are we willing to accept, share and hold each other accountable to the Gospels and commandments of God?**

**--Is it okay if I am raw, wide open about what we expect and what the Word of God says?**

--I apologize if I offend any visitors or fellow residents yet I ask you to be raw also and see the truths in what we see here on a daily basis and what God expects.

--Do we expect to hear foul language? Do we care? The F word, God's name used in all kinds of ways, etc.

--It is one of the 10 commandments—Ex 20:7

**NIV--** You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name.

**The MESSAGE—**No using the name of God, your God, in cursing or silly banter..God won't put up with the irreverent use of his name.

**NIV Eph. 4:29—**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs that it benefits those who listen.

**The Message—**Watch the way you talk! Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say what helps! Each word we have is a gift.

-How about lying? Any of us been lied to, lied on, or lied about lately? How about family? Do we tell them what we do here? How about volunteers groups? Do we portray our real selves to them? Let's see what the Word says....

**NIV Col. 3:9—**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self.

**The Message—**Don't lie to one another. You are to be done with that old life. It is like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you have stripped off and put in the fire.

--How about stealing? Anyone had anything stolen here? This too is one of the 10 commandments.

**NIV Mt. 19:18, Rom. 13:9, Eph. 4:28** all say don't steal.

**NIV Eph. 4:28—**He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

**The Message—**Did you used to make ends meet by stealing? Well no more!

--Have any of you ever heard "I swear" and how about "I swear on my kids, my momma, etc?" Some of us cringe when we hear this.

**NIV Mt. 5:34,36-37—But I tell you, do not swear at all! And do not swear by your head...simply let your yes be yes and your no be no; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. Whoa...when we read this we should take it a little more serious, right?**

**The Message—Just say yes and no! When you manipulate with your words to get your own way, you are wrong.**

**--Do we really like what we see from ourselves on a daily basis here? In Ephesians 5, it says out of respect for Christ, be courteous to one another, don't allow love to turn into lust or vice versa settint off a downhill slide into sexually promiscuity, filthy practices or bullying greed.**

**--We can be sure that using people or religion or things just for what we can get out of them will get us nowhere!!! And certainly nowhere near the kingdom of Christ.**

**Are we using people for canteen? Is love cheating on each other? Is love sitting at a picnic table in public doing some of the things we do? Is love lying to your husband or family about what we are doing here? Is love doing things in secret we would not do in the light?**

**The Message—Eph. 5 Still...don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.**

**NIV Eph. 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words for because of such things God's wrath comes in those who are disobedient.**

**\*We are responsible for what we allow people to do to us also. Love God, ourselves and others enough to be true and honest with each other.\***

**--Are any of us committing adultery?**

**NIV Mt. 5:27 Do not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in the heart.**

**The Message---Don't go to bed with another's spouse but don't think you have preserved your virtue simply by staying out of bed. Your heart can be corrupted by lust even quicker than your body. Those leering eyes you think nobody notices.**

**NIV Heb. 13:4 God will judge the adulterer and all sexual immorality.**

**The Message-- Guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy..God draws a firm line against casual and illicit sex.**

We have only skimmed the surface in what we expect to see here on a daily basis and I want to encourage us all to go deeper into what God expects..our best efforts to have Godly character.

The Message Eph. 4—And so I insist-and God backs me up on this-that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. They have refused for so long to deal with God that they have lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. That is no life for you. We do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything-and I do mean everything-connected with that old way of life has to go. Anger, cheating....get rid of it!

**\*\* I challenge us to take on a new way of life—a god fashioned life. I life renewed from the inside out, working into our conduct, behavior, decisions and God will put His character in us.**

**\*\* No more lies, no more pretending. Tell your friends the truth. Be who God made us to be.**

**THERE IS A CONSTANT BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL IN OUR LIVES—SPIRIT VERSUS FLESH.**

1. The Word of God says we have to deny our flesh many things to follow Him...EVIL says gratify yourself first, take up your lusts, we deserve it, etc.
2. Good says we have responsibilities as a Christian especially because of the sacrifice done for us in Christ...EVIL says look what you are missing!
3. Good says look what you gain—eternal life, peace while here on earth, blessings, etc..EVIL then says we should live for ourselves and have many short lasting pleasures
4. Good says if we live for God, we have hope in this life and the world to come...EVIL says but think of the fun you are missing even if it leads to arguments, prison, death, etc.

**\*\*\*The Christian life is not a card game or some athletic contest that we will walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours.**

**\*\*\*What we chose daily is for KEEPS, a life or death fight to the finish against the Devil and the consequences he wants for our lives.**

**\*\* If we are in Christ, God has placed a hunger for holiness in our hearts. Read all of Ephesians 4 some time because it applies the gospel to our everyday.**

**EPH. 4:15 Speak truth to each other**

**4:26 Forgive quickly**

**4:28 work honestly at your job**

**4:29 Think about your words**

**4:32 Be kind, compassionate, caring**

**\*\*\*These Godly character traits may not get us a standing ovation yet sanctification is often hidden in these ordinary things. \*\*\***

**If we say we will start tomorrow to do better, we will look up and have a bunch of wasted yesterdays!!!**

**Responsibilities, conversations, burdens, grace...are today!!! We can grow in Godly character one moment at a time not yesterday gone or tomorrows we are not guaranteed.**

**--Can we obey now in this moment? REC talks about the 4<sup>th</sup> days and they are not easy. When we think about what we are doing and the spirit says it is wrong or we don't have peace about it, can we stop right there?**

**--Nothing about this should offend any of us. We should celebrate the word of God, His character and when we feel good worshipping or when we do the right thing even when no one is watching, we then know we can do this daily.**

**--The Lord holds us accountable for every moment, however, He also stands ready to see our attempts at obedience, are we trying? He is pleased when we daily give a true effort to grow in Him.**

**\*\*Jesus does not miss the smallest thing done in His name.**

**NIV Mt. 10:42A small kindness counts**

**Eph. 6:18 You know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does...**

**--Where does our pursuit of Godly character begin? Right where we are at this moment..right now...He meets us daily, in church, in studies, and mostly in our hearts and minds when we let Him.**

**1. If you are not born again, saved...do it!**

2. Pray..The command or word Pray is in the N.T. at least 68 times, Prayed is in there 34 times, Prayer 31, Prayers 24, Praying 14..It must b important

3. Listen to God—be obedient Mt. 17:5, Mk. 9:7, Jn 10:27, Acts 3:22, James 1:19, 22" Do not merely listen to eh Word...do what it says"

4. Believe Him, Love Him by walking with Him, share Him, serve Him, and sometimes suffer for Him

Phil. 1:29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for Him.

**\*\*SUFFER**—maybe that is denying ourselves a few pleasures that only satisfy for a few minutes, and nothing we suffer can compare to hanging on a cross innocent

**\*\* I challenge all of us to get a Bible concordance and read the scriptures listed on praying, listening, obeying, serving, repenting for just a few. If u will get in the Word it will change you, starting to live it will change you. Doing it is vital to your life now and eternally.**

I have been thru some changes in 37+ years. It hurt deep at times, but now I know a lot of the pain meant He was taking me somewhere, to use the good and the bad to grow me. You may not lie it at first but do the right thing anyway. Don't hide behind your past, your pain, or anything as an excuse not to have Godly character!!!

**\*\*\*\*Start with raw confession to God, in tears or shouting come clean. If we have greed, guilt, unforgiveness, anger, lying, cheating with deep roots...admit we can't budge them. Admit it all to God and ask Him to clear our hearts!**

**\*\*\*Confession is what you say yes but it is more...it is the way you live, act and talk daily!!!**

**\*\*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret but worldly sorrow brings death> 2Cor. 7:10 This means you can't just be sorry that you got caught!!**

**\*\*\*YOU CAN'T TRY TO WALK WITH GOD WHILE AT THE SAME TIME YOU ARE DANCING WITH THE DEVIL!!!!!!**

**\*\*\*YOU CAN'T HAVE A TESTIMONY THAT WILL HELP OTHERS WITHOUT GOING THRU SOME HARD TIMES.**

**\*\*we become more at peace each time we do the right thing and eventually make better decisions!**

**If we give a genuine effort reading the Word, get filled with God's word it will curb our appetite for doing wrong.**

**--Close your eyes. Think about the dirtiest place you have ever seen. A ditch, a basement, a jail cell. You are surrounded by mold, blood stained walls, etc. You sit down, chains are on your feet. What do you do? File a grievance? Complain to God? Get bitter?**

**Well the apostle Paul—an ex murderer of Christians, was there and wrote 2/3 of the N.T. We can make a difference in our surroundings here and in our families, friends, even the world.**

**\*\*\*WHAT IF YOU WAKE UP TOMORROW AND ONLY HAVE THE THINGS WE GAVE THANKS FOR YESTERDAY?**

**\*\*IS OUR CHARACTER SUCH THAT WE CAN BE TRUSTED?**

**\*\*WHEN THINGS DON'T GO OUR WAY, DOES A DIFFERENT CHARACTER COME OUT?**

**How about we become the kind of women that when our feet hit the floor, the devil says "Oh No, she is up! She is going to shine for Jesus!!!"**

**Being a Christian is not a ritual, it is a relationship. Just as you want to please your mom, family friends, we should want to please Jesus.**

**TheMessage—I John 3:6—No one who proclaims to be in Christ makes a practice of sin. None who do practice sin who (do it willfully, choose it daily) have not taken a good look at Christ.**

**\*\* We are going to become what we think about and talk about all the time.**

**\*\* Will you leave here today and talk about scriptures and good changes you want to make or will you gossip or talk bad about what the Word was today.**

**\*\* Will you choose chaos on the yard over peace? Trash over grace?**

If all you have to offer God is your pain and hurt, give it to Him. A shame struck, penniless outcast, a woman who bled for 12 years, not a wealthy giver or famous preacher—Jesus commended her for her faith in Mt. 5:34

God's promises are to an unlikely crowd---US!!!

God loves us..can we help each other and honor God by doing good and caring for one another? Let's help each other change, change the atmosphere at KCIW. Less lockdowns, less fights, less adjustment hearings...and more love, respect, hpe, joy and Godly character!!

In Christ  
Karen Braun