Desire Deferred Part 2

I finished up last week by stating that all people are seeking to be safe.

All people have a desire to be safe. And true safety comes from the Lord and is evidenced as Christ lives in us:

“*In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.*” (Psalm 4:8, NIV)

“*The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.*” (Proverbs 18:10, NIV)

“*“Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise,” says the Lord. “I will protect them from those who malign them.”*” (Psalm 12:5, NIV)

Sometimes scriptures are to be used in a specific context. In other words sometimes God gave a guarantee of temporal safety in a certain situation. As Christ-followers I don’t think we can count on that all the time. But as those who have trust in God we can be sure of what Jesus said to Martha after her brother Lazarus died…

**23**Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.”

**24**“Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”

**25**Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. **26**Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die.

(Then Jesus asked) Do you believe this, Martha?”

John 11:23-26

So the first question I have for you is “Do YOU believe this?”

Do you believe that Jesus is and was the exact representation of God? And do you believe that He died as a sacrifice for your sins and rose from the grave to pave the way for us to be forgiven and live a new life?

And even be free from the fear of death?

If you believe these things then you are safe?

As Jesus said:

**26**“But don’t be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. **27**What I tell you now in the darkness, shout abroad when daybreak comes. What I whisper in your ear, shout from the housetops for all to hear!

**28**“Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell. **29**What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. **30**And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. **31**So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

Matthew 10:26-31

You are safe with regards to what matters the most.

Even though in a temporal sense you may not be safe.

How can we as the Church arise to help others see the safety of the gospel?

1. Understand the safety you have in the gospel (If you don’t know safe pasture you can’t be safe pasture for others).

Don’t try to convince people that nothing bad will ever happen to them. Instead help them understand that they can live without fear, knowing that even after the hardships of life and the reality of death, those with faith in Jesus can expect the best is yet to come.

1. Be accepting of others even with their sin (you don’t condone it, but you love them)

If you want to be loved and accepted, there really is absolutely no excuse for failing to love and accept others. It doesn’t mean you have to be their best friend, but God’s love for us should compel us to love others.

1. Be open to your own sinfulness so that others feel safe to admit their own. It really is fear that keeps us from admitting who we are and our failures, our weaknesses and our struggles can be very useful to help others confront their own sin.
2. Know and take into account others hopes, dreams and especially their fears so you don’t crush or scare them. I would never take a first time dirt bike rider to ride the trail up to Mount Clifty, they would be scared to death, and they could actually die. Don’t assume that everyone has the same strengths, weaknesses and maturity that you do.

Jesus was offering the woman at the well living water that would well up to eternal life, can you enter into any safer place than that?

I am going to list the last three more desires that all people share and some applications that should follow because of our knowledge of them.

1. They desire healthy touch (Jesus touched people and people touched Jesus and it brought healing, healing that symbolized a crossing over from death to life). We too, are to use the ministry of touch.

Study and learn how to encourage others with appropriate touch (all have different bubbles)

Learn to allow others access to appropriate touch.

Pay attention to what others close to the person would consider appropriate.

1. People desire to be passionately desired by someone else (This is one of the most apparent in the woman at the well, she wanted to be wanted and it led her to sin instead of leading her to express it correctly).

Work to build your desire to desire others (This happens as you work at listening to them and getting to know them).

Let others know that you are with them because you want to be with them—not simply because they want you and you feel it is your duty. No one wants someone hanging with them because they feel like they have to.

1. They desire to be included (1 John 3:1; John 1:12; 1 Peter 2:21-22; Acts 14:22; John 13:15; Php 3:17; 1Tim 1:16; Eph 1:13; Gal 2:19-21).

Include others in your world—even in seemingly mundane activities.

Let Christ live through you

All people have these seven longings of their hearts and all are seeking to have them fulfilled. Every time we converse with another person we should view them as if they were the woman at the well and we are Christ.

1. They desire to be heard and known (we are to listen like Christ listened and knew her)
2. They desire to be affirmed for what they do (we are to celebrate and encourage the positive things they are doing)
3. They desire to be praised for who they are (we are to praise them for living according to God’s image and design)
4. They desire to be safe (because we know the safety of Christ, we are to be a safe place for others)
5. They desire healthy touch (we are engage in the ministry of touch, a hug from a believer can be like a hug from Christ Himself)
6. They desire to be passionately desired by someone else (as we pursue others and let them know they are wanted, we are evidence to them that God desires them)
7. They desire to be included (as we include others in our pursuits, passions and daily practices, we can help others to see that we have been included in Christ’s plan and they have too).

Who do you know that has a hope deferred?

Who do you know who isn’t quite understanding what to do with their God given desire?

Don’t label them a sinner and shun them, help them to understand that their wants and desires are good and God has a purpose for them. This woman believed Jesus because He knew her heart, we too know the basic longings of the human soul, because we ourselves have come to know the One who has given us eternal rest. Continue to help others see Christ as He works in you to help them have their longings fulfilled.

Even as we move in to 1 Corinthians 5, where Paul is going to address a man who is living and sleeping with his father’s wife, we can understand that this sin has something to do with hope deferred. It’s easy to just write someone off as evil and just be done with them. It is a little harder to understand that every sin has, at least, something to do with unmet desires of the heart.

It is our job to help others redirect their desires. To point others to Christ and His plan to fulfill every desire of our heart.

You and I we have streams of living water that is meant to be placed in cups and dispensed to the thirsty soul. As Jesus said,

“*And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”*” (Matthew 10:42, NIV)

“*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.*” (Proverbs 13:12, NIV)

“*A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul....*” (Proverbs 13:19, NIV)

There are a lot of people longing to have their unmet desires fulfilled. Our reactions to COVID-19 have wreaked havoc on people.

Many are desperately trying to isolate themselves in order to save their lives and in the process they are hearts are growing sick because they are being kept from the most important aspects of living.

How will you use the safety, freedom and fulfillment Christ has given you, to lead others to the Well?