

What is Jesus Doing?

IS THERE A KINK IN YOUR FAITH HOSE

(part 1)

Today is the second Sunday of the new year. I would like us to begin today by praying for those who are experiencing the loss of their homes and neighborhoods in the current wildfires...

As I understand it many of the firefighters were frustrated as they were experiencing a lack of water pressure coming through their hoses because of an over demand from the sheer number of fires that they were fighting... Today, I'm going to talk about how to maintain the health of our faith hose in order to keep God's blessing flowing through us.

In California we experience spring-like weather, for the most part, year-round, and so we are constantly watering our plants. Anyone who has ever watered a garden knows that in order for the water that our plants need to come through the hose we are using unrestrictedly and abundantly, the hose must be free of kinks. Kinks in a hose are places where the water is unable to flow freely because the hose itself is bent or knotted in some way. Those kinks must be worked out and eliminated before the water can flow freely.

Today I'm going to talk to us as believers about the kinds of spiritual dysfunction that can literally put a kink in the hose that connects you to the throne of grace and which goes through you so that living water can flow freely through you.

*For I will pour water on him who is thirsty,
And floods on the dry ground;
I will pour My Spirit on your descendants,
And My blessing on your offspring;*

- Isaiah 44:3

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And Jesus said this ...

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

- John 7:38

Here's an analogy that the Spirit revealed to me years ago when I was shepherding the unhoused in the San Fernando Valley...

When we were first saved, it was like we were in a pit of our own making, and the Lord dropped a lifeline down to us, and grabbed ahold of it, and He pulled us up by His strength, because we could not fix our own "sin problem"; we call this the grace of God.

It is by His Grace alone that we are saved. For God to pull us up to safe ground, all we had to do was to take that line that was sent down.

Psalms 139:7-12 tells us that even if we make our own bed in Hell, He is there.

I waited patiently for the Lord;

And He inclined to me,

And heard my cry.

He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,

Out of the miry clay,

And set my feet upon a rock,

And established my steps.

- Psalm 40:1-2

If you think about it... that pit that we are talking about is really like quicksand because if we were to refuse the line of grace that God sent down to us, we would have continued to sink further and further, until our hands could no longer even reach out.

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Unbelievers are still in that position today. There are reasons why they may not take that Hand of grace or that line that's out to them. Those reasons include fear, pride and rebelliousness. These things can cause a person to rely only on their senses and physical desires and not even realize the awful state of their lives. They see no need for a savior.

So here is the analogy that Holy Spirit showed me.

That line that we took hold of was really a hose. Once we were pulled out of the miry clay of our former lives, we drank living water from that hose that was sent down to us from the Throne of Grace. Now that hose flows Living Water through us from that same Throne of Grace. That hose is a conduit that is firmly affixed to Jesus Himself and by faith is now attached to us and that flows Living Water into us and through us. Now that lifeline that was used to save us has become the conduit through which God will use us to help save others by being a testimony to the Living God.

But in order for living water to flow freely through the hose it must be free of kinks. In order for us to be a hose that is free of kinks through which living water can freely flow, we need to be sensitive in our spirit to what the Holy Spirit is communicating and wanting us to do in real time. In order to do that we have to turn our carnal minds over to the Mind of Christ.

The problem is that it takes a while after we have become born again for us to fully access the mind of Christ in all that we do. We've talked about that. It takes full submission and a willing heart to be sensitive to what your Father in Heaven is doing and a strong desire to do it with him so that you are doing God's work, not John's work or Mike's work or Jenelle's work or Kai's work.

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It's very easy for our hose, that lifeline which is now a direct connection of communication with God our Father through the Holy Spirit, to get kinked up because of our own self-will which is still there in the human vessel that we are.

So what are the things that can kink up the hose between you and God? Let's start with a big one. The source of most blockage...

If you've neglected him so completely that you can't even remember the last time you prayed, then there's a kink that is easily undone... You have turned a deaf ear towards the Lord. He's been speaking to you all along, but perhaps you've tuned Him out. That is a major kink in the hose. Let's fix that one first.

- Right there where you're sitting and right now, take a moment to acknowledge God as the Source of all life, of all wisdom and of all power.
- Reaffirm your belief that Jesus is your Lord and Savior.
- Make the decision, right now, that you want to hear from Him and that you are going to make His will your will whatever it takes.
- Then starting tomorrow, first thing in the morning, take some time to have a conversation in prayer with your heavenly Father.
- Then sit down with your Bible or Bible App and read His Word.

That will straighten out the biggest kink in your hose that connects you to God. Now if you've just made that heartfelt decision, let's look at some of the other kinks in the hose that may be blocking blessings or the ability for you to be a blessing.

Worry or anxiety is a big one. Especially worry about money. Worrying about finances is a big kink in your hose to God and also your hose to other people because it shows that you do not trust God even when you say you do.

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Jesus told us this...

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

- Matthew 6:25

Later in the same chapter he says this as a solution...

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- Matthew 6:33

And in his letter to the Philippian church, Paul puts a fine point on it when he says this...

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- Philippians 4:6-7

Trusting that God will supply all your needs is an important kink-buster for any true believer. Think about it.. if you truly believe that God will supply your needs and you're still anxious about it, it's one or more of several problems...

- That you don't really believe God and his word
- That you are more interested in getting what you want than having what you need.
- That you're really not grateful for all of God's blessing in the past or for what you already have.
- That the Kingdom of God and his righteousness is not really something that you're interested in but only the things of this world.

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I know that these are hard words to hear. They are nonetheless true.

Remember it is the peace of God which is the anxiety breaker here that Paul references. God's word says that he will supply all things that we need.

When Jesus says to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and that all these things will be added unto you, He is basically saying "think more about what God wants to do with your life than what you want to do with the life God gave you". Decide right now to give Him the reins of your life. That will get a big kink out of your hose. It's part of the submission we're talking about.

That brings us to another kink... this one specifically in the part of the hose that comes out of you, that blocks the living water that is supposed to come out of every believer. It also has to do with money. In this case it is not the fear of not having money. This kink is the **love of money**.

The Apostle Paul had some notable things to say about this one...

This one is a big chunk of scripture but bear with me because it ties the worry of not having what you need to the desire of having more than you need...

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

- 1 Timothy 6:6-10

The Love of money, therefore, is a BIG kink in your hose both vertically to the Throne of Grace and horizontally, to your ability to be a blessing to others. In fact, Jesus said this in Matthew's Gospel...

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No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

- Matthew 6:24

These two scriptures reveal the relationship between

- contentment with what one has, which is a form of gratitude...
- trust in God to supply our needs, if not always our desires... and
- the ability to serve God with our whole heart, which can only happen when our faith is not being drowned out by the desire for wealth and power.

Strange as it seems, this kink can be found not only in the faith hose of wealthy believers, but also in the very poor. I have befriended many people who found themselves homeless and relatively destitute, who were generous in spirit and always shared the little that they had with those around them who had less.

Conversely, I have met wealthy people who no matter how much they have in the bank always considered it offensive that they should be “required” to give something to charity because enough is never enough for them and they’re thinking only of themselves.

Sadly quite a few of these called themselves Christians. Also sadly, even among the destitute and poor there were those who would rather take from others who are poorer than themselves. It was here, seeing people in those circumstances, that I came to realize that love of money is really just love of self.

You’ve all heard the phrase looking out for #1. Well... a big kink in the blessing hose of a believer is when number one is you. There are some who say that their number one is God but when it comes right down to it, their actions show that they themselves are really #1.

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God appreciates it truly when you treat others as #1. It is God's desire for believers to be a conduit of His blessing. It is a means of giving glory to the One whom you worship.

While it is true that the hose that we have been talking about is a conduit for the believer to disperse living water in terms of the Gospel message to the thirsty unbelievers all around us, our faith hose is also a transport system for the believer to distribute the resources that God pours into us that He desires for us to pour liberally around us, to others, in faith that He will continue to supply our own needs and the needs of those around us.

In fact, intentional generosity, especially when one's natural tendency is to be parsimonious (stingy) is one of the best ways to straighten out the financial kink in your blessing hose.

Solomon sums this up nicely...

There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.

- Proverbs 11:24-25

"He who waters will also be watered himself" is a great way of summing up what we've been talking about here. To conclude the finance part of what I think is going to be a series on removing the kinks from our faith and blessing hose...

We might as well talk about tithing. There are many Christians who tell me that tithing or giving 10% of your first fruits to the Lord is an Old Testament concept and has no relevance to the Christian. While it's true that it was Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets before the arrival of Jesus who said this...

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“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

- Malachi 3:10

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus says this to the Pharisees who he called lovers of money...

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

- Luke 6:38

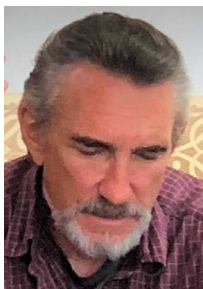
In these two scriptures we have the old meeting the new. God still desires generosity from his people both corporately in terms of tithing and specifically in terms of charity to those most in need. To think and behave otherwise is likely a kink in your hose.

So today, we’ve discovered that the lifeline that God sent to us in the Person of His son Jesus Christ has become the conduit of living water that flows to us from the Throne of Grace and through us to those that He has put in our lives.

If we want that conduit, or “hose” as we have called it this morning to be free flowing and without kinks that will keep God’s blessing from going to us and through us then we will identify and address the issues each of us has allowed in our own lives.

We are going to continue this series next week as we address more of those things which restrict God’s flow.

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Let's Pray,

- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi