

CLEARING THE WAY

“This is what the Lord says: Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; Then you will find a resting place for your souls.” – Jeremiah 6:16



In ancient times, Hawaiians believed that the “clearing” of any obstruction or blockage was necessary in order to proceed forward on the “right track” of things. To *ho’oma’ema’e* (to clear, unburden, remove, or empty). “Blockages” were considered “warnings”. It was anything that prevented a safe pathway or positive outcome to take place. It could be a negative attitude of character, nature, or disposition. Due to this obstacle, a planned trip may need to be cancelled; a voyage re-planned or an important family decision delayed, until a “clearinghouse” has been established. For example, before *ho’oponopono* (conflict resolution) could be exercised within families, a clear path was needed if blockages, such as anger, disunity, and disharmony existed. In such cases, consultation amongst the *kupuna* (elders) needed to be made. To relieve obstacles, Hawaiians believed that prayer was a significant “clearinghouse” resource to remedy the situation.

Likewise, our faith needs to clearly and evidently be seen by others. It isn’t enough to hear what we say, but others must see what we do for God as we grow in spiritual maturity and “Christ-likeness”. In the early days of my youth, my mother’s favorite soap was “Ivory”. She would purchase them in large quantities. You see, according to the television commercial, “Ivory” soap was over ninety-nine percent “pure”. Nothing was fancy about it. It was basically, a plain, white soap. It didn’t have any fragrance, colors or additives. Though other soaps had different colors and fragrances, mom purchased “Ivory” because of its “purity”. In the same way, true faith is “pure”. It is free from contamination and blemishes. Our outward evidence of faith needs to be clearly seen and it should reveal the inward faith we possess. Pure faith reflects the total authority of Jesus. He is our “clearinghouse” and there’s no hidden area in our lives that can go undetected! Even as we may experience “blockages” in our spiritual growth, THE WORD OF GOD ALWAYS PROVIDES “CLARITY”. We may not like what we discover, but the answers that God provides will never leave us in doubt or human reasoning. God always blesses the person who obeys His Word and not just someone who hears the Word (James 1:25). God isn’t interested in which version of the Bible you carry, how big your Bible may be, how “holy” you look on Sundays, how many scriptural passages you have memorized or how perfect your attendance may be in church. God is only interested in knowing what you are doing with what you have learned! You see, Christians are called to have a “vertical” alignment with God, so that we can make a “horizontal” expression of the gospel into the lives of others. Going to church is a “good thing” and a “God-thing”, but it’s not enough. You may even live a good, “clean” life. You may pray and go to church, but, unless there is visible evidence of a righteous life in Christ, you are totally deceived. Why? BECAUSE IT’S ALL ABOUT CONVICTION AND THE THING THAT GOD IS EXPECTING FROM YOU AND I, IS FAITH IN HIM.

God wants “faith in action”. You may be proud of how “holy” you are, but He still honors only faith. You see, many of us talk about how much “good faith” we have; how much we trust God and how much we believe in God, but, when the time comes to take action, we fail! “Action

faith” is when we clear the way of doubt and rely on the Lordship of Jesus Christ to reign over our circumstances and situations. Why? **BECAUSE GOD ONLY HONORS FAITH!**

Finally, “clearing the way” also means remaining “pure” and not allowing the world to guide and lead our lives. God wants us to be “spotless and blameless” (2 Peter 3:14) and the only way to do this is to stay close to the Lord. **HE IS OUR STRONG TOWER!** (Proverbs 18:10). It’s okay to have the “stuff”, as long as the “stuff” doesn’t have you! Worldly “stains” can be like “blockages”, but there is a way that we can deal with them as we live out our life for Christ. By the way, having great faith doesn’t automatically mean that you will never get a stain. Believers still sin, but true and pure faith actively makes you deal with the “stain” as soon as it happens. How? **THROUGH CONFESSION, FORGIVENESS and REPENTANCE.** Every day, we need to create a distance from the world, so, that we don’t get stained. But here’s something you need to know: **NO MATTER HOW DEEP THE STAIN, YOU KNOW A PERSONAL “CLEANER” IN GLORY THAT CAN DEAL WITH ANY STAIN YOU MAY HAVE.** You may think that you have your own “stain remover”, but God is the only One that specializes in “spiritual” stains of the flesh and when He does His work, we can walk around clean and without worry. By the way, have you noticed the number of hand sanitizers in workplaces, schools, grocery stores and other establishments today? Washing of our hands is a serious effort to be free of contamination and not pass on any germs. I’ve noticed that there are some stores that provide their customers with sheets of sanitary wipes for the handlebars of shopping carts. It’s a neat thing, especially, when battling wide-spread diseases. In the same way, Christians need to keep themselves “spiritually clean” in order to prevent being affected by a “sin-stained” world. James 4:8 puts it this way, *“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”* In other words, “cleansing of the hands” refers to confessing and getting rid of the wrong things we are doing. But notice that James goes beyond the hands and directs us to the heart. He says, we must **purify our hearts!** Why? Because if we only deal with the “external things” and not the “internal things”, then, we go right back to repeating the same, wrong behavior! **WE NEED TO FIX THE ROOT THAT IS PRODUCING THE FRUIT.**

Lastly, one of my favorite children church songs is “Jacob’s Ladder”. In Genesis 28, Jacob saw a ladder. But, according to John 1:51, the ladder is Jesus Christ. I want to let you know that angels only move up and down the ladder under His authority. If He is not your ladder, if your faith is not in Him, then, don’t be surprised if you don’t see the angels give you the help you need. If we are to have a pure and “worthwhile” faith, then, we need to “clear the way” for things to come through that model Jesus Christ and glorify God. Believing the Word of God releases the angels and Satan always flees!

What “blockages” do you need to remove today?

