Devotion #264

**A Bond-Servant of Christ**

**Romans 1:1 (NASB)** *“Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.”*

Driving in this morning the fog was thick. As I passed by our local airport I noticed that the runway lights were brightly lit, but they didn’t have much radiance to them. In fact, the further away I looked the lights grew dimmer and dimmer. I thought surely there are no flights coming in this morning. It’s just not clear enough to be safe. My thought quickly took me to life and how often life feels thick and cloudy with fog – you know, the things of life that come our way and keep us from seeing very far in front of us. It’s during these times that we often ask the most questions and even greatly question ourselves.

It’s in the cloudy times of life when the world seems to be pressing in more and more, and there just don’t seem to be answers. It’s often at that point when people give up or throw in the towel of life because it gets too hard to try to navigate through what can’t be seen. Most everyone I know would much rather be navigating life when the sun is out, the sky is clear, and everything can be seen clearly for miles. But reality is just not that way.

So what do we do when life is cloudy? When the fog of life is overwhelming us? What do we do when we can’t see in front of us or behind us. Or, if we do see behind us, the view is blurry and unrecognizable. What do we do? There are only two, maybe three choices. We can try to go backwards. Since we have been in that spot before, we know more clearly what is there - kind of like going back to an old job that you new well and could do with your eyes closed. Or, we can sit still and wait for the fog to clear, which has its advantages. We know enough to know that the fog of life will dissipate if we wait long enough, but waiting seems to be a lot of wasted time. Or, thirdly, we can press on through the fog - slowly and carefully - trusting in whatever we believe will see us through.

For those of us who are Christians, our trust is in Jesus. In all times of life - the foggy times and the clear times, we are servants first. That’s what Paul said of himself. As much as he had attained in his life as a leading scholar in the Jewish world, when he met Christ, everything changed for him. He no longer followed his own path but the path Jesus put Him on. When Paul used the word bond-servant, he was using the common word for servant, which in the Greek culture was a permanent situation, often one that was not a willing choice. But Paul elevates the word to say that by his own desire and willfulness he surrendered his heart to Jesus, and because of that choice, his life was to follow Jesus. No matter where that led him.

I often have to be reminded that all of Jesus’s followers are servants. We are people who willfully give up our lives for His sake. Why? One reason. Because He set us free. He bought us out of the slave market of sin and made us a child of His.

So what does this mean practically? Practically it means our lives are not our own anymore. We have surrendered our rights and our desires for His desires for us. We have abandoned the ways of the world and the ideologies of the world and all it allurements to follow Jesus. Our goal is different now. Our goal is to be a reflection of Jesus. Our greatest desire is to see others come to Him for salvation, for true eternal freedom, even if that means we forsake all that we want in this world. Some would say, “That’s too high a price to pay”. Others would say, “That’s ridiculous. Why would you even think such a thing? God wants you to be happy.” To which we respond, “No. God wants us to be obedient.” That’s what slaves do. They obey, regardless of what the Master asks of him or her. Many will say, “How can you follow a God like that”? Our answer is that He is the most kind, gracious, benevolent, merciful, Master of all. He rescued us. His goal is not to crush us, but to use us for His glory and for our good. The reward for doing so is a life of peace and contentment that is unparalleled and an eternal life that is forever free from the pain and suffering we must endure here. Are you looking for peace? Contentment? Go to the Master. He will lead you through the fog and show you the way.