

## “TAKE YE AWAY THE STONE”

By Keith Greer

“Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.” {John 11:39} Jesus gave this command when He raised Lazarus from the dead. We want to make some applications by the statement “**TAKE AWAY THE STONE.**” Certain “stones” in our lives need to be removed. Stones to be removed:

**Ignorance.** “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.” {John 6:44,45} Yes, people need to remove the stone of willful ignorance. Jesus told us that truth had the ability to “set us free,” John 8:32. Paul commanded the Ephesians that they needed “to know the will of the Lord,” Ephesians 5:17. What is the danger of ignorance? Sadly, the countrymen of Paul were ignorant concerning God’s righteousness so “they established their own righteousness,” Romans 10:2,3. Ignorance is something that one can overcome by study and application of God’s truth in their lives.

**Self-Esteem.** “These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood.” {Proverbs 6:16,17} Solomon would later explain that pride “comes before a fall,” Proverbs 16:18. In the great Sermon on the Mount, Christ Jesus taught one of the needed character traits to enter the kingdom, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” {Matthew 5:3} Paul warned the Christians in Rome about self-esteem: “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” {Romans 12:3} Humility is a must!

**Indifference.** “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see If there is any sorrow like my sorrow, Which has been brought on me, Which the LORD has inflicted In the day of His fierce anger.” {Lamentations 1:12} In Jeremiah’s day he lamented the fact that the fierce anger God had poured out on the disobedient nation had failed to get their attitude adjusted. God’s people cannot be indifferent toward God or the life they are committing to Him. “Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” {Romans 12:11} Can a child of God just take the approach to “take it or leave it” when it comes to carrying out His will? Such conduct will assure one of losing their promised rest!

**Ill feelings.** “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” {Matthew 6:14,15} A common thought in our culture – get over it! One cannot serve God acceptably when they have ought against his brother, Matthew 5:24,25; 1 John 4:19-21. God’s willingness to be forgiving to us is partly depended on how forgiving we are to others who have wronged us.

**Procrastination.** *“Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.” {Proverbs 27:1}* One of the most subtle traps many falls into is “putting off what we can do today until tomorrow!” Felix understood his current condition before God—so what did he do? *“Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.” {Acts 24:25}* Sadly, so many people make this same fatal mistake. No one has any lock on tomorrow and none of us know what the future may hold, *James 4:13-15*. The danger is another chance like today may never come around again!

Too many people depend on something that they do not have an assurance of—TIME! Only one person knows when the clock of this world will stop—God, *Matthew 24:36*. Dear reader, can we allow a “**STONE**” to deprive us of God’s blessings? \*\*\*