



Behind Enemy Lines Training Saints

Written by an Inmate

Skittles & Pencils: Bearing Fruit for the Lord

By Brother Scott

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We have all been given so much to be thankful for. AMEN! I want you to just take a minute and reflect, think about all the many blessings we have been given. God is good!

I want you to just tell Him thank you; say it out loud. THANK YOU FATHER! He is worth of praise; give Him some praise! Praise to You, Lord. Glory to God in the highest!

There are some questions I want to ask all of you, and I pray that it sets your hearts on fire for God. This message is intended to open the eyes of your heart. Question time ...

- 1) Do you think you deserve any of the blessings you've been given?
- 2) Do you feel you deserve salvation?
- 3) Do you feel you deserve eternal life?
- 4) Better yet, do you feel worthy to have the Son of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ suffer the most excruciating and agonizing death the twisted human mind could conceive on a cross, for your sake, to take your place, to pay for your sins, so you can be with Him in paradise for eternity? Come on now, show of hands. Who is worthy? Nobody?

Now tell me, how are you showing your gratitude? Christ paid our debt!!! Now what are you doing for Him? What are you doing for Him?

Jesus tells us in **John 15:13**, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Friends! Us – friends of the Most High. What an honor! Then in **Verse 16** he says, "You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you should go bear fruit." Well, are you? Are you bearing fruit? If not, then why? What is standing in the way?

We were chosen by Jesus to bear fruit. In the **First Epistle of St. Peter**, he also says in **Chapter 2 Verse 9**, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."

You are God's people!!! Declare His wonderful deeds! Declare what He has done, for you, for me, for all of us!!!

Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2:10** that "we are His [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." He created us; He saved us so that we can be His hands on the earth. So He can work through us and bring some light into this dark world!

Jesus tells us in **Mark 16, Verse 15**, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." These are our instructions from Christ Himself!

You might say, "Well, I'm not a preacher." I tell you that neither are the heavens or the earth, or the trees, or the flowers, or the seas, or the animals, or the birds; but it doesn't stop them from proclaiming the majesty and glory of the Almighty!!!

King David said in **1st Chronicles 16-23**, “Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Tell of His salvation from day to day.” **Psalm 19:1**, “The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.” **Psalm 50:6**, “The heavens declare His righteousness.” Now, if all of creation proclaims God and testifies to His goodness, what is your excuse?

St. Paul tells us in **Romans 1:20**, “Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely His eternal power, and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” **WE ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE!!**

We should be doing any, and every single thing we can to proclaim the goodness of our God! When I think of what all God has given me, and what Jesus endured for me, and the debt that was paid for all of mankind, I couldn’t be quiet even if I wanted to. No ... I want to scream at the top of my lungs what He’s done for us. He gave us salvation, He gave us love, He gave us hope, He gave us grace; He gave us a reason to rejoice; He gave us LIFE!!!

He died so that we can live!!! You know, I feel a lot like Paul: I can completely understand what he means in **1st Corinthians 9:16** where he said, “For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no grounds for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” That is my sentiments exactly!!! Woe to me if I don’t preach the gospel.

Granted we don’t all have the same gifts; we aren’t all Charles Stanleys or Jimmy Swaggarts or Joel Osteens or Steven Furticks, but we are all given spiritual gifts. Although these gifts are different and may vary, they have one common goal, and one purpose, to edify the church, and glorify the Almighty!!! No matter what our gifts may be, they all come from the same source. Now, if you will turn with me to **1st Corinthians 12:1-3**

¹Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy spirit is our “guide to all Truth,” the third person of the Holy Trinity that dwells with us to mark us as God’s own. Literally, this is God in us. This spirit is where our spiritual gifts come from. Let’s continue with **Versus 4-6**

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

Now I want you to notice the words “Spirit,” “Lord,” and “God.” This is an acknowledgement of the Holy Trinity, and the Godhead, being the source of our gifts. Let’s keep going, **Verses 7-11**

⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

All of these gifts come from the same source, and are given to us as God wills for us to have them. These gifts are given to us so that we can “bear fruit,” or edify the church, ultimately to glorify God. So, regardless of what gifts He wills us to have, we should always use it! It’s not ours: it’s His. Everything is His!!! Think of it like this ... How many of you have children? Let’s just say you have five children, and you give the oldest, or the most responsible one, a pack of Skittles and tell them to share with their siblings but instead they don’t share; not only do they not share, they throw the Skittles in the

garbage. How would that make you feel? Now, how do you think our Father in heaven feels when He gives us gifts that are far, far more valuable to share with our brothers and sisters, and we don't do anything but throw them in the garbage?

Remember when Jesus sent out the twelve in **Matthew 10:19-20**? Jesus told His disciples,
¹⁹ "When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. ²⁰ For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

Brothers, it's not us, it's Him. We're not throwing away just Skittles. We aren't just throwing away a gift from God. God is the gift!!! To deny this gift is to deny God!!! Let me repeat this slowly because this may be one of the most important lessons I've ever learned. Brothers, we're not just throwing away Skittles; we're not just throwing away a gift from God: **GOD IS THE GIFT! TO DENY THIS GIFT IS TO DENY GOD HIMSELF!**

Let that sink in a little, and turn with me to **Matthew 25:14-30**. This is known as the Parable of the Talents. Jesus tells us this as a warning! Let's read **Versus 14-15**

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴ "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants^[a] and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents,^[b] to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' ²¹ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.^[c] You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' ²³ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' ²⁶ But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

We are the servants. The man is Christ. The talents are our Spiritual gifts, part of God Himself, that He gives us according to our ability. The journey was Jesus going back to heaven. Let's continue with **Verses 16-19**. This tells what the servants did with their talents while the master was away. But the master came back – Christ is coming back, and we will all have to settle our accounts with Him! Let's continue with **Verses 20-30**.

When the first two servants settle their accounts, the master says the words I long to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant” and “enter into the joy of your Master.” But he says to the other servant, “You wicked and slothful servant” and even takes away the talent he had and gave it to the one with ten.

God gives all a part of Himself, the Holy Spirit, and if we allow Him and submit to His direction, He grows, He multiplies, He increases, He bears fruit in us. But if we deny the Holy Spirit, like the wicked and slothful servant, then God will separate from us, the Holy Spirit will leave, and we will be cast into the outer darkness; we will be desolate, away from all that is good.

Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5:14-16**,

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Let your lights shine brothers; don’t hide them.

There is a little story I want to tell you about Mother Teresa. Some of you may know who she was and remember her. For those of you who don’t, she was a Catholic nun, a very humble and reverent example of what Christ desires us to imitate. Time Magazine interviewed her, and spoke of her ministry to the poor and disenfranchised citizens of Calcutta. During the interview, Mother Teresa was asked if “she possessed extraordinarily spiritual qualities that enabled her to work with those whom society has rejected.” She answered: “I don’t think so. I don’t claim anything of the work. It is His work. I am like a little pencil in His hand. That’s all. He does the thinking. He does the writing. The pencil has nothing to do with it. The pencil has only to be allowed to be used.”

Brothers, let us learn to allow ourselves to be used by God. Let us all become pencils in the Hand of the Almighty.

AMEN.