

SERMON: Secrets?**Good Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House****SECRETS?**

Secrets can be both good and bad. Of course we want to protect private things for our friends. Yet it is also important for Christians to speak words of truth. For Jesus said in **(John 14.6)** *Jesus told him, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*

SECRETS FOR FUN

Your pastor gets some brain recreation on his day off by watching professional baseball and football from America on his home computer. The National Football League games are recorded for replay. So I can choose my day off game time well even before needed home chores for the family. The games usually have been played many days before. In Japan, it is easy to not see who won. So recently my daughter, Therese, a fan for our home football team, the New England Patriots, sat down to watch a game with me. She said she accidentally saw the final results on her cell phone, but **she would not tell me.** Therese tried too hard. For when our home team, the Patriots, made one good play she cheered very very loudly. I knew that they would lose! We laughed and then watched them lose miserably for the next hour. This was a "secret" for fun only. But, it seems many things are secret that should not be.

THINGS THE WORLD WANTS KEPT SECRET-**TEACHINGS OF JESUS - A SECRET**

Reading what Jesus said to His twelve disciples in **(Matthew 10.22-25)** *22 And all nations will hate you because you are my followers. But everyone who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When you are persecuted in one town, flee to the next. I tell you the truth, the Son of Man will return before you have reached all the towns of Israel. 24 "Students are not greater than their teacher, and slaves are not greater than their master. 25 Students are to be like their teacher, and slaves are to be like their master. And since I, the master of the household, have been called the prince of demons, the members of my household will be called by even worse names!*

The Lord Jesus is instructing and preparing them that they often will receive harsh treatment and persecution for they represent Him. As many Jews were calling Jesus the *prince of demons*, they should not expect better. He knew that fear of death and persecutions could keep His Message from traveling to those who needed it. His message to the original disciples is even more relevant to Christians who now live in the Times of the End of the Age. Today persecutors may act more in secret than physical attacks. But Jesus promised in **(Matthew 10.26)** *for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.* All their evil secrets to hinder our teaching Jesus will be openly made known before God at the Judgment.

(Matthew 10.28) *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.* Only God, who loves His Children, has power to kill *both soul and body in hell.* Today in most of the world, except Arab and Muslim nations, most persecution against Christians is not particularly violent. It is often by financial pressure or discrimination in universities and career paths. Fears must still be overcome to be obedient to Jesus' instruction in **(Matthew 10.27)** *What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.* The Lord was not exaggerating, but He was using a figure of speech called a *metaphor* to make His point. He instructed His disciples to take His private teachings and make them very public! ...like *proclaim from the roofs.* The disciples needed this attitude to combat the world's keeping a *secret* ---the Teaching and Gospel of Jesus.

But, you might say, "Pastor Bruce I am not a gifted evangelist, as some of my fellow Christians!" Yes. I am aware that the Spirit, as He wills, gives gifts including *evangelist*. But, to make so many efforts to keep your Christianity a *secret* is much different from to *shout it from the roof tops.* Jesus makes this clear in **(Matthew 10.32)** *Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.* Acknowledging the truth of Jesus may be done without *shouting*, but it needs to be revealed to the masses of sinners desperate for God's salvation.

PROCLAIM JESUS FROM ROOFS IN JAPAN? - A SECRET

The Lord Jesus knows that in the great nation of Japan, other than open evangelism, it is a difficult balance between keeping Jesus a secret, and, sharing Jesus' teaching. Christians want to act with respect for the Japanese people. Missionaries learn this and prayerfully struggle with the tension.

Well, other than our wonderful tourist guests here today, OIC Christians are all missionaries for Japan even if you were born here. I want today's Message to not be a pastor putting a guilt trip on the beloved OIC saints. So, I want to present the next Bible verses for you to pray to Jesus about. The Spirit of Christ will answer your heart for how to obey Him without any guilt. God never uses guilt to motivate His Children.

I have chosen the spirit of this Message from the prophet Habakkuk. He was troubled by evil prevailing in the world. He was a godly man looking for answers.

In **(Habakkuk 1.2-3)** *How long, O LORD, must I call for help? But you do not listen!*

“Violence is everywhere!” I cry, but you do not come to save. 3Must I forever see these evil deeds? Why must I watch all this misery? Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight.

Habakkuk decided to wait for God's answer in **(Habakkuk 2.1)**: *I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost. There I will wait to see what the LORD says and how he will answer my complaint.* There is no time of waiting given, but God responded to his desire for holiness to prevail in **(Habakkuk 2.2)**: *Then the LORD said to me, “Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others.*

Note that godly men, like Habakkuk, with a burden for righteousness are given instructions to share with others. Although God was promising His prophet eventual relief from the Babylonian invaders, within that temporal Victory, He also gave the End Times prophecy in **(Habakkuk 2.14)**: *For as the waters fill the sea, the earth will be filled with an awareness of the glory of the Lord.* This glory of the Lord will not fill the earth until Jesus returns in power to take total control as Ruler of the Earth He created.

As we see in **(Revelation 11.15-16)** *15Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices shouting in heaven: “The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.” 16 The twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones before God fell with their faces to the ground and worshiped him. And, (Revelation 19.11) 11 Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war.* My point here is that Christians who love their Lord as He deserves, have pain in their hearts because of a world that does not recognize nor give Him praise ...the Glory He deserves. He is the KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. **This hurt or pain for their Lord's wounded heart becomes an unction or motive to spread His Gospel and His name.** This was the “unction and motive” Jesus was prompting in His Apostles in **(Matthew 10.27)** *What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.* Thus we share the Gospel with love for the lost soul and a sense of Jesus' dishonor at not being recognized everywhere on Earth as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS!

JESUS' NAME – A SECRET

The World wants to keep Jesus' name a secret. Why?

(Acts 4.8-12) *8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of our people, 9 are we being questioned today because we’ve done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? 10 Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. 11 For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, ‘The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.’ 12 There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”*

Peter declared Jesus' name the only name by which men must be saved. He also told all the rulers and elders of Jerusalem that the crippled man, a man lame from birth, *was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead.*

Such is the power in the name of Jesus.

WHAT JESUS DID – A SECRET

As in my last Message titled **Walking Close with Jesus is Knowing you have Eternal life**, the Apostle John wrote in **(1 John 5.18-19)** *We know that God’s children do not make a practice of sinning, for God’s Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. 19 We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one.”* Note that John was building up the confidence of his audience, his *Dear Children* in the Lord. But, he did not hide the truth from them that all Christians have a spiritual enemy. Confidence does not require that there be no enemy. Confidence requires a Friend and Ally, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, much greater than our Enemy. Yet, Jesus of course knew this before his disciples did. So in **(Matthew 10.27)** He prophesies or foretells the resistance for the rest of the Church Age until the End of Time. The *control of the evil one* results in keeping a *secret* anything that reveals Jesus. But especially, to hide what Jesus did for us helpless sinners on the Cross. The Bible declares this powerfully in **(Romans 5.6)** *When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. AND....*

(Titus 2.11) says: *For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people.* God's undeserved love or grace was revealed in His Son, Jesus. The world around us Christians wants people to believe the lie that Jesus was just for the Jews, or just for the Gentiles, or for the Americans, or just for *whoever*. The Son of God came to Earth as a Jew. **He was an oriental, not a western man.** There was no “western civilization” when He was revealed to mankind. His Apostles and Disciples brought His Gospel to the ends of the Earth in obedience to Jesus' command as He was about to ascend back into Heaven. That is when He said In **(Matthew 28.19)** *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations {ethnos/NTG} baptizing them in the name of the Father*

and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Greek word *ethnos* means *people groups* and not nations. Jesus' Great Commission, the title given for **(Matthew 28.19)**, is to be sure that even the smallest ethnic or culture group in the largest nation has heard the Gospel.

A RUDE AWAKENING – ALL SECRETS REVEALED

(Matthew 24.29-30)²⁹ *“Immediately after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 30 And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

For this Message I am avoiding the many theories of when the Church is Raptured, both living and dead brought to Heaven. This is seen throughout the New Testament. Also, the book of Revelation is not chronological in the order of many chapters. **The main point here is what the experience will be for the people on Earth who never found out or believed the secrets about Jesus. This is a rude or abrupt awakening as the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens.**

Already today the Church has been proclaiming Jesus Christ and Him Crucified for about 2,000 years, but then in **(Matthew 24.29)** *“Immediately after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.* The “Great tribulation” of God's fierce anger, *the anguish of those days*, is over. But the heavens then will declare the Glory of the Lord's Judgment, not the Glory of His mercies as we see everyday in the Creation. Judgment shown by a *darkened sun, moon without light, and the stars falling from the sky.*

For He said Himself in **(Genesis 1.14/AMPC)** *And God said, Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs and tokens [of God's provident care], and [to mark] seasons, days, and years,* Yes, the glorious stars we see at night are *tokens [of God's provident care].* In **(Matthew 24.29)** God will shake *the powers in the heaven* and cause stars to fall. He will be then declaring that **His provident care is over and done for people on the Earth!** At this time all His Chosen Christians will be brought to be with Jesus in Heaven. For in the next verse **(Matthew 24.31)** *And he will send out his angels with the mighty blast of a trumpet, and they will gather his chosen ones from all over the world—from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.*

It is also noteworthy of the meaning of *the stars falling from the sky*. The Apostle John received the Book of Revelations about 90-100AD. He had little knowledge of astronomy as we have. God's almighty power is not lessened when He uses His Creation for miracles and especially for signs and wonders even as said in the Creation. So, pardon some science, for as St. Augustine said: "*All truth is God's truth!*"

So what about the stars falling? We know the stars are many *light years* away from Earth. A light year is how far light travels in one year, 9.5 trillion kilometers. God can do anything. However, as a former consultant for the National Aeronautical and Space Administration, NASA, my knowledge of the heavens God created leads me to remember *the asteroid belt* in our solar system.

On the overhead screen is an artists drawing of the *Asteroid Belt* from NASA. You can see that frequently some might enter the Earth's atmosphere. These millions of rocks are close to Earth and not *light years away*. NASA has named a few large ones, (300-400km long) as Ceres and Verdes. We see them when they hit the earth's atmosphere to be as what most call *shooting stars*. Most burn up before striking the ground. This seems likely what John saw as **(Matthew 24.29)** *and the powers in the heavens will be shaken*. God shaking loose, so to speak, many asteroids to become *meteors or shooting stars falling to Earth*. Now the devil's seed, or liars in science, claim Asteroids never hit the Earth. A blatant lie for history shows they do.

One example that I recall was a television program in 1955 called "To Tell the Truth." A panel of famous celebrities tried to guess each guest's "**secret.**" After the panel gave up on one guest's story, the lady told "her secret." : I was taking a bath and relaxing in the bathtub. I heard a crash and something flew by my face from above and all the water ran out. It was a meteor from outer space as confirmed by looking floors below." She won the prize money, and was glad to be alive too.

John's vision must have been millions of *stars falling* announcing that. *Judgment Day is NOW!* **(Matthew 24.30)** *And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens* We can only imagine the unbelievable shock this will be those on Earth. *The sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens*, is likely a huge Cross emblazoned across the heavens. *And there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth*. Then the secret to the worldly is now revealed to all peoples, all the *ethnos* and cultures. They mourn because they were warned that this day would really happen, but they did not prepare for it! And many, if they even believed it, kept it secret, even to themselves. The "sins they kept *secret* from God and Man"

will be exposed. As Jesus said in **(Matthew 10.26)** *for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.* The panic of these people is well presented in a song by *The Second Chapter of Acts*:

“No one will have a secret
No one will tell a lie
Things that were done in hiding
Are gonna reach to the highest sky
And one thing that I know for certain
The stars will lose their course
The moon will be
Bleeding in sorrow
No one believes they're
Running in circles running in circles
Bleeding in sorrow
No one believes they're
Running in circles running in circles
Running in circles
Losing their minds

WHAT GOD CAN DO FOR YOU – IT IS NO SECRET

We read in **(Matthew 2.1-2)** *1 Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, 2 “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.”*

Christians like to tell their friends that “wise men still seek Him.” That is so true.

Christians have seen His star. It brought them to His Cross. **(Romans 5.6)** *6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.* Have you seen in your heart and soul Christ Crucified: Him hanging on His bloody Cross for you. If you have, it will cause you “*to come to worship him*” as the wise men did. Many of us are gathered here today for that very purpose, *to worship Jesus.*

Anyone here today who has not yet seen His star drawing them to His Cross for freedom of sin can come to Jesus now. His star is today the *love and feelings in your heart* by the Spirit of God. God's Spirit is here to give His provident care by Jesus' real Cross, so you never will be terrorized by the Sign of His Cross on Judgment Day. Jesus is waiting for you with open arms. All sins

will be washed away by His sacrifice on His Cross about 2000 years ago. Today is the acceptable day for Salvation.

Christians who have already been led to Jesus on the Cross are now like the wise men. For after you see Jesus sacrificing His life for you in your heart, you will never be the same. You are now led by Holy Spirit as the wise-men in **(Matthew 2.12)** *When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.*

To anyone who accepts Jesus, **Jesus becomes the Light of their World, the true *Sunrise from on High. Brighter than all the starry stars.***

I have a small tune written by an American Country Western Singer the day He accepted Christ. It goes like this:

It is no secret what God can do
What He's done for others
He will do for you
With arms wide open, He will pardon you
It is no *SECRET WHAT GOD CAN DO.*"

Let Us Pray

REFERENCES

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NLT - *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

NTG – Novum Testamentum Graece/Nestle-Aland, Pinter in Germany 1898 & 1979 **NOTE-** Pastor Bruce puts {...} around words not in the original exact text, but either the original Greek text, or his decision for more clarity, make it needed.