

Greetings to all who follow Jesus Christ,

**SCRIPTURE:**

Psalm 16:4 (MSG) – Larger reading: Psalm 16:1-11

*Don't just go shopping for a god. Gods are not for sale. I swear I'll never treat god-names like brand-names.*

**STORY:**

Faith honors God and God honors faith! A story from the life of missionaries Robert and Mary Moffat illustrates this truth. For 10 years this couple labored faithfully in Bechuanaland (now called Botswana) without one ray of encouragement to brighten their way. They could not report a single convert. Finally the directors of their mission board began to question the wisdom of continuing the work. The thought of leaving their post, however, brought great grief to this devoted couple, for they felt sure that God was in their labors, and that they would see people turn to Christ in due season. They stayed; and for a year or two longer, darkness reigned. Then one day a friend in England sent word to the Moffats that she wanted to mail them a gift and asked what they would like. Trusting that in time the Lord would bless their work, Mrs. Moffat replied, "Send us a communion set; I am sure it will soon be needed." God honored that dear woman's faith. The Holy Spirit moved upon the hearts of the villagers, and soon a little group of six converts was united to form the first Christian church in that land. The communion set from England was delayed in the mail; but on the very day before the first commemoration of the Lord's supper in Bechuanaland, the set arrived.

**OBSERVATION:**

What a huge challenge this is... being a faithful witness, especially when nothing seems to be going right with very few signs that anything significant is going to happen. But God expects us to be faithful in our commitment and the success is his on his terms in his time at his direction.

We are God-success shoppers... always looking for this angle or that. We are success driven, success orientated, determined to experience success at whatever the cost. Somewhat like shopping for name brands. But reality eventually needs to sink in – what is popular today won't be tomorrow. Brand names are nothing more than a marketing ploy... and the cost is out of this world. Why do we bother? Because we want to be "in" as in "in fashion," "apart of the 'in' crowd," "having the latest and best," etc.

We treat God the same way. We will bow at the altar of the latest version of god-centered religion only because it is the most talked about, the most popular, most "successful" version around. But is it real? Has it been proven by the test of time? Will it be around tomorrow or next year or in 10 years?

Fans grab at the latest and best, while Followers stay the course. Followers are faithful regardless of the immediate results. Fans run off in this direction or that. Fans buy into the "dog and pony" shows that are brought in to help us obtain success. Followers trust

the Lord, faithfully believing that in time God will win the day. Followers are people who labor long and hard with little to show for their labors knowing that God is always faithful.

Wasn't it an old farmer who said: "If you plant enough seeds something will grow!" The missionary couple, in the story above, were planting seeds. Year-after-year-after-year... nothing... crop failure... but they continued to plant the seeds of faith. They were faithful witnesses to the truth that was in them. What would be the message to those villagers if after a few years they simply packed their bags and left? It was being faithful over the many years that won the day.

We want the flash, the excitement, the latest-and-best, the brand name religion, while God wants steady, faithful, stay the course people.

**QUOTE:**

*"The difference between an admirer and a follower still remains, no matter where you are. The admirer never makes any true sacrifices. He always plays it safe. Though in words, phrases, songs, he is inexhaustible about how highly he prizes Christ, he renounces nothing, gives up nothing, will not reconstruct his life, will not be what he admires, and will not let his life express what it is he supposedly admires." – Søren Kierkegaard*

**PRAYER:**

Forgive us for wanting immediate success. Give us the strength to carry on when nothing seems to be happening. Help us to trust you for the success. Guide us towards a life of faithfulness.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim  
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