**BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR**

***“Are You Able To Drink My Cup?”***

Merriam-Webster not only writes a dictionary for words, but also for idioms that are used in our language.  I enjoy studying the background of idioms we use all the time in our culture.  For instance,

“*I feel under the weather*” is taken from sailors who felt sick and would go below deck to get out from the weather.

“*Break a leg*” is from stage actors who had such great performances that they were called by the approving audience to take a bow repeatedly until they sometimes broke a leg.

“*Once in a blue moon*” comes from the fact that the moon is full once every 29.53 days, meaning once per month.  But every 2.7 years it appears twice in a month.  Thus, it’s a rare occurrence.

Don’t you just love idioms?
The ball is in your court.
Don’t spill the beans.
Are you pulling my leg?
Don’t sit on the fence.
It’s the best thing since sliced bread.
Don’t beat around the bush.
You passed that test by the skin of your teeth (my favorite).

A young bride says to her new husband on their honeymoon, “I love babies so much I wish we could have twins.”  Parents with twins might reply: "***Be careful what you wish for***, ***you just might get it***."  That’s an idiom that encourages caution and deeper thought beyond how you presently feel.  Ask any mother that gave birth to twins how her first three years went.  Oh sure, they wouldn’t think of giving one of the darlings back, but the energy and patience required to raise them would match the strength of Hercules and the patience of Job.

When the apostles jockeyed for position, seeking for promotion in the coming Kingdom, Jesus could have easily used this idiom: “Be careful what you wish for.”  Indeed, He promised them to “*sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*” (Matt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30).  But if they could have only seen what that “*throne*” included they would have likely joined Jonah on that ship to Tarshish.  They would not have walked, but run, to escape that “promotion.”

Upon His resurrection Jesus spent the next 40 days revealing Himself alive to over 500 eyewitnesses (I Cor. 15:6).  This forever gave “*infallible proofs*” to His claim to be the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world (Lk. 1:1-4; Ac. 1:1-3).  The apostles were then handed the keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:19) and commissioned to “*go make disciples of all nations*” with the promise that in so doing they would be “*hated by all men for My name’s sake*” (Matt. 10:22), and then raised the ante to say, *“They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake”* (Matt. 24:9).

Already, before the kingdom even began, James and John should have reconsidered their wish, proposed by their mom, to sit on His right hand and on His left (Matt. 20:21).  When Jesus replied, “***You do not know what you ask***,” He was in effect warning them to *be careful what you wish for*.  When He then turned to these two men and asked, “*Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with*?” they eagerly (and naively) replied, “*We are able*!” (Matt. 20:22-24).

Well, they had been forewarned.  They would get their wish in drinking His cup (of wrath), and His baptism (of suffering).  These two men, along with their other ten band-of-brothers, would venture out into the world to “*preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mk. 16:15).  Sounds exciting, doesn’t it?  A travel agency might promote it as “Thrilling Adventures into Exotic places!  Come, see the world!”  With visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads they set off to conquer the world for Christ.

Thirty years later we read the journals of these once bright-eyed adventurers and see what they discovered on their “great” commission.  Paul, speaking for all of them, wrote in his journal:

*“We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you”* (2 Cor. 4:8-12).

As if that weren’t enough, Paul adds to the description of those men who “*sit on twelve thrones*” and drink Jesus’ “*cup*” and are immersed into His “*baptism*”:

*“We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report;* ***as deceivers****, and yet true;* ***as unknown,*** *and yet well known;* ***as dying****, and behold we live;* ***as chastened****, and yet not killed;* ***as sorrowful****, yet always rejoicing;* ***as poor****, yet making many rich;* ***as having nothing****, and yet possessing all things”* (2 Cor. 6:2-10).

Imagine if you can the twelve apostles being allowed to enter a time capsule and return to their role as simple fishermen, publicans and zealots following Jesus.  They again are allowed to walk the dusty roads of Galilee, Samaria and Judea.  But only now they know the future.  James has been martyred (Ac. 12).  All have been imprisoned, beaten, spit upon, ridiculed, and run out of town after town after town.

Jesus, looking upon these veteran soldiers of the cross, again asks, “*Are you able to drink my cup*?”  They, with broken bodies, and tear-filled eyes, quietly smile at Him and meekly say, “*We are able*.”  Their visions of glory were no longer of earth, but heaven.  Their fame was “*unknown*” on earth, “*yet well known*” in heaven.

Do you *wish* to be a disciple of Christ?  Be careful what you wish for.

But know what you’re in for… on judgment day!      - Rick