**22/2/2015 JCC 'BE STEADFAST, IMMOVABLE.....'**

It's time to grow up! **Ephesians 4:14 'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.'**

This passage is telling us that we are to mature in our relationship with God and our understanding of His ways and Word. We should graduate from kindergarten into junior school and then high school etc. We should no longer be as easily led as a small child, believing everything we hear. So how should we be?

**1Corinthians 15:58 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.'**

First notice it is assumed that we realize that being 'steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord' is a matter of our choice and determination. **'Be steadfast'** - be settled, solid and firm, know what you believe. God's strength is to be at work in our minds. **Romans 12:2 'And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.'** The greatest secret in successfully serving God, and the greatest challenge we face in our Christian walk is controlling our minds. Our life, our mind, our choice. It takes effort, work and diligence to win the battle of good and evil for the control of our minds. Another aspect of being steadfast requires us to serve God with all our heart, mind and strength. This is the greatest command as found in **Deuteronomy 6:5** Being steadfast also means being dependable and focused on getting the work of God taken care of. We need to be passionate, (having a burning desire) giving everything we have, doing everything we can, with our best effort, not a half-hearted effort**. Colossians 3:17,23 'And whatsoever you do in word of deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.' 'And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.'**  Do everything as if you were doing it for Jesus Himself - what a difference that would make in our lives! Serve with all the excellence we can muster! Part of being steadfast is to be unwavering - staying focused on the task at hand. The single greatest cause of failure is the loss of focus, forgetting the direction and purpose of serving Jesus. Be unchanging, unswerving, undeviating. Do not allow our Christian convictions and standards to be compromised, avoid the 'mixture' of our lives in Christ with the systems of this world. Ask, what did Jesus say, what did He do? Stay on His track, line up with His Word and keep moving forward. We are His Kingdom builders, so let your involvements in this life be building, not tearing down. Amen?

**Be unmovable.** In other words, nothing can shake your faith. The example of the 3 Hebrew young men - they would not bend, they would not bow, they would not burn - Jesus was with them. **'Our God can save us, but even if He doesn't, we will serve Him anyway!' Daniel 3:17,18** We are to be firmly persistent, incapable of moving or being moved. [I'm not moved by what I feel, I'm only moved by the Spirit that is real. All my sins are under the blood, I've been redeemed!] There is a hymn with these words, 'I shall not be, I shall not be moved, just like a tree that's planted by the water, I shall not be moved. Though the tempest rages ..... On the rock of ages..... Be firmly planted on the rock. The wise and foolish man - parable.

**Always abounding in the work of the Lord...**To you, what is the work of the Lord? Looking for opportunities to bless, to serve others - we love God by loving others. On the lookout for ways to serve God, looking for something to do for Him. Be the difference, make a difference. Bring Him glory, honor and praise**. 'Many shall see it and be glad, and they shall trust in the Lord.'**

**Your labor is not in vain...**All we do for Christ counts for eternity, whether we can see the benefit here on earth or not. Notice that serving God takes hard work, sweat, labor - it requires our best efforts. It is a labor of love. Caring for others well being, being concerned for others, blessing others etc. It is God who gives the grace enabling us to be faithful. We will go through a lot to serve God ie. Africa. Who wants suffering and deprivation? What is the matter with you? Yet this is how you find fulfillment in life - by 'loving your neighbor as yourself.'

The knowledge that we will be resurrected or have resurrection life - living forever, eternally with Jesus - should excite and inspire us to serve God with abandon, with all diligence, obedience and joy! We are talking about partaking in eternal life! Hello? Get excited, get busy for God.

**1Corinthians 15:51-57** This great victory can only be ours because Jesus has won the victory over death, hell and sin - not something we can do on our own or through our own abilities - only by His grace can we enter His presence, only because of His grace can we stand or be prostrate in His presence. This great hope is ours because of Jesus Christ and His great sacrifice!