

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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Five Fold Failure

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Introduction

Before I begin this Teaching Letter let me say that I believe that there is a true five fold ministry that is given by the Lord to His people. I also believe that this true five fold ministry is necessary to the maturing of the people of God. My problem is with those who call themselves a part of the five fold ministry when they actually have no concept of what the real thing is. These are those who see the five fold ministry as “offices” or “positions” and seek the prestige, honor and authority that go with their worldly definition of these functions. Actually, these are not offices but job descriptions, functions in the Body of Christ.

Origin Of The Five Fold Ministry

The Scriptures are very clear about the origin and function of what we call the five fold ministry.

Ephesians 4:8 NASB

(8) Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

Ephesians 4:11 NASB

(11) And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,

Jesus gave us the five fold ministry. It was a gift to us after His ascension; therefore, they have nothing to do with the Old Covenant but are exclusive to the New Covenant. They are gifts to us, the people of God, and the gift itself is men who function in these job descriptions which are all aspects of the ministry of Jesus. There are *some* men in each function but notice it is not *all* men who function in these capacities. These are men who will do the work of an apostle just like Jesus did; the work of a prophet just like Jesus did; the work of a shepherd just like Jesus did and so on.

Since the gift of these men and the functions they fulfill are from Jesus, He is the one who sets

the selection criteria. He is also the one who calls, authorizes, and empowers His choices to do the work He has set for them to do. **No one can appoint any of the five fold ministry.** Only Jesus can do it. So, it doesn't matter how big or important the “mutual admiration group” might be, they have no authority to appoint or authorize apostles or prophets.

Function Of The Five Fold Ministry

The five fold ministry, as ordained by the Lord Himself, has a collective job to do as shown by the next verse.

Ephesians 4:12 NASB

(12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

There are two “for”s in this verse but it translates two different Greek words that have slightly different meanings. The first “for” means “forward to”, “pertaining to”. We would say “for the purpose of”. The second “for” means “unto” and points toward a result. The word translated as “equipping” also means “correcting”, “instructing”, and “repairing”. So, the five fold ministry's purpose is to equip, instruct, correct, and repair the saints so that they can do the work of service. In other words, the purpose of the five fold ministry is to prepare the people of God to fulfill their calling and enable them to do the work that the Lord has assigned to them.

Notice that there is nothing in these scriptures that put the five fold ministry into any form of hierarchy of authority. They are not “running the show”. They are not in positions of prestige or authority. One of the Lord's criteria for selecting someone for one of these functions is that the person has a servant's heart as shown by His words in Mark.

Mark 10:43-44 NASB

(43) **"But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;**

(44) **and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.**

The true five fold ministry is not highly visible in the forefront of things but is quietly working to bring the other believers into maturity. They are always putting others in front of themselves.

Today, we have a guy in Colorado who is appointing apostles over states and nations. We have prophetic schools who are appointing prophets. How arrogant is that! Do they presume on the prerogatives of the Lord? It is certainly obvious that their criteria selection is not the same as the Lord's. No wonder we have a five fold ministry that is not doing its job. These imposters don't know what the job is! Thousands have been “called” as “apostles”, “prophets”, “pastors” or “evangelists” according to their own testimony. However, the “job description” that is found in Ephesians 4:11 to 13 for these “ministries” has been ignored or has been left unfulfilled. In other words, the **job** that is accepted as valid in today's system has no relationship with the scriptural “**job description**” found in Ephesians.

The five equipping ministries are not prepared by higher education, greater Bible knowledge, or by various forms of formal training. It is not even by experience as denominational ministers regardless of their position in the visible hierarchy. Only the Lord can prepare His equipping ministers.

Zechariah 4:6 NASB

- (6) Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.

This experience of “by My Spirit” is known in the New Testament as “by the anointing”. All this obviously begins with a genuine filling of the Holy Spirit or baptism of the Holy Spirit, otherwise, there would not be an anointing of the Spirit.

The True Five Fold Ministry

Part of equipping the saints for their work includes preparing candidates for the next generation of the five fold ministry itself. If they fail in this, then there are not any prepared candidates that are capable of functioning as the five fold ministry of the next generation. This is self evident in the visible church, at least in the western version of it.

The five fold ministries have failed in equipping, repairing, correcting, and instructing the believers to do the work of the ministry. The five fold ministries have also failed to prepare the candidates for the next generation of five fold ministries. [*Remember everything reproduces after its own kind as God established in Genesis.*] This five fold failure has left the church immature, short-sighted and unstable in the things of the Lord. Does this mean that the five fold ministries can't be brought forth because of the previous generation's failure? Of course not, the Lord has made a way.

The Five Fold Ministries For Today

It is very clear in the Scriptures that Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit and through that anointing He did the work the Father had assigned to Him. After His baptism and anointing of the Spirit, He was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness. Upon His return He entered the synagogue and read from Isaiah this passage which He applied to Himself.

Luke 4:18-19 NASB

- (18) "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,
- (19) TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."

This passage details the work that Jesus was to do during His ministry. As He completed His work He told the disciples this.

John 20:21 NASB

- (21) So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

It should be obvious that Jesus had received and fulfilled the ministry of equipping the disciples so that when He ascended they were prepared to equip others for the next generation of ministry. We have ample record of this in the Scriptures.

It is also obvious from the Scriptures that Paul was NOT EQUIPPED by these ministries that Jesus equipped. Therefore, we have to believe that we can be a generation that reverses this trend of producing mediocre ministers that have NO MANIFESTATION of the Holy Spirit or the anointing upon them. Why is this anointing a present possibility? Because, the Holy Spirit that was sent to lead His disciples into all further Truth is still here today to lead and teach us. But what if we don't have the equipping ministries with us today? The Lord will bring them forth today just as He did with Paul, who is our example of the process. We must become these equipping ministries so we can get the church back on the track to reality.

How do we do this? The same way that Paul did. As John tells us, the Lord has given us the Holy Spirit to anoint and teach us.

1 John 2:27 NASB

- (27) As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

We have the exact same hope that Paul had because he did not have the benefit of these equipping ministries. He was just a new believer, but in a few years he was fully equipped to develop others so that when he was martyred the equipping could be carried on to the next generation. Those of us who are completing our work in this generation MUST get the message of the Kingdom of God out to the young people who will be the equipping ministries for the next generation. For us to just continue for another generation in this failed system that we have today would be foolish, disobedient and stupid.

What is the answer? We must begin the equipping of ourselves as Paul did.

Galatians 1:11-12 NASB

- (11) For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.
- (12) For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:15-18 NASB

- (15) But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased
- (16) to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood.
- (17) nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.
- (18) Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.

Paul received his calling and his ministry independently of man. He received them from God. Since he was not dependent upon other ministries to prepare him for his own ministry then we can conclude that God is able to train us for ministry even if the equipping ministries are not

available to us.

If there is no one that the Lord has put in our lives that is performing the job functions of the five fold ministries we don't lose hope but, instead, go directly to God for the Lord through the Holy Spirit to work in us all that we need to do the job that He requires of us.

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 NASB

- (5) Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,
- (6) who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Restoring The Equipping Ministries

I believe that in my generation (I am in my sixties) the Lord has begun a restoration of the five fold ministries. This restoration is occurring with little benefit of previous generations of equipping ministries. The Lord Himself is training and raising up His five fold ministers. Not in a way that is garishly visible to others as powerful public ministries. But, instead, He is quietly working His ways and His character into those of humble heart who are willing to lay aside their own desires and walk in the Spirit of the Lord.

I believe that there are many of these humble servants hidden in the heart of God awaiting a time when they will be revealed as equipping ministers to other believers. These are those who seem to have no place of ministry in the organized system that we call "church". These are those who feel alone and alienated from their fellow believers. These are those who desire to do all that the Lord has for them to do. These are those who will not be a part of the five fold failure that we see with the self-promoters. These are those who are not concerned with positions of "authority" but who are concerned about obedience to the Word of God. These are those who will equip the next generation, possibly the last before the Lord returns.

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