

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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Consider Our Ways

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Introduction

When God created man, he built into us the desire and the ability to worship Him. When Adam sinned, we were cut off, separated, from God by our sin. In our fallen condition we substituted other things to be worshiped as God and we developed our own way of how to worship God. We see the seed of this in the actions of Cain and Abel when they offered sacrifice to God [*Genesis 4:3-5*]. Abel understood God's requirements (probably Adam had told both of his sons about the Garden experience and the details of their expulsion) and offered a blood sacrifice; whereas, Cain offered produce, the fruit of the ground. This was an affront to God since God had cursed the ground so that we would receive from it only by the "sweat of our brow" [*Genesis 3:17-19*]. So, Cain proceeded to offer God what he had brought forth by his own sweat, his own effort, and he thought that this was good and right. (Remember, the tree was the knowledge of good and evil—that is, the ability to decide ourselves, like God, what was right or wrong, good or evil.)

Cain's offering was rejected by God because we cannot come to God on our terms only on His. Cain was mad when God did not accept his offering. However, God asked him why he was mad and told him to do what was right and everything would be all right. This makes Cain madder and he goes and kills Abel because he is mad at God and jealous of his brother [*Genesis 4:5-8*].

The natural man, the soulish man, wants to come to God on our own terms and then build monuments to ourselves for achieving it. When confronted with spiritual reality that we don't understand, our first impulse is to build something. This was true of Peter when Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus and spoke with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. Until God told him to shut up, Peter was saying this is good, let's build three tabernacles, one for each of you [*Mark 9:3-7*].

This same thing happens as we touch the spiritual reality of the Ekklesia. We immediately want to build something; however, we can't build the Church, only Jesus can build His Ekklesia. All we can do is build a monument to ourselves or our traditions and formalize our own ways of worship. The moment that we move from "gathering together as an assembly" to meeting as an organization or a corporation, we have moved from the true Ekklesia of of the Lord to the false church of our own ways. Our "let us build" mentality causes us to create and sustain a "religious

organization” rather than living in the family of God. Our natural understanding and methodology replaces the Holy Spirit and we give place to selfish ambitions and “dead” works.

A Tower Top

Genesis 11:4 NASB

(4) They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *will reach* into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

We want to pass on to our descendants all the knowledge and ways of doing things that our ancestors have accumulated. In the scripture above, the literal Hebrew says “a tower with a top like unto the heavens”. The people of Babel had received forbidden knowledge, secret knowledge, opened to them by fallen angels and demons that had to do with astrology, the Zodiac. They wanted to preserve this knowledge for the future and put it on top of a pyramid style of tower so that, if God brought another flood, it would still be standing afterwards.

We do the same thing. We hand down traditions from our fathers, regardless of whether these are right or wrong. We want to preserve these traditions by making sure that they still stand regardless of what God does. After all, it is the way that we do things. Most of these traditions are actually a hindrance to our proper walk with the Lord. Jesus even said that our traditions invalidate the commandments of God making them ineffectual or useless [*Mark 7:13*].

We also preserve our methodologies, our “how to’s” on making spiritual things work—reducing the work of the Holy Spirit to formulas and legalistic rituals—gathering people into our frenetic activities “to take our city for Jesus” or “open the windows of heaven” or “repent for the sins of our ancestors”. We forget that the spirit of Babylon is the spirit of religion and religious activity. We are always reaching for one more activity that will create a spiritual break through. Actually, we have no need of any religious activity whatsoever. We only need to believe and be obedient. Where is the simple unity and oneness with Christ and the following of the Holy Spirit that turned Jerusalem upside down in the book of Acts?

Build a Reputation

We want to “make a name for ourselves”. This is the real motivation behind much ministry. We have adopted the world's standards for success valuing size, numbers, wealth, power, and recognition. We want our church, our ministry, ourselves, to be famous. We shamelessly promote these things to the world to build a reputation. We let ambition drive us and we manipulate everything around us to insure our successful reputation.

Haggai 1:5-7 NASB

(5) Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways!

(6) "You have sown much, but harvest little; *you* eat, but *there is* not *enough* to be satisfied; *you* drink, but *there is* not *enough* to become drunk; *you* put on clothing, but no one is warm *enough*; and he who earns, earns wages *to put* into a purse with holes."

(7) Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways!

It is time to consider our ways. We have little spiritual success because we are operating in our flesh. Oh, we have cleaned it up, dressed it up, and “Christianized” it but it is still flesh. We are still operating from the fallen nature, following the spirit of Babel.

Jesus is building His Church. He did not delegate that job to us! His Church is being built with living stones not brick and mortar. When are we going to become co-laborers with Him and help Him build His House and stop building our own houses?

Haggai 1:9 NASB

- (9) "You look for much, but behold, *it comes* to little; when you bring *it* home, I blow it away. Why?" declares the LORD of hosts, "Because of My house which *lies* desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.

Haggai 1:4 NASB

- (4) "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house *lies* desolate?"

The work on the Lord's spiritual house is not getting done because we are concentrating on our own houses, which go by various denominational names. The House of the Lord is the Body of Christ and does not recognize any divisions—the Body is One Body.

Haggai 1:2 NASB

- (2) "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'This people says, "The time has not come, *even* the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt.'"

This people says that it is not time to work on the house of the Lord. How many preachers and pastors do you know that take this attitude? Oh, they don't say the words but all of their actions relate to the furtherance of themselves, their denomination or their work for the Lord.

It doesn't matter what “this people says”. The Spirit of the Lord is saying that it is time to rebuild the House of the Lord. We must lay aside our ambitions, our need to build something and become obedient to the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:4-6 NASB

- (4) *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
(5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
(6) one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

We used to sing a chorus that really says it very simply: “without the sound of a hammer, God is building today, a house to dwell in, forever to stay.”

Let's hear what the Spirit is saying to His people.

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