

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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Word of God

Introduction

One of the areas of concern that I have is that there seems to be a major increase in believers who do not hold the written word of God as important as we have in the past. In their minds there seems to be little need to read, study and learn the Scriptures. The excuse used is that we are following the Spirit and the Spirit is doing things and revealing things to us. My problem is that many who are saying this seem to have little discernment concerning the things of God and, because of their attitude toward the Scriptures, seem to be unable to discern if the Spirit they are listening to is actually the Holy Spirit. They have no appropriate standard of measurement. Instead they are using their own “feelings”, their own standard, to determine if the spirit or the teaching is true or false.

How are we to move on to maturity as we are admonished in Hebrews 6:1-3 if we have not learned the beginning principles of Christ? How do we learn these unless we study the word and call upon the Holy Spirit to bring us understanding? How can we discern if it is the Holy Spirit or another spirit that is moving if we don't know the character and practice of the Holy Spirit from the word?

Without a working knowledge of the written word we become prey to the wolves who speak of angels that drop gold dust, or jewels, or feathers, or oil. We become prey to men who push people down, slap them in the head, hit them with their fists for healing. We become prey to “churches” where people go into frozen trances, uncontrollable laughter, howling and hissing, uncontrollable shaking, all to a tribal musical beat in the name of “the anointing”.

What is the “Word of God” as it relates to the Scriptures? It would seem that there are two extremes in this area: 1) the Scriptures are the Holy Word of God, the Holy Bible, inerrant, containing all that God has said; and 2) we have the Holy Spirit who tells us all that God wants to say and the Bible is only a portion of things that God has said in the past. Watchman Nee once said that any truth taken to an extreme becomes a heresy. That means that both of these extremes contain an element of error and the truth is somewhere between.

Idolized Bible

There are some believers who have made an idol of the Bible, by making it an infallible textbook by which all things are measured and analyzed. They approach the Scriptures with reason and logic declaring their understanding by an intellectual process. By its very nature, this approach makes one a legalist. This is the same methodology that was used by the Pharisees. This is how Jesus addressed this mindset.

John 5:39 NASB

(39) "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

Jesus is telling them that the point of the Scriptures is Him, the Living Word. The Scriptures cannot give eternal life, that can only come from the Living Word. Their thinking was wrong. A couple of verses prior to this one Jesus told them that they “had not heard voice of the Father”; He also told them that they did not have His word abiding in them [v. 38] nor did they have the love of God in themselves [v. 42]. In other words He was telling them that their mental focus on the Scriptures didn't come from God's love in their hearts because the word didn't abide in their heart only in their thinking processes. This caused them to miss the purpose of the Scriptures; that is, to testify of Jesus.

This tells me that any “proof-texting” with the Scriptures without the love of God in our heart or being able to hear the Father's voice only results in what we think and falls short of the intention of the Scriptures themselves. A strictly intellectual presentation of the Scriptures does not result in the administration of life.

[Now, before I continue with this, I want you to understand that I believe that the Scriptures are the *logos*, the word of God that has been written and that it was written by the direction of the Holy Spirit and, as originally penned, is completely free of error. I do think that translation issues have arisen largely because of cultural interpretation or bias by the translators.]

Loosey—Goosey Spirit

Then there are those who are filled with the Spirit and begin to fellowship with the Lord and who begin to be taught by the Spirit who suddenly think that all impressions that they receive are the words of God. They throw out the Scriptures and begin to follow all of their “leadings”. They consider this to be “freedom in the Spirit” and disdain the legalistic interpreters of the Scriptures. Isaiah makes it clear that this mindset is a problem.

Isaiah 8:20 NKJV

(20) To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.

The law and the testimony are the Scriptures to Isaiah. Anyone not speaking according to this word is devoid of the light of the Lord. This means that Isaiah saw the Scriptures as the measuring stick, the yardstick, for future words. In other words, the future words of God would be in accordance to the previous words of God and are to be measured by them. In context Isaiah is saying this in connection with those who are consulting mediums, spiritualists, and false prophets, The contrasting factor is that when God is the source of the word it is in accordance

with His previous words unlike those who are speaking false words.

We need to remember that not everything spiritual is from God. Not every word spoken in the Name of the Lord is a legitimate word from God. We must have a yardstick by which to measure the spoken word, the *rhema*, that is, the fresh spoken word. That yardstick is the Scriptures by which we measure the *rhema* by the *logos* with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Balance

If we operate only by the *logos*, the Scriptures, we produce dry doctrinal dogma which is legalistically applied to all. If we operate only by the *rhema*, the spirit anointed word, we produce an environment that is open to the spiritual realm without any safeguards resulting in wildfire manifestations of strange origin.

We know that not all of the word of God is written down because Jesus said: "**I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.**" (John 16:12 NASB) Much of what Jesus said is written down for us but there is no record of what he didn't say. How are we to know the things that He didn't say? He tells us in the next verse.

John 16:13 NASB

- (13) "**But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.**"

Part of the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to guide us into truth and to speak to us what He hears from the Lord, which means that there will be some things said to us by the Spirit that are *rhema* words that are not written in the *logos* Scriptures. However, since the Holy Spirit, the Helper, the Comforter is of the same type and nature as Jesus, He will speak and act in accordance with the recorded words and actions of Jesus. This means that the recorded word becomes the yardstick by which we measure the received word.

The interpretation and application of the written word is completely dependent upon the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13 NASB

- (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,
- (13) which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

God's Standard

Recently I was helping one of our granddaughters with her school science lesson, which was on standards of measurement. Her lesson said that the development of standards were necessary for the advancement of scientific knowledge otherwise there would be no way to communicate results of experiments and conclusions of proofs. Standards made it possible for truth to be communicated correctly and exposed false procedures. If this is true for science how much more important is it for our spiritual understanding?

By definition a standard doesn't change. It is always the same in all situations. God has given us an unchanging standard in His Word.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
(John 1:1 NASB)

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NASB)

Before our Lord was incarnated as a man, He was the Word. He is the unchanging standard of God because He is God, the Word. Jesus as the Son of God is the Word that has been made flesh. We are to be like Him, conformed to His image. That means that the Word must become flesh in us also. Not just in intellectual knowledge but in practice so that our very actions reveal the Word in action just as Jesus showed us the Word by His life and by His actions.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (Hebrews 1:1-2 NASB)

Previously, God spoke to us through the prophets; but, the way that God speaks to us now is through His Son, who is the Word. He is still speaking to us through His Son because "...the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10 NASB)

We don't understand how important the word is to God. At the last day, we will be judged by the word that Jesus has spoken.

"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. (John 12:48 NASB)

Since the word is the standard by which we will be judged, it is also the standard by which we judge ourselves and those who come in the name of the Lord.

We have a record that the things that Jesus said were written for our benefit, to enable us to believe and have life.

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31 NASB)

It is important then that we study what has been written because it was recorded for a purpose; however, it is also important to remember that we can't interpret what is written intellectually but only by the Holy Spirit. What has been written has become the standard of measure for anything else that might be said for the "testimony of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy," will always be aligned and in accordance with and measured by the written words of Jesus.

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