

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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Order or Chaos?

Introduction

We sometimes forget that these two conditions, order or chaos, are opposites of each other. In their extremes it is obvious that they are opposite; however, in milder forms it is not always so clear. It should be obvious to us that our God is a God of order and not chaos. It is shown in Genesis that He *imposed* order on chaos. That shows us that God is not arbitrary but has a plan that is *ordered* to His purpose.

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16-17 NASB)

God imposed His order on all created things by and through Christ Jesus. He holds all things together. I believe that this not only includes our physical creation but also the spiritual structure that is described here in these verses. Order is also clear in the book of Revelation as we read of the events occurring around the throne room of God and the actions of the Elders and other beings who serve the Lord.

Imposed or Embraced?

Why does coming into order and structure become such a problem for many of God's people? Could it be that our only exposure to this concept has been through a denominational structure that has been imposed on us? Could it be that we have never seen the order and structure that is provided by the Holy Spirit? An order that must be embraced willingly by us and never imposed by the Lord.

An imposed order is the way of the world system and is corrupted by the misuse and abuse of imposed authority. Jesus told us that it was to be different with those who follow Him. [Mark 10:42-44] His order follows the principles of a servant's heart. His order can never be imposed. How could you possibly impose a servant's heart on anyone? It can only be embraced by the person as a leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Biggest Problem

The Holy Spirit has led many out of the denominational structure and into more intimate smaller groups that meet in homes or other places. The gathering is then faced with the problem of what to do and how to do it. The only example has been how it is done in the denominational structure.

Many are opposed to doing anything that even remotely resembles the way the denomination did it. They want to only follow the Holy Spirit and only want to do what the Holy Spirit wants done. While this is a noble thought and a desirable outcome, in practice we don't know how to do it. It is one thing to walk in the Spirit as an individual but it is another thing entirely to walk in the Spirit as a group.

What do you do when you are gathered seeking the Lord and what He wants to do and each of 25 or 30 people think that the Lord wants to do something different? Who decides what the Lord *really* wants to do? In many cases it is decided by default, by the one or ones who started the group. In other cases, the ones who have the strongest personality or the most outgoing decide. Sometimes, the “talker” takes over (every group has one) and sidetracks the meeting by jumping from topic to topic with a continuous stream of words. None of these provide any form of spiritual order but, rather, a mild form of chaos.

This quickly becomes the biggest problem facing a small group gathering. Basically, the groups will move toward one of two solutions. One answer is to impose a form of order that is a modified version of the denominational gathering. The gathering becomes a “mini-church” meeting that is only superficially different from what the members had know previously. Or, they move toward more chaos with multiple attendees moving the gathering in various directions that correspond to what they “feel” the Spirit wants. The gathering becomes overly long and drawn out with little focus and many times conflicting words/teaching/direction given in the name of the Lord.

Neither of these types of gatherings provide any potential for the growth and maturity of the believer. Neither provide growth of the body as described in Ephesians. Both of these types fall short of the Lord's intention for the gathering of His people.

The Solution

We need to remember why we gather together as the people of God. We are His Family, His Body, His Temple. Each of these descriptions of us have unique qualities that help us understand our relationship to Him and to each other. They also have a number of things in common. Two big commonalities are 1) each member has a relationship with others to varying degrees, 2) each type has its own form of order and structure, whether Family, Body, or Temple.

A family has order because of the father. A body has order because of the head. A temple has order because of its purpose.

There are two primary purposes for us to gather together: 1) to minister to the Lord, 2) to minister to one another. Therefore, the order and structure that we embrace is patterned in such a way that it is conducive to achieving these two primary goals.

Patterns are neither good nor bad. They simply facilitate action. If we always open our gathering with a song or songs, we have established a pattern. If we always open with prayer, we have

established a pattern. The Holy Spirit is not against patterns. After all, the body has an autonomic system in which the head doesn't have to tell the heart to beat or the lungs to inflate. His Body when it gathers also has some automatic functions that occur without the Head having to speak directly.

The Holy Spirit does have a problem with patterns if the patterns become rituals. If you have to sing three songs before you can enter into the Lord's presence, the singing has become a ritual. We must guard against rituals but not patterns.

There are patterns in our ministry to one another. An example is James 5:14 where anyone sick is to call for the Elders and they are to pray over him. This is a pattern. It doesn't require direct command from the Head. It doesn't require a direct leading of the Holy Spirit. It simply requires obedience on the part of the person and on the part of the Elders. The only time this pattern would not be followed as stated in the Scriptures is if the Holy Spirit directly led the Elders to proceed in a different manner that would be an exception to the pattern.

When the Family gathers whose needs are ministered to first? Those present or those who are not present? Naturally, because of the Father's heart for his children, those present are ministered to first and then prayer for those who are absent. This is the pattern and should only be changed at the specific direction of the Holy Spirit for that occasion.

We need to learn, to mature in our understanding. There are principles and patterns of order that we need to embrace for our gatherings. We need to learn how to “walk in the Spirit” together. This is much harder than walking in the Spirit by ourselves. We need to have patience with one another and leave room for the Holy Spirit to work on and teach our brethren and ourselves how to come together as one.

These other teaching articles may be of interest to you:

[Assembled Together](#)

[Discerning the Body](#)

[Functioning Together](#)

[Purpose of Assembling](#)

[Releasing Life](#)

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