

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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The Way We Think

The Way We Were

Lets start off by looking at where we were—our condition before we met the lord.

[Ephesians 2:12 NASB](#)

- (12) *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

This is our condition:

1. We were separate from Christ;
2. We were excluded from the people of God;
3. We were strangers to God's covenant promises;
4. We without God and had no hope.

Before knowing Christ, we had no ability to change our condition. While we could possibly change our circumstances in this world, we were unable to partake of any aspect of God's promise or provision. And we had no hope of ever being able to change any of this.

The scriptures also tell us why we stay in this condition.

[2 Corinthians 4:3-4 NASB](#)

- (3) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
(4) in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Who is the god of this world? Satan. What has he done? Blinded our minds. Blinded them to what? God and all of the things of God. The mind is not blind to education or science or anything else of this world but it is blind to the things of God. Therefore, without Christ we have

a heathen mind—a mind that thinks like the world because it is blind to the things of God.

The way a heathen mind thinks is like a heathen. How does the heathen think? “I am number one”. To a heathen nothing is more important than himself. Right? What is the second most important thing to a heathen? Satisfying his desires—if I want it, I want it. All he is concerned about is me, mine, what I want and what I have to do to get it, and how do I get more of it.

Before knowing the Lord, we had a heathen mind, lost and far from God. Then we were born again and we began to function with a carnal mind. What is a carnal mind? Some of our traditions give differing definitions of “carnal” but the scriptures define it for us.

1 Corinthians 3:3 NKJV

- (3) for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

Behaving like men, that is, the natural, earthly man, is the mark of carnality. After knowing Jesus, we are not to behave like mere men anymore. We are now children of God and should behave as such. So, another way of saying this is that *a carnal person is a born again person who is still thinking and behaving according to the ways of the world instead of the ways of God.*

We even see this in Peter, one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus.

Matthew 16:21-23 NASB

- (21) From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.
- (22) Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You."
- (23) But He turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.**"

Jesus was telling them what was to happen to Him as the Lamb of God. This was perfectly within the purposes of the Father. However, Peter didn't like what was being said by Jesus and rebuked Him. Jesus immediately rebuked Peter and his mindset. Peter was thinking and behaving as a carnal person with his mind on man's interests rather than any thought of God's interests. This was a Satanic thinking process and created a stumbling block for Jesus.

We have a lesson in this for us. Whenever the carnal mindset and thinking processes are being expressed as it relates to the purposes of God, it creates stumbling blocks, hindrances, to those who are seeking to do the will of God. Why is this? Because the thinking processes, the mindset, of the world is contrary to the things of God because it is blind to them.

Our problem is that we don't understand how serious this is. Our modern church provides little or no teaching that helps us put off the worldly mindset and begin to move on into the thinking processes of the mind of Christ. As a result, our modern church thinks and behaves like the world thinks and behaves. It is a tragedy.

What Jesus did

Our God is a God of processes. He didn't re-create the earth in Genesis in one day or in one moment. He did it in seven days—a process. He does the same thing with us—a process. A process takes time.

God meets us where we are. As the Scriptures say, God loved us not that we loved Him. He demonstrated this love by sending His Son who died for us while we were still sinners, undeserving.

1 John 4:10 NASB

(10) In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 5:8 NASB

(8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

He didn't wait until we got good enough. Jesus died for us while we were the worst heathen imaginable. He died for us because he loves us. He meets us right where we are; but he doesn't intend to leave us where we are, but he intends to take us to the fullness of something else that he has for us.

Romans 8:29-30 NASB

(29) For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

(30) and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

He did predestine us to be conformed to the image of his son. When he forgives us, it begins a process where the end result is that we look like Jesus. He starts where you are but he is going to take you to a new place. That is predestined—you have no choice. That is, if you are going to walk with Him, you are going to become like His Son or you will cease to walk with him.

Four Stages of Spiritual Growth

Let me give you four stages of spiritual growth.

1. get out;
2. get through;
3. get in;
4. dwell.

That sounds simplistic but it is not. It is based on the pattern of the children of Israel that were in Egypt and God's promise of the Promised Land. First get out of Egypt. God has a process for doing that—apply the blood to the door post in obedience and then follow Moses out of there. Then to the red sea for baptism and then the wilderness.

Once the children of Israel got into the wilderness, they were to learn some things. It took them

40 years to learn those things. The length of time in the wilderness was determined by them. It was only a two week journey between Egypt and Canaan but it took them 40 years. It took 40 years because they had 40 years of garbage that had to be worked out of their heart before they were ready to enter the Promised Land.

Our time in the wilderness is determined by us and our willingness to yield to change by the Spirit of God. We can take two weeks, two months, two years, 40 years, or the rest of our life. It's determined by how flexible we are to yield to the Holy Spirit for change.

Once the Children of Israel got out of Egypt and passed through the Red Sea, they were now “predestined” for the Promised Land. Although they desired on numerous occasions to turn back, that was really not an option. God was protecting them from the elements of the wilderness and the inhabitants. He made provision for food and water. If anyone turned back, they were no longer eligible to receive the protection and the provision—the wilderness would destroy them.

The first stage, getting out, is relatively easy. God has done all of the work. We simply need to be obedient.

The second stage, getting through, is very hard on us. God has to get Egypt out of our mindset and thinking processes, which is the purpose of the wilderness. We have to learn to rely on God for protection and provision and trust Him as our God and Father who loves us.

The third stage, getting in, is an expression of our dependency and cooperation with Him. We learn to become a worker with the Lord. The wilderness prepared us to participate in the plans and purposes of God and now we put it into practice.

The fourth stage, dwelling, is a testimony to the King and His Kingdom. Once we are in the land we must dwell, which requires a different mindset than we used to have. The Promised Land operates by a different set of rules than either Egypt or the wilderness.

The process of change takes us through the four stages of growth. As we move from one to the other, change is mandatory. Each stage provides the procedures for the changes that are necessary for the next stage. If we neglect the process, we will not be ready to enter the Land. Once we are through the wilderness, we either “stand and enter” or we become “bleached bones” in the wilderness.

The Purpose of the Wilderness

The majority of change is to occur in the wilderness. As we move into the wilderness, God begins to work in us on many levels. It is in the wilderness that we experience the renewing of our minds. Our thinking processes are changed.

Deuteronomy 8:2 NASB

- (2) "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

Deuteronomy 8:16 NASB

- (16) "In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.

Don't you think God knew what was in their hearts? He is God, of course he knew. Who had to know what was in their heart? They did. Jeremiah tells us the heart is desperately wicked who can know it. We don't know our own heart. God has to show it to us. He knows it and he uses the wilderness experiences to show us our heart. In verse 16 he tells us the outcome of it—to do us good at the end.

The purpose of what God is doing is to do us good at the end. That means that all of the humbling and proving and testing of our hearts is to do us good. We need to remember that because when we get in the middle of the humbling, proving, testing, it's hard to remember why we are there. We have to remember that God intends to do us good. That is why Romans 8:28 is so important.

He puts us into circumstances to humble us, prove us, show us our hearts so that he can do us good. So we have to get out Egypt and then get through the wilderness. Once through the wilderness we have to get in to the promised land. They had a physical land—the promised land. We have a spiritual land of promises. The scriptures say that the promises of God are yeah and amen. Yet, how many of us would say that we live daily in every promise of God? Why? Because there are promises that we have never experienced. Why? All of the promises of God are conditional, even salvation is conditional on believing and repenting. Every other promise of God is conditional. We legally have every promise of God. We experientially do not. So, getting into the land is getting into the promises experientially.

Joshua 1:2-3 NASB

- (2) "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.
- (3) "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.

Their **legal position**—they owned the land because God had given it to them. Every place you walk—**experiential position**—they had to walk on it to possess it. There were giants there that thought they owned it. Walking on it wasn't easy—they had to kill a few giants in order to do it. We have the same problem with the promises of God. When God promises us healing there is a devil there with sickness. Legally, healing is the children's bread—it belongs to us; it was in the covenant when Jesus hung on the cross—part of the atonement. However, we all have been sick at one time or another. So experientially we don't live every day in the promise that God has given us. We have to learn how to walk on the promises.

Once you are in the land and killed the giants you have to learn how to dwell in the land. It has different rules than the wilderness and the wilderness has different rules than Egypt. Even God's method of provision changed. His provisional level in Egypt was meager—survival level. In the wilderness, the provision level was just what was needed—just enough. The manna was good for one day, except for the Sabbath. Only enough for the needs of the moment. When they got in the land, the day that they ate the first meal of the produce of the land was the day the manna stopped coming. After that, it was the law of sowing and reaping. As we grow in God in these different areas, his methods of dealing with us changes, his provision for us changes, and the rules which we are operating under in God change.

These 4 stages are also reflected in our minds. The heathen mind is tied up in Egypt. The carnal mind is in the wilderness. The spiritual mind deals with getting in the land. The corporate mind, the mind of Christ, is about dwelling in the land. As we grow we will go through these types of

changes in our minds.

This is the process. A process is not done in one step and it is over. It has multiple steps and takes some measure of time.

The church has broken this process into pieces and preached the pieces separately rather than as one complete process. We have lost sight of the correct objectives and substituted other lesser objectives. We have confused the message to the point that we don't give a clear objective any longer.

The objective is the Lord Jesus. There is a new King in town. That is what upset the Caesars so much. If we really preached that there is a new king in town, it would upset our own judicial and legislative system. The King of the Kingdom of God says different things than what our government says.

What occurs in this process? God starts right where we are. It doesn't matter how far in the slime of this heathen world we were, God meets us there. Then, He starts pulling us out of that— He delivers us from the power of darkness and translates us into the Kingdom of His dear Son. He starts to work on us. He wants to move us from where we were to the objective that he has for us, which is to be conformed to the image of His Son. . How could John say in I John 3:2 that we would be like Him when He returns? Because we have been predestined to be like Him. Unless we have short circuited the process we are going to get there.

If I had a heathen mind before being born again, I still have a heathen mind after being born again. Only now we call it a carnal mind because it has the life of God in the spirit. However, we still have the heathen thinking process. The process of sanctification is the process of renewing our minds.

We have to learn

1. to think Gods thoughts Isa. 55:8-9
2. to feel God's emotions Matt 15:8 how to have righteous indignation
3. to desire God's plan heathen and carnal mind can't understand spiritual things
4. speak His Word requires a person commitment to the things of God
5. do God's work John 5:19 heathen mind doesn't see the Father doing anything.

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