

# 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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## It Is Required

### Introduction

For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his habitation be made desolate. Let no one dwell therein;’and, ‘Let another take his office.’ (Acts 1:20 WEB)

While this scripture is speaking of Judas, it has application to us today. To me, one of the saddest things possible is for our calling and purpose to be given to another because we did not fulfill it. Remember that Judas walked with Jesus just as the other disciples. He heard the same teaching as the other disciples. He worked miracles just like the other disciples. He went forth when Jesus sent them two by two just like the others, yet his position in the Twelve was taken by another. What is the difference between Judas and us? To me, that is an important question to answer.

### Teacher or Lord?

Judas was a zealot. His primary focus was on the overthrow of Rome and the establishment of the kingdom of Israel. He was very sincere in his goals and purpose. When he heard Jesus speak of the Kingdom, I think that he thought, “here is one I can follow who can accomplish my desire”. He fitted Jesus to his political purpose rather than fitting himself to Jesus' purpose. We can see this in the Scripture when we look at the way the disciples addressed Jesus as they spent more time with Him.

As the disciples came to Jesus at the beginning they called Him Rabbi, that is, teacher (John 1:38 among others). As you follow them through the Gospels, the way each addressed Jesus moved from Rabbi to Lord. The fullest expression of this transition is at the last supper when Jesus was speaking of His betrayal.

As they were eating, he said, “**Most certainly I tell you that one of you will betray me.**” They were exceedingly sorrowful, and each began to ask him, “**It isn’t me, is it, Lord?**” He answered, “**He who dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same will betray me. The Son of Man goes, even as it is written of him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born.**” Judas, who betrayed him, answered, “**It isn’t me, is it, Rabbi?**” He said to him, “**You said it.**”

(Matthew 26:21-25 WEB)

In their relationship with Jesus, each of the disciples had moved from Rabbi (master, teacher) to Lord except for Judas, who still referred to Jesus as Rabbi (master, teacher). Judas never made the transition to the Lordship of Jesus. As long as you are motivated by your own desires you will only look to Jesus as Teacher. To see Him as Lord requires that we die to our own desires. While you would find it very difficult to betray anyone whom you thought of as Lord, it is not nearly as hard to betray someone whom you think of as teacher.

We should learn a clear lesson from this. Judas didn't betray Jesus for the 30 pieces of silver. The money was not his motivation merely an extra benefit. That is why he threw the money on the floor of the sanctuary in front of the priests [*Matthew 27:5-8*].

Judas was a zealot. He saw Jesus as the one that had the power to establish the kingdom of Israel and throw off the yoke of Rome. He thought that he could manipulate Jesus into proclaiming his kingship. He never dreamed that Jesus would actually allow himself to be put to death. Judas thought that his betrayal would cause Jesus to use his power in a political manner. That is why he threw the money on the floor and went out and killed himself when he realized how wrong he was.

We too must transition to the Lordship of Jesus. We cannot manipulate Him for our own agenda or for our own gain. He is Lord and King. We do His will; He doesn't do ours.

## Worthy of the Work

Paul was also concerned about this. He disciplined himself for the ministry like an athlete disciplines himself for an athletic contest. His reason for doing this was to ensure that he would not become a castaway himself after ministering to so many others.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NASB)

Paul was certainly not talking about salvation. He was speaking of his calling, his work in the Lord. If this was a concern for the Apostle Paul, where does that put us? While contemporary teaching may make us feel good by telling us everything is all grace and there is no qualifying for the work that the Lord has called us to do, common sense and even a cursory reading of the New Testament tells us otherwise.

Paul said that we should prove ourselves in all things as ministers of God. The list of areas that approve us is certainly not a seminary curriculum.

Working together, we entreat also that you do not receive the grace of God in vain, for he says, "At an acceptable time I listened to you, in a day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is the acceptable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. We give no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our service may not be blamed, but in everything commending ourselves, as servants of God, in great endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; in pureness, in knowledge, in perseverance, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in

sincere love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Corinthians 6:1-10 WEB)

While we can never be worthy of our salvation, we do need to be worthy of the work God has called us to do.

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, (Ephesians 4:1 NASB)

It is a constant theme with Paul in his other letters, also.

so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; (Colossians 1:10 NASB)

just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 NASB)

In each of these cases, walking worthy is always related to God's calling and His work.

Peter gives us clear instruction on the things that need to be added to our lives and continue to increase as we grow in the Lord. The first part of Chapter 1 of Second Peter details these things and then in verse 8, Peter tells us why they are so important.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (2 Peter 1:8-11 NASB)

The Greek word here means idle, useless, inactive, and interestingly, unemployed. If we don't have the qualities that Peter listed in the previous verses and if they are not increasing in our life, we could find ourselves unemployed in the kingdom of God. To be called to work and then be unable to fulfill that work would be most tragic. Peter says that we are to be diligent to make our calling and selection steadfast, stable. If we practice the things listed, we will never fall or fail.

## It is Required

There are some minimal requirements that are necessary before God permits us to go on with the work that he has assigned to us [*Hebrews 6:1-3, Ephesians 2:10*].

So let a man think of us as Christ's servants, and stewards of God's mysteries. Here, moreover, it is required of stewards, that they be found faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:1-2 WEB)

If the Lord is going to entrust to us any of His mysteries, **it is required** that we have been found faithful in our stewardship. That says to me that present revelation from the Lord is a result of

previous faithfulness to His revelation.

Jesus said

"He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. (Luke 16:10 NASB)

The way that the Lord teaches us faithfulness is by starting with little things. As we are faithful in the little things then the Lord can add to us bigger things. He grows our faithfulness because it is required as we mature into the deeper things of the Lord.

Faithfulness is the minimal requirement. It is aspect of the nature of God. We must cultivate faithfulness if we are to fulfill our work and calling in the Lord.

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