

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)

Volume 16, Issue 4

April 2018

An Invisible Being

Introduction

Due to a steady deterioration of our understanding since the first century concerning “church” we have forgotten what church really is. Church has never been a building, temple, or any other form of edifice or place. Church since inception has always been a being—the Body of Christ, the Bride. Church has never been an inanimate object but has always been a living entity with Jesus as the Head and with us as His Body.

The Being that is the Church is invisible to the natural eye. It can only be known by the Spirit. We are told in the Scriptures that we are to know no one after the flesh, that is, according to the natural, but to know them according to their new nature in Christ [2 Cor. 5:16]. The new nature is invisible to our natural eyes.

Natural Understanding

Some of the reasons that our understanding of Church has become so foreign to the Scriptures is because we have applied our natural understanding and reasoning to what the Bible says about church. However, the Word makes it clear that this won't work.

1 Corinthians 2:14 NASB

(14) But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

The natural man operating in human reasoning CANNOT understand spiritual things. This includes Church, which the Lord is building.

Applying natural thinking to Church produces organizations, structures, hierarchies and similar things because that is how human reasoning works. The result is the multitude of denominations that we have today. However, those who can spiritually appraise things see one organism, one spiritual entity call Church.

Spiritual Understanding

Spiritual things can only be discerned or seen by our spiritual eyes. They can only be understood

by the revelation of the Spirit. Even communicating spiritual truth requires active involvement 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.

Because of the spiritual nature of Church we don't actually see it in the natural but we do see the effects of the Church as we interact.

The Church is made up of born again people who are operating from their New Nature. Born again people are being led by the Spirit and, therefore, their motivations are not understood by the natural man. Only the effects are seen.

John 3:8 NASB

(8) "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Natural reasoning produces organizations with the need to make members who will support the organizations. As a result we have a drive to make church members who will tithe and give to the church. Jesus never said anything about making church members. He said that we are to "make disciples of all nations" [Matt. 28:19]. Disciples not members. That is a major difference.

Proper Evangelism

How does a shift to a proper end result change our methods of evangelism? The natural man uses human reasoning to persuade a prospect to make a commitment. That is the essence of all forms of sales. However, Paul said that he didn't use persuasive words but demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit so that faith would rest in the power of God rather than in persuasive words of men.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NASB

(4) and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

(5) so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

John gives us some details in how we are to evangelize.

1 John 1:1 NASB

(1) What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--

1 John 1:3 NASB

(3) what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

We proclaim what we have personally experienced of Jesus—what we heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have touched with our hands of the Word of Life. Evangelism is not an issue of proclaiming “the 4 spiritual laws” but rather testifying to the work of Jesus in our own lives. A “personal” savior is validated by a personal testimony. This is what separates Christianity from all other religions—Jesus is alive and ruling from the right hand of the Father and is working in the earth today to bring to fulfillment the purpose of the Father.

Notice that the purpose of our testimony is to bring others into fellowship with us and with the Father and the Son. This type of fellowship far exceeds anything that we can conceive with our natural minds. It is a function of the Spirit.

When persecution comes, those who have been persuaded by the reasoning of men will be persuaded differently in order to avoid trouble. Those who have experienced Jesus personally and participated in the fellowship of the true Church and the Father and the Son will stand against all persecution because they have seen, touched, and handled true reality—the Living Word of Life.

You have permission to copy and distribute these materials provided:

1) no changes are made to the content, and, 2) they are not sold.

© 2003-2018 by Art Nelson and [Lifestream Teaching Ministries](#)

For comments or questions contact Art Nelson at this address:

artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com