

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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Appointed Times & Prepared Hearts

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Introduction

As I was finishing the teaching lesson "[But I say to you](#)", which deals with Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, I began to think about how little attention we pay to the direct words of our Lord. It is little wonder that we are not prepared for the times in which we live or the circumstances that are coming upon the world by the purpose of God.

There are two aspects for the accomplishment of God's purposes. The first is that all things have an appointed time, an effective time when His purpose is initiated or completed. The second is that His people have their hearts prepared for the appointed time in order that they might participate in His purpose.

The Lord's Words

We have a good example of what I am talking about in the events of Jesus' appearing after His resurrection. Jesus had told His disciples that He would meet them in Galilee after He was raised from the dead. Before His death He was giving them an appointed time and place to see Him after His resurrection.

"But after I have been raised, [I will go ahead of you to Galilee.](#)" (Matthew 26:32 NASB)

When the women came to the tomb, the Angel told them the same thing.

"Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, [He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him;](#) behold, I have told you." (Matthew 28:7 NASB)

The women ran to report this to the disciples and Jesus met them and repeated what He had previously told them before His death.

Then Jesus *said to them, **"Do not be afraid; go and [take word to My brethren](#)**

to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me." (Matthew 28:10 NASB)

Consider for a moment that Jesus was appearing to whomever He willed; but, He had told them that any or all of His disciples could see Him in Galilee. Of course, one had to believe that it was true that Jesus had been raised from the dead and make the journey to the appointed place. They that heard and believed had the opportunity to see the resurrected Jesus at the designated mountain in Galilee.

But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. (Matthew 28:16 NASB)

Paul tells us later in his epistles that there were more than 500 brethren who saw and heard Him during this time.

and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; (1 Corinthians 15:5-6 NASB)

Jesus continued to teach His disciples over a period of 40 days about the Kingdom of God, which was the focus of the Father's purpose.

To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised. "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:3-5 NASB)

He also gave them a command to wait in Jerusalem until they received what the Father had promised which was the Holy Spirit. They were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit before doing anything else. Then Jesus ascended and those who heeded Jesus' command returned to Jerusalem.

While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, (Luke 24:51-52 NASB)

They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. (Acts 1:11-12 NASB)

When they returned to Jerusalem, 120 of them gathered in the upper room where they continued in prayer, worship and discussion (Acts 1:13-15). Now, here is the question. If over 500 heard the command of Jesus to wait in Jerusalem, why is there only 120 in the upper room waiting? They had all received instructions from our *resurrected Lord*. They had physically heard His command, His directive word. And yet, the majority had not been obedient.

The 120 were in the upper room with one mind, that is, one focus, one purpose, one desire toward the Lord. Their hearts were being prepared for what was about to come forth in the earth. This

preparation time apparently went on for about 7 days. *[There are fifty days between Passover and Pentecost. Jesus died at passover. After His resurrection, which was three and a half days after the cross, He continued to teach His disciples for 40 days, leaving about seven days from His ascension to the day of Pentecost.]*

The 120 (the minority or remnant) with prepared obedient hearts were the first to receive the Holy Spirit as the Father promised. We don't know what happened to the other 380 plus disciples (the majority). Remember that they had believed enough to gather in Galilee to see and hear the Lord. However, they must have had other things to do than wait in Jerusalem. Apparently that was a word that they did not want to hear.

Maybe they received the Holy Spirit later; maybe they didn't. Maybe they missed God's plan for them; maybe they didn't. Maybe they repented of not being obedient to the Lord; maybe they didn't. Maybe they were just like us—they fully intended to wait as the Lord instructed when they heard His words but were distracted with the issues and problems of life and strayed from their commitment. Waiting is a hard thing for any of us to do.

Appointed Times and Prepared Hearts

God has purposed in His heart to accomplish certain things according to His plan. Some of this has been a mystery that has been hidden until the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading* to obedience of faith; [\(Romans 16:25-26 NASB\)](#)

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the *wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; [\(1 Corinthians 2:6-8 NASB\)](#)

He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him [\(Ephesians 1:9-10 NASB\)](#)

This mystery of His will has been hidden in ages past but is now being revealed “with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of times”. In other words the culmination of the mystery of His will is appointed for the fullness of times, the end of this age. Understanding the mystery will cause those who have prepared hearts to be able to have a suitable administration of the things of the Lord during the last days.

When we read the Scriptures, it is obvious that there are many things that are appointed to happen to fulfill the will of God before the return of the Lord. In order to participate in this according to His will, we will have to have hearts that have been prepared by the Holy Spirit for the appointed times.

The Season

As the close of this age approaches we need to remember the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. They grow together *until* the harvest then the Angels gather out the tares *first* and bind them for burning. This parable doesn't line up with an escapist mindset. One with an escapist mentality thinks that it doesn't matter, we won't be here anyway. As a result, their hearts are not prepared for what is about to come upon the world.

Our resurrected Lord is still speaking to His disciples. He speaks from Mount Zion, the appointed place. He speaks through the Holy Spirit, His administrator in the earth. He gives instructions, directive words to His disciples, who are expected to be obedient. But only the remnant is truly listening. The majority are thinking of other things, the issues and problems of life. The remnant is renewing its commitment to doing the Lord's will. Their hearts are being prepared to participate in the Lord's last days purpose.

What are you hearing the Lord say? What are those you fellowship with hearing the Lord say? Is it a comfortable, feel good word or is it a word to prepare your heart? Are you part of the majority or part of the remnant?

We serve an indestructible, everlasting King who rules an unshakeable Kingdom. His citizens must become unshakeable also. Impossible to do without a prepared heart.

For further consideration about this topic you might want to read:

Feb. 2009 issue Present Truth Teaching Letter: "[The Word of the Kingdom](#)"

Mar. 2009 issue Present Truth Teaching Letter: "[Present or Previous Truth](#)"

Mar. 2008 issue Present Truth Teaching Letter: "[Self Evident Truths](#)"

Apr. 2008 issue Present Truth Teaching Letter: "[Compressed Truth](#)"

May 2008 issue Present Truth Teaching Letter: "[Proceeding Word](#)"

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