

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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Present or Previous Truth

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Introduction

In a previous issue [[May 2008](#)] we discussed “proceeding words” from the Lord and how we need them. Proceeding words are both individual and corporate in nature. They occur as God “permits” us to move on in Him¹. When this happens, there comes a day when we begin to come into the responsibilities of sonship. We have grown up in the family of believers but it is now time to “get a job”, to be “employed” in the Kingdom of God, to begin to fulfill our calling by doing the works prepared for us from the foundation of the world. This is when the Holy Spirit brings to us a *proceeding word* that takes us into our work in the Kingdom.

There are three primary characteristics of a proceeding word:

1. it is *always* deposited in us by the Holy Spirit **before** it is confirmed by others;
2. it is *always* directional in its scope and nature;
3. it is *always* dependent upon the power of the Lord for it to be accomplished.

The result is that a proceeding word *always* moves us toward the fulfillment of our destiny in the Lord.

As we move forward in the proceeding word that God has given, we receive “present truth” words that are applicable to our present circumstances and the will of God. Present truth is for the NOW and, if not acted upon, can become “previous truth” that is no longer applicable to our present circumstances. It is important that we understand this so that we don't become confused or presumptuous with the Lord.

One example of a proceeding word is the instruction to the children of Israel to leave Egypt and go to the promised land of Canaan. A New Testament example is the command of Jesus to go into all of the world and make disciples of all nations. We will look at these examples of proceeding words and the way that “present truth” words come forth as we move into them.

¹ Hebrews 6:3 “And this we will do, if God permits.” NASB

Example 1: the Promised Land

God promised the Israelites that He would take them to a land flowing with milk and honey and give it to them. This involved leaving where they were and going with God to where He promised. If they didn't go with the proceeding word they were simple left behind in Egypt.

After the trials of the wilderness, they reached the land of Canaan and sent in 12 spies to check out the land. As you know, 10 of the 12 gave a bad report about the inhabitants of the land and the people were ready to abandon the “proceeding” word that had caused them to come to Canaan. However, Joshua and Caleb spoke God's “present truth” word to them.

Numbers 14:6-9 NASB Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; (7) and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. (8) "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us--a land which flows with milk and honey. (9) "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

This is a present truth word to complete the proceeding word that had been previously given. It applied to their present circumstances. However, the people rejected the present truth word from Joshua and Caleb. As a result, the present truth word from Joshua and Caleb become a “previous truth” word that was no longer applicable to their circumstances. God spoke a new present truth word that was now appropriate for their situation.

Numbers 14:28-35 NASB "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; (29) your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. (30) 'Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. (31) 'Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey--I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. (32) 'But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. (33) 'Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer *for* your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. (34) 'According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, *even* forty years, and you will know My opposition. (35) 'I, the LORD, have spoken, surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they will die.'"

The people didn't like the sound of the new present truth word, so they attempted to revert to the previous truth word. The scary thing is that they tried to do this with repentance.

Numbers 14:39-40 NASB When Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people mourned greatly. (40) In the morning, however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country, saying, "Here we are; we

have indeed sinned, but we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised."

"We have sinned" is repentance. However, the New Testament tells us that repentance has to be granted by God.¹ When a new present truth word comes, our repentance must relate to our disobedience to the previous word in light of the current word and our willingness to be obedient to the new word. They didn't do that. They only wanted a "do over" and revert to the previous truth which was now invalid as present truth. The result was that they were overcome by the enemies and many died.

Example 2: the Command of Jesus

We all know Jesus words about what we call the "great commission". He told us to go and make disciples of all of the nations [Matthew 28:19] and to preach the gospel to all creation [Mark 16:15]. This is a clear proceeding word. We are to do this as a command from Jesus. However, when Paul and Barnabas attempted to follow the proceeding word, this is what happened:

Acts 16:6-7 NASB They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; (7) and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;

The present truth word for them in their current situation seemed to be in contradiction to the command of Jesus. We forget that the Holy Spirit directs our fulfillment of any proceeding word. He speaks present truth to us that is applicable to our present circumstances.

How many "evangelists" or "missionaries" do you know that have taken the command of Jesus to go but think that they can go anywhere to preach to anybody without a present truth word from the Holy Spirit? It is no wonder that these are ineffective in the things of the Kingdom.

Present Truth

Present truth is a time constrained word. It is for the present time for the present situation. As such, it can become a previous word that is no longer applicable for the present time and situation. A new present truth is needed.

A good example of the time element involved in present truth words is given by Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 29:4-10 NASB "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, (5) 'Build houses and live *in them*; and plant gardens and eat their produce. (6) 'Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease. (7) 'Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.' (8) "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. (9)

¹ 2 Timothy 2:25 "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,"

'For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them,' declares the LORD. (10) "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.

Jeremiah gives them the word of the Lord that says to settle in to Babylon—to build houses, plant gardens, grow crops, pray for the welfare of the city, and other things associated with living. Then, He says that anybody that says anything else is a false prophet that the Lord has not sent. This present truth word was good for 70 years.

Daniel while reading Jeremiah realized that the 70 years of captivity was about to end and began to seek the Lord concerning His people. Both Jeremiah and Isaiah spoke present truth words that changed or replaced the previous truth.

[Jeremiah 51:6 NASB](#) Flee from the midst of Babylon, And each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, For this is the LORD'S time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her.

[Isaiah 48:20 NASB](#) Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! Declare with the sound of joyful shouting, proclaim this, Send it out to the end of the earth; Say, "The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob."

It is clear that you can't build houses, plant gardens and flee from Babylon at the same time. So, one present truth word is replaced by the succeeding present truth word. When the new word comes forth, it is disobedience to try to walk in the truth of the previous word.

Application

Today, there are many who claim to speak a “present truth” word. I receive emails of all sorts of “prophetic” words by many so-called “prophets”. Now that the economic crises is upon us, there has been an increase in both the doom and gloom “words” and the feel good, be happy “words”. We have to discern by the Holy Spirit, “Who has the present truth word?”

This is especially true corporately. Is God saying, “come out of Babylon”? If so, then staying in Babylon becomes disobedience. How can we be obedient if we don't know what God is saying? General truth is not enough. We must have proceeding words and present truth words that are God's will for our circumstances. These only come from our walk in the Spirit and our fellowship with other committed believers.

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