

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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A Call to Arms

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Introduction

One of our enemy's strategies to to keep us distracted from the plans and purposes of God. This has happened to the Church, at least to our version of it in America. We have diverted our efforts into side issues and ignored the primary functions of God's purpose for the Church. Maybe, we are even ignorant of God's plans for His Church.

The Scriptures are clear about one of the primary purposes for the manifestation of Jesus and His work as the Christ.

1 John 3:8 NASB the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

Colossians 2:15 NASB When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

Hebrews 2:14-15 NASB Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, (15) and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Jesus disarmed our spiritual enemies; He triumphed over them. He rendered the devil powerless who had the power of death previously. However, our enemies have not been eliminated, just disarmed. The only weapons left to them are deception, trickery, and the manipulation of our own fleshly desires.

The Lord continues His work now through His Body in the earth. He, as the Head, is seated in the Heavens while we, His Body and Bride, carry out His will in the earth through the power of His Spirit. There is an organic connection between the Head and the Body that we must see by revelation. The Head is the life source for the Body and provides direction and function. The Body is the expression of the Head in the earth to do His will, to reveal His finished work, to

bring His government, to set the captives free.

We know that God could have simply slapped the devil out of existence when he rebelled but He didn't do that. A display of power simply shows that God is more powerful but that is a given because God is God. For His own reasons, He desires to reveal His manifold wisdom to the Heavens through His Church. As a result, He has left the devil around for the time being so that we would show forth His wisdom in its many facets.

You're in the Army Now!

War was declared when our Enemy rose in rebellion toward God. It ends when he and his angels are thrown into the Lake of Fire (*Rev. 20:10*) which has been prepared for them (*Matt.25:41*). We live our lives between these two events. The war is raging now even though the final outcome has already been determined.

We are combatants whether we like it or not. We are in the Lord's army. All through the Old Testament, God is referred to in the King James version as "the Lord of hosts". "Hosts" is an old English word for "armies". Our Lord has saved us and made us to be in His army.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 NASB Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (4) No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

Paul recognized that he was in the Lord's army and told Timothy that to be a good soldier he would suffer hardship with him too. He was in "active service"; therefore, he was not to get entangled (distracted) by the affairs of everyday life but concentrate on pleasing the Commander-in-Chief.

Our problem, at least the American Church, is that we have become comfortable in the barracks and don't want to leave our bunks. We have ignored discipline, training, function and the purpose for which we were drafted. We have pretended that we are not at war! As a result, many captives are still in captivity.

At the Battlefield

Jesus gave authority to His disciples and sent them forth to do certain things.

Luke 9:1-2 NASB And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. (2) And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.

Jesus linked authority to the proclaiming of the Kingdom of God, dealing with demons and healing diseases. The authority that He gave to His disciples and to us is the *governmental authority* of the Kingdom of God issued from the King. We proclaim the Kingdom of God which is a governmental conflict with our enemies. This is manifested by healing and casting out of demons.

Luke 11:20 NASB "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Jesus has been given *all* authority in heaven and in earth (*Matt. 28:18*). He has now given us

authority over *all* demons. There is no demon, no matter how seemingly powerful, that is not subject to us by the authority of the Name of Jesus. When we encounter demonic activity as we proclaim the Kingdom we exercise the authority that has been given to us and remove the demon from the situation.

The problem that we have is that we don't act like an army. An army operates as a unit not as individuals. We act like individual soldiers doing our own thing according to our own ideas. As a result, we have deliverance ministries but we have little governmental occupation of territory.

This is what Jesus said happens to a demon that is cast out of a person:

Luke 11:24-26 NASB "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' (25) "And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. (26) "Then it goes and takes *along* seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

So, what had happened after the demon left. The house or territory previously occupied by the unclean spirit was cleaned up but it was not under the control of a new government. It was empty and waiting for another occupant to claim the territory.

How many war movies have you watched where the goal was to take the next hill and hold it? The goal of a marching army is not just to remove the enemy but to also take control of the territory, to put it under new government and set those who were oppressed by the old government free so that they can now operate in the new government.

The Finished Work

Jesus has finished His work. He has done all that He needed to do. He has provided every resource needed and made every provision that is necessary for the perfect, complete and total fulfillment of the will of the Father. We are His workers who apply His work in situations and lives. We are conduits from which flow His living waters as He said (*John 7:38*). He has given us the authority to do this because He has already completed it and provided it to us in His finished work..

Matthew 16:19 NASB "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

John 20:23 NASB "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

From these Matthew and John scriptures we have four statements that make use of *perfect tense* verbs. They indicate that when you do a certain work, at any present time, it shall already have been perfected. Whatever you bind on earth shall have already been bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth shall have already been loosed in heaven. Whose sins you forgive have already been forgiven. Whose sins you retain shall have already been retained. This is true because of the finished work of Jesus.

Simply put, we are a channel, a flow, an agent of the finished work of Christ and its release into a

life or a situation. With the authority given to us we become the executor of His finished work in the earth. We should never move away from this finished work of Jesus, because it is the basis for all our living and victory. It is the source to which we look continually to find the resource for every demand, the strength for every kind of weakness, and the provision for every kind of need. In it is the foundation of His Government and is the basis for His Church and His Kingdom.

We as His ambassadors only have authority for His work not our own work. We can't decide what to bind or loose or whose sins to forgive or retain. *We can only reveal what has already been done in Heaven by the finished work of Jesus.*

Our Failure

This is where we are failing. Sure, we can cast out a demon; but we are not bringing in new government to replace the control of the demon. We are not extending the Kingdom of God. We have become distracted by blessings and our own desires. We want to use the authority of the Lord for our own benefit. However, true authority only benefits the purposes of the King and His Kingdom. The Church is failing to operate in its God given authority to take ground from the enemy, to bring release to those held captive, proclaiming a new government—the Kingdom of God.

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