

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 7, Issue 1

January 2009

Stop—Think—Apply

Art Nelson

Introduction

As I was pondering the new year and asking the Lord about the subject for the first Present Truth Teaching Letter for 2009, I seemed to hear in my spirit, “stop and think and do the Word of the Lord”. While I am not sure of the full extent of the meaning of this, I am convinced that it is the focus of what God is saying for the coming year. So, in keeping with that thought, this issue will present several things about which we need to “stop—think—apply” the Word that the Lord has already given us and which we have neglected to apply to our life circumstances.

Before proceeding, consider our premise concerning “present truth”. All of the Word of God is Truth and it is personified in the person of Jesus Christ who is the Word made flesh. However, after He ascended He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit which He poured forth on those who believed and He has a specific purpose in His work in us. **"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (John 14:26 NASB)**

So, at various times and seasons in the purpose of God, the Holy Spirit will bring an aspect of Truth to our remembrance. When the Holy Spirit emphasizes a particular truth in a particular season, that is “present truth”. It is present truth that keeps us fresh in the Spirit. Present truth is the 'compressed' truth of the Word that has been 'uncompressed' by the Holy Spirit through revelation and understanding. If we fail to walk in present truth, we cut ourselves off from further revelation of truth. We “settle on our lees” and our “taste” remains in us.

Jeremiah 48:11-12 NASB

(11) "Moab has been at ease since his youth; He has also been undisturbed, *like wine* on its dregs, And he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, Nor has he gone into exile. Therefore he retains his flavor, And his aroma has not changed.

(12) "Therefore behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will send to him those who tip *vessels*, and they will tip him over, and they will empty his vessels and shatter his jars.

It is continuing in present truth that purifies us, pouring us from vessel to vessel. Otherwise, we stagnate and our 'aroma' remains in us; that is, we stink to high heaven.

The Lord has emphasized several aspects of 'present truth' over the past few years, which includes things regarding the Kingdom of God, the Church, the work of the ministry, placement and function, apostles, prophets, overseers and teachers, Body life and relationships. If we don't begin to apply that which the Lord has spoken, this will be the year that He will send "the tipper of vessels" to us.

Unfolding Truth

Let's recap some of the various aspects of present truth that we need to stop and think about. These are not presented in any particular order.

Stop and think about the differences between the Kingdom of God and the Ekklesia, the Church. The Scriptures make it very clear that they are different and yet we talk and act and live our lives as if they are the same. Jesus emphasized the Kingdom not the Church. He spoke of the Kingdom about a hundred times and yet mentioned the Church in only two verses (once in Matt. 16:18 and twice in Matt. 18:17). When Jesus sent forth His disciples, they preached the Kingdom. In Acts the early believers preached the name of Jesus and the Kingdom of God; but, today, we preach "receive Jesus and join the Church". Have we preached the wrong thing? Are we guilty of placing emphasis on the wrong thing? What does it mean to us that the Kingdom and the Church are different things? Have we completely misunderstood 'church' or the 'kingdom'? [*For more on these things see ["The Kingdom of God Series"](#), ["Being the Church Series"](#), ["Will the Real Church Please Stand Up?"](#), ["Government of God Series"](#)]*

Stop and think about what it means to be the Ekklesia, the Body of Christ, the Church. Have our 'church traditions' made the commands of God ineffective? Have we substituted form for function? In our society, we "go to church"; yet this is impossible from the Scriptures. We are the Church! Have we substituted performance and programs for the life of the Spirit? Have we been 'baptized into the Body' by the Holy Spirit? [*"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13 NASB)*] Are we ministering life to one another? Are we satisfied with warming a pew with our backside on Sunday morning? Is God satisfied with us when we do that? Is the Sunday morning meeting what the Lord had in mind when the Scriptures speak of "assembling together"? [*For more on these things see ["The Captivity of the Church Series"](#), ["Primary and Secondary Goals"](#), ["Father's Covenant"](#), ["Purpose of Assembling"](#).]*

Stop and think about what it means when the Scriptures talk about leadership or authority. Jesus said that those who lead us and operate in spiritual authority would not be like those in the world nor operate in the manner of the world. *"And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' "But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant." (Luke 22:25-26 NASB)* Our leadership does not lord it over us as they do in the world. Our "benefactors" are not those who have authority over us. Are we operating like the world? Does the desire for authority drive our leaders? Do we have leaders who act like servants or not? [*For more on these things see ["Developing a Father's Heart"](#), ["Kingdom Government: Shepherds"](#), ["Spiritual Authority"](#)]*

Stop and think about the function and structure of our 'church' meetings. Is our structure a hierarchy with this one under that one, etc.? If so, we are violating what Jesus said as listed above. Do we have a 'pastor' that is responsible for all spiritual ministry? In the Scriptures there is not such thing as a 'pastor' such as we have in our institutional churches. In the Scriptures, 'pastor' is never mentioned in connection with 'a church'. Instead, the leadership of the Church is provided by Elders, which are always plural. Our one man leadership church model does not exist in the Scriptures. We have divided the assembly into “clergy and laity” giving us a “pulpit and pew” structure. Both of these are erroneous when they are compared to the Church described in the Scriptures. The Word presents the Church as “every member involvement”, each contributing to the growth and supply of the Body. Each one ministers to another in mutual edification. Can our current meetings do this? Is it possible to minister to one another as the Lord intended? Or have we structured things in such a way that it is impossible to follow the leading and ministry of the Spirit? [*For more on these things see “[Unity of the Faith](#)”, “[Spirit of Diotrephes](#)”, “[Principle of the Tithe](#)”, “[House of the Lord](#)”, “[Functioning Together](#)”]*]

Apply

These are just a few of the things that the Lord has been speaking to His people over the last few years. However, these words have been either ignored or twisted into some form of ministerial self promotion. The Holy Spirit has brought enlightenment and understanding to many but those who are speaking of these things are like voices crying from the wilderness. The institutional mainstream continues fat, dumb, and happy. What do we do? How do we apply what God has said?

I seems to me that it is very, very difficult if nor impossible for the changes required to apply these words to happen in the institutional church. The 'house churches' are as bound by traditions as the institutional church and in some ways even more resistant to change because they are convinced that they have it right. What are we to do?

In my case, there is no venue to even speak of the things that the Lord is saying—the institutional churches don't want to hear and the house churches don't want to hear either. So, I hold periodic teaching classes to try to bring understanding and motivation to those who have ears to hear.

I would like to hear from any of you are also struggling with these issues if you are on this email subscription list or who access this lesson from the website. I would like to hear of any solutions that have come to mind—any methods that are working. Are any of you participating in an assembly that is a true Ekklesia, functioning at some level as the Lord intended? Please, let me hear from you—my email is at the bottom of this teaching letter.

© 2003-2008 by Art Nelson and [Lifestream Teaching Ministries](#)

Previous issues of Present Truth are on the website: www.Lifestreamteaching.com

For comments or questions contact Art Nelson at this address:

artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com

You have permission to copy and distribute these materials provided:

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

Removal instructions:

This is a free teaching letter, without cost or obligation.
If you have received this teaching letter in error or if you desire not to receive "Present Truth" teaching letter please reply with "remove" in the subject area.