

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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Standards & Measures

Art Nelson

Introduction

One of the areas of concern that I have is that there seems to be a major increase in believers who do not hold the written word of God as important as we have in the past. In their minds there seems to be little need to read, study and learn the Scriptures. The excuse used is that we are following the Spirit and the Spirit is doing things and revealing things to us. My problem is that many who are saying this seem to have little discernment concerning the things of God and, because of their attitude toward the Scriptures, seem to be unable to discern if the Spirit they are listening to is actually the Holy Spirit. They have no appropriate standard of measure. Instead they are using their own “feelings”, their own standard, to determine if the spirit or the teaching is true or false.

Recently I was helping one of our granddaughters with her school science lesson, which was on standards of measurement. Her lesson said that the development of standards were necessary for the advancement of scientific knowledge otherwise there would be no way to communicate results of experiments and conclusions of proofs. Standards made it possible for truth to be communicated correctly and exposed false procedures. If this is true for science how much more is it important for our spiritual understanding?

God's Standard

By definition a standard doesn't change. It is always the same in all situations. God has given us and unchanging standard in His Word.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
(John 1:1 NASB)

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NASB)

Before our Lord was incarnated as a man, He was the Word. He is the unchanging standard of

God because He is God, the Word. Jesus as the Son of God is the Word that has been made flesh. We are to be like Him, conformed to His image. That means that the Word must become flesh in us also. Not just in intellectual knowledge but in practice so that our very actions reveal the Word in action just as Jesus showed us the Word by His life and by His actions.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (Hebrews 1:1-2 NASB)

Previously, God spoke to us through the prophets; but, the way that God speaks to us now is through His Son, who is the Word. He is still speaking to us through His Son because "...the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10 NASB)

We don't understand how important the word is to God. At the last day, we will be judged by the word that Jesus has spoken.

"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. (John 12:48 NASB)

Since the word is the standard by which we will be judged, it is also the standard by which we judge ourselves and those who come in the name of the Lord.

Continue

We have a record that the things that Jesus said were written for our benefit, to enable us to believe and have life.

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31 NASB)

It is important then that we study what has been written because it was recorded for a purpose. What has been written has become the standard of measure for anything else that might be said for the "testimony of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy," will always be aligned with and measured by the written words of Jesus.

Jesus specifically told us what it takes to be a true disciple of His.

As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:30-32 NASB)

Continuing in His word is the only way to know truth and the only way to be made free. The word is the standard of truth and it is the standard of freedom.

It is clear from what is recorded in the New Testament that the early Church relied on the recorded Scriptures from the Old Testament to understand what the Lord was saying and doing. The Holy Spirit interpreted Old Testament prophecies and applied them but the disciples had to have a basis of knowledge about the Old Testament Scriptures for the Holy Spirit to work with. Since this is the case, why do we think that we don't need to study the New Testament in order to

have a basis for the Holy Spirit to interpret the word to us?

Jesus made it clear what the Holy Spirit would do when the Father sent Him to 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)

The Holy Spirit teaches us partly by bringing to our remembrance things that Jesus said. Notice He causes us to remember. We remember what we have heard or what we have read. The earliest disciples had heard Jesus speak; but, we, the later disciples, learn of Jesus from the written word. If we have not read nor studied the words of Jesus, what is the Holy Spirit going to bring to our remembrance?

Lack of Foundation

It is the lack of knowledge of the word that causes us to be open to strange doctrines and strange practices. Until a proper foundation of the word is built into us, we can't go on to maturity.

For this reason, having left the subject of the beginning [*principles*] of Christ, let us continue being moved to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead [*fig., utterly useless*] works and of faith toward God, of [*the*] teaching [*or, doctrine*] of baptisms [*or, immersions*] and of [*the*] laying on of hands and of [*the*] resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. And this we shall do, only if God shall be permitting.
(Hebrews 6:1-3 ALT)

The things listed here are the beginning principles of Christ and they are all things fully documented in His written word. How are we to move on to maturity if we have not learned the beginning principles of Christ? How do we learn these unless we study the word and call upon the Holy Spirit to bring us understanding? How can we discern if it is the Holy Spirit or another spirit that is moving if we don't know the character and practice of the Holy Spirit from the word?

Without a working knowledge of the written word we become prey to the wolves who speak of angels that drop gold dust, or jewels, or feathers, or oil. We become prey to men who push people down, slap them in the head, hit them with their fists for healing. We become prey to "churches" where people go into frozen trances, uncontrollable laughter, howling and hissing, uncontrollable shaking, all to a tribal musical beat in the name of "the anointing".

The only cure for deception is truth. The way to know truth is to continue in His word as Jesus said. Enough of this standard-less mysticism and let's get back to the standard of His Word. After all it is what will judge us.

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For comments or questions contact Art Nelson at this address:

artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com

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