

PRESENT TRUTH

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Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 KJV)

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20% Christians

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Why does the American Church seem so weak when we compare it with the Church of the first century? We, today, should have every advantage--greater numbers, faster travel, multiple avenues of communication and distribution of knowledge. But, we seem to lack the power of the early Church along with the commitment and maturity of the members. Why is it this way? God is no respecter of persons and He is the same today as yesterday and will be the same tomorrow. The Holy Spirit has been given to us as a Helper just like He was given to them. The difference then must have something to do with us. Since the Lord has given us all things that pertain to life, maybe we have neglected God's way of bringing us to maturity.

I believe that most of the current problems in the American Denominational Church exist because we have neglected the 5-Fold Ministry as presented in Ephesians chapter 4.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, (Ephesians 4:11 NASB)

There are two reasons given for the work of these 5 ministries:

for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (Ephesians 4:12 NASB)

These 5 are to equip the saints to do their work and they are to build up the Body of Christ.

We are also given the results that are expected to come from the work of the 5 ministries:

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; (Ephesians 4:14 NASB)

We are not to remain as children but instead grow up--become mature. Because we have not recognized and received from the full 5 fold ministry, the Denominational Church has remained as children. We have only fully received the ministry of the "pastor" or shepherd and, therefore, have only received 20% of the equipping and building up that the Lord intended for His Body.

We age physically but remain children spiritually. This is not what Jesus had in mind when He said that we should become as a little child. We are to be children only in believing and receiving from the Father.

Jesus gave us the gift of 5 ministries because we need 5 ministries to grow up! Without them (all 5) we remain children, unstable (tossed here and there), and easily deceived (carried about, tricked). As a matter of fact, I imagine that part of the Devil's strategy is to keep the people of God spiritually retarded, unstable and deceived. It is adults that become productive members of society, soldiers, protectors, providers; not children. Could it be that the society of the Kingdom of God doesn't have enough adults in it to function properly in the earth?

When you build a house it takes several types of workers--carpenters, plumbers, electricians, foundation men, roofers, etc--to complete the house. God is building His House and He gave 5 ministries to build it not one or two. It is impossible for "Pastors" alone to complete the work of God in His people. That is the difference between us and the first century Christians--we are only 20 percenters. The Church is full of children who like to play "dress up" and pretend to be grown-ups.

If we can receive the 5 ministries of Jesus, if we can move from 20% to 100%, then we have a promise of what we will be like--Jesus! Ephesians 4:15 tells us that "*...we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,*". When this happens there are some expected results.

from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:16 NASB)

First, there is a completeness--the whole body. Second, there is unity and purpose--fitted, held together by supply from every joint. Third, there is functionality--proper working of each individual part. This results in a strong Body--growth and building up of itself.

Isn't this what we need today? Enough falling short. Let's receive the Jesus appointed apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers in the fullness of each ministry so that we can be 100% of what we are supposed to be.

Of course, before we can do this we have to understand what these 5 ministries really are and how they operate. It appears to me that the Denominational structure is too restricted to contain them. Unless God works a miracle, I don't see how a denominational church can fully receive these ministries--it doesn't have a place for most of them nor an avenue for their functioning according to the Lord's intention.

The denominational model is not God's model of His Church. If you have the schematics for a car, but, the purpose is to build an airplane, you will never achieve the objective. We must have the correct schematics, blueprints, blue lines, in order to build the correct product. Jesus is building His Church and He has the master plans. The traditions of men will never accomplish the purposes of God. The 5 fold ministry can only function fully when it transcends our model of the church.

May the Lord open our eyes to the inability of men to package the purpose and work of God into nice, structured consumer products, which we can open or close as we see fit. God's way is not our way. It is far above our ability to package it. Why do we try? Can't we just do it His way?

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