

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter from Lifestream Teaching Ministries

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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The Kingdom Within

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We have always had a fascination with “deeper truths” as we move in the things of the Spirit of God. In the early 70's “deeper truth” meant things dealing with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the 80's “deeper truth” meant things dealing with the government of God. In the 90's “deeper truth” meant things dealing with the five-fold ministry. Now in the first decade of the new millennium, “deeper truth” means things dealing with the Kingdom of God.

I have ministered and lived through each of these decades of “deeper truth” and, hopefully, will live through the current one. A couple of things become obvious in retrospect. (1) Not everyone is interested in “deeper truth”. (2) Just because one is interested in the current “deeper truth” doesn't mean that he will be interested in the next “deeper truth”. We have a tendency to “camp” around any “deeper truth” that effects us greatly. After all, everyone needs the “deeper truth” that we just discovered.

One other thing about “deeper truth” scenarios. They churn the water; they stir things up. As a result, there is a lot of debris, jetsam, and flotsam that needs to be eliminated. Every “deeper truth” that comes forth brings with it all sorts of fringe ideas, thoughts and understandings. Some of these are wonderful, some are weird, and some are just plain wrong.

The Lord has His own refining process to remove the “lees” from His new wine, to purify it. We push every truth as it comes forward toward every extreme. The Lord works to bring everything back into balance. Watchman Nee once said, “any truth taken to an extreme becomes a heresy.” That is why every time a “deeper truth” comes forth, the side effect from the extremes is heresy.

So it is with the current understanding of the Kingdom of God. Many use the “lingo” of the Kingdom without understanding its real meaning. Others want to make the Kingdom physical now and force the world to operate according to their understanding of “kingdom principles” making our society a New Testament version of the kingdom of Israel. Let's come into balance.

Basic Facts about the Kingdom

1. The Kingdom of God is currently not of this world.

John 18:36 NASB Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

2. You must be born again to see or enter the Kingdom.

John 3:3 NASB Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:5 NASB Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

3. The Kingdom of God and the Church are not the same thing.

Ephesians 2:19 NASB So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

We are fellow citizens in the Kingdom and we are part of God's household (church). As point two above says, we have to be born again, that is, Christians, before we can see or enter the Kingdom.

4. The Kingdom is currently contained in the Holy Spirit.

Romans 14:17 NASB for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The Kingdom of God is *in* the Holy Spirit. Its elements are righteousness, peace, and joy.

5. The Kingdom is within us in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 17:21 ALT neither will they say, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' For listen! The kingdom of God is within [*or, among*] you*."

Luke 17:21 NASB nor will they say, 'Look, here *it is!*' or, 'There *it is!*' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

6. The Kingdom of God is increasing.

Isaiah 9:7 NASB There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

The Kingdom of God has come in “mystical” form currently. It is contained in the Holy Spirit. Later, at the Lord's physical return to establish His reign, He will establish His physical Kingdom, which will rule for 1000 years.

However, we live in the “now” and as such can receive many of the aspects of the Kingdom of God now (but not to the extreme that some have taught—we only receive the fullness of the

Kingdom when the Lord returns.)

The Inheritance

Ephesians 1:11 tells us that “we have obtained an inheritance”. Not only have we obtained this inheritance, we have also been given a down payment, an earnest, a pledge of our inheritance, which is the Holy Spirit who was promised to us.

Ephesians 1:13-14 NASB In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, (14) who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

We have received the Holy Spirit within us as our down payment on the inheritance, which is the Kingdom of God. We have not yet received the fullness of the Kingdom, only the down payment. However, we must allow the Kingdom, through the Holy Spirit, to gain victory in our life if we desire to receive the fullness of the inheritance

Ephesians 5:5 NASB For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

This is not dealing with what we call “salvation”. This is dealing with our inheritance. To inherit, you have to be family, a son or daughter. Inheritance is based on *who* you are not on *what* you do.

You are qualified to receive the inheritance because you are a son or daughter and because the Father is pleased with you as a son or daughter.

Colossians 1:9-14 NASB For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, (10) so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; (11) strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously (12) giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. (13) For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, (14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

We have been qualified because the Father qualified us. However, is it possible that we can disqualify ourselves?

1 Corinthians 9:27 NASB (27) but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Paul was certainly not speaking of being disqualified as it relates to salvation, but was speaking of disqualification in terms of the inheritance, the reward of the Kingdom. If Paul was concerned about his own disqualification, I suspect that we should be concerned about ours.

The Government of the Lord

In Acts 14:22, as Paul and Barnabas were returning to the various cities where they had preached Christ on their first apostolic journey, they strengthened and encouraged the disciples by telling them that "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." This further illustrates the difference between Church and Kingdom since we are "born" into the family of God; but, it is through many tribulations that we enter the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is the rule of the King—Jesus. We come under His government, His rulership. That is why tribulations are involved. The government of Jesus requires us to adjust our attitudes, relationships, and environment. This produces conflict between our desires and the Kingdom.

Jesus told us to pray for "His kingdom to come and His will to be done". He also told us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness". We are to seek His rule over us first—it is of primary importance. Because His rule produces righteousness and peace (Isaiah 9:7).

When the Holy Spirit comes, He brings the Kingdom of God into our heart. It immediately begins to increase, to grow in us, and it comes into immediate conflict with our old nature and desires. That is why the scriptures tell us that we must present our bodies as a living sacrifice and that we must be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:1-2).

The Increase of the Kingdom

As the seed of the Kingdom grows in us through the Holy Spirit, it begins to move outward into our souls. The first area affected by the increase of the kingdom is the mind in all of its aspects. The extent to which we allow our minds to be renewed is the extent to which we walk in the way of the Kingdom.

Our minds are filled with self-interest. The natural mind evaluates everything from the perspective of its effects on me and mine, even our understanding of God's plans and purposes. A clear example of this is given to us in some of Peter's interaction with Jesus. Jesus had just finished telling His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem to suffer, die and be raised the third day. Peter grabbed Him and told Him, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You." He said this without any consideration of God's plan and purpose for Jesus as revealed by Jesus' response.

Matthew 16:23 NASB But He turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.**"

The first area of the mind affected by the Kingdom is the adjustment of our goals and priorities. These must change to reflect the Holy Spirit's directives instead of our own. He is the administrator of the government of the Kingdom of God and He begins to make adjustments in us as we come under the Lord's government.

As our goals and priorities change so will our work change. What we are doing relates to our goals and priorities. As these move from self-interest to God's interests, it naturally results in a change of what we are doing and, usually, in how we are doing it.

Another area that is adjusted is our relationships. We can no longer build relationships with

those we like based on personality, emotional ties, character traits, natural relationships, or commonality of experiences or problems; but, instead, we build relationships based on the Holy Spirit.

[2 Corinthians 5:16 NASB \(16\)](#) Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer.

Jesus gave us a clear example of this in His own relationships. On one occasion He was speaking to a group and His mother and brothers seeking to speak to Him.

[Matthew 12:47-50 NASB](#) Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." (48) But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "**Who is My mother and who are My brothers?**" (49) And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "**Behold My mother and My brothers!** (50) "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

He illustrated the criteria for Kingdom relationships. They are not based on the natural but on the purposes of God. It is those who are doing the will of God that should become our closest friends.

It is time for us to come under the government of the Lord Jesus. It is time to seek His rule over us. It is time for us to be adjusted so that we can fulfill His purpose.

We pray, oh Lord, let your Kingdom come, let your will be done. Amen.

[For further teaching along these lines, you might want to consider "The Government of God" series or listen to "The Renewed Mind" series. Both of these are available on the website.--Art Nelson]

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