

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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Dark Light

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A few days ago I was pondering on some of the words of Jesus that don't immediately make sense. One in particular had always bothered me, because I knew in my heart that my understanding of it was not the complete meaning. This is what Jesus said:

Matthew 6:22-23 NASB "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. (23) "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Luke 11:35-36 NASB "Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness. (36) "If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it will be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays."

What bothered me was, "how can light be darkness". Doesn't make sense does it? As I pondered on this, I realized that I had always read this from the natural viewpoint with the eye being the natural eye through which we see light. Then it dawned on me that Jesus was speaking a spiritual truth and I needed to look at this from the spirit and not my natural understanding.

Light and Dark

In the natural we have a spectrum of light. A prism can break down light into its spectral components. We also have light that can't be seen with out natural eyes because the spectrum is outside of that which our eyes can see. Examples of this are infrared and ultraviolet light.

In the spiritual realm we have two types of light which are the light of God and the light of darkness. The Scriptures tell us that "God is Light", that Jesus is the "light of the world", that we are "light", that we are to "walk in the light as He is in the light", and many other references of a similar nature. There are also a number of Scriptures that speak of darkness, which is our natural state without Jesus. Sons of this age are called sons of darkness; when we walk in our natural understanding or in our own reasonings, we are walking in darkness. There are many other similar references to our state before knowing Christ.

Eyes of the Heart

Now, let's go back to Jesus' words when He said, "The eye is the lamp of the body." Just as our natural being has physical eyes that allow light to come to our vision centers, our spiritual bodies also have eyes that operate by or with spiritual light. [NOTE: Paul tells us in I Cor. 15:44 that, "If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."]

So, we need to identify that part of us which corresponds to our spiritual eyes. There are several Scriptures which relate to this.

Ephesians 1:18-19 NASB *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (19) and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might*

Paul prayed for the Ephesians that the eyes of their heart would receive light. Most of the time when the "heart" is referred to in the Scriptures, it means "the inner man", kind of a combination of soul and spirit. From this we know that our spiritual eyes are in our inner man.

Later in Ephesians Paul speaks of our condition before knowing the Lord and in this he further defines our spiritual eyes.

Ephesians 4:17-19 NASB So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, (18) being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; (19) and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

So, we can conclude that "the eyes of our heart being enlightened" is the same as our understanding receiving light. The Greek word for "understanding" in the verse above is "*dianoia*" and means the deepest processes or thoughts of our minds, which is consistent with our conclusion concerning the eyes of the heart.

As I pondered on these things, my own understanding suddenly, by the Holy Spirit, received light. I was enlightened as to the meaning of Jesus' words.

Lamp of the Body

Jesus said that the "eye is the lamp of the body". This is extremely important. The Lord has given us a perfect picture of how this all works in the form of the Tabernacle of Moses. We know that the Tabernacle was a pattern, a shadow, of something in the heavens and that everything about its structure and furniture is a picture of spiritual truth.

The types and shadows recorded in the Scriptures are the spiritual language of the Holy Spirit so that understanding does not come except by the Spirit. Jesus spoke in parables for the same reason: understanding comes only through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

However, the Lord does intend for us to come to understanding and He has provided to us the Holy Spirit so that we can understand those things that Jesus intends for us to understand. But, we have to learn "spiritual language" first. Natural thinking processes, natural understanding can

never understand spiritual truth.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 NASB (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, (13) which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. (14) But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

The structure of the Tabernacle consisted of three major components: the outer court, the holy place, and the holy of holies. In these we have a picture of Jesus in all of His ministry. We also have a picture of our path to the throne room of God. Jesus is always the door. Each of these three components of the Tabernacle has a door. Each door represents Jesus in one aspect of His ministry as the Way (door to outer court), the Truth (door to holy place), the Life (door to holiest of holies). Another aspect of truth in this regards light. The light of the outer court is the natural light of the sun. The light of the holy place is the light from the seven branched lamp. The light of the holiest of holies is the light of the presence of the Lord.

The Tabernacle is also a type of the structure of man. When God made man, He made him a triune or three part being. This was done on purpose. We are triune beings because we are made in the image of God who is also a triune being. Because of this, we can begin to understand our nature when we can see and understand the type in the Tabernacle.

We can relate the Tabernacle's three major components with our three major components—the outer court is the body, the holy place is the soul, and the holiest of holies is the spirit. Now consider for a moment, we receive a new spirit when we are born again so we are in union with God, who is Spirit, through our spirits. Sanctification is the outworking of righteousness and holiness from our spirits into our souls. [Remember, Jesus came to save *souls* not *spirits*.] Romans 12 tells us what we do next.

Romans 12:1-2 NASB Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. (2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

So, our bodies are given as a sacrifice. The Altar of Sacrifice is in the outer court of the Tabernacle. [The furniture of the Tabernacle relates to us for a purpose.] Our minds, the primary component of the soul, must be renewed. If the soul relates as the holy place, then the pieces of furniture that are applicable are the Table and the Lamp. The light comes from the lamp so then renewal of the mind begins with the lamp.

Jesus said “the eye is the lamp of the body” and we have already seen that the eye relates to our heart and understanding; therefore, the Lamp in the holy place represents our understanding and its light illuminates the Table and the rest of the holy place.

Lamp and Light

Jesus also said that if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness. We can conclude that before we know the Lord the lamp is not giving forth the light of God but instead

is shining with the light of darkness.

The Lamp of the Tabernacle was a lampstand with seven branches that had little bowls of oil at the end which were lit to provide the light. Prior to knowing the Lord, our lamps burn with an oil of darkness, the understanding that comes from our natural mind that has been corrupted by sin and rebellion. Paul gives us a picture of this type of oil and light.

Ephesians 2:1-3 NASB And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, (2) in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. (3) Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

The Lamp has seven branches and the listing here in Ephesians of our former condition presents seven aspects of the oil of darkness.

1. Trespasses and sins
2. walked according to the course of this world
3. walked according to the prince of the power of the air
4. lived in lusts of flesh
5. indulged the desires of the flesh
6. indulged the desires of the mind
7. by nature children of wrath

Before knowing the Lord, the only light in our understanding comes from these seven areas of the oil of darkness. No wonder Jesus said “if the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness.”

The Lampstand has a central branch with three branches on each side of it. I think that this is important because we have a relationship between the corresponding branches. For example the second branch on the left of the central branch would have a balancing relationship with the second branch on the right of the central branch. Based on this, I think that we can list these seven branches as they would relate to the central branch.

3 LEFT BRANCHES	CENTRAL BRANCH	3 RIGHT BRANCHES
1. Trespasses and Sins 2. Walk by Course of World 3. Indulge Desires of Flesh	By Nature: Children of Wrath	1. Living in Lusts of Flesh 2. Walk by Course of Prince of Power of Air 3. Indulge Desires of Mind

The process of renewing our minds replaces the oil of darkness in the Lamp with the oil of the Spirit. We receive true light in which there is no darkness.

The Kingdom Comes

When we are born again we receive a new spirit that contains the seed of the Kingdom of God. When the Holy Spirit comes that seed begins to grow and flow into our soul (process of

sanctification) and the first area touched is the lamp of our understanding, which is the beginning of the process of renewing our minds. The sevenfold bowls of oil of darkness are replaced by the oil of the sevenfold Spirit of God detailed in Isaiah.

Isaiah 11:2 NASB The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

This is what we have if we put this into the same table format as previously with the other seven aspects of our nature before knowing the Lord.

3 LEFT BRANCHES	CENTRAL BRANCH	3 RIGHT BRANCHES
1. Spirit of Wisdom	Spirit of the Lord	1. Spirit of Understanding
2. Spirit of Counsel		2. Spirit of Strength
3. Spirit of Knowledge		3. Spirit of Fear of the Lord

As the Kingdom of God begins to come or to increase in us the Spirit of the Lord flows into the central branch of the lampstand and replaces the existing light and oil of our nature as children of wrath. The oil continues to flow to the other lamp bowls replacing their oil and light also so that, over a period of time, we have a renewed understanding. [The process of the oil flow is detailed in Zechariah chapter four.]

When we are heathens, we have a heathen mind; that is, our way or process of thinking is heathen and is directed by the seven aspects of darkness as detailed above. When we are born again, we receive a new spirit, but the way we think is still heathen. We have a carnal mind that is still directed by the seven aspects of darkness that light our understanding. The renewing the mind process moves us from a “carnal mind” toward a “spiritual mind”. Until the Spirit begins to enlighten our understanding, we cannot grasp spiritual truth. As we individually develop spiritual minds, it is then possible for us to come together collectively into the mind of Christ.

The Church is in trouble today because we have accepted the “carnal mind” as the norm. We think just like the world thinks, only we couch it in religious terminology. Even our leadership has very little renewed understanding.

We have stopped teaching on the renewing of the mind and instead concentrated on prosperity and success. As long as this is our focus we are adding more oil of darkness to our Lamp. Prosperity and success appeal to the carnal thinking processes and will hinder or prevent any real spiritual growth in understanding the deeper things of God. No wonder we are so shallow in our understanding—the light that is in us is darkness and how great it is!

Dark light is for those who walk in darkness. We, however, are of the light—let us walk in it.

[For further study on this topic watch for the “Renewing the Mind Series”, which will be available on the website soon.--Art]

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