

The Foundation of Ministry

Introduction

Much of our problem today is that few who minister are actually qualified to minister. We have substituted seminary education for the preparation of the Holy Spirit with the result that few actually have the basics of the ministry built into their life and don't know how to minister these to others.

Paul tells us that he did not receive his gospel, his message from men. That men did not teach it to him but that he received it by revelation of Jesus.

For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ([Galatians 1:11 NASB](#))

For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ. ([Galatians 1:12 NASB](#))

We have substituted intellectual knowledge for the revelation of the Spirit. That is why many of the lives of those who minister do not manifest the fullness of the life of Jesus.

All ministry begins in Jesus, as we have said, it is *of Him, through Him and to Him*. The basics of that ministry is three-fold:

1. The blood of Jesus
2. The cross of Jesus
3. The life of Jesus

Without understanding these three ministry basics we will be unfruitful in the ministry of the Lord and will be frustrated in our own understanding and application of His Word.

The Lord has provided these three things to enable us to be brought back to a place of being summed up in Jesus (see the [Purpose of the Father](#) lesson). It is important that we understand these three things and their place in our ministry of reconciliation.

The Blood of Jesus

We use words many times without thinking about their meaning. Words become overused to the point that we don't really know what they mean. We only know how to use them in the right context. That makes it sound like we know the meaning whether we do or not. The blood of Jesus is just such a phrase. It is misused frequently in Pentecostal circles. Have you ever heard

the phrase “plead the blood”? Where did we come up with that? It is not in the scriptures. The closest thing to this phraseology is in Revelation 12:9-11 where the saints overcame the accuser of the brethren by the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb. As we shall see in a moment, this is the only true form of “pleading the blood”. We testify to what the blood of the Lamb has done for us and this testimony is used specifically to overcome the Accuser.

What is the purpose of the blood? Who is it for—us or God? Most people would say us, but it is actually for God. The blood is an atonement. It is what God sees instead of our sin. Therefore, its primary purpose is for God—to satisfy His justice and righteousness.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.' (Leviticus 17:11 NASB)

Leviticus 16:30 tells us that the blood cleanses us before God. We are made pure before Him. Its purpose is to provide justification before God.

Our old nature is not cleansed or made righteous by the blood. His provision for our old nature is the cross of Jesus. The blood and the cross are not interchangeable. We sometimes treat them as if they are, but they are not. The blood takes care of our heavenly needs—righteousness and justification. The cross is God’s methodology for our daily walk—the putting to death of the old man.

We need to understand the use of God’s provision for us. If we understand this properly we will take away half the enemy’s weapons against us. If we are sick and the Doctor gives us a treatment regimen that is designed for a different disease than the one that we have, it doesn’t do us much good. The treatment is true for the proper disease but not for others. It is the same with God’s provision—the blood of Christ is for certain things and the cross of Christ is for other things. If we need to treat something with the cross, it doesn’t mean that the blood is not true. It just means that we are trying to treat the wrong thing with it—that is not what it was designed for.

Look at how the Blood is used in Revelations.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:10 NASB)

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. (Revelation 12:11 NASB)

It is by the Blood that we cast down our Accuser. Who is our accuser? Satan! Where is he? Before God. What is he doing? Accusing us. The Devil is not running around the earth wrecking havoc (this doesn't happen until he is cast out of Heaven in Revelation)—he is before God accusing us.

While he is accusing us before God, what is happening in our minds? The same accusations are also being whispered to us. That is the link between our minds and the Devil's accusations. As the accusations continue we receive condemnation. How do we stop that? By testifying to what the Blood has done for us.

The Blood has covered our sin. The Blood justifies us before God. We can declare to the enemy that we stand under the Blood. God sees the Blood not my sin; there is no condemnation because God sees the Blood.

So, you see, the Blood is for God to see and for us to use to overcome the accuser. The Blood is a spiritual weapon to be used against the work of the enemy. The cross is for our daily walk; it is a weapon against the flesh.

The Blood keeps our conscious clear. The Blood doesn't wash our hearts. Ezekiel says that we get a new heart.

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. (Ezekiel 36:25 NASB)

"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26 NASB)

Jeremiah said that the heart is desperately wicked. That is why we have to have a new one. For the same reason that we don't wash and iron clothes that are going to be thrown away, God doesn't wash our heart. We get a new one because the old one is going to be thrown away along with our bodies. The old heart epitomizes the old nature and it is to be done away with.

The old man must be delivered to death so that the life of Jesus may be manifested. As long as our old man is alive and active, Jesus is not revealed in us. We must be delivered to death so that the life can be revealed.

While the blood justifies us before God, if we are dealing with a "cross" issue, the blood is not what is effective—we need the cross. It is inappropriate to pray, "O Lord, by your blood don't let me sin tomorrow." It is appropriate to pray, "My old nature has been crucified with Christ, I

will not yield to temptation. Strengthen me, Lord, in the inner man.” Do you see the difference between the two?

The Cross of Christ

The blood deals with our sins—what we have done. The cross deals with the body of sin—who we are—the son of Adam. The only thing that can be done with the old nature is to crucify it. You can’t clean it up, send it to church, make it good, or do anything else with it except crucify it. That’s why we receive a new nature in Christ and we are to live by the new nature.

We need to understand three expressions of the cross:

1. The word of the cross
2. The work of the cross
3. The way of the cross.

The word of the cross is the preaching about the cross. The work of the cross is what Jesus accomplished when He hung on the cross. The way of the cross is the daily application of the cross to our lives. It takes the power of the Spirit to reveal the work of the cross and it takes the power of the Spirit to apply the way of the cross to our walk.

The work of the cross is a one-time event—a crises event. From then on we reckon the deed done. Our old man was crucified with Christ—it is done—the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. ([Galatians 2:20 NASB](#))

The way of the cross is the application of the work of the cross on a real-time basis—a daily lifestyle that incorporates the work of the cross. In our lives the old nature is reckoned dead. The work of the cross is for the old man—the way of the cross is for the new man.

Jesus said that we should deny ourselves, take up the cross daily, and follow Him. This is a three-step process. It begins with us denying ourselves. Many people think of this as taking up their cross; but, Jesus said deny ourselves first and then take up the cross (Luke 9:23). What is the difference between these two?

Denying ourselves does not kill the flesh. A good moral person can deny the urge to steal because he is a good moral person. It doesn’t have anything to do with God. Taking up our cross always involves death—the death of the flesh. This always involves God.

There are three characteristics of the Cross:

1. a *principle* in God before the foundation of the world, the Lamb was slain before there was a need for a savior.
2. a *place* where divine loves meets human hate, where the human will crosses the will of God;
3. a *power* for those that believe.

We have all heard the scripture preached about the cross being the power of God; in most cases, we have not rightly divided the word of Truth.

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18 NASB)

This is not a scripture for the lost. The preaching of the cross is not for the lost—they consider it foolishness. The preaching of the cross is for us *who are being saved!* Read this scripture carefully—that's what it says—the word of the cross is the power of God to us who are being saved! To those that are perishing (the lost), it is foolishness—they laugh at it.

Then, what is the power of God to the lost? The Gospel! (See *What is the Gospel?* lesson.) The lost need to hear that Jesus came, died (shed His blood for atonement), was buried, rose and revived, and is now Lord of all. It is through the Gospel that the Holy Spirit woos the lost.

Why is the Cross the power of God to us who are saved? Because, the power to be transformed into the image of Christ lies in the Cross not in the Blood. Songs and messages about the Cross are not (or shouldn't be) *salvation messages*—rather they should be *overcoming messages!* We overcome in our daily walk by the Cross not the Blood.

The Life of Jesus

If we are going to evangelize, we must have the life of Christ manifested in us. They know when they are seeing flesh and when they are seeing real life. Jesus must be revealed through us for ministry to be effective.

We express the life of Jesus in three ways:

1. by thoughts
2. by intentions or motives
3. by actions.

Jesus was moved with compassion and love for those that he came into contact with. If we are manifesting the life of Jesus, we will be moved in the same manner—by the love of God. This is

not a mealy-mouthed love like many have today, but a true love. Not a love that excuses but a love that confronts.

Read the story of the Rich Young Ruler in the scriptures (Mark 10:17-22). After Jesus had told him what to do from the viewpoint of the Law and the Rich Young Ruler said that he had done that, the scriptures say in Mark that Jesus looked at him and *loved* him. Then, He told him to sell all and give it to the poor and follow Him. The Rich Young Ruler couldn't handle that and walked away.

This was *confrontational love*. When Jesus looked into the Rich Young Ruler's heart, He saw something that stood between him and God. Confrontational Love always seeks to remove the things that stand between us and God.

And finally, the life of Jesus is manifested through *actions*. If healing is needed, then pray for the sick. If deliverance is needed, then cast out devils. If food is needed, then multiply what is available. When the life of Jesus is present, miracles occur.

Two Family Trees

In the Garden were two trees—the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life. Adam never ate of the Tree of Life, only of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. So, we now have two family trees—one of Adam rooted in the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and one of Jesus rooted in the Tree of Life.

We all understand from genetics that we inherit characteristics from our ancestors. From Adam's tree we inherit rebelliousness, independence, disobedience. But if the last member of that family dies, the characteristics, the genetics, die too. If I was the last Nelson with no successors and I died, everything from my ancestors dies with me. That is what happened with Jesus as the Last Adam. He was the last of that family. When He died all of Adam died with Him.

Jesus rose as the Second Man, the first born of a new race—the Head of a new family. When we are born again, we are born into that new family and inherit the family traits of righteousness, peace and joy. We have a new family tree and the nature that goes with it.

The nature of the Adamic tree is grabbing or grasping—we grasp for power, pleasure, money. It is characterized by the phrase “for me”. The nature of the family of Adam is selfishness, self-centeredness. Of course, this “grasping” trait can be traced back to Lucifer who grasped at being God and fell. He tempted Eve with the same line—you can be as Gods—and she grasped at that.

The nature of the Tree of Life (Jesus) is giving—He gave himself for us. It is characterized by the phrase “for others”. The scripture says that Jesus was equal with God but did not grasp at

equality with God but humbled Himself. We are to have the same mind—think the same way that Jesus did.

When we go to minister, we must operate from the proper family tree. If we minister from the Adamic tree, we go in pride, use manipulation, get as many “decisions” as possible so that we can add more notches to our gun—“we had 27 saved last night in our street witnessing!” My first reaction to that is “where are they today”. If they were born into the family, where are they when the family gathers?

We need to remember: “If it wasn’t done through the life of Jesus, then there was no life in what was done.”