

THE WORD

We Would See Jesus



Over many months we have been studying worship and its different dynamics from the aspect of sacrifice. Starting this year off I sensed the exciting and awesome subject of the Word of God bubbling up. Over the years and in so many discussions with many people I would get asked the question, “How did you know that was the word of God that you shared before you shared it?” My answer is always the same, “I didn’t, but I saw the word.” I understand the look of curiosity that I get when I make that

statement. What people are usually thinking is, “What does the word look like?”

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.” (John 1:1-3) “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. . . full of grace and truth. . . . Jesus Christ.” (John 1:14, 17) John 1:5 makes this curious statement: “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” We read previously that Jesus is not only Life, but His Life is the light of men. In order to need light you have to be in some sort of darkness. If Jesus is the light to shine on mankind’s darkness, then it is plain from John 1:5 that mankind does not understand the Light. This is our fundamental problem with seeing the Word, who is the person, Jesus Christ.

The second problem is what we do with the image God creates with that word. “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness. . .’” (Genesis 1:26) “When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them ‘man.’” (Genesis 5:1, 2) Last month we looked at the fact that there is no temple in the Holy City because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is its temple (Revelation 21:22). We also looked at our transitions from temples made with human hands to the Holy Spirit residing in human

temples, to our final place where God alone is the temple. We all have a human tendency to worship the image God creates instead of God, who created the image. God knows this, so He sent Jesus, the God-man to give us a new image and make us into a new creation.

Almost every major Christian denomination started from some revival; some image of God or revelation of Father, Son and Holy Spirit that had been lost and needed restoration. Yet it doesn’t take us long to start worshiping what we can see; i.e., the revival or the physical manifestation of the truth. You would think that that wouldn’t be so bad. But as soon as we take our eyes off of the person of the Word in Jesus Christ, we backslide. Let me give a modern day example. At the turn of the 1900s a revival took place and the work of the Holy Spirit was restored with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. Many denominations sprang from this revival and many do wonderful works for Christ and are quite faithful in what they do today. But about a year ago I was in a church service listening to a very reliable minister from one of these denominations preach. He quoted from a statistic that only 14% of its membership today actually speaks in tongues---down from 100% at the turn of the century---and frankly the problem isn’t limited to this particular organization.

Let me share what I think happens to all of us---where the rubber meets the road in our lives: We take our focus off of Jesus, the Living Word. For example, in Christian

circles we have men's ministries and women's ministries and worship ministries and youth ministries. We have ministries that minister to all of these ministries. We have ministries that clean the temples made by human hands and we have ministries that try to clean the human temples. Are all of them necessary? Absolutely, yes. If you have ever been a pastor and realized on Saturday night that the toilets were filthy in your church bathrooms, you would have been very blessed to have someone that would minister to that aspect of the temple made by human hands!! Yet have you ever seen a worldwide revival start because somebody preached about ministering to the temples made by hands or ministering to youth ministries or men's ministries or home group ministries? No. Why not? Because God comes in glory on the order and sacrifice of His Word. Think about it. Every major historical revival came because of the revelation of the word--that Word coming in the form of the Holy Spirit brooding in revelation on the spoken word of God (Father, Son and Holy Ghost). We absolutely need helps ministries because our faith without works is dead. But that flows as an outcome of preaching the Word, Jesus Christ. If you try to substitute good ministries or anything else for this, we are out of order. And God in glory does not come outside of His prescribed order. So eventually even the very truth God wanted to restore dries up (along with the helps ministries) because nothing can be sustained without the Word, flowing in Holy Spirit breathed revelation.

We talked many months ago about housing the word of God and then praising or praying that word out loud and placing that word as a heart of sacrifice to God. Releasing anything else in praise or preaching or prayer is not going to move God. Why? Because faith and obedience to God's word is what moves God. When people ask me how I know a word is from God, I see what cannot be seen by human eyes, exchange my knowledge for what He knows, by faith receive Him in the form of His word, and through obedience speak or write or sing or pray or praise what He commands. This is revelation and the Spirit of God moves upon and broods upon revelation to birth what He desires. This is not a new theme but a very old one. The ancients taught it and it is what our first pastor taught us as baby Spirit-filled Christians. Even as young children growing up in mainline churches we were 'indoctrinated' with this concept because it is the first and last reality of Jesus Christ--the Alpha and Omega of our faith. It is WORD constantly becoming reality and dwelling among us.

The Scriptures are replete with this concept, from beginning to end. One of my favorite of these Scriptures is seen in Hebrews 11:1, 2: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. This is what the ancients were commended for." (The King James reads vv 2 as: "For by it the elders obtained a good report.") But as with all topics concerning God, there is a danger in substitution. When we lift up any ministry, no matter how God-ordained it

may or may not be for a particular moment in time, over the totality of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit will no longer brood on that situation. Human anointing and human 'feel good' emotions can mask the fact that the Holy Spirit is no longer an active participant, but an observing bystander. And this is how we begin on the slippery slope of good-church effort and not Holy-Spirit breathed movement. This is how religious spirits begin to affect us. For those of you that have read the book Beyond Strongholds, we looked at judging women and not allowing the mind of Christ to be implanted in us as the source for a religious spirit's control. This should not surprise us. Eve was created in the image of God. When we judge that image according to our own understanding and refuse to allow the mind of Christ to reveal the image of Christ in Eve (women), we will substitute our own thinking in this area instead of Christ's mind. This is true for all aspects of ministry. Let's look at our Scripture reference for this month and see if Jesus reveals a pattern for us to see the Word.

John 12:20-32 reads as follows: "Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request, 'Sir,' they said, 'we would like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.’ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, ‘This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.’”

It would take a small book to expound on all the dynamics of this portion of Scripture. On face value, the request seems logical, but Jesus answers with a totally illogical statement. Imagine, if you will, that your child walks in the room and says, “Mommy, I want a glass of milk.” You respond with, “Unless you jump in the milk bottle, become a cow and have a baby, you will receive no milk.” Rightfully so I think all of us would agree that the authorities should come and take you away as an unfit parent if you did something like that. If we were to look at this portion of Scripture in the natural and not see the Word of God, that’s how we should interpret it. I have read some scholars who make a good argument from the verses before and after that these Greeks (and the disciples) had prestige and money as a

motive for this request. Whether the argument is correct or not, it would not surprise me that they were focused (worshiped) on the image that they could see as opposed to what they could not see. Yet Jesus immediately redirects their vision. He does not focus their vision on something other than Himself, but He points their vision to what they cannot see about Him. They cannot see that housed in Him, the Living Word, is the power for every living soul’s resurrection. He has just raised Lazarus from the dead and this same crowd is following Him because of this sign (John 12:17-19). In actuality this is one of the ‘Messiah miracles.’ Raising someone from the dead after 3 days (on the fourth day) was a miracle that the religious believed only the Messiah could do. So the crowd was correct in following Jesus. The religious leaders are afraid that people will lose sight of them, and focus their attention on Jesus. Jesus is focusing their and our attention on Himself and telling us plainly that if we will lift Him up, we will be resurrected and will have the same power to resurrect others. Father God in awesome glory falls on the revelation of this Word. Ah, but the people cannot see the Word clearly and only hear it as a thunder or an angel. Their eye is not clear on the Word, but on what they believe the word should do and say (John 12:37-41).

Reading the articles on sacrifice over the last few months we can get caught up in our sacrifice in order to work or minister for Jesus. My grandmother, God rest her soul, was such a person. She was always sacrificing for the next generation (us and

her great grandchildren). I watched as two generations abused this sacrifice. That wasn’t what troubled me. What troubled me was that I saw no fruit. As I observed this, I turned to the Lord to ask Him some questions. Basically His response was this: We can sacrifice for many things, but when our motive is on what we can see as opposed to lifting up the Word, Jesus Christ, we will absolutely sacrifice needlessly. The next generation or ministry or venture will come up polluted, self-centered or be totally lost anyway. This is why faith-based initiatives can get off base and out of God’s order when we forget to lift up Jesus, the Living Word as the focus. Without that revelatory word going forth, manifesting Jesus, even something as God-ordained as sacrifice can be totally wasted with no eternal value. In our featured text, the theme and focus is on the Son of Man being lifted up. Jesus lifted Himself up on the cross and then commands His followers to do the same by lifting Jesus up and exalting what He did on the cross and by faith revealing the Word---the very nature of Christ to a lost and dying world. Then the Father will glorify that ministry and that word will have eternal value.

From our featured text it’s obvious that not even miraculous signs can draw people to believe: John says, “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: ‘Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?’ For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says

elsewhere: 'He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn---and I would heal them.' Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God." (John 12:37-43) Even some of the leaders who believed in Jesus still had their focus tainted and tarnished by the image of the word that they understood and could see as opposed to believing in what they could not see. They could see the word in other men, but praise from God many times is unseen. Isaiah believed and by faith saw the Word and obediently spoke and wrote as God commanded. As a result He saw Jesus and His glory, thereby having his own personal revival!!

Through the revelation of the Word---Jesus Christ, the Christian church has done awesome ministry, both worldwide and historically. Before Christ there were no hospitals or large community-wide schools (except in Jewish circles). There was no concept of rescue missions or feeding the poor (except in Jewish circles because of the Old Testament). Even our three-branch form of government and constitution is based on the revelation of a covenant-keeping Triune God. Slavery---which held most of the world captive was eventually abolished as a direct result of the revelation of Jesus Christ---the word to the hearts of Christians.

The only way the world can be changed is through the revelation of Jesus---the Word. Over the next few months we will be studying the Word of God. Since God knew we would always worship and focus on what we could see, He sent us Jesus, so that we would really see the Eternal, Living Word that was the light of mankind. Each one of us need the Word revealed to us daily so we can transition from houses of worship that we can see to a temple that is God. Since we are moving to a destination in which God is the temple, let's ask the Lord to give us a daily revelation of the Word, Jesus Christ---and then an open door to pass that revelation on to a lost and dying world. Log on next month for more. . . .



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