

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 62

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Topic: The Ministry of The Word - Part 1

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Spiritual ministry flows from the Word of God , which is the sword of the Spirit, and which equips the man of God for every good work:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 MKJV *All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work.*

Hebrews 4:12 MKJV *For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Ephesians 6:17 MKJV *... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,*

The apostles saw the ministry of the Word and prayer as their two top priorities (Acts 6:2-4). And teaching the word was the main job of the church elders appointed by Timothy and Titus (1 Timothy 2:7, 3:2, Titus 1:7-9) as well as the apostolic leaders themselves (1 Timothy 4:11-13, 2 Timothy 1:11, 2:24, 4:2).

The central focus of the ministry of the Word is Christ, His character and His commandments. Even the Old Testament Scriptures are about Christ (Luke 24:27,44 1 Corinthians 1:10-11, 2 Timothy 3:15). We should be talking about Jesus a lot!

The focus of the NT is on the four gospels which set forth Christ. Acts and the epistles then explain the message of the gospel and its spread among the nations and correct misunderstandings about Christ, His character and His commandments. The apostles saw proclaiming Christ and Him crucified as their central, even only, task (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Other issues are secondary (though they may be important). There are brief passages about church order, leadership, ethical and moral issues and family life. There is almost no teaching about politics.

The ministry of the Word involves the plain setting forth of Christ and of His salvation. It is not about human philosophy, or politics or the ideas of the age. It is not even about social issues such as abortion or family or health care, as urgent as these may seem.

Unless we teach Christ first and Christ deeply these other issues will be addressed in vain. Without Christ's example of agape love and His commands regarding relationships all our teaching on family becomes futile. Paul's epistles always outlined the doctrine of Christ first and foremost before addressing the practical issues of the Church.

The ministry of the Word is not about theological speculation, or even about 'bible knowledge' (as in bible trivia quizzes). The Pharisees had tremendous bible knowledge, and the scribes and Saducees were theologians, but they did not understand Christ!

John 5:39-40 MKJV *You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life. And they are the ones witnessing of Me, (40) and you will not come to Me that you might have life.*

We should not be learning the Bible just for the sake of learning the Bible. Our teaching should come out of the Scriptures but should point to Christ Jesus (as the Scriptures themselves do). We should aim at producing growing faith in Christ and not just at imparting knowledge. Our goal in teaching is salvation and maturity in Christ Jesus and full obedience to His commandments:

Colossians 1:27-29 MKJV *(27) For to them God would make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, (28) whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. (29) For which I also labor, striving according to the working of Him who works in me in power.*

Governments will change and the systems of this world will pass away but the Word of the Lord will stand forever. Therefore teaching Christ from the Word is the most important thing we can do because it has eternal consequences, life for some and death for others:

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 EMTV *(14) Now thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and making known through us the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. (15) For we are the fragrance of Christ to God among those being saved, and among those perishing. (16) To some we are the fragrance of death leading to death, but to others the fragrance of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? (17) For we are not as the rest, corrupting the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.*

The apostle Paul trembles as he contemplates the ministry of the Word crying out: *And who is sufficient for these things?* The ministry of the Word is a high and holy task, not a means of commercial profit (2 Corinthians 2:17 above). It is something to be pursued with purity and integrity and with the awareness that teachers experience a much stricter judgment (James 3:1).

The ministry of the Word is primary because it is the ministry that causes faith to grow in the hearts of believers.

Romans 10:17 EMTV *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

And without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

The other spiritual gifts are useful but they must operate in tandem with the ministry of the Word. For instance, healing the body without proclaiming Christ is just a mere delaying of people's entrance into a Christ-less eternity.

Even prayer depends on the ministry of the Word and the intercessors knowledge of the power and the promises of God.

Finally we must address the issue of how the Holy Spirit works together with the proclamation of the Word of God. The Holy Spirit's role is to glorify Christ :

John 16:13-15 MKJV *However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatever He hears, He shall speak. And He will announce to you things to come. (14) He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will announce it to you. (15) All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and will announce it to you.*

And the Holy Spirit is the author of the Holy Scriptures:

2 Peter 1:21 MKJV *For prophecy was not borne at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke being borne along by the Holy Spirit.*

Thus the spiritual ministry of the Word will involve active cooperation with the Holy Spirit as He seeks to glorify Christ. This will come about as we, with renewed minds, study the Scriptures which are the textbook of the Holy Spirit. As we dig into the Bible the Holy Spirit will 'take of Mine' (the things of God in the pages of the Scriptures) and reveal them to us. Praise be to God!

More on this theme tomorrow, God willing.

Blessings,

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