

CATCH THE FIRE

STUDIES 1 - 10

STUDENT MANUAL

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

Catch The Fire

Studies 1 - 10 *Student Manual*

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Stephen Nemeth Lectures

PLACE OF REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH

STUDY 1

Scripture Portion: John 21:1-22

A London church had a large board outside with the invitation: “Come In Here And Have Your Faith Lifted!”

Unfortunately, in many congregations, this is definitely not the impression given, but rather one of gloom and death. An examination of **John chapter one**, may furnish the reasons and the remedy.

1. THE REASONS FOR DECLINE.

(The letters RSV, following a reference, denotes the use of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, authorized by Protestant and Catholic authorities.)

Christ is hidden from view though always there in reality.

John 21:1 - (RSV) -*Jesus showed himself*.....

Important though it is for our redemption, there is a tremendous emphasis on the *death* of the Lord Jesus, without a balancing view of His resurrection life.

In this story, the death of the Lord Jesus had spelt disaster to the hopes of the disciples of a Messiah Prince’s sweeping them into political power.

The Lord had sent the women to testify that He was alive and that His disciples were to meet Him in Galilee.

Matthew 28:10 -

They had obeyed Him, but were now growing tired of waiting for His appearing - just as the modern church seems to have lost its expectation of His coming in glory and to have settled for more worldly aims.

Company and fellowship within the church are weak.

John 21:2 -

Peter was outstanding as the “rock” and leader, but he had just passed through the dreadful failure of his denial of the Lord with cursing and swearing.

Luke 22:61-62 -

Matthew 26:72-74 -

Thomas was full of loving courage -

John 11:16 -

but an inherent pessimist and a rank unbeliever when it came to the resurrection.

John 20:24-25 -

Nathaniel had no guile -

John 1:47 -

but he had fled with the rest when Jesus was betrayed -

Mark 14:50 -

John alone had stayed right through to the cross -

John 19:26-27 -

but may still have been thinking in terms of calling fire down from heaven upon their adversaries -

Luke 9:54 -

to forward his own throne in the new kingdom -

Mark 10:35-37 -

with typical selfish intolerance -

Mark 9:38 -

How often we can trace the same attitudes in the church today! Yet Christ has to work with them and can turn these attitudes completely around, as He did with John -

1 John 2:9-10 -

c. *Conditions within the church are bad.*

John 21:3 -

Peter backslid to the old life of fishing.

Luke 5:10-11 -

Others soon followed his example. The way in which it was done was completely without prayer. Darkness came on and their labor was fruitless.

Just so, despite better organization, meetings, campaigns and missions today, there is little fruit in souls being saved or believers being added to compare with the report being put in.

Strangers are hardly interested at all. The preacher often gives the same message to the same crowd year after year.

2. THE REMEDY IS REVIVAL.

1. Christ revealed.

John 21:4 - (RSV) -*Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach;*.....

This brought an end of their efforts. Christ now steps in where self has failed.

The Lord kept His appointment and promise to be there, despite their unfaithfulness though the church was blind to it. He did a miracle.

In these last days, the Lord is doing a new thing.

b. *Contact with God's power.*

John 21:7 - (RSV) -*"It is the Lord!"*.....

Miracles reveal a risen Christ and attract people to come to the church -

John 21:9 -

while the fire, typical of the Holy Ghost's outpouring, brings love, warmth and purity
-

Isaiah 6:5-6 -

and a real feast -

John 21:12 -

Forgiveness follows for Peter -

John 21:15-17 -

after detailed confession and a promise of following Jesus to death -

John 21:19 -

In this body ministry, each one has a place from the Lord. We must be aware of being too concerned with God's plan for others!

What are the practical results of this new warmth in revival?

3. THE RESULTS OF REVIVAL ARE SEEN AS -

1. Preaching to God's people first, getting them right, before attempting to reach outsiders.

The Lord came first to His own -

John 1:11 -

Paul went first to the Jews -

Romans 15:20-21 -

2. Prayer for unity in the love of God is answered!

John 17:21-23 -

This prayer of Christ's was not for unity at any price or by organization, but a definite plea for contact with the Father in real fellowship!

John 17:11 -

- c. Preservation of God's flock by His chosen leaders.*

John 21:15-16 -

This is only where there is a prayerful concern for the condition of things and where God's own people are first reached so as to provide the maturity of experience necessary to carry the young converts forward.

Malachi 3:16 -

4. Prevention of disappointment.

John 21:22 -

by looking to Christ and not to others.

Where Christ is seen clearly in the lives of church members, there is less room for the devil to work and less excuse for people to go back from God.

Witness work was not limited in the early church to just a few evangelists.

The nation of Israel itself was God's witness to the world!

Isaiah 43:10 -

While the prayer for boldness in witnessing applied to the church -

Acts 4:31-32 -

even in persecution, *everyone* witnessed -

Acts 8:1-4 -

Witnessing was corporate action.

e. Ministries of individuals are developed within the body.

Peter is an example -

John 21:15-17 -

This enables the exercise of personal evangelism and pioneering to be possible at a later stage.

2 Timothy 2:2 -

6. Presentation of a new vision of the glory of God through suffering.

John 21:19 -

The small group of those going through suffering here with Christ, were not promised any easy time, but definite persecution and even death, which they would bravely meet.

This shows that there may be blessing only for those prepared to go on with God and the people of God's first choice (e.g., the Jews) may not accept the message of revival. We may, therefore, expect persecution and division by "religious" (not "sinful") people.

This cost should be carefully counted before we accept the task of seeing a revival within the church which will enable it to evangelize the world.

At the same time, the Jewish rejection of Christ led to their judgment in the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. It is either revival or judgment for a dead church today.

Revelation 3:16-19 -

What is *your* choice?

EXERCISE

In your own words, what causes of going back from God are revealed in -

Question 1.

Exodus 32:1 -

Answer.

Absence of spiritual leadership!

Exodus 32:1 -

He was in the mountain forty days and nights -

Exodus 24:18 -

fasting -

Deuteronomy 9:9 - *When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water:*

completely shut in with God.

The people supposed, perhaps, he had lost his way in the darkness or perished in the fire. They lost their reverence and awe which they had shown thirty days earlier at the giving of the law!

It is easy to *forget* the immediate presence of God in our midst and look on delay as weakness.

Exodus 32:1 - *.....gathered themselves together unto Aaron.....*

They gathered *against* Aaron in a tumult, and demanded an image of God (the Hebrew here is simply 'Name of God' in its plural form, *not idols*) now that the shekinah pillar of fire was veiled, which had gone before them.

Exodus 32:1 - *.....we wot not what is become of him.*

Ignorance and fear lead to lack of trust in God and departure from unseen spiritual reality, to outward forms visible to the eye.

Multiplication of outward forms and machinery within the church, does not always indicate more spiritual power and may, in fact, indicate growing spiritual weakness.

Question 2.

1 Kings 11:4 -

Answer.

Age and worldly associations.

1 Kings 11:4 -when Solomon was old.....

Solomon could not have been more than fifty years old. He already began to decline from his youthful piety very soon and, under the influence of others, fell away.

Galatians 3:3 -

You cannot begin in the Spirit and go on in the flesh. There must be a *continual* walk with God in the Spirit. Christians cannot afford to cool off from their first love -

Revelation 3:17 -

Mere length of time as an orthodox church is not sufficient to guard from backsliding unless associations and standards are spiritual.

1 Kings 11:4 -

Some see this as merely outward observance to please his wives, but this means that Solomon was a hypocrite.

He must have become an actual and open idolater at Tophet -

Read **Jeremiah 7:30-34**

and an old and foolish king -

Ecclesiastes 4:13 -

The number of wives violated divine law -

Deuteronomy 17:17 -

as their foreign connection led to idolatry -

1 Kings 11:2 -

Read **Exodus 34:12-16.**

Mixture of the church and the world is equal adultery.

The individual believer must mark -

2 Corinthians 6:14 -

Question 3.

Luke 8:13 -

Answer.

Adverse times of testing.

Luke 8:13 - (RSV) -receive it with joy. But these have no root;.....

The Seed is the Word of God which is received but some who receive it have no root.

The immediate blessing of salvation, healing or the baptism, brings joy alike to the individual and the church.

There are many people emotionally stirred in revival times or by great preachers with a shallow response in no deep affection and no great conviction.

Matthew 8:19 -

Luke 11:27 -

Galatians 4:15 -

Ezekiel 33:31 -

Ephesians 4:14 -

Instability is not commended in scripture, but examples are given in -

Psalm 106:13 -

Matthew 13:6 -

Galatians 1:6 -

Luke 8:13 -

A time of testing reveals the weakness of such a response. The Greek word (peirasmos) is linked here with the temptation of Christ, mainly by the devil -

Luke 4:13 -

A falling often occurs in a church where there is no deep spiritual root, so the preacher must avoid merely emotional stirrings.

Question 4.

Luke 11:24-26 -

Answer.

Apostasy caused by neglect to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:24 - (RSV) - *.....unclean spirit.....wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but not finding any,.....*

Spiritual cleansing is *vital* as the first step with the power of evil being cast out.

1 Corinthians 6:11 -

Here demon. power is clearly meant, which is noteworthy, for seeking another place. Reformation without regeneration, and purging without filling, are not enough.

Luke 11:26 - (RSV) - *.....brings seven other spirits more evil than itself,.....*

The backslider, on going back, usually sinks into deeper sin than that from which he was originally saved. The church, not living right, often goes deeper into sin than some in the world.

Warnings on the dangers of apostasy will also be found in -

1 Timothy 1:19 -

1 Timothy 4:1 -

Hebrews 3:12 -

2 Peter 3:17 -

The only answer is a definite baptism and being continually filled with the Spirit of God.

Question 5.

2 Timothy 4:10 -

Answer.

Attractions of the world.

2 Timothy 4:10 - (RSV) -*Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me.....*

Worldliness has been a real means of destruction in the souls of individuals and of the life of the church.

The Lord warned against it -

Matthew 16:26 -

Luke 21:34 -

and mentioned it in the parable of the sower -

Matthew 13:22 -

as destroying the finding of the truth.

Before the end of the world especially, it will lead men into false security, as in the days of Noah -

Matthew 24:38-39 -

added to its power to mold the attitudes and pleasures of life -

Ephesians 2:2 -

to the power of the devil.

Demas had once been a fellow laborer with Paul -

Colossians 4:14 -

Philemon 24 -

He seems to have forsaken Paul for worldly ease, safety and home comforts, as Chrysostom implies that Thessalonica was his home town.

Paul himself writes of the unworldly nature of the Christian call in -

Romans 12:2 -

1 Corinthians 7:31 -

Galatians 6:14 -

2 Timothy 2:4 -

The apostle John expressly says that a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

1 John 2:15 -

There is no room here for anything other than a clear cut with the world for the church and the Christian.

NOTES

NOTES

PREACHING THEMES:

PRAYER

STUDY 2

Scripture Portion: James 5:16-20

James 5:16-20 -

Evangelism is promoted by drawing the attention of God's people to particular themes.

Of these, prayer is more conducive to spiritual power than the calling of conferences to discuss ways and means!

What instruction should be given on this point? By what means can prayer further outreach?

What, basically, is the type of prayer that can help here?

4. THE AIM OF PRAYER MUST BE THE GLORY OF GOD BY DEPENDENCE UPON HIM.

James 5:16 - (RSV) -*The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.*

How is this promoted?

a. Promotion of unity among Christians.

Matthew 18:19 -

This reveals the need of unity among those praying, as a precondition of God's answering prayer.

Hence -

James 5:16 -

begins by suggesting that Christians confess their sins one to another and pray one for another.

A united, powerful prayer meeting is the barometer of church power.

Pleading with God before moving out to man.

Philippians 2:13 -

James 5:17 -

Elijah, whose zeal for God led him to pray, sustained him, even during his darkest moments of loneliness and defeat.

1 Kings 19:10 -

God's glory was his chief aim and God knew this.

When Elijah had moved out in revival power, he took the trouble to find out God's plan and what he should do according to it.

1 Kings 18:36-37 -

Later, when he neglected to do this again and ran away, God had to ask him -

1 Kings 19:9 - (RSV) -*"What are you doing here, Elijah?"*

We need to find out God's plans first, not ask Him to bless our own!

c. Power of the Holy Ghost being allowed to lead our praying.

James 5:17 -

James 5:17 - (RSV) -*prayed fervently.....*

This "more earnestly" is seen in the prayer of Christ in the garden -

Luke 22:44 -

which made our redemption possible and is referred to in our Lord's words -

Matthew 26:41 -

Link this with -

Romans 8:26-27 -

The Spirit helps "our infirmities" (the same Greek word "astheneia" is used for "weak)."

See the place of Spirit-led praying that Elijah reached in -

1 Kings 18:42-46 -

The Holy Ghost not only enabled him to pray “through” for rain, but to outpace the king’s chariot back to the city!

Praying in tongues in this realm enables us to reach beyond human knowledge limits. We depend very much for the power of our praying, then, on God’s Holy Spirit.

2. THE ARRANGEMENT OF A PRAYER MEETING BY THE CHURCH.

James 5:18 -

Regular prayer meetings over a time, need wise leadership and arrangement. This is recognized alike by the Catholic Pentecostals and by Finney’s “Revival Lectures,” where he advocated a program which included -

1. Scripture reading.

Romans 10:17 -

Isaiah 44:3 -

which was much used of God in the Hebrides Revival in this respect.

- b. Selected topics for prayer and praise introduced specifically to the meetings.*

Be clear.

3. The Holy Spirit’s leading to be relied upon.

Wherever it is safe to do so, let those who are led by the Spirit, pray as and when they feel to do so.

Lead off with the keenest!

d. *Shorten your prayers to a small time limit and keep to one object.*

Long silences, if not led by the Spirit, can “chill” a meeting, while long prayers can deaden it.

5. Shout the victory and do not always be dwelling on sin, once confessed.

1 John 1:9 -

6. The avoiding of mistakes in the meeting.

James 5:19 - (RSV) -*if anyone among you wanders.....*

Avoid -

(1) Lack of confidence by choosing the wrong person to lead.

Jeremiah 29:13 - (RSV) -*seek me with all your heart,*

(2) Remarks.

Those which are controversial, unreasonable, unscriptural, ridiculous, irrelevant or directed against opposition, during the prayer, stop them at once!

Avoid mistakes of -

(3) Long hymns or prayers of a “dead” nature.

Too much singing at the wrong time can take away those pauses when the Spirit wishes to intervene in the meeting, especially for gift ministries.

Read **1 Corinthians, chapter twelve.**

(4) Local customs.

These can bind the meeting if you slavishly adhere to them. Have variety!

7. Awakenings in the church can happen in a bad situation.

James 5:20 - (RSV) -*whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death.....*

Scripture has many examples of this very thing happening at a time of greatest deadness among God’s people.

(1) Hannah.

1 Samuel 1:27 -

Although she had a need of a child, God's people had a greater need of a prophet in a time of spiritual darkness as Eli allowed sin in the worship of God.

God answered her prayer and used her dedication to save His people.

(2) Samuel.

1 Samuel 7:9-10 -

God's people repented. Over the offering of a sucking lamb (type of Christ) Samuel prayed and the enemy was defeated.

(3) Elijah.

1 Kings 18:37 -

This is particularly mentioned here in **James** and would seem to indicate that the "sinners" are sinning saints, rather than outsiders, showing that backsliding can eventually lead to death.

James 5:20 -

This was certainly the challenge of Elijah to the people of God and led to the fire falling on Mt. Carmel which brought a revival and a destruction of idol priests among God's people.

A modern archaeologist has actually found a piece of fire-blasted rock in this location!

(4) Ezra.

Ezra 5:15 -

Ezra fasted and prayed and brought conviction and revival to God's people.

The fire with Elijah and the rain here are types of the Holy Ghost.

(5) Zacharias.

Luke 1:12-13 -

As with Hannah, a family problem was prayed about and answered by God in a much larger way, with the arrival of John the Baptist to start a move among God's people to prepare them for Christ.

It is noteworthy that Zacharias was not believing at the time his prayer was answered, yet his previous faith and prayer still bore fruit.

(6) The Early Church.

Acts 1:14 -

Pentecost was a direct result of prayer of God's people, including the women and Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus. This shows that there is a ministry of intercession for *all* the body of Christ.

Do not be discouraged, therefore, by the state of the church or group in which you find yourself but pray, and preach that others would pray, until God hears and brings a revival of His power.

This is the first step to evangelism.

EXERCISE

What do the following stories teach us about the power of personal prayer?

Question 1.

Exodus 15:24-25 -

Answer.

The power of personal prayer.

Exodus 15:25 -

The water of Marah was bitter and the children of Israel complained against Moses, leaving him in a difficult position. Instead of defending himself or attacking the people, Moses wisely turned to prayer. The Lord gave him a word of wisdom, showing him exactly what to do to meet the need.

This was a definite miracle answer. Those who suppose it was the Arab ghurkud, are faced with the problem that its berries were not ripe at this time of the year.

We need much more to take our own problems to the Lord in prayer so that the Holy Ghost can operate gifts through us.

Question 2.

Judges 6:39-40 -

Answer.

Proving God's guidance by putting out a fleece.

Judges 6:39 - (RSV) -please, make trial with the fleece just once more;.....

Gideon had broken down his father's altar when called by the angel to deliver Israel, and had been protected. But now, he wanted to be sure of the call of God and had asked God to do a miracle on the fleece, by keeping it dry overnight from the usual dew.

Here he makes assurance doubly sure by asking for the bigger miracle of keeping all the ground dry and allowing the fleece to get wet.

While it is right to “put out fleeces” where God’s will is already revealed, we need to see that this was a special personal prayer in a state of great emergency, demanding a tremendous miracle and is not, therefore, to form the basis of day by day guidance in smaller things.

Question 3.

1 Kings 9:3 -

Answer.

Promise of God’s presence and power on consecrated people.

1 Kings 9:3 -

God had already appeared to Solomon in Gibeon.

1 Kings 9:2 -

There he had asked for wisdom and received the promise of riches and honor.

Now he has built and sanctified the temple and is looking for God’s approval, which is here promised, and with certain conditions. A blessing is also added for his family.

1 Kings 9:4-5 -

This shows the response of God to the genuine prayer of personal consecration, by the believer, whose body is now the temple of the Holy Ghost.

2 Chronicles 7:12 -

See the direct answers to Solomon’s inaugural prayer in -

1 Kings 8:29 -

1 Kings 9:4-5 -

This was answer to -

1 Kings 8:25-26 -

God does answer prayer where His glory is the single aim.

Question 4.

2 Kings 19:19-20 -

Answer.

Protection is afforded by God as a witness to the world.

2 Kings 19:20 - (RSV) -I have heard your prayer to me about King Sennacherib of Assyria.

Sennacherib's messengers had taunted the people with their trust in Egypt and in God, and pointed to the weakness of the gods of the other nations to deliver them.

King Hezekiah realized that God's glory was here questioned. He prayed for deliverance, not just for his own benefit, but the whole world's need to witness the superiority of God.

This was a very powerful plea and brought an immediate answer from the Lord through the lips of His prophet, Isaiah, that He would protect His people.

The application of this story to modern conditions is that, when we are sure that we are standing for God, we may pray for His protection and confidently believe the words of prophecies which may be given us in the Spirit, or through the written Word, of His protecting power.

Once again, God's glory, and not mere personal advantage, is our aim.

Question 5.

2 Chronicles 18:31 -

Answer.

Prevention of persecution and death is possible by prayer.

2 Chronicles 18:31 -

Jehoshaphat had got involved with Ahab in an ungodly alliance.

2 Chronicles 19:1-3 -

Thus he found himself in trouble at Ramoth-Gilead, although he had listened to the warning of the true prophecy of Micaiah.

Here he must have realized his mistake and called out to God to rescue him, which the Lord was able to do, while, at the same time, punishing wicked Ahab who had disguised himself and tried to escape divine retribution.

This story not only warns us to keep the right company, but shows that, where there is a righteous life and a genuine desire to seek God, His protection is always available.

NOTES

NOTES

PREACHING THEMES : **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

STUDY 3

Scripture Portion: 1 John 3:11-24

5. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE.

1 John 3:11 -

What is the use of prayer when we are not keeping God's commandment to love?

1 John 3:22 -

The importance of love derives from -

The command of Christ.

1 John 3:11 -

Christ's definite new commandment is that Christians love one another.

John 13:34 -

Complete fulfilment.

Complete fulfilment of the Old Testament law lies in loving God and one's neighbor.
Romans 13:8 - *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

c. Christ's compassion should be ours, not a worldly attitude.

1 John 3:12 -

Clearly it should be no surprise to find the worldly person hating the Christian.

1 John 3:13 -

This is the world's attitude for the Christian who is living the new life, but it should not be so of us.

4. Condemnation will be ours if we fail to love.

1 John 3:14 - (RSV) - *.....He who does not love remains in death.*

Read **James 2:8-15**.

This explains that, even as Christians, we must suffer when we break God's law, for the law of liberty under which we come in Christ, demands judgment on its breakers.

e. *Conquest of sin.*

1 John 3:15 - (RSV) - *He who hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

When we love our brother, we are in the light and there is no occasion of stumbling found in us.

1 John 2:9-11 -

We *must* get the victory here!

6. Clear Distinction.

1 John 3:15 -

What then, is in one who hates?

Very clearly, the devil.

1 John 3:10 -

Jesus puts this fact bluntly to the Jews who wanted to get rid of Him.

John 8:44 -

Recognize the source of hatred.

g. *Christ's own example.*

1 John 3:16 -

This example should be a powerful stimulus to us to lay down our lives for other Christians. How much more should we be prepared to help them in practical ways?

It is a real contradiction to say that we love God and hate another Christian in whom God is manifest, when Christ was prepared to die for him. How much more should we be prepared to do for him!!

1 John 4:20 -

8. Christian teaching is against selfishness.

1 John 3:17 - (RSV) - *If anyone has this world's goods and sees his brother is in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?*

This teaching is again clearly seen in the book of **James** which deals with faith shown by helpful works.

Read **James 2:14-26**.

Is this practical outworking of love seen in the church?

1 John 3:18 -

6. INSTRUCTIONS HOW TO LOVE ARE GIVEN VERY CLEARLY IN SCRIPTURE.

1 John 3:18 -

In what ways should we show our love to others?

9. Clear characteristics are given in -

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 -

Patience, kindness, humility, gentleness, unselfishness, calmness and joy in the right.

1 Corinthians 13:7 - (RSV) - *It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Do we do this?

10. Covers sins.

Proverbs 10:12 -

Christian love overlooks the repeated lapses of other Christians -

1 Peter 4:8 -

when talking to outsiders -

Proverbs 17:9 -

This does not excuse us talking to the person concerned.

Do we “gossip” too much?

c. Calls back the one who has slipped.

The everlasting love of God has drawn many a person back to Himself.

Jeremiah 31:3 -

This love was shown by Hosea in a very practical way when dealing with his unfaithful wife -

Hosea 11:1-4 -

Deal gently with backsliders!

4. Caused by the Holy Ghost.

Romans 5:5 -

God’s love should be outworked in yielding to the leading of the Spirit of love.

2 Timothy 1:7 -

This causes fear to go and the use of spiritual gifts in a loving manner.

Read **1 Corinthians 12:4-11.**

5. Concern for others should be genuine.

Romans 12:9 -

Do not pretend to love others, but do it sincerely from the heart -

2 Corinthians 6:6 -

Do not pretend love!

f. Christ's love should be our standard.

John 15:12 -

We should ask ourselves, "Would Jesus do this?"

God is essentially love -

1 John 4:8 -

This is seen in the gift of His Son, *not* the love of complacency or affection - drawn out by any excellency in its object.

Romans 5:8 -

This is a deliberate exercise of the divine will in choice. It is not, however, self-pleasing, nor an impulse from the feelings or natural inclinations, but seeks the welfare of all.

Romans 15:2 -

Seek opportunity to do good.

Galatians 6:10 - *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

This love is deep and constant by a perfect Being towards unworthy objects, producing a love in them.

The word "love" means more than "tender affection" -

John 21:15-17 -

where unselfish love is used in the first two questions to Peter, ready for service.

Peter's use of "love" in reply and in the Lord's third question, conveys just the thought of cherishing an object above all else.

To love life from an undue desire to preserve it selfishly, is attacked by Christ -

John 12:25 -

but to love life -

1 Peter 3:10 -

putting emphasis on the real object of living, is something the Lord commends.

Be unselfish in your love!

(Avoid confusion with “epos” which means “human passion” and “human love for other humans.”)

7. Created by the Lord in answer to prayer.

The Lord helps us to increase in love to others by practical praying -

1 Thessalonians 3:12 -

as love comes from God’s nature in us -

1 John 4:7 -

h. Clearly shown in our faith in others.

Perfect love casts out fear.

1 John 4:18 -

7. INSTRUMENTS OF ITS PROMOTION LIE WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH.

The whole group should see the value of love and be clearly taught how to work towards its divine power by outworking the life of God, planted within us by the Holy Ghost.

This will lead to -

1. Positive assurance.

1 John 3:19 - (RSV) - *And by this we will know that we are of the truth.....*

The sacrifice of Christ on Calvary shows the measure of God’s love.

Ephesians 5:2 -

By sharing in this love, we may be sure of our identification with Him. We shall lack assurance of this when we lapse from His love.

2. Personal dealing with sin.

1 John 3:21 - (RSV) - *Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God;*

If there is something which needs to be put right, it should be confessed.

1 John 1:9 -

or else we cannot pray with confidence,

1 John 3:21-22 -

Private things should be confessed privately, public things publicly. This confession should include unloving attitudes as well as acts.

c. Pray together.

Job's captivity was turned when he prayed for his friends -

Job 42:10 -

Psalm 133:1-3 -

United prayer brings down the blessing of the Spirit in revival.

4. Prepare to serve God.

Serve God even in the menial tasks.

1 John 3:24 - (RSV) - *All who keep His commandments abide in Him, and He in them.*

Evidence of this is seen in the abiding power of the Spirit on those who do this service.

1 Peter 1:22 - (RSV) - *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart.*

Only then can the church have an impact on the community.

EXERCISE

In your own words, what do these verses teach us about the love of Christ?

Question 1.

John 13:1 -

Answer.

Everlasting love seen at the time of Christ's suffering.

On the eve of His last sufferings, instead of thinking of Himself and His coming sufferings, He thinks of His own being left behind.

The words "unto the end" mean the utmost degree of an act.

This sets the measure of our love towards other Christians, which should be utterly self- less.

Question 2.

John 15:9 - *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

Answer.

Enjoyment of Christ's love can be continuous through obedience.

Not "continue to love Me" but continue in the possession and enjoyment of My love."

The conditions of continuing in God's love is obedience to God's commands.

Obedience of discipleship is the secret of Christ's abiding in His Father's love. The same conditions apply to our own abiding in Christ.

The word for "continue" is the same as "abide" in -

John 15:10 -

John 14:15 -

1 John 2:5 -

1 John 5:3 -

2 John 6 -

Question 3.

John 15:13 - *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Answer.

Christ says that one can show no greater regard for those dear to him than by laying down his life for them, and this He was preparing to do.

This is the measure of Christ's love and is to be matched by our own willingness to make sacrifices, even smaller ones, for other Christians.

John 10:11 -

Romans 5:7-8 -

This shows the measure of Christ's love in dying for us in our sins and applies equally to Christians.

Ephesians 5:2 -

Love especially seeks the good of those of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10 -

Question 4.

Romans 8:35 - *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

Answer.

Eternal attachment of Christ to His own.

This shows that nothing can separate us from Christ's love to us - not our love to Him (as is seen at the end of the chapter.)

Paul had endured so much trouble, but saw it not as the wrath of God, but as His chastening and part of his ministry.

Read **2 Corinthians 11:11-33**.

1 Corinthians 4:10-13 -

The reference here is to -

Psalm 44:22 -

This shows Christ as God and that His love is divine to the unloving.

Question 5.

Galatians 2:20 - *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Answer.

The everlasting love of God leads to Christ's death for each one of us.

Self must die and the life now lived by the Christian is no longer the old life before conversion. The Christian lives no longer as an animal "in the flesh," but "in the faith" of divine sonship.

Christ loved us before salvation and showed this love by His sacrifice. The Greek here (paradidomi) shows that Christ handed Himself over for this sacrifice voluntarily.

Ephesians 5:2 -

Ephesians 5:25 -

This measure of Christian loving and giving is vital to our following in His steps!

NOTES

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PREACHING THEMES: **PRACTICAL CONSECRATION**

STUDY 4

Scripture Portion: Romans, chapter six - (RSV)

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SURRENDERED LIFE.

Our relationships with one another depend very much upon the victory which we have obtained in the realm of crucifying self.

Let us look at the kind of character which is self-less and ask ourselves, honestly, whether this is our own character before preaching it as the ideal for others.

This character is for *all* Christians -

Galatians 5:24 -

Death to self is shown by total immersion in water baptism and rising again, as set out in **Romans, chapter six.**

What does this show us?

8. DEATH TO SIN.

Romans 6:2 - (RSV) - *How can we who died to sin, still live in it?*

The possibility of being dead to sin is not only assumed here, but is taken as basic for every Christian

From the moment we are “born again” of the Spirit of Christ, we must see ourselves as dead to the old life and raised in Christ to the new. This must affect our whole aim in life and be reckoned as an accomplished fact.

Romans 6:11 -

Merely trying to get the victory over sin in small things, fails to deal with the *root* of the problem in *self*. So there must be a radical dealing with sin, as well as sins.

Many Christians may start well enough by realizing this at conversion, but fall back into a life of imposed rules later, rather than dealing with the matter at the root, by realizing their position in Christ -

Colossians 2:20, 23 - (RSV) - *Why do you submit to regulations?*

23 These have an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion.....and severity to the body, but they are of no value, serving only to indulge the flesh.....

Colossians 3:1-3 - (RSV) - *If then you have been risen with Christ, seeking the things that are above, where Christ is.....*

2 Set your minds on things above, not on things that are on the earth,

3 For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

9. DYING WITH CHRIST.

Romans 6:6 - (RSV) - *We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.*

Reckoning ourselves as dying with Christ, our Representative, is the first step to victory. When we *try* to get victory, we do it in our own strength and fail. When we *trust* His finished work, we enter into *an accomplished fact* which brings complete deliverance and keeps us humble.

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

2 Corinthians 4:11 -

10. DEFINITE OBEDIENCE.

Romans 6:13 - (RSV) - *Do not yield your members to sin!*

This reckoning must be followed by a *definite yielding* to the Lord, maybe on some minor point at issue, which becomes an attitude of unquestioning obedience.

This was seen in the lives of -

Noah -

Genesis 6:22 -

Elisha -

1 Kings 19:20 -

Isaiah -

Isaiah 6:8 -

and Paul -

Acts 9:6 -

to say nothing of the blessed obedience of the Lord Himself -

John 4:34 -

11. DISCIPLESHIP IN TRIAL.

Romans 6:13 - (RSV) - *Yield.....your members to God as instruments of righteousness!*

This action of yielding must lead to an attitude of submission to God. We see this in the trial -

of David when he ceased to fast for his baby -

2 Samuel 12:23 -

of Job -

Job 1:21 -

and of Christ -

Mark 14:36 -

John 18:11 -

This brings us to a place of *delight* is doing God's will.

Psalm 40:8 -

1. Prayer to be led aright.

Psalm 143:10 -

filial feeling (the obedient are in the true family of Christ) -

Matthew 12:50 -

and eventually to new revelations -

John 7:17 -

Service to God then comes from the heart -

Ephesians 6:6 -

and our daily rule becomes -

James 4:15 -

rather than a self-planned and sufficient life.

Thus we become *totally dependent upon God*, contrary to all natural inclinations.

2. Consecration.

Romans 6:22 - (RSV) - *You have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God.*

A slave is one who -

- (1) *has forfeited all rights.*
- (2) *looks for no rewards.*

How far is this true of our own attitude to the work of the Lord? Do we still look for something out of it for ourselves?

Clearly, the service of God brings a blessing -

Exodus 32:29 -

But we must be willing to be always giving of ourselves with no expected return -

1 Chronicles 29:5 -

Once our heart is yielded to Him, then our eyes will automatically be looking for His directions -

Proverbs 23:26 -

in gratitude for His mercies -

Romans 12:1 -

This consecration may have to be made in times of difficulty -

Judges 5:2 -

or stress (the apostles concentrated on the Word of God and prayed) -

Acts 6:4 -

and will lead to practical sacrifice (the Macedonian churches) -

2 Corinthians 8:5 -

At the end we should be able to say with Paul -

Philippians 3:8 - (RSV) - *Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ.*

3. Crowning reward.

Romans 6:22 - (RSV) - *.....the return you get in sanctification and its end, eternal life.*

The Lord Jesus promises to us one hundredfold in this world for all we have given up, and eternal life in the world to come -

Mark 10:30 -

with *persecutions* by people who do not understand us!

The Congo Evangelistic Mission has seen many saved, but the cost is to be seen in the missionary, Mr. Richardson, who perished on the way; Mr. Armstrong's agony and death through blackwater fever; and a grave at Katenta where "a little missionary baby lies," (Mr. Burton on David Burton and Margaret Gittings' child) "this little thing, long prayed for, joyfully received, and then....."

The world will not understand this suffering in the body of Christ, that souls may be born into the kingdom of God.

"Teaching lazy people to work, while your own folks are starving."

The black Christians on the field, also pay a price. "Bwana, it would be easy to *die* for Christ. It would cost us nothing to lay down our lives, but it is hard to *live* for Him. We are scorned and maligned today. It will be the same tomorrow, next week and next year. Oh, why do people treat so cruelly, those who come to them with nothing but grace and love?"

Galatians 6:17 -

For the Christian, the "best is yet to be." We have to die anyhow, so cannot hold onto our life. What then is the loss for Christ, of something you cannot keep anyway?

Consecration is our "reasonable service" in this light.

As Jim Elliot (martyred by the Aucas) wrote: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

EXERCISE

What do these verses teach us about the consecration of the church?

Question 1.

Read **1 Corinthians 3:10-17**.

Answer.

These scriptures show us about the consecration of the church, that it should be built on Christ, to be tested by fire, and the reward of faithful leadership.

This passage is *not* primarily to do with personal salvation but the ministry of building up the church of Christ. Work in this building was begun by Paul who made Christ his foundation stone.

1 Corinthians 3:10 -

Those who built after him by teaching, life and character, would build either in the abiding substances of gold, silver and precious stones (truth, faith, love) or the flimsy substances of wood, hay, stubble (false teaching, selfish motives, unworthy conduct.)

These are revealed.

1 Corinthians 3:12-13 -

by God's visitation and trial -

2 Thessalonians 1:8 -

when the builder himself may survive, but the building will be lost, depriving him of any reward.

1 Corinthians 3:15 -

God's building is His Body, the church, and injury done to it is very serious in the consequences it brings to the one responsible.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 -

The word “defile” here is the same word as “destroy”. The ruin that that individual works in the church, will be visited on the one who did it.

The phrase “which temple ye are” can also mean “of which holy sort ye are.”

No literal temple is recognized in the New Testament, but a spiritual temple is made up of all believing worshippers.

John 4:23-24 -

The Greek word for temple (naow = shrine) means “the earthly dwelling place of God. Christ uses it of His own earthly body -

John 2:19-21 -

It is used of the individual body of the believer in -

1 Corinthians 6:19 -

The synagogue was merely a place of assembling men and women.

The ones actually destroying the holy temple, will, in turn, be destroyed by God. Death was the penalty of destroying the Old Testament temple.

Leviticus 16:2 -

Daniel 5:2-3 -

Daniel 5:30 -

So, eternal death is the reward of those who destroy God’s building. (These are distinct from “unwise builders” who still hold to the foundation.)

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 -

Question 2.

Ephesians 2:19-22 -

Answer.

Born and brought up by the Spirit, Christians grow as a holy temple.

A marked progression is seen here. God dwells not only in a *state* but in a *family*; not only in a *family* but in a *temple*. The visible glory of God is seen in the church.

2 Corinthians 6:16 -

The saints inherited the status of spiritual Israel and all the glory of the temple at Jerusalem. The ministry and living example of the apostles were the foundation of this new building.

Matthew 16:18 -

The prophets here mentioned are probably those of the New Testament days and the present dispensation. All were *holy men*.

Psalms 118:22 -

This reference may refer to the Old Testament prophets as well.

The church has holy growth as a living organism not the mere mechanical increase of a building.

1 Peter 2:5 -

Christ is the Head of the building and the personal element of holiness in which it is built. God, by His Spirit in the believers, has them for His habitation.

1 Corinthians 6:19 -

Both in the Old and New Testaments, God's people had to be holy.

Question 3.

Ephesians 5:25-30 -

Answer.

Baptism and the Word are symbols of the purity of the church.

This is a reference to the church as the bride of Christ.

A Jewish bride, before she was presented to her husband, was bathed in water -

Esther 2:12 -

Baptism derives its efficacy from the Word accepted and growing in the heart.

Revelation 21:2 -

The “word of faith” confessed in baptism has a real cleansing power -

Romans 10:8-9 -

Romans 10:17 -

John 15:3 -

Holiness and glory are inseparably joined here. Christ is at work preparing His bride.

Matthew 25:1 -

Question 4.

1 Peter 2:1-5 -

Answer.

Brought to Christ, young Christians are built up into a spiritual body.

In order to grow, there must be a balance for all (Greek - aorist), a laying aside of malice, which leads to guile, leading, in turn, to hypocrisy - pretending to be what we are not. Envy then springs up and slanders.

All these must be laid aside in favor of the pure Word, which will enable us to grow up into a kingdom of priests, for our great High Priest.

Men will reject this process, but God will accept holy people offering spiritual sacrifices.

Question 5.

2 Peter 3:11-14 -

Answer.

Banishment of the present earth and creation of a new world in holiness.

Greek present tense shows that things are already being dissolved so that there is a present need of holiness.

2 Peter 3:2 -

A holy commandment.

Our holiness in prayer and witnessing can hasten Christ's coming, when a completely righteous new world will be created.

2 Peter 3:12 -

It will be vital in this new world to have pure holiness.

2 Peter 3:14 -

1 Corinthians 1:8 -

Philippians 1:10 -

God will do this in co-operation with your own consecration.

Following are prophecies setting this out.

Read **Isaiah 65:17-25**.

Read **Isaiah 66**.

Revelation 21:1 -

1 Peter 1:19 -

NOTES

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PREACHING THEMES: **PRAISE AND WORSHIP IN** **THE SPIRIT**

STUDY 5.

Scripture Portion: 1 Peter 2:9

1 Peter 2:9 -

Cleansing and consecration should lead to praise.

In the Kikuyu Revival, it was found that dwelling merely on sin and its cleansing, made for introversion and could even be used of the devil whereas, after a positive cleansing, a fresh consecration, a looking away to God in positive praise, led to real power in witnessing.

Hence, we have -

12. THE PEOPLE WHO PRAISE.

1 Peter 2:9 - (RSV) - *.....a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people.....*

It is only those who have experienced God's cleansing that can really praise Him from the heart. Hence the need for the church to be shown the first stages of sin, repentance and consecration, before this level of praise is reached. It is the redeemed of the Lord who would say so.

Psalm 107:2 -

Those who can best offer thanksgiving are those who -

1 Timothy 4:3 -

Mere repetitive praise, without the life to back it up, is obnoxious to God.

Proverbs 15:8 -

13. POINTS FOR PRAISE.

1 Peter 2:9 - (RSV) - *that you may declare the wonderful deeds.....*

Praise is, in itself, **a good thing** -

Psalm 92:1-2 -

Psalm 92:4 -

even commanded by God -

Psalm 100:4 -

Ephesians 5:4 -

and linked with thankfulness -

Colossians 3:15 -

Colossians 3:17 -

1 Thessalonians 5:18 - (RSV) - *Give thanks in all circumstances: for this is the will of God concerning you.*

The Lord Jesus Himself gave an example of it -

Matthew 11:25 -

b. Thankfulness.

Thankfulness also led immediately to the outpouring of the Spirit on the first believers -

Luke 24:52-53 -

c. Worship.

Worship not only leads to outpourings of the Spirit, but is a vital product of the Spirit-filled life bringing glory to God.

Colossians 1:9 -

Colossians 1:12 -

2 Corinthians 9:12 -

d. Public testimony.

This forms a public testimony, for example, Jesus at the grave of Lazarus at a time of the release of God's miracle-working power by the Spirit.

John 11:41-42 -

14. PRAISE, HOWEVER, IS PRODUCED BY SEVERAL FACTORS.

1. A vision of the greatness of Christ.

Prophetess Anna -

Luke 2:36-38 -

2. Awareness of God's forgiveness and healing power.

Psalms 103:1-5 -

- c. A sense of victory over sin and a positive looking forward to Christ's coming.*

1 Corinthians 15:52 -

4. Advance hope of resurrection derived from a definite new birth experience.

1 Peter 1:3 -

- e. Assurance of the Father's making us worthy of inheritance among the saints in light.*

Colossians 1:12 -

This is the prospective condition and share of the believer in the new order of things to be ushered in at the return of Christ.

Acts 26:18 -

One enters into this birthright by being a son of God, not because of a price paid or a task accomplished, though faithfulness to God is implied, amid opposition.

Galatians 4:30 -

Revelation 21:7 -

6. Ability to comfort others because God has comforted us in our afflictions.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 -

g. Answered Prayer.

Jesus clearly shows this at the grave of Lazarus, where He praised God aloud -

John 11:41 -

Notice that the Lord did this *before* anything visible had taken place in the resurrection of Lazarus. He did this *publicly* so that, when the miracle took place, God alone would be glorified as He acknowledged the Source of the miracle.

We need to do the same.

7. Appearance of spiritual gifts.

Daniel and his three friends needed spiritual gift manifestation, literally, to save their lives. They registered appropriate gratitude for God's manifestation.

Daniel 2:23 -

Without such supernatural vision the church may still perish. We need to praise God whenever the Holy Ghost manifests His power.

1. Appointment to the service of Christ.

God gives strength where He appoints and shows His faith in us by doing so.

1 Timothy 1:12 -

Paul received mercy because of his ignorance, but never ceased to marvel at his salvation and call to the ministry.

10. Abundance of praise in tongues.

Paul thanked God for the special strength he received from the gift of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:18 -

At a time when some have often rejected tongues, we should remember that God has given them for praise and refreshing. We ought to show our gratitude to God for His gift by accepting it and using it to His glory.

Isaiah 28:11-12 -

What an insult to God it is to reject such a generous gift!

What would we feel like, if somebody rejected a precious gift which had cost us a great deal to give?

k. Association in fellowship with other Christians.

The Christians came out from Rome to meet the prisoner Paul, which caused him to -

Acts 28:15 -

Fellowship should never be taken for granted, but we should always be grateful to God for His provision in this and other respects.

12. Accessions to Christ.

Salvation of souls should always be made the object of thanksgiving -

Romans 6:17 -

especially to the Lord Who called them -

2 Thessalonians 2:13 -

13. Abiding growth in the Spirit.

Paul thanked God for the gift ministry in the Corinthian church -

1 Corinthians 1:4-9 -

He also showed gratitude to God for the well-known *faith* displayed by the assembly at Rome -

Romans 1:8 -

as well as the *love* at Ephesus -

Ephesians 1:15-16 -

and at Colosse -

Colossians 1:3-8 -

These are linked with the steadfastness in the church at Thessalonica -

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 -

with increasing faith and love -

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 -

Are we grateful enough in the fellowship for what God is doing in the midst?

n. Attitude of steadfastness in bad times.

1 Thessalonians 3:8-9 -

To Paul this was a matter of life and death to him as he was so personally involved in his converts and churches which he had brought to birth.

God's keeping power should always be praised.

15. THE PERSON TO BE WORSHIPED.

1 Peter 2:9 -

Praise should not be limited to what God has done for us, but what He is to us! We need to beware of speaking of man and praising somebody other than God.

Matthew 4:10 -

This worship - in Spirit and truth - may be offered anytime, anywhere.

John 4:19-23 -

It is made possible by an entrance into the Holiest Place through the blood of Jesus.

Read **Hebrews 9:7-14.**

It is a vital preparation for our activity as a body, in heaven -

Revelation 5:9-11 -

and unites us with the body of the Old Testament people of God in the past -

Philippians 3:3 -

God has called us and chosen us to be a worshiping people and to show His praise.

This is an essential part of our evangelistic witness. Sinners are looking for those who are really enjoying their salvation.

David realized he had lost this and asked God to return it to him, to make him an effective witness -

Psalms 51:10-13 -

The church needs to be cleansed and then show the same joy, if converts are to be won.

EXERCISE

Give some of the results of worship, *in your own words*, from these verses.

Question 1.

Isaiah 6:3-5 -

Answer.

Conviction of unworthiness as we see the glory of God.

These angels seem to have sung responsively one to another -

Isaiah 6:3 -

emphasizing the holiness of God.

Jeremiah 7:4 -

Jeremiah 22:29 -

Ezekiel 21:27 -

Isaiah was personally convicted of unclean lips and so of unworthiness to carry God's message.

Isaiah 6:5 -

The same fountain cannot give forth salt and clear water, so those exercising a prophetic ministry must have sanctified lips.

Read **James chapter three.**

Isaiah 6:4 -

The "smoke" here is probably the Shekinah cloud of glory.

1 Kings 8:10 -

The glory of God produced also a cleansing which enabled Isaiah to prophesy, although, at first, it awed him.

Judges 6:22 -

Judges 13:22 -

Job 42:5-6 -

Question 2.

Job 42:5-6 - I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Answer.

Cleansing and repentance made possible by an open vision of God.

Job is here retracting his former words of complaint against God and is in a new place to pray for friends and be healed himself. Job does not actually see God here except through the veil of a dark cloud.

Job 38:1 -

But, here he also sees spiritual facts that had escaped him before.

We often do not see the outworking of God's plan until later, so must be patient in allowing Him time to reveal Himself in His workings.

Question 3.

Luke 17:17-19 -

Answer.

Complete health and healing are secured by praise and thanksgiving.

Here, although ten lepers were cleansed, only the Samaritan had come back to thank and worship the Lord Jesus.

This shows that Christ knew (word of knowledge) that ten had been cleansed - without them being actually there. Jesus is marvelling at this display of faith by one of another nation.

Matthew 8:10 -

The Samaritan had fallen down on his face at His feet and lay there prostrate, worshipping Christ as God. This was a greater revelation than that of any of the Jews and enabled his salvation.

Question 4.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Answer.

Change into His likeness by the Spirit of God, comes by worship.

“We all” here shows that all Christians may enjoy this change into the likeness of Christ by our worship of Him in the Spirit. All those enjoying the Spirit, instead of vainly reading the Old Testament with veiled heart (as the Jews) reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord.

James 1:23-25 -

Just as Moses caught the reflection of God’s glory from being in His presence, so we catch this same glory, to one degree or another, the longer we spend in the presence of the Lord.

The Spirit receives the things of Christ, the Lord, and shows them to us as we read His Word also.

(The absence of the article in the Greek can be accounted for by the use of “the Spirit” as a proper name.)

Question 5.

Nehemiah 8:10 -

Answer.

Continue in the joy of the Lord if you wish to be strong.

The festival had been marked by a deep sense of various convictions over sins, but now Nehemiah and his followers exhort the people to be joyful in God.

Leviticus 23:23-25 -

suggests this should be a joyful festival and the people under conviction of their national sins from the reading of the law, were not allowed to forget this.

Portions were to be sent also to the poorer brethren enabling them to participate in the public rejoicings.

Deuteronomy 16:11 -

Deuteronomy 16:14 -

At a time of deep conviction of sin, in revival especially, over emphasis on sin and no balancing view of the efficacy of the blood in cleansing, can be used of the devil to depress and destroy the strength of believers.

After adequate confession, we need to take our cleansing from Christ and enter into praise and worship.

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PERSONAL APPLICATION

STUDY 6

Scripture Portion: 1 Corinthians, Chapter 14

“The strength of the chain is its weakest link” is a very true saying when it comes to church evangelism, as the power of the group depends upon every individual in the fellowship playing their full part.

This is seen at a personal level in the next three lessons. Its effect is traced in the last two lessons of this series.

To see why everyone is involved, we must first of all, trace the functioning of the body in its ministry, then in its location for meetings and finally in the emergence of individual ministries, as “seeds” for other bodies to benefit by.

This will occupy our next three lessons.

16. BODY MINISTRY OF THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT.

Character of the body is love.

1 Corinthians 14:1 - (RSV) - *Make love your aim.....and desire.....gifts.*

Love is the essential atmosphere in which the body of Christ can grow. It does not replace the gifts but is the way in which the gifts should be used.

1 Corinthians 12:31 -

Where there is hatred or even suspicion, the gifts cannot be exercised. Where there is genuine love, there will be a marked growth among the body members in -

(1) Knowledge of God.

We have not received the spirit of the world which leads to quarrels.

1 Corinthians 2:12 -

1 Corinthians 3:3 -

The unspiritual man can neither receive nor understand the gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:14 -

This fact should be recognized by the use of the gifts of the Spirit at the proper times and places. It is wrong to force them on an unprepared people. Our growth in the deeper revelations of God is seriously hampered by lack of love in the fellowship.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 - (RSV) - *I.....could not address you as spiritual men, but as children of the flesh, as babes in Christ.*

2 I fed you with milk, not with solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready.....

3for there is jealousy and strife among you.

Superior knowledge to the unspiritual only leads to pride. Even Branham was warned not to divulge all God had shown lest carnal impersonations would be used.

(2) *Members of the fellowship.*

The early Christians devoted themselves to teaching and fellowship of the apostles.

Acts 2:42 -

They did not wander around to other doctrines or churches. They could be relied upon to be out at every meeting, without a falling away in attendance, where they could always expect miracles.

Acts 2:43 -

They shared everything, meaning that the move of God relied on a fresh influx of converts for its income and was not cushioned against spiritual decline by vested income, which came in, irrespective of no conversions.

Acts 2:44-45 -

They broke bread in their homes.

Acts 2:46 -

They had glad and generous hearts and were popular. The Lord added daily to their number.

Acts 2:47 -

It is true of our fellowship today.

17. CHRIST-CENTERED WORSHIP SHOULD BE THE MAIN AIM.

1 Corinthians 14:25 -

Paul prefers prophecy to tongues in that prophecy builds up others - though he does not forbid tongues to build up one's own spiritual life.

1 Corinthians 14:5 -

He suggests that even with outsiders present, really deep prophecy will reveal hidden secrets.

1 Corinthians 14:24-25 -

This again should not be to draw attention to the individuals being used of God in the gifts, but to glorify God. One man, therefore, should not be glorified or one woman made prominent, but Christ should be acknowledged as Head -

Ephesians 1:22-23 -

and Saviour -

Ephesians 5:23 -

In fact, the whole aim of the body should be to build up individual members to the personal stature of Christ.

Read **Ephesians 4:11-16.**

To achieve this, God has not only given gifts to individuals in the body, but has given individual men (sometimes with natural talents) to benefit the whole body.

These are -

(1) *Apostles.*

Those sent by Christ to start and father them, e.g., Paul.

(2) *Prophets.*

Used in deep prophetic ministry, like Agabus in -

Acts 11:28 -

Acts 21:10 -

(3) *Evangelists.*

These were concerned with the proclamation of the good news as distinct from the work of starting new churches (apostles), e.g., Phillip -

Acts 21:8 -

(4) Pastors and teachers.

A pastor is a shepherd to feed and tend the flock of God.

A teacher is one also concentrating on this ministry.

(Compare with Barnabas and Saul at Antioch.)

Ephesians 4:11 -

These are not offices but kinds of work to be done for God within the body.

1 Peter 5:2-3 -

Acts 11:26 -

The actual men who did this work are the “elders” or “bishops.”

Acts 20:17 -

Acts 20:28 -

These men are mature leaders, given to the body for this work, usually appointed by the apostles, as new works were opened under God’s leading.

Acts 14:23 -

(5) Other ministries, including healers, helpers, administrators.

1 Corinthians 12:27 -

All play their parts in the work of the body and should be seen in action locally.

These are all supplied to the church by the Lord Jesus, Who works through them.

Colossians 2:19 -

18. CHARISMATIC GIFTS TO THE BODY.

1 Corinthians 14:26 - (RSV) - *Each one has.....a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation.....*

While individual men are given to the body, the Lord gives gifts to all as they need them. These, too, may differ. There is unity in this diversity.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 -

The Spirit determines how each one is to be used -

1 Corinthians 12:11 -

Note that the emphasis here is on unity.

1 Corinthians 12:13 -

tells us nothing about those who have *not* received the baptism, as this was basically assumed as an experience for all Christians.

Read **Hebrews 6:1-5**.

Paul is dealing here with the unity of those who have received this baptism.

The body has many members, whose ministries differ in gifts of tongues -

1 Corinthians 12:30 -

though all praise God in tongues at baptism.

Acts 10:44-46 -

and -

Acts 2:4 -

with the twin gift of interpretation of these messages.

4. CONDITIONS OF EXERCISING GIFTS.

Read **1 Corinthians 14:27-40**.

1. Everyone should be given a chance to participate in this ministry.

No one person should give more than two or three messages in tongues -

1 Corinthians 14:27 -

Similarly, each person should be limited to two or three prophecies, which should be submitted to judgment of the others.

1 Corinthians 14:29 -

b. All should co-operate in this move.

Times of quiet should be observed when another person gets a revelation.

1 Corinthians 14:30 -

Since everyone should be able to prophesy -

1 Corinthians 14:31 -

exercise of the gifts should not lead to arguments -

1 Corinthians 14:33 -

These should be acknowledged as the command of God -

1 Corinthians 14:37 -

The body must work in unity in this way.

3. There should be no clamping down on spiritual gifts, such as tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:39 -

in a wholesale way, *but* the principle of decency and order should be observed.

1 Corinthians 14:40 -

There should be no pride or preference for individuals, but a waiting on the judgment of revelations.

1 Corinthians 4:5-7 -

We must remember our accountability to God for these gifts.

Read **Matthew 25:15-30.**

These talents are divinely given.

Prophecy should be done in faith, humility, patience, simplicity, diligence and cheerfulness.

Read **Romans 12:3-8.**

1 Corinthians 14:39 -

EXERCISE

In your own words, say what these portions tell us about the work of the body of Christ.

Question 1.

Romans 12:3-8 -

Answer.

The work of the body of Christ is shown in the scriptures as separated among various individuals and operated by faith.

Romans 12:4 -

Humility is the keynote for every individual - **verse 3.**

Body ministry, depending on co-operation with others, is more likely to lead to this than a one-man organization.

We do have an essential unity in Christ - **verse 5.**

But, there are different jobs for each one to do, including prophecy - **verse 6.**

depending for its operation on faith - service - **verse 7.**

teaching, exhorting - **verse 8.**

giving, helping - with zeal and doing acts of mercy cheerfully - **verse 8.**

Each one of these ministries should be used and not kept back - **verse 6.**

Paul himself is an apostle only by God's grace and emphasizes no self-elevation here - **verse 3.**

Teachers are distinguished from prophets who have a personal revelation ministry as distinct from mere teaching of the Word and preaching.

Acts 13:1 -

1 Corinthians 12:28-29 -

This personal ministry demands greater faith as more detailed prophecies are given.

Exhorters - were apparent in the Kikuyu and W.E.C. revivals where they would openly exhort the person under conviction, "You are hiding the real big sin, now out with it!" This is a powerful ministry in times of the Spirit's moving.

Giving - was done here privately. Liberal giving was also mentioned.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:2-9.

There is also a place for the administrator to rule -

1 Timothy 3:4-5 -

These scriptures also pertain to the elders.

Question 2.

1 Corinthians 12:28 -

Answer.

Several different ministries are needed for the complete body. These are appointed by God, not just by men.

"God has appointed in the church....."

Some kind of definite order is here set out parallel to God's making up a human body.

1 Corinthians 12:18 -

Apostles were not limited to the twelve, but included Barnabas and others -

Romans 16:7 -

Prophets followed them in precedence, (e.g., Agabus in **Acts**). Teachers came next followed by workers of miracles, showing the precedence given to the Word of God in bringing about miracles, which confirmed the teaching.

Healers are those exercising a less spectacular ministry, while helpers and administrators show the priority of spiritual power over administrative ability in the church.

Tongues may be last, but all are necessary and no one must be thrown out of the body.

Question 3.

Ephesians 4:13-16 -

Answer.

The single aim of the body should be to grow up into Christ's fulness.

“Until we all attain to.....the stature of the fulness of Christ.....”

The aim of this body ministry should be the stature of Christ and not merely drawing a party after one's self.

Christ supplies this ministry by the Spirit, Who sorts out the crafty doctrines of men and helps us mature in God - **verse 14.**

Compare with **Hebrews chapter six.**

There is a need of growth, even for Paul. It is only through the ministry of others that we are able to achieve it, hence the need of fellowship.

“Holding the truth in love” (not “speaking” only) shows common teaching with charity in it.

Question 4.

Colossians 1:24-26

Answer.

Sent to complete Christ's suffering work and reveal His body.

“complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body.....the churchthe mystery hidden for ages and generations.”

Paul speaks of the mystery of suffering within the body identifying us with Christ. A “mystery” is a thing always here, but formerly hidden and just now revealed by the power of the Spirit.

This shows that, from the beginning of the world, God had in mind to bring the Gentiles and all mankind into His plan.

This was only revealed in the book of **Acts** to Paul and other of the apostles, in its fulness.

1 Corinthians 12:26 -

Ephesians 1:9-10 -

Ephesians 3:5-9 -

These reveal the importance of this revelation of the Gentiles as in the body of Christ.

Question 5.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-21

Answer.

Seek to be obedient to leaders and have peace among yourselves, verses 12-13.

The body functions in a disciplined and peaceful way. There are definite leaders in it, put there by God - **verse 12.**

Their job is to admonish the idle, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak and be patient with all - **verse 14.**

The body must always do good, rejoice and pray (with praise) and allow the Holy Ghost to work freely - **verses 19-22**, while at the same time exercising its direction on prophetic revelations.

Matthew 25:8 -

Colossians 2:18-19 -

Evidently the elders are here meant as workers and leaders -

Philippians 1:1 -

Hebrews 13:17 -

Ephesians 4:11 -

2 Timothy 2:14 -

2 Timothy 2:24-25 -

1 Peter 5:3 -

There should be no differences among leaders -

1 Corinthians 1:12 -

1 Corinthians 4:6 -

Prayer must be a vital part of this ministry -

Romans 14:11 -

Romans 12:12 -

Acts 5:41 -

Note the need for the body to exercise its discernment on prophetic utterances, which must be proved.

NOTES

NOTES

PERSONAL APPLICATION: **HOME MEETINGS**

STUDY 7

19. SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND AND USE

Home meetings are not merely to be advocated because of their advantages in bringing various denominations together, or even because of their need in times of trouble, but more because of their Bible backing. In the scriptures we see -

Worship.

Worship at its highest form is possible in the home because it is a spiritual thing. The Spirit-filled meeting of Mary and Elizabeth is paralleled by that of the wise men worshiping the baby Jesus and having divine revelation in **Matthew chapter two**.

Miracles.

Wonderful miracles became possible with the presence of Christ in the home. This could happen in the family, e.g., Peter's mother-in-law, or to others.

Mark 2:1-5 -

c. Witnessing.

Witnessing work to sinners is done most easily in homes.

Matthew 9:10-11 -

Cornelius' home became a place of mass salvation and baptism in the Spirit.

Acts 10:22 -

Even today, where sinners hardly enter gospel meetings, a gathering in the home can be a powerful evangelistic weapon.

4. Greater privacy.

Work of a deep personal nature is possible in more secluded privacy provided by the home, whether for salvation or healing. For example, Nicodemus at night on the housetop, **John, chapter three**, and the two blind men who followed Jesus home, are two outstanding examples.

Matthew 9:28 -

e. Wayfaring evangelism needs hospitality to sustain it.

The Lord Jesus stayed in homes regularly.

Matthew 26:6 -

He encouraged His followers to do the same, making just one home their base in each town and using it, rather than the synagogue, as the place to preach and heal the sick.

Luke 9:4 -

6. Deeper truth could be more easily explained.

Words of deeper truth could be explained to the inner ring of disciples in the privacy of the home where they could be presented only by parables and pictures in outside preaching.

The Lord Jesus did this in homes -

Mark 10:10 -

Traces of the same work by Paul, as a supplement to his public ministry, is recorded in -

Acts 20:20 -

The more personal revelations of the Spirit and deeper teachings were thus able to be privately communicated to a ready audience, which would not have been possible elsewhere. This is a tremendous advantage in deepening the scope of Spirit gifts.

g. Waiting upon God.

Waiting upon God for longer periods of prayer was easier in the home, where whole nights could be spent in urgent intercession, e.g., Peter, on release from prison, knew to go to the home which was a regular scene of Holy Ghost prayer meetings.

Acts 12:12 -

It may even have been the scene of Pentecost itself, after prolonged prayer - **Acts chapter two.**

8. War and persecution.

War against the church and persecution in the synagogue made the home a useful place of refuge. Paul had no hesitation in leaving the synagogue, where his message was not accepted, for the home where his message was accepted -

Acts 18:7 -

and even of “splitting the believers” where he met opponents of his teaching -

Acts 19:17 -

This reflects strongly on the present position of churches where the full gospel message is opposed and people are compromising in declaring it for fear of being “put out” or “splitting the work.” The work of God is already split when God’s people are unwilling to move onward with the Holy Ghost.

Acts 2:46 -

The early church kept fellowship as long as they could with the established Jewish system but broke bread happily in their own homes. Finally, they spent most of their time in the home, as the Jews finally rejected the Saviour.

1. Wholesale use of homes.

Wholesale use of homes is found in the epistles.

Romans 16:5 -

1 Corinthians 16:19 -

Colossians 4:15 -

2 Timothy 1:16 -

Philemon 2 -

There is no mention of special buildings here!

10. Communion.

Wine and bread for the breaking of bread were partaken of in homes, not elsewhere!

Matthew 26:18 -

Acts 2:46 -

Simple fellowship meals made Christ real.

Luke 24:30 -

20. SUGGESTIONS FOR RUNNING THE MEETINGS.

1. Avoid sectarian attachments.

Do not run the meeting to promote a sect but as part of a larger fellowship.

Protestants and Catholics should be equally welcome and an informal atmosphere maintained in which it is easier to develop the use of spiritual gifts.

Those who come to worship Christ, like the woman with the spikenard ointment -

Mark 14:3 -

should not be subjected to the suspicion of their church standing.

The home meeting is there to build up the body of Christ, not a denominational organization of man although it should, and must, stand for the full counsel of God as revealed in the scriptures without compromise.

b. Allow room for the Spirit to move in the meetings.

Seating should be done informally round the central table, rather than in pew-like rows!

After the introductions, allow time for free praise and prayer where everyone can take part.

- (1) Where strangers are present, an element of greater control is needed by the leaders who should meet and have a private time of prayer beforehand.
- (2) Introductory talks should be informal and not too full of scripture except that which is natural to the context of the talk. Catholics and the unsaved will otherwise be embarrassed.
- (3) Testimonies should be practical experiences (not sermons) and prayerfully considered, before they are shared, allowing the Holy Ghost to emphasize those parts which He wishes. For example, life before the experience, exactly how you received it, and what were the main effects of that particular contact with God.

- (4) Adequate explanations should be given to newcomers of spiritual gifts in operation, with the literature also made available at the end to help.
- (5) The shy should be encouraged to participate and the bolder ones quietened down.
- (6) We should not be frightened of times of silence, as well as worship more loudly in English and in tongues.

Every meeting should have a fresh leading by the Spirit and never settle into a routine.

21. ARRANGE TIME FOR PERSONAL COUNSELING.

After the meeting, a break may be provided for informal fellowship round a cup of tea and a biscuit. Refreshments should be kept simple or the meeting will prove too heavy a load for the hostess, who will look forward to it with dread.

If possible, a private room should be set aside for talks with those who need personal counseling and prayer, e.g., the sinner woman in -

Luke 7:37-38 -

should not be talked about in the open by modern Pharisees!

There is a tremendous need for personal dealing with people at this informal level to sort out problems, which can never be aired in the larger gatherings.

These points are merely suggestions and are given on the basis of experience of such home meetings and are *not* intended as a rule book.

Obviously, where the group is closer, for instance, there is a greater degree of informality and liberty than where strangers are present. Each meeting must be considered on its own merits.

2 Corinthians 3:17 -

1 Corinthians 14:40 -

EXERCISE

The Bible describes the work done in home meetings as -

Question 1.

Acts 2:2-4 -

Answer.

Charismatic and powerful at Pentecost!

“.....a sound from heaven.....and filled all the house where they were sitting” - verse 2.

The suddenness, strength and diffusiveness of this Holy Ghost power in the house, must have been graphically witnessed by the writer. Thus the church originated in a house where a number of like-minded Christians met privately for prayer.

This humble origin indicates the concern of God to use those who prayerfully seek His gifts and are not concerned with the prestige of buildings or powerful positions.

These tongue-shaped flames rested upon each one sitting in the house, a visible evidence of united power received from God.

Question 2.

Acts 5:41-42 -

Answer.

Common meeting ground for prayer in time of trouble.

“.....and in the home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus Christ” - verse 42.

Here we have a private, as well as a public, preaching ministry showing that they did not withdraw from their first church loyalties into the homes, until they were forced to do so.

They witnessed to the Lord in their old church connections, but fellowshipped in the homes and used them to spread the Word. This reveals a balanced approach to the new move of God which may be imitated today.

Notice the severe punishment of the scourging they had to endure and the persecution which drove them to meet in the homes as their only place of refuge.

Home meetings fill a vital part in periods of persecution and civil strife.

Question 3.

Acts 9:10-19 -

Answer.

Call and private revelation given by God to God's chosen leaders.

The home provides an ideal setting for private revelation ministry and the preparation of future leaders for public work.

Notice the private revelation of Christ to Ananias in his own home which was a detailed word of knowledge on the name and address of the man he was to visit and the way in which Paul had been granted a vision also as he quietly waited on God at this home - **verses 11-12.**

Notice the need to ignore gossip, if we are to listen to the Spirit - **verse 13.**

and the measure of revelation given of Saul's future ministry - **verse 16.**

Notice the loving greeting of Ananias on entering the other's house - **verse 17.**

The private ministry of healing and the baptism of the Spirit which followed in this house - **verse 18.**

He was also evidently baptized after that and took food at the end of his fast - **verse 19.**

Personal revelation of this sort should always be checked against one's own leading of the Lord.

Question 4.

Acts 10:9 -

Read **Acts 10:24-33.**

Acts 10:44-48 -

Acts 10:24 -

Peter took time off to pray in the house where he was staying -

Acts 10:9 -

This led to a vision of greatest importance for the future of the church, showing the need for regular communion at home with God.

The use of hospitality to strangers -

Acts 10:23 -

This reveals the place of the home in fellowship, while this gathering of friends shows the importance of the house as a place to preach and spread the word among one's own friends in informal meetings.

Acts 10:24 -

In the home, church and racial differences can be dropped and we may simply obey the call of God.

Acts 10:28 -

After this vital outpouring of the Spirit with tongues - **verses 46-47** - they realized their need of fellowship and the home became a place of teaching for the new converts to grow.

All these uses form models for the use of homes today in the move of the Spirit.

Question 5.

Acts 12:12-17 -

Answer.

Challenging needs can be met by communal prayer.

".....the house of Mary.....where many were gathered together and were praying" - **verse 12.**

This prayer meeting must have been known to Peter but its special nature was determined by the urgency of the occasion - **verse 12.**

It is a great comfort to have the power of corporate prayer at times of special need.

Indeed, it may well have been in this very house that Christ ate His last meal together with the disciples and that they were sitting on the day of Pentecost.

Certainly out of this prayer meeting, young John Mark was soon to be launched on missionary activity - **Acts chapter thirteen.**

Peter then went away to another house to hide (showing the use of homes in dangerous times) and was able to communicate with James, the other acknowledge leader of the church at Jerusalem - **Acts chapter fifteen.**

The unbelief that seems to have been manifested on this occasion is the more remarkable in view of the previous release of the apostles from prison by God's angel. It reveals the mercy of God in going even beyond our own understanding and prayer.

Ephesians 3:18-20 -

NOTES

PERSONAL APPLICATION:
INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES
EMERGING
STUDY 8

From the pattern of ministries we traced in our last lesson, it will seem strange to have the emergence of individual ministries in essentially a group concept of the body.

However, there need be no contradiction between the two, as the individual ministry must always be seen in the context of the group outreach, while wider group ministries can be developed only by individuals personally in contact with God.

22. MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT IN LOCAL MEETINGS LEADS, IN TIME, TO WIDER USEFULNESS.

One main example of this is seen in the New Testament account of Phillip, the deacon who launched out into evangelistic work as seen in **Acts, chapter six** onward.

Chosen for local administration of funds.

Philip was full of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 6:3 -

Acts 6:5 -

Scattered by persecution, Philip left Jerusalem.

Acts 8:5 -

c. Despite prejudice, the Lord gave him a miracle ministry in Samaria.

Acts 8:6 -

4. Many were saved. He led them through water baptism.

Acts 8:12 -

- e. He lacked the ministry of the baptism in the Spirit.*

Acts 8:15-16 -

He even seemed not to have noticed the superficial nature of the sorcerer's profession.

6. The Holy Ghost moved him supernaturally to the desert to make way for the **deeper ministry of Peter at Samaria.**

Acts 8:26 -

- g. His obedience marked a new development in his ministry of the words of wisdom and knowledge.*

Acts 8:29 -

Essentially, this was a move of faith to a deeper walk in God.

8. Philip, not Peter, opened the gospel door to the Gentiles with the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch.

Acts 8:38 -

Thus, Philip's ministry not only became deeper but wider in its scope.

1. Levitation by the power of God.

Acts 8:40 -

This marked a deeper move into the miraculous.

10. His household was essentially spiritual.

His daughters also prophesied. He passed his spiritual zeal on to the next generation!

Acts 21:8-9 -

23. MEANS OF BUILDING UP THE CHURCH.

After local usefulness and proving, from the local home meeting, we see emerging the ministries which can travel and benefit the body as a whole.

1. Apostles.

For example, Paul and Barnabas trained others and launched out from Antioch.

Read **Acts, chapters twelve and thirteen.**

2. Prophets.

All may prophesy,

1 Corinthians 12:28 -

but some were sent out from the Jerusalem church to travel, e.g., Judas and Silas.

Acts 15:32 -

c. Evangelists.

For example, Philip was sent out after training at Jerusalem (as above.)

4. Pastors and teachers.

For example, Peter was commissioned by Christ to feed His sheep - **John chapter twenty-one.** He traveled from Jerusalem into a larger miracle ministry.

This system seems to cut out the need for residential Bible schools, as distinct from training in the local churches or training with a traveling group (e.g., with Paul.)

The modern context of workers going out to countries under the government, rather than through missionary societies, does not seem to be found in the scriptures.

Traveling ministries in the New Testament church were developed first in the local setting, then in a wider setting as they proved faithful. This made for mature, stable leadership and incentive to reliance on the Spirit for leading in a deeper way.

EXERCISE

In your own words, give the importance of Christian experience in witness work from

-

Question 1.

Mark 5:19 -

Answer.

The importance of experience is shown in Christian witness work in the absence of the Lord Jesus in person. His absence led to personal testimony by witness.

(RSV) - Tell them how much the Lord has done for you.

The men of Gergasa preferred their pigs to the Saviour Who told this man who had been delivered to go home and tell his friends what God had done for him.

Seeing him and knowing him in the past, this testimony would make up, in a powerful way, for the lack of seeing Jesus in person - just as we must testify today, now that people can only touch and see Jesus through us.

2 Corinthians 3:2 -

The Lord refused his request to stay with Him.

Mark 5:18 -

He had confidence that the demons would not reenter his body. This shows the effect of testimony also on personal deliverance.

This man actually went, not to his friends only, but to the whole district!

Mark 5:20 -

As a result, Christ returned later to find a whole crowd of sick awaiting His touch!

Question 2.

John 3:10-11 -

Answer.

Assurance of doctrine is gained only from personal experience.

(RSV) - *Are you a teacher.....and yet you do not understand this?.....We speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen.....*

The Lord Jesus here uses the word “we” to speak of Himself and the other disciples as having experienced this new birth - or birth from above by the Spirit.

John 3:5 -

He showed surprise that Nicodemus had not seen this already in the scriptures -

Psalm 2:10 -

Ezekiel 11:19-20 -

Ezekiel 36:26 -

Isaiah chapters eleven and sixty-one.

Experience never contradicts the scripture but the scripture is made real by experience of it today. The Greek word here used is a perfect tense with a present meaning signifying to have seen or perceived.

This is different from growing knowledge and shows a fulness of knowledge.

John 7:17 -

As we do God’s will, we get a full knowledge of His teaching.

Question 3.

John 9:25 -

Answer.

Attacks of doubt are warded off by personal experience.

(RSV) - *.....one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.....*

The priests directed the healed blind man to give the glory to God as Jesus was a sinner. But the latter stuck tenaciously to the facts of his experience and so warded off the attacks of the doubters, who kept on hearing him and trying to ensnare him in his story.

They had to answer to this and had to cast him out.

Do not let Satan rob you of your experience of healing or tongues of doubt!

1 Samuel 6:5 -

Jeremiah 13:16 -

Luke 17:18 -

These scriptures direct all glory to God.

Be like the man who was asked how he knew he was saved. "Sir, I was there when it happened. Do not argue. Stick to facts.

Question 4.

Acts 26:16-18 -

Answer.

Appointment to missionary service springs out of personal work.

(RSV) - *I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you.*

Enlargement of vision and experience is granted to those who are faithful in testifying to what they have already received. This enables the hearers -

Acts 26:18 -

Paul here joins the eyewitnesses of Christ and the ministry of the apostles who had seen Jesus, and is promised further visions later in his life.

Luke 1:2 -

Acts 18:9-10 -

Acts 22:17-21 -

Acts 23:11 -

2 Corinthians chapter twelve.

Note the importance he attaches to this experience as a qualification for his authority in -

Galatians 1:12 -

Personal faith in Christ brings this deliverance and forgiveness.

Isaiah 61:1 -

Question 5.

2 Peter 1:1 -

Answer.

Admission to faith and standing of the greatest Christians is by experience!

(RSV) -*those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours.....*

The measure of our faith is not determined by reading books and knowing promises claimed by other Christians, but by actually passing the tests in our own experience. Many make this mistake and think they have a greater faith than that which they actually enjoy, as the test reveals.

There is no substitute for a personal proof of one's own ministry and paying the price of revival.

2 Peter 1:18 -

It is stressed here that Peter was an eyewitness of Christ's power, but the object of his faith was the same as that for every other Christian.

One article is here used in the Greek to show that God is, at the same time, our Saviour.

We must all press forward to the common objective of experiencing all that there is of Christ.

NOTES

NOTES

***POWER OF THIS TYPE OF
EVANGELISM:
FAMILY CONCEPT***

STUDY 9

24. THE LOCAL CHURCH AS A FAMILY.

a. Home for new converts in a family of love, with maturity.

The whole point of this study is to underline the need for evangelism.

The present forms of evangelism by a one-man ministry from outside the church in the locality, is valid only to set up a group in a new area. Where the evangelistic effort is made in context of a backslidden local church, the converts are often lost when they contact the coldness of the local group.

The first priority, therefore, must be to get the church right before launching out for converts.

God had to deal with Ananias to accept Saul -

Acts 9:17 -

Even for pioneer works, follow-up must be done by a mature man, often with a religious background.

2 Corinthians 12:14 -

The ultimate aim.

Apart from the efficiency of such church evangelism, there is the ultimate aim of producing not just souls saved, but citizens for heaven where we are to be joint heirs together -

Romans 8:17 -

We must realize our brotherhood with one another and with the Lord -

Hebrews 2:11 -

Matthew 12:50 -

Romans 16:23 -

(Quartus - a brother in Christ)

1 Corinthians 7:12 -

Christ set the example by starting His preaching within the church.

Matthew 12:9 -

Mark 1:21 -

Luke 4:16 -

Paul and Barnabas followed this example by going first to the Jewish synagogue.

Acts 13:14 -

Even the writer of **Hebrews**, exhorts them not to forsake the assembling of themselves together when trouble began -

Hebrews 10:25 -

d. Fellowship is a mark of real salvation.

1 John 3:14 -

There is power in a double witness -

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 -

The Lord hears and knows the fellowship thus produced -

Malachi 3:16 -

This marked the early church -

Acts 2:42 -

Philippians 1:3 -

Philippians 1:5 -

and the Methodist revival “love feasts.”

2 Peter 2:13 -

Jude 12 -

5. Fellowship is vital to growth.

God’s original plan for man (Adam) included fellowship -

Genesis 2:18 -

It was well illustrated in the life of Moses -

Numbers 10:31 -

Exodus 17:12 -

Christ Himself appreciated this need for fellowship -

Matthew 26:37 -

The Lord sent out the disciples two by two showing His appreciation of the need of fellowship in evangelism.

Matthew 18:19 -

25. THE BIRTH OF DAUGHTER CHURCHES.

This is made possible by the leaders released from the mother church, as in **Acts chapter eight**. This keeps the outreach going forward into new areas.

1. Home churches are easy to set up.

This allows the church to move with the population into new areas. All the early references during the spread of Christianity are to home meetings.

1 Corinthians 16:19 -

Colossians 4:15 -

These allowed more intimate fellowship and more people to be involved in the outreach activities.

2. Fellowship was good between mother and daughter churches.

These were not regarded as “split” moves. Compare with the prophets who came down from Jerusalem to Antioch, **Acts chapter eleven**, to assist in their growth.

Barnabas and Paul also had contact with Jerusalem, **Acts 15:22-34**.

The same fellowship in sending out missionaries and gifts to those in need elsewhere, is found in **Second Corinthians chapters eight and nine**.

Similarly, the letter to the church at Corinth was passed around to all the others.

2 Corinthians 1:1 -

Psalm 119:63 -

c. Christian love shown in broad-minded tolerance and instruction.

Acts 18:14-16 -

4. Traveling ministries were thus made possible, which enriched all.

For example -

Agabus -

Acts 11:28 -

Acts 21:10 -

Apollos -

Acts 18:24 -

Acts 19:1 -

EXERCISE

The importance of fellowship is seen in -

Question 1.

Ruth 1:16 -

Answer.

Based on personal relationship and determination to go through with God.

(RSV) -*your people shall be my people and your God my God.....*

Ruth 4:15 -

This shows that this daughter-in-law was better to Naomi than a son, in her determination to go through with God. Her dedication was amply rewarded by marriage to Boaz. Naomi tried to dissuade her two daughters-in-law from going with her. This was a real test of their determination to have fellowship.

Naomi complained that God's hand was against her so promised them nothing. This step of Ruth's was all the more remarkable in view of the circumstances at the time it was made. It is in times of real distress we prove the true value of fellowship.

Question 2.

Romans 16:4 -

Answer.

Believers who risk their lives for missionaries.

(RSV) -*who risked their lives for my life.....*

Aquilla and Priscilla were willing to risk their lives for Paul. This may have happened at Corinth.

Acts 18:6 -

Acts 18:9-10 -

or at Ephesus -

Acts 19:30-34 -

1 Corinthians 15:32 -

They must have returned from Ephesus to Rome. There the apostle was glad to see them. The true test of Christian love is seen in this willingness to die for the brethren, just as the Lord Jesus died for us.

1 John 3:16 -

Question 3.

Matthew 12:50 -

Answer.

Brings a division with natural relationships by heavenly connection.

(RSV) - *.....whosoever does the will of My Father in heaven is my brother, sister.....and mother.*

Subjection to the known will of God brings us into the family of Christ.

It may put us at odds with our earthly kindred, as here it puts Christ first so that we actually have more fellowship with others of like mind, than with those nearest to us in the flesh.

Those who resemble Christ in His love and devotedness to the Father, are truly the most nearly related to Him and are the objects of His dearest affection.

In this relationship, a man's foes can even become those of his own household.

Question 4.

1 John 1:7 -

Answer.

Believing and walking in the light brings fellowship and cleansing.

We need to believe in His truth and behave with no part of our life hidden from God's light.

Ephesians 5:8 -

Ephesians 5:11-14 -

Our behaviour shows our standing. Our daily life must be essentially God-like. By this means only can we have true fellowship with other Christians and have true cleansing through the blood of Christ.

Nothing hidden or in the dark can be cleansed until it is confessed and brought to the light. The Greek present tense used here shows continuous cleansing from defilement of sin.

Ephesians 5:26 -

Question 5.

Matthew 18:19 -

Answer.

Agreement on earth in prayer leads to certain answers.

(RSV) - *.....if two of you agree on earth about anything.....*

Wide provision is here made for asking, based on the promise of -

Matthew 18:20 -

Note the premium put upon union in prayer, showing that we must agree as touching the object wanted. This is very different from a vague agreement.

This agreement must be made on details of how, when and where that prayer is to be answered.

Notice that they are gathered unto Christ's name, not a denomination or organization and that it is through His Name that this prayer is presented and answered.

NOTES

NOTES

***POWER OF THIS TYPE OF EVANGELISM:
GENERAL CONCEPT -
CHRIST AS HEAD OF THE SPOTLESS BRIDE
STUDY 10***

26. THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST.

Evangelism cannot be isolated and an individualistic activity, due to the fact of Christ being not divided in His activity throughout all truly born again Christians.

He is also interested, not only in local churches or even in the increase of denominations, but is Head of the whole body of Christians.

Ephesians 1:22 -

He should be given His rightful place as Director of Operations, which will affect and nourish the body as a whole. As the husband is head of the wife, while the wife may make suggestions, yet the husband makes the final decisions.

Ephesians 5:23-25 -

Colossians 2:19 -

This has the following important effects.

Not only the evangelist, but the whole church must be in a place with God if an evangelistic outreach is to have permanent results.

It is no use bringing converts into a dead church or one that is split. God's people must get it right.

Needs of the Christian must, therefore, find priority in evangelistic messages.

- (1) There must be a call to united, Holy Ghost prayer.

Matthew 18:19 -

- (2) Personal relationships must be dealt with and cleansing established between Christians before outreach to the unsaved.

1 Peter 4:17 -

- (3) There must be personal and practical consecration to Christ as Lord - **Acts, chapter ten.**
- (4) Joint worship and praise in the Holy Ghost should follow this cleansing and prove the main attracting power for the sinner.

Psalm 51:12-13 -

Now a personal response must follow within the body by -

- (1) Body ministry of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which will enable the Lord to cleanse and keep His church pure.

1 Corinthians 14:24-25 -

- (2) Members should realize the value of their homes and open them for evangelistic outreach and teaching meetings within their areas.

Once the relationship for love is established, each cell group should work together to build up the body of Christ over the area.

1 Thessalonians 1:8 -

- (3) Individual ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist and teaching elder should be recognized within the body and given their place.

d. No other type of evangelism but the scriptural way can achieve results.

- (1) This family concept among all Christians in which new converts can enter and find, not only love, but maturity of leadership.
- (2) “Daughter” churches can grow up through the home meetings, without a “split” being made.

A background of real love alone, can avoid clamping down on the growth of the body of Christ as a whole, because man wants to direct.

27. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

She is being made ready for her marriage. So, the present charismatic outpouring is not an end in itself. God wishes to draw all His people together into one body, not just to revive the old divisions.

1. The timing of the present move in a period of darkness.

This is significant when we read that the Lord will come back for His bride at “midnight.”

Matthew 25:1 -

Matthew 25:6 -

2. The truth of God must be realized by His people, who are responsible for making themselves ready for His coming.

Revelation 19:7 -

They must submit and respond to this prompting of the Spirit, as the bride submits to her Husband.

Ephesians 5:22 -

While God is at work by His Spirit, He is also asking for an active response from His people to His plan for the return of Christ.

Matthew 24:14 -

What is this plan of God, as revealed by history, since the return of Christ to heaven?

We may trace definite stages from church history.

- (1) The original church, ready at any time for His coming, gradually lost its purity and power through sin - not through God’s will.

This reached a peak when the Roman Emperor professed conversion and the church/state system grew up with temporal power.

This was followed by the “dark ages” in which only a few individuals kept to the original light of God.

(2) A.D. 1500.

Martin Luther rediscovered the truth of salvation and justification by faith.

Starting within the church, his message was rejected by the authorities. He was still attached to the old state system of Catholic versus Protestant in geographical divisions following the government of rulers.

His teaching revealed, however, a new aspect of the truth of God and paved the way for national Protestantism and the Church of England. This system, however, is not God's final truth.

(3) A.D. 1700.

John Wesley brought the new truth of sanctification by faith in that man cannot only escape the penalty of sin hereafter in hell, but also escape the power of sin in the life, enjoying real victory.

His message, too, was rejected by the church authorities within the Church of England and was still limited by the lack of vision on baptism for believers only. Accordingly, he did not see the sanctifying content shown by total immersion and attached holiness to the baptism in the Spirit.

His teaching opened the way for the smaller class meetings led by laymen and the spread of the teaching of holiness through the land. But this was not God's final truth.

(4) A.D. 1800-1900.

Plymouth Brethren went back to the church as being distinct from the state and began to see truth on the believer's baptism and body ministry.

The 1859 revival of holiness and the work of the Salvation Army in giving the church a social conscience, were also vital parts of this new move.

Apart from an abortive move among the Irvingites, there was no large scale realization of the miracle gifts of the Spirit.

This system, scriptural as it was, is not God's final truth.

(5) A.D. 1900.

New Year's Day marked the emergence of tongues as a sign of the baptism in the Spirit in the U.S.A., among a praying group. This spread rapidly across the world so that, in every denomination today, there are an estimate 25 million speaking people speaking in other tongues.

This blessing has crossed denominational barriers and empowered many Christians to see a return to the power of the early church.

Some who have received this blessing came under government by man made systems - specially under wartime pressure - while others, more recently receiving the baptism and going deeper into the gifts of the Spirit, still continue to hope for a revival which will save their own church system from destruction, not realizing that God is building a new church of people ready for Christ, with no spot, in perfect holiness, on a scriptural system!

Song of Solomon 4:7 -

2 Corinthians 7:1 -

28. YOUR LOCAL CHURCH IS A PART OF THIS GREAT MOVE.

Will you be in it? Or against it?

If God cannot unite His church through blessing, then He may well have to do it through judgment. The alternative rests with us to make the right response.

Will you look round to see what God is doing in your area toward His great plan and fall in with His move or begin to move on your own?

People perish without a clear vision. If we are to fully meet the needs of the world, we ourselves must be in the fulness of the plan of Christ.

Paul prayed for his Ephesian converts, who already had the baptism and many blessings of the Spirit.

It is to this end that God is moving and working today for His greatest day of all - the blessed return of our Lord Jesus Christ for His bride!

Will you be ready on that day? Saved? Sanctified? Spirit baptized? Enjoying fellowship with a New Testament body? Outreaching for souls?

Let us not go back to the previous stages of God's program but reach forward for this great, final denouement!

EXERCISE

In your own words, give what these Scriptures teach about Christ's bride -

Question 1.

Revelation 21:2 -

Answer.

The city of God is the bride.

God began this preparation in Eden where, in the garden, we see the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:7 -

This requires more labor and building than a mere garden and stresses the need of preparation. The various "stones" in this city were brought into place and shaped by the hand of the Lord Jesus. God now comes to live (tabernacle) with men permanently.

Read **Ezekiel 37:25-28.**

John 1:14 -

Question 2.

2 Corinthians 11:2 -

Answer.

Christ is the Worker behind the preparation for the wedding.

Paul acts as a friend of the Bridegroom to present the bride to Him.

John 3:29 -

His jealousy has God's honor at heart.

1 Kings 19:10 -

Paul had labored hard to present the whole church ready for Christ as His coming.

Matthew 25:6 -

Read **Ephesians 5:27-32**.

Notice “chaste virgin” is in the singular showing the whole body as one.

Question 3.

Ephesians 5:27 -

Answer.

The church is presented pure and spotless.

Holiness and glory are inseparable. Christ is preparing His church through gifts and graces of the Spirit for His coming.

Song of Solomon 4:7 -

The visible church contains both the clean and unclean.

Read **Matthew 22:10-14. -**

2 Timothy 2:20 -

But Christ is purifying and preparing it for His coming. Evil will be cut off forever as Christ works.

Matthew 13:47-50 -

Question 4.

Revelation 19:7 -

Answer.

The coming of the marriage of the Lamb is certain.

Read **Revelation 21:2-9**.

This is the final consumation. Perfect union with Him personally and participation in His holiness, joy and power are seen here.

The harlot divides her attention among many lovers, but Christ alone is the object of the church's affection.

A special marriage supper is here -

Revelation 19:9 -

This shows public avowal by the Lord.

Read **Matthew 25:1-12.**

Question 5.

2 Peter 3:14 -

Answer.

Certain people need to watch that they be found blameless.

God will do much for His bride, but not everything. She must adorn herself and be spotless.

“Found of Him” - in His sight showing a personal interest in the coming of Christ. This is contrasted with present spots and blemishes in the “love feasts.”

2 Peter 2:13 -

On promises of blameless, see -

1 Corinthians 1:8 -

Philippians 1:10 -

1 Thessalonians 3:13 -

1 Thessalonians 5:23-25 -

Our conscience must be clean towards God, fellowmen, and the witness of this will be personal peace.

NOTES
