

**"THE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE PURE WORDS, LIKE SILVER TRIED IN
A FURNACE OF EARTH, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES.
YOU SHALL KEEP THEM, O LORD, YOU SHALL PRESERVE THEM FROM
THIS GENERATION FOREVER." (PSALM 12: 6 & 7)**

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“Power Vs. Form” (Part II)

John the Baptist said:

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)

Jesus declared:

“But you, do not be called Rabbi; for one is your teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for one is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for one is your Teacher, the Christ.’

(Matthew 23: 8-10)

“However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth;”

(John 16:13)

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

(John 14:6)

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” (Matthew 28:18)

And the Twenty-Four Elders declare:

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

And every living creature will declare:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever.” (Revelation 5:13)

Dear reader, make no mistake about it; once and for all, settle the issue, not in your head, but in your heart; All authority and all power pertaining to every issue of life and all of creation rests fully and completely and forever and ever in ---- Jesus Christ and in Him, alone! Apart from His authority and power, there is none ----O----! Do not be deceived, our only hope of living this life as God intended for us to live it; and to make it through this fallen world, and enter into His eternal kingdom ---- Is by His

authority and power. If He does not confirm His living word (Mark 16:20) in and for us, we will find ourselves in a state of extreme suffering ---- mentally, emotionally, physically, financially and spiritually.

Man, since his creation (Genesis 1:27&28) has been totally dependent upon God. We, mere mortals, are like a newborn baby as the umbilical cord is cut. If a baby is laid aside, all wrapped up in a blanket and placed in a crib, and left there alone, the baby will soon die. It cannot survive if left alone. Neither can we, dear reader, neither can we. Sadly, I fear that the vast majority of those of us who call ourselves followers of Jesus Christ do not realize just how helpless we are when God chooses to withdraw His power from us. I know that we say we do, but far too often our words flow out of the brain --- the intellect --- and not the heart.

When we live our lives day by day with the revelation in our heart of just how dependent we are on God just to get through the day, it will change our thought patterns, our words, our prayer life, and our outward behavior. Instead of self-confidence and religious pride, which embraces “religious form” in varying degrees; there is meek humility, a repentant heart and a healthy, holy fear of God. As I have said many times; fearing God, is the healthiest thing (spiritually) that man can do. When the fear of God is absent from man’s heart, the end result is exactly what we are experiencing today among Christians ---- division, strife, greed, lust, coveting, idolatry, sexual sin and perversion, divorce, sickness, disease, death, etc. In such a spiritual environment, religious “Form” explodes in growth, becoming more and more distorted as man’s true heart is reflected in his “Form”. At the same time, God’s Power (His word confirmed to our benefit) fades away as He gives us over to ourselves, and allows us to hit bottom, where we wake up and repent of our wickedness; throwing ourselves at His mercy. Oh that we had hearts to hear!

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10)

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the Law of your God I also will forget your children.” (Hosea 4:6)

God’s people have a long history of behavior just like ours in this present day. It is a history of rising to lofty heights of favor with God only to soon fall into the depths of disfavor. How could this happen? The answer is simple; man’s flesh loves himself more than God; and then when he does not walk humbly before God, he will soon give in to his own heart and turn a deaf ear to God’s commandments, precepts and judgments. He drifts further and further away from The Way, The Truth, and The life. This happens very slowly, sometimes over several generations. The frightening thing is that this process of drifting away from God’s way does not begin as an intentional act, and we do not realize what is happening. In fact, we become quite confident that we are in good standing with God and on the right course toward our heavenly home. This is exactly where most Christians are today.

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

After our Lord returned to our Father, what we refer to as “the Church” was given birth in an upper room in Jerusalem involving about 120 charter members. The account is detailed in Acts chapter one. In verse 14 the 120 believers were described as being in “total agreement”----

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,”

In Acts chapter two, verse 40 through 47 we read of a unified body of believers that was growing in number totaling in the thousands. Even though they were exploding in growth, we read that ---

“All who believed were together, and had all things in common,” (Vs. 44)

“Continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,” (Vs. 46)

In verse 47 we learn that “Unity with Christ” resulted in the believers having favor with all the people, as the Lord, Himself, built His church. In Acts chapter five, verses 12 through 16, we learn that the “Power of God” was quite evident as our Lord confirmed His word through signs and wonders. Luke tells us that they were still in “One Accord” (Vs. 12) even as multitudes of men and women were added “to the Lord” (Vs. 14).

Where there was unity in Christ, religious form set aside, and man’s traditions abandoned, the Power of God was clearly evident. In such a spiritual environment, our Lord, Jesus Christ is free to confirm His word, according to His good pleasure (Mark 16:20). This spiritual law has withstood the test of time since time began for man in the Garden of Eden. Simply put, man cannot manipulate God; regardless of how sincere he is as he establishes his religious form. Regardless of how well the stage is set with lights and sound ---- Regardless of how beautiful the music ---- Regardless of how eloquent and charismatic the speaker ---- Regardless of how many good works are established and carried out ---- Regardless of how emotional we become, how loud we become, how many banners we wave or how many tears we shed --- Regardless of all man does as he attempts to manipulate God or find favor with Him through the practice of his varied forms of religion he is doomed to failure!

While our Lord was here, He addressed this problem of Power Vs. Form on several occasions. On one occasion He addressed it through the parable of the washing of utensils. His words are clear, precise, and easily understood for all those who love Him, and desire to “keep His word. Listen ----

“Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men ----.” (Mark 7:6&7)

**“For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men ----.”
(Mark 7:8a)**

**“All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.”
(Mark 7:9)**

“Making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. Any many such things you do.” (Mark 7:13) Emphasis Added

Today, I arose before sunrise. It is Sunday, the 25th day of November. Today, here in North America, as in the rest of the Western world, we Christians will clean up, dress up and show up to practice our various forms of Christianity. Our intentions are for the most part, good. Most of us sincerely believe that what we are about to do is the “right” thing to do in the eyes of God. In fact, many of us are so convinced that we are “right”, that we cannot ---- we will not ---- entertain the thought that Jesus is speaking to us

through Mark's writings in chapter Seven of his letter. To do so would threaten all that we are. Many of us have become a living, breathing expression of our "form", and will go to our grave ---- risking eternity ---- on the flesh of man, rather than the Word of God. Oh how spiritually bankrupt we have become! Oh, how powerless we have become in this hour of great need.

"There is a way that seems right to man, but its end is the way of death."
(Proverbs 14:12) Emphasis Added

As I have mentioned previously, Paul warned us of the dangers of these days, of which he said:

That we would have a form of godliness but would be void of its power (2 Timothy 3:5)

That we would ---- always be learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:7)

That we would ---- profess to know God, but in works we would deny Him, (Titus 1:16)

Jesus Christ boldly declared that He was The Way, The Truth and The Life (John 14:6) Jesus is not the way of death. He is not the way of defeat. He is not the way of untruth. He is not the way of division. He is not the way of strife. He is not the way of sickness, disease, unsoundness of mind, poverty of spirit and the lack of life's essentials. And ---- He is not the way of spiritual or religious form. All these things and more speak of death ---- the very opposite of Life and of Power. Jesus Christ is the Word of God (John 1:1&14). His word is all Powerful; and It is good news for all who can receive It, believe IT, and walk in It. God's word is all powerful, and when confirmed by Him, His word prevails ---- 100% of the time. God's word never fails!

"For the word of God is living and powerful," (Hebrews 4:12) Emphasis Added

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever." (Isaiah 40:8)

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"
(Numbers 23:19)

And Jesus declares ----

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

The word of God is the centerline on the highway of holiness (Isaiah 35:8), which leads us from this life to our heavenly home; Father's word will guide us safely through this fallen world and bring us into our Homeland. Jesus, who is literally the "Word of God" said, "Follow Me!" (Matthew 9:9, Mark 8:34, John 12:26, Matthew 16:24)

Dear reader, nowhere in God's word will you find our Father telling us to split up and divide ourselves into separate groups, each with its own "form" and traditions. No where! In fact, Jesus revealed to us a spiritual law that assures us of failure whenever we separate ourselves into our religious "form". Listen to our Lord ----

“Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.” (Matthew 12:25)

There is no power in division. Even the world understands this principal. One motto among the great armies of the world is ---- “Divide and Conquer”. Lucifer understands this spiritual principal, and the world understands it; but obviously the Christian community does not! God represents unity, not division. And those of us who consider ourselves to be a part of His body in the earth should reflect our oneness with Him, and with each other. The fact that we do not reflect this oneness sheds a lot of light on the question of why we are so powerless, except in our vain imaginations. *May God have mercy on us all!*

For the most part, religious form has overtaken our ranks rendering the word of God of no effect (Mark 7:13). If you question what I am saying here dear reader, let me issue this challenge to you: The next time you, a loved one, or a friend receives a diagnosis of having a sickness or disease that could be terminal, watch and see if your religious form will heal you or them.

When the storms of life make landfall on your shores in the form of division between husband and wife; or severe financial problems in your home or that of your children; when the demons of hell begin to reek havoc in your family ---- when these storms settle in, as they will, I challenge you to call on your form of religion and see what happens. See if your traditions, your religious repetitions, your good works, your church, your rituals ---- watch and see if any of these things will heal, deliver, restore or save!

How long will we continue to watch our homes break apart, our brothers and sisters rot away with sickness and disease? ---- How long will we allow the religious carnival barkers to fleece the flock and prey on the helpless? ---- How long will we continue to reflect our flesh to the rest of the world, rather than the likeness and Image of the One we call our Lord ---- Jesus Christ? How long?

Some 150+ years ago, Bishop J. C. Ryle of Liverpool, England that I have quoted previously, addressed this problem of form and the danger of adding anything to Christ. Please listen to our brother as he warns us even from the grave -----

Is Christ all? Then LEARN THE ENORMOUS FOLLY OF JOINING ANYTHING WITH CHRIST IN THE MATTER OF SALVATION.

There are multitudes of baptized men and women who profess to honor Christ, but in reality do Him great dishonor. They give Christ a certain place in their system of religion, but not the place which God intended Him to fill. Christ alone is not “all in all” to their souls. ----No, it is either Christ and the church, ----or Christ and the sacraments, ----or Christ and His ordained ministers, ----or Christ and their own repentance, ----or Christ and their own goodness, ----or Christ and their own prayers, ----or Christ and their own sincerity and charity, on which they practically rest their souls.

If any reader of this paper is a Christian of this kind, I warn him also plainly, that his religion is an offense to God. You are changing God’s plan of salvation into a plan of your own devising. You are in effect deposing Christ from His throne, by giving the glory due to Him to another.

I care not who it is that teaches such religion, and on whose word you build. Whether he be Pope or Cardinal, Archbishop or Bishop, Dean or Archdeacon, Presbyter or Deacon, Episcopalian or

Presbyterian, Baptist or Independent, Wesleyan or Plymouth Brother, whoever adds anything to Christ, teaches you wrong.

I care not what it is that you add to Christ. Whether it be the necessity of joining the Church of Rome, or of being an Episcopalian, or of becoming a Free Churchman, or of giving up the liturgy, or of being dipped, ---whatever you may practically add to Christ in the matter of salvation, you do Christ an injury.

Take heed what you are doing. Beware of giving to Christ's servants the honor due to none but Christ. Beware of giving the Lord's ordinances the honor due unto the Lord. Beware of resting the burden of your soul on anything but Christ, and Christ alone.

Dear reader, whether we realize it or not, whether we will admit it or not, things are not going well with the Body of Christian believers (as a whole) here in the West. We are not in union with Him, and as a result we are suffering much loss. We do not love Jesus Christ with all of our heart, all of our mind, and all of our strength. (Matthew 22:36-40) We have lost our first Love, (Revelation 2:4) if we ever had it to start with. We love "self" ---family ---ministry ---our church ---our pastor ---our teacher ---our job or profession ---our wealth ---our pleasures ---our nation ---we love all of these things more than we love Jesus Christ. We have become self-centered, unloving, greedy, prideful, vain, void of wisdom, earthy rather than spiritual, fearless before God, presumptuous, untrustworthy, unbelieving, and void of the Power of God. I level this charge with fear and trembling, realizing that God's judgment is now falling on His house. May God have mercy on us!

I beg you, dear reader, to join me in choosing to separate ourselves wholly unto our lord. To divorce ourselves from anything and everything that smells like religious form. Please join me in crying out to God and repenting for our wickedness of having neglected Him and having followed man's traditions. Let us plead for His mercy and protection as He sets His house in order. Fear God, saints ----throw yourselves at His mercy!

"Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through Angels proved steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him." (Hebrews 2:1-4)

God Bless,

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Your Brother, Tom

"EVERY WORD OF GOD IS PURE; HE IS A SHIELD TO THOSE WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM. DO NOT ADD TO HIS WORDS, LEST HE REBUKE YOU, AND YOU BE FOUND A LIAR." (PROVERBS 30:5 & 6)