

"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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RETURN TO JESUS PART ONE

As I once again take up my pen, I feel what I can only describe as turbulence in my being. The spirit realm is filled with raging warfare as light clashes with darkness. The forces of good and evil are engaged in an intense battle that is unparalleled in the history of the human race. The flesh of man cannot comprehend the horror of what is taking place all around us in the spirit realm. The forces of hell have pulled out all stops in their effort to harvest as many human souls as possible for their lord, Lucifer. The entire conflict of which I speak is centered on only one issue, your soul and my soul. Souls! It is all about human souls, nothing more and nothing less.

Most Christians today are confident that they are saved and on their way to heaven because they believe in JESUS CHRIST. As far as many Christians are concerned, the war over souls is being waged out in the world, not in the church. This is exactly what Lucifer and his agents want us to believe. The church as we know it today is fertile ground for Satan and his forces of deception. You cannot say that FATHER has not warned us – because He has!

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

"For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works." (2 Corinthians 11:14&15)

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12)

When it comes to the natural and the supernatural realm, the people of God, for the most part, have always found the natural realm the most comfortable. That is because our flesh dwells in the natural and its' desires and lusts are met or fed in the natural realm. Lucifer and his agents love it when we turn away from the reality of the spirit realm, because then we become easy prey and soon fall under the sway of his deception. As long as it appears to be light and righteousness and appeals to our carnality, it must be God and therefore good. May God have mercy on us and wake us up before it is eternally too late!

Today, many of us are asking the question of why professing Christians, who claim to be born again, are acting like the unbelievers. Fornication, sodomy, adultery, various addictions, bankruptcy, etc. etc. seem to be commonplace in what we call the church. Not only that, but sickness and disease have reached epidemic proportions among believers and we seem to be helpless to do anything about it. While some preachers will on occasion preach a sermon on the situation and others write books about why bad things happen to good people – nothing changes. It only gets worse. I believe that our present condition is the result of the great "falling away" from the faith that Paul warned us about in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

Dear saints, during the past two years I have embarked upon a study of the first century church and that led to a study of the first three hundred years of what was called "The Way" and what we now refer to as the church. What I discovered shocked me. In a nutshell, I discovered that what we are now experiencing and call church, came into being some 340 years after our Lord had returned to heaven. In other words, what we now have, for the most part, is not the New Testament church as described in our FATHER'S word. It is not! Anyone who is not intellectually dishonest can research this subject for themselves. The historical facts are available to those who would like to know the truth. I would recommend reading "Rethinking The Wineskin", "Who Is Your Covering" and "Pagan Christianity" by Frank Viola at SeedSowers Publishing House, P.O. Box 3317, Jacksonville, FL 32206 – 800-228-2665. This will get you started in your search

Now please do not think that I consider myself an expert on the first century church. I am not, nor do I desire to become an expert on this subject. However, there are several facts that I have learned and one of those facts is the subject of this message. Listen to our Lord's words –

**"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
(John 14:6)**

The first century church referred to themselves as "The Way". As far as they were concerned, there was only one way and that way was JESUS. He said that He was "The Way" and they were a part of Him, therefore they were a part of "The Way" – JESUS. Not only that, but JESUS was their only Shepherd (see John 10:11 through 14) and they followed Him. They fed on His word and considered that word to be the Truth. With all of their hearts they believed that if they followed JESUS as their shepherd, fed on His word as truth, that they would experience Life as FATHER intended us to experience it, both now and in the hereafter. The result was that they did experience life just as FATHER promised through the lips of his Son.

Throughout His earthly ministry, JESUS urged us to follow Him alone, as He followed His Father. He never once suggested that we were to follow a church organization, a preacher, an evangelist, a teacher, a pope, priest or prophet. No! JESUS said; "follow ME". (John 12:26) JESUS said; "Keep My word". (John 14:15,21 & 23) JESUS said; "Abide in ME". (John 15:4) JESUS said; "One is your Teacher, the Christ." (Matthew 23:8)

The first century church took JESUS at His word. They believed Him and they followed Him. He promised that if they waited on Him that they would receive power from on high. (see Acts 1:4-8 and 2:2-4) And they did! You can read part of the account of the beginning of the church in Acts 5:12-16. JESUS promised that if we would surrender to Him, take up our cross and follow Him, that we would be His disciples and take up where He left off after He returned to His Father. Listen to this promise-

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

**And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do,
that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." (John 14:12-14)**

Let me ask you, dear reader. If you claim to be a believer in JESUS CHRIST, who follows Him, does your present experience confirm the promise of JESUS CHRIST as outlined in John 14:12 through 14? If not, why not?

In Mark the sixteenth chapter, verse 16,17 and 18, JESUS said;

**"He who believes and is baptized will be saved;
but he who does not believe will be condemned.**

And these signs will follow those who believe; In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Now let me ask you again. Are the signs that JESUS said would follow those who believe Him, following you? If not, why not?

Either JESUS said what FATHER'S word claims that He said or He did not, which would mean that the Bible was not altogether true. If JESUS did say these things and if they are recorded accurately, then we who believe Him should be experiencing exactly what He said we would experience. Unless – JESUS was not who He said that He was – GOD – in the flesh of a man. (see John 8:58) You see my friends, each of us must decide who we will believe and who we will follow. You cannot separate JESUS CHRIST from what He said as recorded in our FATHER'S word. You cannot! Except you call Him a liar! However, that is exactly what many of us have done. We may not have come right out and called Him a liar, but our response to His word shouts out loudly - "I don't believe You." There in lies the root of our problem today. For the most part we are no longer following JESUS and now we are reaping a crop that we do not want to harvest. In short, many of us are using the name of JESUS, but we are following someone or something other than JESUS. Sadly, few of us know the difference. May God have mercy.

Now, let me take a moment to address some of my critics. I have had a few ask me why I continue to be so critical and why I always seem to be preaching to the choir. First, I have nothing to do with my message. I did not put into my heart what has been placed there, and I cannot change the message, nor would I even if I could. Secondly, concerning the choir, or the church. I can only tell you that the choir is sick – spiritually sick! My message and burden is for us, those of us who claim to be believers in JESUS CHRIST and who would quickly say that we are His followers, but who do not reflect His likeness and image and who do not confirm His word by the life that we are living. I make no apologies for my message and I view the message as much for me as for you.

To my preacher friends who have faded away because you feel that I have been much too hard and critical of the institutional church, I can only tell you that our FATHER will in the end confirm the criticism when He first releases a full measure of His judgment on the institution and then destroys it forever. All of the spiritual boxes that we men have created and tacked the name

of JESUS onto, will one day become wood, hay and stubble and be consumed in the fire of His holiness. My prayer is that you will flee back to JESUS and "let His people go" back to Him, as the only True Shepherd. If you as a spiritual leader, have allowed people to follow you and serve your vision instead of pointing them to JESUS alone, I can only say – shame on you – shame on you. You need to repent and flee from your wicked ways.

Now back to the subject at hand, Our failure to follow JESUS. I am persuaded that following JESUS is not easy (see Matthew 7:14) and in fact very few of us will actually follow Him. Following JESUS, while costly, does bring great reward. In fact I must tell you that your potential as a follower of JESUS far exceeds your present experience. I do not care what your age, your race, your financial status or any thing else. All of the promises of God are available to you and to me right now! If we meet His conditions, then we will receive His promises. The first such condition is to follow Him, alone, and devote the hearts' first love to Him, not to another man. Not to the Pope or preacher. Not to your church. Not even to your closest family members. Listen to JESUS –

"If anyone comes to ME and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." So Likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."
(Luke 14:26,27 &33)

Many Christians today will read the words of our Lord and just turn away because they seem to be so hard. This has always been the problem with man's carnal flesh. You see, as far as our FATHER is concerned, He is looking at our heart. He does not ask us to desert our family. NO! God established the family. However, He demands that we love Him above all others. As our love for JESUS increases, His love for those around us flows through us and they get blessed whether they realize it or not.

What JESUS asks that we do is impossible to do except by His Spirit in us, and FATHER is not going to fill us with His Spirit if our heart is not devoted to Him alone.

A.W. Tozer had a lot to say about our present condition, which has gotten much worse since his death in 1963. I recommend his book, entitled "The Counselor", which is available through Christian Publications in Camp Hill, Pa. Tozer makes the following statements in his book, and I agree with them.

"The Spirit of God cannot give a disobedient child His blessing. The Father will not fill a disobedient child with the Holy Spirit. God gives His Holy Spirit to them that obey Him – those who are obedient to the word, obedient to the Spirit, obedient to the risen Lord." (Pg. 82)

"Our problem is that we do not want to go through the experience of being filled with the Spirit. We want to be blessed, to go to heaven, wear a crown and rule over five cities."

"We do not want to come to that place where the Lord chops us down and hews us up. We don't want that. That is why we are the weak people that we are these days. The Lord's people want JESUS to do all the dying, and they want to do all the chuckling." (Pg. 83 & 84)

"I can only wonder why it is that Christian people can go on and on and not be concerned about actually lacking the blessings and gifts promised by a loving Father in heaven." (Pg. 86)

"We go on year after year and learn to live with death. We find ourselves able to live with a spiritual corpse. Our breath is frosty, our cheeks are pale, our toes are frostbitten and we haven't any spirituality. We learn to live with that – and we imagine that is "Normal". We even write books to prove that it is normal, but the Holy Spirit isn't on us, and that's our trouble." (Pg. 93)

Brother Tozer saw clearly our spiritual condition and as I said, we have gotten a lot worse since he passed on to heaven in 1963. No doubt, were he alive today, his heart would be broken by what he would see in the church of man. I am also certain that he would still be warning us that we had lost our way. He would still be pointing us to JESUS alone.

Dear friends there are many of us today who claim to be born again – who claim to be Spirit filled and who claim to be following JESUS, but who are in fact, not following Him by His definition of the term follow. The end result is form and no real power. The end result is just exactly what we are now seeing in the church – Sickness, wasting disease, alcohol addiction, divorce, unmanageable debt, suicide, adultery, fornication, child molestation, division, strife and every form of evil. What we are now experiencing was not an accepted part of the first century church – it simply was not. If sin entered the camp, it was dealt with swiftly. Just ask Ananias or Sapphira. (Acts 5: 1-11) Those early believers took JESUS at His word and they followed Him alone – some to their death, but they wavered not. Let me ask you these questions. Is what we are now experiencing worth the price of following our church or some charismatic preacher, rather than just simply following JESUS? What would it take to get you to sell out and flee to the Master? How bad would things have to get before you would steal away to JESUS and tell Him that you wanted to finish your life following Him and just be His friend? Think about it – Pray about it. It is not too late to flee Babylon.

"Return, backsliding Israel, says the Lord; I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful, says the Lord; I will not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the Lord your God, And have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree. And you have not obeyed My voice, says the Lord."

"Return, O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion." (Jeremiah 3:12-14)

I love you all in Christ!

Tom

