

**"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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“SEPARATION”

"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:17&18)

"And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4)

Today I would like to share with you a Biblical truth that is critical to the spiritual well-being of every single person who claims to be born-again and a follower of Jesus Christ. That truth is centered on God's command, to His people, to ---- "Come Out"! To be "Separate"! These are strong commands given by God to His people. They carry both the promise of a blessing ---"Being received as a child by our Father"; and they carry a curse -----"of sharing in sin and receiving plagues." As is so often the case with God, He has set before us the blessing and the curse. Father commands that we obey Him, but He leaves the choice to us. He never forces us to be obedient to Him. He knows that if we sincerely love Him, we will choose to obey Him. If we turn a deaf ear to our Father by ignoring His word, we have no one but ourselves to blame for the suffering that follows. We cannot say that we were not warned beforehand of the consequences of being disobedient to our God and Father. No man will stand before God and make excuses for his disobedience. No man! That includes you, dear reader; and that includes me.

Now then, what is Father commanding that we come out of in 2 Corinthians 6:17 & 18 and Revelation 18:4? What is He warning us about? The answer is clear. Father has called His people to come out and separate themselves from - "The World." Watchman Nee, in his book entitled "Love Not the World", defines the world as referenced in the command to "come out of her," as follows: "The whole circle of worldly goods, endowments, riches, advantages and pleasures. It is an ordered system which is governed from behind the scenes by a ruler, Satan." Nee goes on to say, "Since the day Adam opened the door for evil to enter God's creation, the world order has shown itself to be hostile to God. The world 'knew not God' (1 Cor. 1:21), 'hated' Christ (John 15:18) AND 'cannot receive' the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17). 'Its works are evil' (John 7:7) and 'the friendship of the world is enmity with God' (James 4:4). Hence Jesus says, 'My Kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). The world is under judgment and God's attitude to it is uncompromising."

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world -----the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -----is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:15&16)

In the book of Acts, Chapters one and two, we read the account of the birth of the true church. It was the Day of Pentecost; there were about 120 people in an upper room and they were in "one accord." In other words, there was no division among them. They had separated themselves from the world and its systems to wait on our Lord's promise:

"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

As we know, our Lord's word was confirmed for the 120 souls who chose to "do" as He commanded. The Holy Spirit fell in that room and baptized every soul there, and the church became the Lord's body in the earth. At that point, it is important to note that the church was in "unity" and "separate" from the world and its hellish system. Truly, the church was the "salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13&14). They were a peculiar people; a called out and separate people; a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9). They were in the world, but they were not of the world. They did not look like, speak like, and act like the world. They were offensive to the world as they judged it by their very presence. Therefore, they were hated and despised, especially by the religious spirits that represented the world's religious system. In those days, the true church was indeed "separated" from the world system. Our Light was shining brightly as the Living Word was confirmed by our Lord from heaven (Mark 16:20); demons were cast out, the sick were healed, the Gospel of Jesus Christ was preached and the church exploded in growth (Acts 2:46 & 47). God's separated people, endued with His power, had become an extension of Jesus Christ in the earth -----and surely Father was pleased with His own children! As it was written, so it was -----

"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)

Well dear saints, approximately 50 generations have come and gone since the days of the first century church. How do you think we compare today with our forefathers who left the upper room with the fire of God all over them, and the favor of God going before them? They had no new testament; no mass communications, no taped sermons or teachings; they had no Bible colleges or Seminaries, no structured denominations and there was no Roman Catholic Church. Today, fifty generations later, we have all of the above and more. And yet, compared to our forefathers of the first century church, we carry virtually no resemblance. What happened?

They had the power and the favor of God; for the most part, we have neither. What happened? Their light was exceedingly bright; our light is very dim. What happened? Their faith sustained them as they were eaten alive by lions and burned alive to light the pagan streets; our faith is so weak that our voices fall silent at the first sound of the threat that comes from the world's system, which is ruled by Lucifer (John 12:31 and 16:11). What happened? Their entire focus, passion, and zeal was for Jesus Christ -----they focused outwardly, not inward toward self -----Their message was simple and mirrored that of Jesus: Repentance, holiness, righteousness, charity and separation from the world; we are centered on "self", have more passion and zeal for our church, our leadership, our religion than we do for Jesus. We know little of repentance, even less of righteousness, and virtually nothing of holiness! What happened? They healed the sick and raised the dead; we send our sick to the drug store and bury the dead. What happened? They cast out demons with the word of God; we would rather not discuss demons, because most of us do not believe in them. What happened?

Dear saints, the written record is clear; the first generation of the body of Christ walked in the reality of Gods word and His power was manifested through them. They were known as the "Ekklesia" or "the called out ones." They heard the call to --- "come out" and to separate themselves from the world --- and guess what? They did! What followed their obedience to our

Lord is now history. They set the example for all who would follow after them; however, something went terribly wrong and Paul saw it coming, and he warned us when he wrote:

"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1: 6-9)

Again, Paul warns:

"I am jealous for You with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted -----you may well put up with it!" (2 Corinthians 11: 2-4)

If God's word be true, and I declare that it is, then there are an untold number today who are accursed by God, as they teach and preach a gospel that contradicts that which came forth from God Himself. When man becomes so cock-sure of his good standing before God that he loses his fear of God, and trembles not at His word (Isaiah 66:2b)-----when he begins to take the liberty of adding to and taking from God's word, he sets himself up for everlasting damnation. His only hope is that God's judgment would fall now, resulting in total surrender and deep repentance.

The greatest lie that ever fell on man's ears was ---"You will not surely die." (Genesis 3:4). Today, you can hear that very same lie --- "You will not surely die" being spoken across Christendom, with the same result as in the beginning -----DEATH!

Be warned, dear reader, our God is a God of His word, and while He is long suffering and patient with us, He will not excuse our disobedience without suffering the consequences. Our current state of spiritual bankruptcy is the direct result of our having put up with "another gospel" and failing to separate ourselves from the world. Should you be "one" of the many professing Christians who do not consider this matter to be a life and death matter; let me call your attention to an example of God's reaction to a generation of His people who chose to rebel against His word after they had heard His word, and turned a deaf ear to His call for repentance. This is but one of many examples and it is found in Hosea chapters eight and nine. Listen -----

"I have written for him the great things of My law, but they were considered a strange thing." (8:12)

"Because they have transgressed My covenant and rebelled against My law." (8:16b)

"Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples, for you have played the harlot against your God." (9: 1a)

"All their wickedness is in Gilgal, for there I hated them. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; I will love them no more. All their princes are rebellious. Ephraim is stricken, their root is dried up; they

shall bear no fruit. Yes, were they to bear children, I would kill the darlings of their womb." "My God will cast them away, because they did not obey him;" (9:15 - 17a)

These are sobering words indeed and reveal to us a part of God's holiness that few are acquainted with. They are "words" forgotten today, and as it was written then, so it is today-----

"They are considered strange words." (8:12)

May God have mercy on us all in these final days of man's rebellion! May our God grant us ears to hear and the spirit of repentance before our light grows any dimmer.

As one carefully examines the written record, under the tutorship of the Holy Spirit, there is something worth noting in Hosea's writings. In chapter seven where God is stating His displeasure against His people, He mentions Ephraim's failure to "separate" himself from the worldly and as a result, he lost his strength. Listen-----

"Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake unturned. Aliens have devoured his strength, but he does not know it; yes, gray hairs are here and there on him, yet he does not know it. And the pride of Israel testifies to his face, but they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek Him for all this." (Vs. 8 - 10)

From the very beginning of man's relationship with God, God has commanded that His people come out of the world, and separate themselves wholly unto Him; touching not that which is unclean. We are to be in the world, but not of the world. We are not to love the world system nor the things of the world. Our hearts are to love God and our devotion and allegiance is to be directed toward Him continually, day and night. As it is written -----

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:1 & 2)

Whenever God's people mix themselves with the world and become attached to the world, they place themselves in direct opposition to God, whether they realize it or not; and they are called of God --- Adulterers and Adulteresses. Needless to say, such spiritual adultery results in a loss of spiritual strength and a gradual separation from God; leaving behind only religious form and no manifested power of God, except in the vain imagination of man.

"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4)

When one listens to God speak through His word, concerning the separation of His people from the world; and then takes an honest look at our response to that word; TRUTH reveals that many professing Christians, perhaps the overwhelming majority, are at enmity with God. They are enemies of God. No longer can they say that they are "in" the world, but not "of" the world.

When it comes to our practice of Christianity we say all the right things, and I believe that, for the most part, our intentions are good. However, good intentions and a heart that loves the world, and the things in the world, can be very deceiving indeed.

"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me,- -."
(Matthew 15:8&9a)

When man's heart is divided between the world and the things of God's Kingdom (Colossians 3:1 & 2), all that he does in the practice of religion is in vain. Webster defines the word "vain" as used in Matthew 15:9 as follows: "of no real value, idle, worthless, futile and unsuccessful."

Dear reader, I beg of you not to ignore our Lord's words of warning ----- words that have been preserved for nearly 2,000 years. These words are critical to our spiritual well being. We cannot mix the world, its things and its systems with God's Kingdom -----we cannot! There must be a separation. We can clean up and show up at the assembly week after week; we can sing our songs and recite our creeds; we can confess our sins and cover the alter with our tears, as Esau did (Hebrews 12:15-17); we can pay our tithes and give our charitable gifts; we can attend Bible study after Bible study, until we can quote chapter and verse from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21; and if the heart be divided between the world and God ----- then all we have done, has been done in VAIN!

The second part of this message will follow. In it we will deal with very specific examples of our having attempted to mix the world with the things of God. We will also discuss what we must do to correct our behavior. In the meantime, search your heart to see if there be any wicked thing therein.

"Search me O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
(Psalm 139:23 and 24)

God Bless,

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Thomas -- your Brother

"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)