

Faith and Works V

The Contemporary and Biblical Contexts

Col. 2:8

Mind Over Matters

There are those who will claim their teachings are a result of divine inspiration or revelation, yet when we look at what they are teaching it is clear that using the natural thinking of fallen man and interpreting the scripture through the context of the worlds notions of spirituality one will always end up on the highway most traveled, while the path to the narrow road remains unknown.

The tendency to interpret scripture through the natural mind, and the attempt to resolve it based on our own temporal experiences is ingrained in our fallen nature. Spiritual interpretation of scripture is when the key is revealed by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 13:52; Luke 11:5). Peter got it, and not by flesh and blood, but in his early discipleship, as we all do, he took his eyes off the author, perfecter and finisher of the faith once delivered, and considered things from man's point of view (Matt. 16:23). This revelation of the key, the glory of God in the face of Christ that we have even while we still inhabit this tent, this earthen vessel, this is the anointing that John spoke of (1 John 2: 24).

1 John 2:26 These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. 27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

Imagine a congregation that did not have any need for the Apostle John to teach them because they had an anointing that taught them everything, that would be some group. But what was this anointing? It was the inner witness of the Holy Spirit of God in the face of Christ. When that is the focus, the foundation, and everything is build on that, there is a natural progression from receiving salvation, learning to live in it, and then walking in it. All throughout John's first letter he builds on that premise, that if one has that anointing, if follows they will know God's Holiness, will have forgiveness and love for each other, will seek to live in a

manner pleasing to God. True understanding of the depth of our salvation is what is needed so that obedience to the Gospel is from the heart in keeping with the new covenant.

Eph. 1:15-22 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Eph. 3:14-19 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

This is the key the Pharisees denied those seeking insight into the things of God. This is the key, that when a scribe has it, will bring forth treasures, both old and new from the scriptures.

One can be intelligent, or unlearned, but carnal thinking, the thinking of the natural mind, is not a quality of intellect, it is the orientation of the mind. The mind set on the flesh is death, the mind set on the spirit, which is revealing Christ, takes every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:4), and by faith personally rests in and trusts in that revelation, is life and peace (Rom. 8:6). Both the wise and simple are both to guard, that lest as the serpent deceived Eve, their minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (2 Cor. 11:3).

It is not a matter of a particular teaching, it is about Christ Himself, and our Abiding in Him, partaking of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), the true food, whose flesh and blood, in a spiritual sense, we partake when we fix our hope completely on the grace to be revealed at His coming (1 Peter 1:13), not looking at the seen, for that is perishing, but looking at the unseen (2 cor. 4:18) as confirmed in our hearts by the witness of the spirit by which we are sealed on believing (Eph. 1:13), that which is eternal.

Many seek faith as a means of sustaining their first husband, of avoiding the cross (Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:16-22). But true faith embraces the true cross, not harsh treatment of the body (Col. 2:23) or the removal of dirt from the flesh (1 Peter 3:21), but of a clean conscience through complete transference of our confidence and dependence from the old foundation of sand inherited from our first father to that of the new foundation of solid rock, not seeking to clean our old filthy rags, or apply patches to old wine skins, but to leave them, to be completely clothed in the garments of Christ (Col. 2:10; Eph. 4:24).

Many feel, in their ignorance, as did the Corinthians, that emotionalism, and manifestations of certain outward exhibitions of behavior, classified as "spiritual" by the current standards of popular opinion. But the Holy Spirit is seeking to build

the body of Christ IN the Body of Christ, not make super hero's or CEOs out of members of a local social "corporation", for the glory must be God's and the focus on Christ, even as Moses lifted the serpent, for we are not to preach ourselves, but Christ crucified. What is the power being manifested? The power of flesh to move flesh? The power to speak that which attracts itching ears? Or the power to satisfy the soul who hungers and thirsts for God?

There are two classes of individuals one finds representing God, seeking to be His ambassadors.

One is charismatic, looks good on camera, full of stories of how what they did unlocked their ability to grant them access or manifest wealth, health and fame - all the things the gentiles seek. Jesus will not be the center of their presentation and what they have to proclaim. This group points to their worldly success as proof of their expertise in moving or acting like God. These are the ones building their ministries by attracting crowds, but not the body of Christ. These are the ones who say the gospel is about signs and wonders, while producing few if any, relying instead on flesh to move flesh. Many will proclaim themselves to be prophets, while forgetting the scripture that says the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

There is another class, some are barefoot, few have the charismatic ability to move the emotions of people by their personality and skills of presentation, yet they can speak from their heart. They often do not have the latest technology to fill a stadium with electronic video and music. Sometimes all they have is a tattered Bible. They do not have the power to move men. They have the power to allow God to move through them, that when they pray, He hears them, because they come to Him in faith in Christ, not in their own self righteousness. Following the masters voice, staying true to the message of the Gospel that the power may not be diminished, they have become mighty fishers of men for the kingdom of God and are doing the real work, often at the cost of their lives, carrying the Gospel to those areas yet to hear the good news of Christ.

They are spending their lives, most without fame or prestige, for the sake of the Gospel, their hearts one with God's heart. Not working to get a return in this life, their lives spent on behalf of the next one and the confidence that they know whom they have believed, and that He is able to keep that which they have committed unto Him against that Day. These are the ones building the body of Christ, the ones whose fruit will last. These are the ones whose feet are shod with the true Gospel of peace, with signs following as they give testimony for the Hope that is within them.

This life of faith is not a matter of what we have done, and the teachings or techniques we used to "do it". That is still trying to qualify the old nature for graduation. It is about Christ. Have we believed the Gospel of Christ, do we have our eyes fixed not on a teaching or ministry, but on Him? It is about a new creation, old things are passed away.

We often see Jesus through our natural eyes as an accessory to our old wardrobe, but we are to be completely clothed with Him, letting go of the old, by faith knowing that our old self is crucified with Him, and that it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us. The life we live, we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and delivered Himself up for us.