

02.03.08 (Building the Altar and Receiving the Spirit's Fire 1)

Stripping Away “the False System of Faith”

- Isi 1:10-15; Joh 5:17, 19-20, 37-39; Joh 3:3; Joh 4:21-24 -

**** *Beginning Remarks***

**** *Scripture Reading: Isi 1:10-15; Joh 5:17, 19-20, 37-39; Joh 3:3; Joh 4:21-24***

1. The true face of the false system of faith

1) Mistakes committed repeatedly by Israel and many Christians generation after generation

- Israel held sacred “the Sabbath day, religious festivals, the New Moon celebration, sacrifice offerings, the books of Moses”. However, God said, “Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah...”. Similarly, the Pharisees, teachers of the law, chief priests and Sadducees held sacred “God’s word, religious festivals, sacrifice offerings, tithing, charity and serving earnestly”; they were also very careful (in what they were doing) having known the mistakes of their forefathers. But Lord Jesus said “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, your hypocrites... You snakes! You brood of vipers!” <Mat 23:1-36> “You belong to your father, the devil” <Joh 8:44>...

2) Today, too, misunderstandings abound.

- I don’t accept heresies and faiths of an extreme kind but hold firmly the doctrines of the orthodox gospel. Therefore my faith is true...

- I participate in Sunday services and all the meetings of my church; I hunger and thirst for God’s word. Therefore I am living a life of true faith...

- I do tithe and all other offerings and serve faithfully in my church’s ministries. Therefore I am absolutely positive about my life.

- In my service, I often experience “the empowering, gift-receiving, and results”. Therefore I....

**** Is my life based on a system of true faith? Diagnose the index of your faith as follows:**

3) State of a false faith

① **I do not know what God is doing:** The end purpose of the practice of faith is to see the deeds of God, who is “living and true” and who “speaks and works”, and to follow him accordingly. Therefore, regardless of how well I understand God’s word, how hard I pray, and how earnestly I participate in services and gatherings, all of my faith is dead faith that blinds to “how God is leading me in my life and daily living”.

② **I do not like to communicate with God:** The first natural reaction of one “who has met the true and living God” has to be that “he hears God’s voice and can pray to him”.

Otherwise, “either God is dead or I am dead”. If both are alive, “the communication between two living personalities” is deemed to continue and develop.../ If I have truly experienced “my prayers being answered” (testing and approving God’s good will, thereby getting cleansed, empowered and answered), I will surely live by the power of prayer... ←→ The reason that I don’t enjoy praying is either I have not met God or I have not mastered the secrets of how my prayers are answered.

③ **I cannot see how the love between God and me is developing:** Life of faith begins with “establishing the love relationship between father and son and between husband and wife. Agape and its fruit are the entire contents of “Song of Songs”. All those who have confirmed through Jesus Christ and his Cross the great, infinite and unconditional love of God the Father and themselves as being “blessed and loved” are able to discover God’s infinite and great love in all their conditions and encounters and often see God’s mercy, forgiving, protection, help, anointing, blessing and accomplishing in their loving communication with God. If I live a life like this, wouldn’t I experience “the developing and unfolding of my love for God”?! Moreover, this love will spread to “the fellowship that God has prepared and loves” and continue onto all peoples...

2. false systems of faith

*** If our faith does not begin with “the essence of the gospel” (knowing God, endearing ourselves to him, and following him), we are deemed to fall into “the trap of religion”.**

1) Legalism = its essence and form, the reversal of the container and the contained – rules and formality (the container) are important. But more important is “the love relationship, communication and fruit” (the contained, the essence)/ Legalists hope to gain “God’s mercy” with what they do. But the fact remains that only those to whom God has shown his mercy (has chosen) will receive mercy <Rom 9:15>-- the law ushers in sin and sin sets condemnation and death to work <Rom 6:23>/ the law brings me to the cross of Jesus Christ where I discover that the great and eternal love of God the Father is for me and that I am “not under law, but under grace” <Rom 6:14>; my life has been transformed so that I now love to test and approve God’s good will and follow him accordingly (a slave to righteousness) <Rom 6:18> and “serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code” <Rom 7:6>/ “love covers over a multitude of sins” <1Pe 4:8> and “there is no fear in love” <1Jo 4:18>

2) begging for blessings = God is not my end purpose but the means of achieving my end = because they don’t know God, they run after blessings outside God – they don’t know exactly “what is blessing” but take to be blessings “good health, longevity, wealth, social position, reputation and peace”. In fact, God himself is “the blessing”; as long as we can have “God’s presence and his pleasure”, we’ll be able to gain the eternal blessings on the earth and in heaven.../Saints have gained their identity as sons of God in Jesus Christ <Eph 1:5>; there is no greater blessing and success than being “God’s children, the body of Christ, and the temple of the H.S. / The most successful are those who we can, in Christ, gain God’s eternal purpose, test and approve his good will, follow his leading, see his protection, help and accomplishing. / Seek first his kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” <Mat 6:33>; “Dear friend, I pray that you many enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.” <3Jo 2>

3) Humanism = living by man's standards, methods and limited ability = reversal of master and servant – though they also believe in God's omnipotence and engage in prayers, they pray that "God give them what they ask for". / Their problem is that they don't know "how they can see the work of God" because "they don't know how to communicate with God. The reason for their failure to communicate with God is that "their life is not rooted in God's word, Christ and the H.S."

4) Mysticism = they are not looking for "God (the normal) who is with them and leads them"; rather, they continue looking for "God (the abnormal) appearing in time and space of a special nature and only on special occasions" = Doing so will lead us easily into superstition, blind faith, and mad faith; we would run the risk of becoming participants with demons – Jesus said, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign" <Mat 12:39>. Gentiles take to the practice of worshipping idols, spirits and sorcery. / All those who know God only as the God of omnipotence but not as the true God (his presence, his purposes and his good will) tend to seek miracles / No miracle is greater than that of our transformation through Christ "in terms of our life, destiny, purpose, vision, power and fruit", i.e., the miracle of "seeing God who is invisible and hearing God who cannot be heard through Christ" and the miracle of "being joyful always, loving one another, giving thanks in all circumstances, singing and making music in our hearts to the Lord, driving out demons, having people born again, healing people, edifying people, planting churches, blessing our cities and the world". Under special circumstances God performed "supernatural miracles of an abnormal kind" and will perform miracles of a normal kind that serve to "glorify him, edify his people and establish his kingdom"...

****Though they may appear different from one another, the abovementioned "four products" grow out of the same spiritual motivation, methods and starting point.**

-The same spiritual state of mind: those people all move in the state of mind that is separated from God – in the flesh (they are either dead or asleep spiritually); accusations, deceptions, cheating and control by the devil; in the state of sinning / their motives and purpose: self-centered / their method: living by their own efforts...

**** All "Christians" who are not yet restored to the "true faith" are always in and out of those "four false systems of faith".**

3. The fundamental reason for their not being restored to the true faith

1) They have not passed the test of "the Cross (death and resurrection)" <Rom 6:1-11>

- Without the Cross, they will never gain "the new life, identity, belonging, inheritance, motives, goals, contents and methods..."

- the Cross = baptism = only through total dismantling (to die with Christ) and building anew (to resurrect with Christ) can we hope to receive the H.S. and the new life.

- by the love revealed on the Cross I am "no longer under law but under grace". ↔ I will not slip into legalism.

- With my new life and identity made in Christ by the Cross I will be able to confirm that "I am already the most successful". ↔ I will not slip into prosperity theology for blessings.

- My new life made by the Cross will surely bring about a new way of living, i.e., I will be able to “test and approve what God’s good will is and follow him accordingly”. \longleftrightarrow I will not slip into humanism.

- With the H.S. and the Christ, who was the Word incarnate, enabled by the Cross I can enjoy Emmanuel at any time and at any place. \longleftrightarrow I will not slip into mysticism.

2) Why can’t they pass the test of the Cross? The reason is that “those religious people” do not yet know “the three fundamental messages of the gospel revealed through the Cross”.

**** Whoever believes, with a righteous and clean heart, in God’s breathed secrets of the Cross, he will be able to enjoy the new life, power and blessings brought about by the Cross. However, man’s spiritual problem and his lack of spiritual acumen prevent him from knowing “the secrets of those three most important messages”.**

① Man’s fundamental problem (the flesh, the root of sin and Satan) <Eph 2:1-3>

- As soon as I understand this problem, my spiritual eyes will open and I will no longer remain in the flesh, trust in myself, run after worldly things, or be deceived again.

② The accomplishing of Jesus Christ’s “penal substitution and his substitutionary death, burial and resurrection” <Eph 2:4-6>

- Once I understand the effects of “my death and resurrection with Christ”, I will be able to believe that I have received “a new life, belonging, destiny and inheritance”.

③ “The eternal and infinite blessings in heaven and on earth” God has prepared for me in Jesus Christ <Eph 2:7; 1:3-23>

- Once I understand this, I will be able to remain firm with regards to “the eternal purpose” God has set for me and to seek God’s good will in my circumstances so as to trust and obey.

3) Because we do not know these messages described above, we need to begin the “dismantling and building anew”. This is how:

① *Meeting God* = Knowing God (Trinity), knowing ourselves, and establishing the correct relationships (that of father and son, master and servant, and the king and his subjects)

② *Firmly believing in God’s word* = understanding the facts = reformatting our thinking system (our world view, view of history, view of life, our value system, etc.)

③ *Covenanting with God* = affirming our life’s purpose (four evangelizations) and principles (pray / Emmanuel / trust and obey)

④ *Communicating with God* = learning the secrets of praying (testing and approving, cleansing, requesting, interceding and triumphing)

⑤ ***Walking with God*** = To glorify God, edify his people and establish his kingdom, we need to live an altar (prayer)-centered and fellowship-centered life in the seven fields of our daily living according to God's schedule.

4) If we live a life according our new “operating system of life and living”, we will understand, as we “communicate and walk with God”, what it means to say ① God's work; ② the joy in communicating with God; ③ the true life of faith in “the unfolding and the development of the love between God and man”

**** Concluding Remarks**

**** Prayer Topics of the Week**

1) **Is my life and living built on “the true system of faith”?** *Am I clear about what God has done in my past? Did God tell long ago “what I will do in the future”? Do I love to draw near to God? Do I understand what happens when I communicate with God? How has my love for God and men continued to develop?*

2) **The gospel of the Cross is the power of God. Just like Paul, if one has seen through the secret of “Christ's cross”, one will certainly enjoy “infinite blessings”.** *How much do I understand “the three fundamental message of the gospel revealed by the Cross” (Outline #3)? Am I done with “the total dismantling and building anew”? Have I gained a new life? Do I know God's good will for me (in my circumstances) and am I able to enjoy those infinite blessings at any time and at any place?*

3) **Because they have yet to see through the secret of “their death and resurrection with Christ (the Cross)”, saints, albeit born again, will tend to slip once a while into “legalism, prosperity theology for blessings, humanism, and mysticism” in their walk of faith:** I need to diagnose my life and root out the unhealthy “religious elements” with the facts as revealed to me by the gospel of Christ's Cross so that I can live a more beautiful and powerful life of the gospel (as a gospel man, man of Christ, and man of God).