

OBEYING THE TRUTH

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As we have come to understand the first eight chapters of the book of Revelation, everyone of us should be at the point of applying what we know in overcoming our sin nature (old man). One of the biggest liberties I felt in Christ, was when I realized that Sabbath keeping was abiding in Christ daily, and the seventh day is the symbol of the inward truth. All the literal law keeping, the way I dressed and ate were works approached from my own understanding in an effort to make myself holy. Now I am ready to approach all these things from God's perspective and be completely free of the sin nature forever. Genesis one and the first three verses of chapter two will be fulfilled in the last generation before the return of Christ.

1 Pet 1:18-25: *18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain [manner of life] (handed down) by tradition from your fathers; 19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth [by means of] the spirit [toward sincere brotherly love], see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23. Being born [inwardly], not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible (seed), by the word of God, [living and abiding] for ever. 24. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: 25. But the word of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. [Alternate rendering], (supplied for clarity).*

Early in Peter's ministry, he was involved in a meeting (Acts 15) where some believing Pharisees insisted that worshipers must keep the letter of the law. In addition to O.T. books, the Pharisees recognized in an oral tradition, a standard of belief and life. They sought for distinction and praise by outward observance of external rites and by outward forms of piety, but, were comparatively negligent of genuine piety, as they prided themselves by their good works. Saul, who became Paul, was a Pharisee (Acts 26:4-5) at one time. The temple and its services had long since become very works oriented. This tradition handed down by generations of Jews, Peter called a *vain manner of life* (KJ = conversation), a tradition devoid of truth.

The church era to which Peter belonged slipped into spiritual apostasy so bad, that today we refer back to those times as "the dark ages." While God brought the church out of some of the worst times, the modern church is still based on vain traditions of man. See how far you can get when you try to convince a person raised in a certain religion that the doctrines taught them by parents and grandparents contains error. A lady, whose parents were in the same Bible study, challenging what I was teaching stated: "You mean what my parents taught me all my life is wrong?"

The 'corruptible seed' which has been planted in our minds is man's own interpretation of the Bible. What does it mean to be redeemed by the blood of the Christ? Is it only accepting the fact that he gave his life in our behalf? I tell you it is much more! His sacrifice was known before creation began. So, understanding who is the son of God, and the purpose for which he died prepares the heart to receive the genuine love of the Father. Are you willing to start from the beginning and search out the truth for yourself? And, will you apply what you find in order to change your vain manner of life? It is the cleansing of man's carnal thought processes and beliefs by the incorruptible concepts of our heavenly Father, and only by obeying the truth that the soul can be cleansed from the defilement of the flesh. How does this happen?

2 Cor 10:3-7a, 12-13: 3. *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4. (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6. And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. 7. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?... 12. For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.*

Part of the tradition of man is to look on outward things, comparing self with others. I am guilty of comparing my religion with others and thinking mine was superior, and within my church I compared my works to those who attended church week after week and who seemed to do nothing for spiritual well being. But the real warfare is inward and personal - man covets his own opinion above God's knowledge. But, *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* (Jer 17:9) Only God can know the corruption that resides in each of us. Therefore, we need to obey Him, and stop judging others by our perverted thinking, while at the same time believing we are accurate in thought and action. In our sinful state, not one of us is any better than another, so, we need to recognize our true condition and ask God for help.

1 Cor 3:1-1-9: 1. *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4. For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6. I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7. So then neither is he that plants any thing, neither he that waters; but God that giveth the increase. 8. Now he that plants and he that waters are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

Is there envying and strife within and among the denominations today? *For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?* One says, I am a Baptist, another says I am a Lutheran, etc. - are we not yet carnal? Yes, there is strife, and therefore, professed Christians are generally still babies and have need of milk, because they cannot bear solid food. What is solid food? The foundation is realizing that God brought forth a son before all creation for the express purpose of manifesting His love toward humanity. God did not send His son because a penalty had to be paid; He did not need to be appeased by a substitute death - Those ideas are pagan in origin! If God is angry, then why did He not retaliate when the son of His love was rejected and killed? We are the angry god, and we have been manifesting it everyday toward others! God is love - we need to know how to obtain and live by it?

Phil 1:8-11: 8. *For God is my [witness], how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. 9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10. That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

We obtain God's love by obtaining the Father's and Son's knowledge, applying it in our lives and bringing forth fruits of righteousness, which are the fruits of the Spirit of Christ. **Gal 5:22-23:** 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23. Meekness, temperance: against such*

there is no law. Do you see any fruit of anger or revenge? How are you reacting when someone offends you? Does self rise up when things are not going your way? How do you react to those near you?

When we believed and accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we began partaking of the divine character. But it does not stop there. **2 Pet 1:4-8:** *4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith (spiritual understanding of Christ) *virtue* (moral excellence); *and to virtue* (moral excellence) *knowledge*; 6. *And to knowledge temperance* (self control); *and to temperance* (self control) *patience* (endurance); *and to patience* (endurance) *godliness*; 7. *And to godliness brotherly kindness*; *and to brotherly kindness [love].* 8. *For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge (Jesus' knowledge) of our Lord Jesus Christ.* It is evident that the church today lacks moral excellence and brotherly kindness. And it will never change unless each individual makes a personal commitment to hear, understand and obey the voice of God in their conscience. We have a choice - We can continue to build on the sand of the sea, or, we can build on the true cornerstone by the truth that is in Jesus Christ.*

1Cor 3:10-13: *10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. 11. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13. Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

Mankind is either building their spiritual house with God's thoughts (gold, silver, precious stones), or with man's thoughts (wood, hay, stubble). To build on the Rock, we must hear and do as the Spirit instructs (Mt 7:24), and allow our manner of life to be molded after the Savior's. Then, when the unclean spirit brings (blowing winds) their false teaching (rain & floods) upon our house, it will remain solid and stable. **Col 1:21-23:** *21 And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, 22 yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unproveable before him: 23 if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven...* (American Standard) of which we are all made ministers in Jesus Christ. Amen.