

## WHAT IS MAN: MINISTERING CHRIST

Christ was the manifestation of God on the earth. Now man is supposed to be the manifestation of Christ on the earth. The man Christ Jesus manifested the "LIFE" of God to those willing to see. Jesus said in JOH 5:26 "For just as the Father has life (zoe) in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life (zoe) in Himself; Also in JOH 1:4 In Him was life, (zoe) and the life (zoe) was the light of men. Jesus, Himself, Is that "Life". JOH 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life (zoe); he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies,

When the sick touched Jesus, they touched God. Not the "Body" of God but the Life (zoe) of God. He said " JOH 14:9 Jesus \*said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and {yet} you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? Like so many of us, Phillip was anticipating seeing "the body of God", something that can be touched by natural perception. What he saw, but did not perceive, was the Life of God being manifested in the man Christ Jesus. This is something that we don't normally expect to see. We can't see the Life but we can see the manifestation of that Life.

When people touched Jesus, they touched Divine Life. When they saw Jesus, they saw God. Is it any wonder that people were healed just when they touched His clothes. No! They touched the Life that overcomes death and all it's manifestations.

Then what is this act of laying hands on the sick? MAR 16:18 -----; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. " What is it in mens hands that cause the sick to recover? JAM 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, **anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord**; JAM 5:15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and **the Lord will raise him up**, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

Is not the laying on of the believers hands a direct contact with the Life of God in that believer? Is not the anointing of oil a direct contact with the Life of God in that elder. Is not the prayer of faith asking God to release His life to the sick person to overcome the death that is working. In the same way that light overcomes darkness, Life overcomes death and it's manifestations (sickness and disease). This is exactly why resurrection Life overcomes the grave and the sting of death. ROM 8:2 For the law of the **Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has set you free from the **law of sin and of death**.

As the person of Jesus Christ was the vessel of God's Life, even so the church is now the vessel of God's life. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of God's life upon the church. The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus is the manifestation of the Life of God within us.

2TI 1:9 who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, 2TI 1:10 but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, Part of the gospel message is that Jesus Christ has abolished death and has illuminated Life and immortality. That is good news

to the dying world.

Such an important aspect of the church was revealed to Paul that we should be constantly reminding believers of our inheritance now in the church. EPH 1:23 which is **His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all**. EPH 3:19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that **you** may be **filled up to all the fulness of God**. This is such an incredible statement that it is difficult to believe more difficult to preach. God is Truth, He is Life and He is Love among many other attributes. Therefore Paul says in EPH 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; {and} that you, being **rooted and grounded in love**, so you might comprehend.

It is apparent in scriptures like these that God expects all His attributes to be manifested in the church while it is still on this earth. When Christ left this earth in bodily form and then poured out the Holy Spirit for all who believe that He equipped the church to manifest the fullness of God. ( His attributes). What other purpose has the church been left here on the earth following forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. Certainly she has been left here to contain **and** manifest the Life and person of Christ to the world. The Holy Spirit has been given to stand along side and help us and to lead us to those who are ready to respond to the gospel.

However the church is busy organizing raiding parties to be sent out to other churches to bring back some of their members. If you can convince them that our church has better and more exciting programs you won't have to manifest the Life or power or the attributes of Christ. It is difficult to entice unbelievers to our church with programs that are better than T.V. However they might come if they saw the fullness of God manifested. When Jesus Christ manifested the Life of God the multitudes followed Him.

The great difference between Christ and other men and women who started religions is that He ministered out of Life while they ministered out of death. The source was entirely different. Life is much deeper than doctrines or philosophy. There are many false prophecies and counterfeits of every kind. Many half truths are faked as total truth. The one thing that cannot be faked is Life. Thoughts, emotions, sentiment, sympathy, compassion and even holiness can be acted out in a convincing manner but "Life" can be felt and identified as real.

The church now has been left here to declare and manifest that Life of God to the world. We say the church's work is to manifest the resurrection Life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan is presenting the life of fun, satisfaction, partying, self-fulfillment etc. All this is death but he counterfeits these as living now. In every case where Satan has dominion and the opportunity to deceive, he will minister death. Death is the identifying mark of Satan. Life is the identifying mark of God.

Those who have taken their stand in Jesus Christ have already died. Therefore death can no longer be master over them. They have passed out of death and into Life. Death is a past tense experience. Now, even though the church has died and been resurrected into new Life, Satan is always trying to introduce death into the church. He uses those who minister in the flesh because ROM 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ROM 8:6 For **the mind set on the**

**flesh is death**, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ROM 8:7 because **the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God**; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able { to do so }; ROM 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. He doesn't much care what someone preaches if they are in the flesh. They that are in the flesh minister death even if they are saying good things no Life is ministered.

These epistles were all written to believers in churches. They were not warnings to the world but warnings to the church. The warning is to walk the Spirit and in Life rather than in the flesh and in death. If Satan can entice believers to sin then death begins to progress. Sin always brings death.

It is difficult to define, in a clear definition, what Life really is. We can say God is Life. We can describe it as resurrection but it still remains abstract. However when we touch the Life of God we know it immediately. Since this Life of God has its own identification and attributes it must be identified by those who "know" that Life. It cannot be taught as a subject. It must be recognized in the spirit.

The amazing thing is that those who only have death in themselves, cannot recognize either death or Life. The natural man, living in death, can recognize good and evil and even if doctrine lines up with the scriptures. He can discern if a sermon has been entertaining or not and if the music was professional. He can't discern if there was Life ministered or whether death was ministered. Whatever is devised and ministered in the flesh is death, even if it sounded good.

Only Life feeds the spirit of man to strengthen him. Ministering death not only doesn't feed the spirit it poisons and weakens the spirit. The difference between a meeting that lifts and strengthens us and one that entertains, but weakens us, is the difference between Life and death. Too much of the time, even those who have received Life cannot recognize death. We should be alert to discern if a meeting or a minister is supplying Life to us or draining Life out of us. Both are possible. Did we touch Christ or did we touch a man, flesh and death? Those who minister Life, minister Christ. Those who minister flesh minister death.

The question is this: If Christ dwells in us and we are "anointed" with the Holy Spirit how can we minister flesh? All those who have Christ in them and have received the Holy Spirit do not automatically minister out of His life, but out of their own natural life. This is evident in someone who is exalting his own ministry or begging for money. It is not so evident in someone who is preaching the scriptures. Even if someone is preaching the Kingdom of God we may still touch death instead of Life.

In the movement that exalted the "shepherds" and their authority and the lording it over the flock as church discipline, it was easy to touch death working. Name and fame have been used by Satan to sap Life out of a minister or an assembly. Building a bigger building (to serve more souls) has been a trap repeated over and over. What good is a big building with death in the pulpit and death in the pews. Christ will and must build His church with Life. It appears that man can build his church with death from those who cannot recognize Life.

God's instrument of Life is the cross. As the cross ministers death to the minister, the Life of

Christ is manifested. 2CO 4:11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over **to death** for Jesus' sake, that **the life of Jesus** also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 2CO 4:12 So **death works in us, but life in you.**

Where the cross is lacking or refused, no Life is ministered. Paul's revelation was that "the easy road" and no problems produce a powerless ministry with no Life. Of course jumping on a cross of our own making is of no benefit either. The ministry of Life will continue even if the pulpit is removed and there is no public ministry. Some men in the 18th century were removed from public ministry and isolated but the ministry of Life continued. Life cannot be stopped. These men were replaced with others that ministered death but were acceptable because they kept busy and upheld the doctrines. When William Law was removed from the pulpit and isolated, his books ministered Life to far more people than he could have from the pulpit. His books are still ministering Life.

Life speaks to the Living of reality while death speaks to the dead of foolishness and man's opinions. It has nothing eternal to say. Ministry, that ministers on any other basis than Life, is not New Testament ministry even though it may minister New Testament facts. Jesus said "the words that I speak are Spirit and Life". 2CO 3:5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as {coming} from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 2CO 3:6 who also made us adequate {as} servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for **the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.** There is one New Covenant but two ways to minister it. One gives Life and the other gives death. Letter refers to the written commandments of God as a mechanical method of pleasing God. This is in contrast to the New Covenant obedience in the spirit to the inward laws of God written upon our hearts. Legalism is ministering letter that kills while ministering "Spirit" gives life. "Spirit and Life" is a very difficult ministry because the immediate response is not visible and it may appear that no one is receiving the ministry. This then is a faith ministry. Legalism lets you observe the obedience but only within eye range. If believers are walking in spirit and life it works no matter where they are or who is watching.

When a person stands up to share we should be aware of whether he is ministering doctrine, opinions, legalism or whether he is ministering Life. The first can present a very accurate and technical application of scripture and present a scriptural conclusion but minister no Life. It is not only possible but also typical that someone can minister scripture but not minister Christ.

The scriptures are not always clear on every subject and God doesn't offer a foolproof and intellectual or logical explanation of every scripture. If we seek for absolute clarity and something intellectually satisfying, we may find that only letter is ministered. The reason is because we must leave room for the Holy Spirit to reveal the spirit of scripture. God's Truth is not always logical or understandable. Too much orthodoxy can be just letter. The truth is that the natural man will always be confused with the scriptures.

For example: Is the cross of Christ logical or something that comes by revelation? Is resurrection in the waters of baptism something logical and easily understood or is it simply by revelation? How can we logically explain "salvation"? How do we rationalize the Word of God becoming flesh and taking on the body of a baby and growing into a man? God's purpose is not that we limit our knowledge just to facts of scripture but that we learn to know Him. It is possible to have a

vast knowledge of scripture and still reject the Christ of the scripture. Just observe the Jehovah Witnesses and the Mormans or any number of cults. The one thing they lack is revelation knowledge of Christ.

Is justification by faith a good bible doctrine? Certainly! But is the goal to know the doctrine or to be actually justified by faith? The scriptures, themselves, have no voice but God does still speak through the scriptures. The scriptures without the voice of God do not automatically bring Life. The scriptures reveal Christ when God speaks.

The ministry of the spirit then is a ministry of Christ by a minister who has a personal knowledge of Christ. This ministers Life to hearers rather than just doctrine. It is Life that builds up an assembly and feeds the spirit.

Comparing spiritual ministry, two men may speak the same words but release different measure of spiritual truth. One may release power and the other just release words. One may minister Christ and the other minister letter. One may have a revelation of Christ and the other a knowledge of scripture. One may be a minister of Christ and the other a trained minister.

Both Baalam and Isaiah were prophets who spoke of the Kingdom of God but both were not equal concerning the Kingdom. In time of persecution and trouble or temptation which one would stand firmly in the Kingdom? Which one would we rather have minister the Kingdom to us? Someone standing outside the Kingdom can minister the doctrine of the Kingdom but what does it produce?

The church is "The fulness of Him who fills all in all". Is that Truth or is that just doctrine? "That we might be filled up to all the fulness of God". Is that a remote possibility or is that God's truth for us? Is that something that we just accept by faith or is that something that we strive for and seek after as a goal for our time? The church will reflect our answer!