

## #325 Kingdom: Ministry Introspection

This is a reflective evaluation of past mistakes, misconceptions, misappropriations of truth, ignorance of God ways, and insensitivity to the developing needs of the church. It may be a shallow confession of my inability to grasp the deeper truths as inward experience rather than as outward doctrines. My motive is to try to help others avoid the same mistakes that I have made in trying to minister the anticipated restoration of truth.

I am considering my final ministry in three dimensions. (1) Sharing the basic understanding of man's needs as God's fallen creation and his recovery into God's grace. (2) The development of a growing concern for redeemed people to pattern their lives toward fulfilling God's Eternal Purpose and bringing joy to His heart and to meet His original need in the Genesis of creation. (3) The changing climate within the church and a deeper concern for the inner life of the believer and the consciousness that we are called to much more than "to do something for God" but our continual calling "to become something for God."

There is a general concern that so many can receive the light / revelation that they are sinners and desperately need a Savior but then receive no "continuing revelation / light" of their eternal calling. So many have developed no consciousness of responsibility toward God or to His Eternal Purpose or to grow up in all things into Christ, who is the Head of His Body. My temptation is to blame all this ignorance on the "ministries" that God has set in the church to solve this problem. It seems clear that blaming the "believers" for their carnality is not valid if the ministries are just ministering the basics and the safety of the status quo.

Many of the liberal churches have reduced Christianity down to a moral behavior or a philosophy of honesty and integrity. The result is a gospel of ethics and outward appearance. Some proclaim a doctrine of politics and influence in the community. Some more conservative churches have focused upon gifts, evangelism, Bible study and memorization of scripture and attending the meetings. For the most part all this "activity" is irrelevant if there is no inward life and no spiritual awareness. ALL outward work done in the flesh for the satisfaction of man is irrelevant in the Kingdom of God and when it is all added up the sum is ZERO in eternity.

In this next restoration God is much more concerned with the person than He is with their doctrines or their methods or what they are doing "for God." If the person is not "right in his inner life" what he does is irrelevant. What he thinks or what methods he uses to advance himself amount to nothing in the Kingdom of God. The carnal person, ministering carnal things, to carnal people will always get a carnal, earthly result that is just wood, hay and straw. The carnal minister trying to minister spiritual things and deeper truths is a total anomaly in the Kingdom. Why? Because the message is just coming from his mind / intellect and not out of a rectified inner life. This problem has shamed the church for decades and has been a blight upon the believers and has eclipsed most spiritual vision.

The Biblical concept of spiritual church growth, fellowship, care for one another and sharing and the shallow actual practice within the churches has spoiled the church's testimony. The world is just not beating down our door to get in to our blessing. We don't really have something eternal

to offer them that is demonstrated by valid evidence. What we have is not needed by the world because they have the same thing. When the “inner life” of the church doesn’t condemn this carnality we can assume something is wrong. Our “doctrines” are not convincing because of the lack of life.

All these “ecclesiastical structures” will not help the next restoration and will probably hinder it and condemn it as heretical. Some may just be indifferent to restoration and spiritual life. This kind of church history has repeated itself in each restoration in the past 500 years. A problem of “Christian outwardness” with little inner life has plagued the church for centuries. To look to the next restoration while we still seek acceptance by the visible church will lead to more frustration. The visible church will present 100 reasons why everything is currently OK and how this radical element has always attacked the church as too liberal.

It is my theory that each person of God, who will carry the Word of God, must grow spiritually in their inner life in direct proportion to the ascending message of fulfilling God’s Purpose. In other words; Spiritual messages can only be effectively preached by spiritual persons. A carnal preacher ministering spiritual truth will be completely ineffective in the priesthood ministry of the Holy Place. Developing into a spiritual person should precede the spiritual message or we will just be preaching empty words from flat paper. That means we will just preach the “letter of the scripture” without spirit and Life of the Word. That doesn’t mean what we preach is wrong but that it just has no life and therefore no effectiveness.

When we begin in ministry we are concerned about getting people born again, baptized in water, regenerated, baptized in the Holy Spirit and established in a church fellowship. We are concerned about and focused upon “shepherding the flock of God..”

Sometime later we get concerned about their spiritual growth and their inner life, prayer, and receiving revelation from the Word of God. All our life and effort is directed toward the church.

Then suddenly we discover many inconsistencies in our personal life. We recognize character defects, integrity problems and that our inward motives are corrupt. We recognize things coming out of our mouth that must reflect something that is in our heart. Things we used to do with no conviction now become major distractions. Serious problems that we blamed on others, we discover originated with us and our attitudes or arrogance. Immediately we get concerned about our own spiritual life and the spiritual condition of our inner man. We then turn to examine our inner life and we are accused of “inwardness and introspection” and new age philosophy. Some always criticize us for seeking “subjective experience” instead of walking by faith.

Nevertheless, we learn to recognize God’s discipline and His Eternal Calling. When we understand that this life is just preparation for our life in eternity and our place in His Kingdom we can easily get even more subjective. Still, we realize that preaching “the gospel of the Kingdom” is not the full solution for the fall in Genesis 3 but this basic gospel introduces us to a fuller recovery within God’s Eternal Purpose and within the Eternal Kingdom. Surely, we will soon recognize that preaching to men to solve their problem and meet their need is way too shallow. Even if that is necessary it still does not address God’s needs and His purpose FOR the Genesis

creation.

Our next effort is not just to focus upon the salvation of men but upon the complete transformation of man to become a new species upon the earth. Then to inform the “new Species Man” that he needs to recognize the New Father of his new creation and not use his connection to his earthly father as an excuse. Then the “New Species Man” must submit to a New Government and New King to which he owes his allegiance and **which he must serve**. The central focus of our Life and Ministry must change from man center to God center. However, ministering a “God centered gospel” to others when we haven’t brought our life into a new God Center makes our life and ministry ineffective. It is NOT that our message is wrong but that we are wrong.

When we bring our life and consecration into the Kingdom Reality, we no longer treat the carnality of the believers with compassion and longsuffering. Exercising patience with their carnality is no longer a priority. Now we are open for more criticism because we are accused of failing to demonstrate “love” for the brethren and of being too demanding and too hard on the believers.

Finally, we change our message to focus upon eternity and God’s Eternal Purpose and the tremendous opportunity God has given us to stand with Him to administrate the Kingdom Government of God to the whole universe and all over the works of His hands.

When we discover that the reason for the carnality of the church is because we failed to minister the reality and Life of the Kingdom we want to quit and give another person the opportunity. Secretly we hope they fail so we can be vindicated for our failure. In our distress we discover that the “fully redeemed Christian” is essentially “spirit” and his experience is “spiritual.” We hope the evidence of that transformation is seen in prayer, Bible Study, faithfulness, integrity, spiritual life, discernment and revelation from God. If, instead, we find soulish issues remaining and carnal attitudes prevailing we try to readjust our message to practical issues of the Christian life. However, we may discover there is not even a foundation or spiritual base so we can begin with proper foundations.

When there is a true spiritual atmosphere in the assembly, the soulish Christian will be offended and feel like an outsider and charge the ones who are growing with snobbishness. The charge of spiritual superiority and spiritual arrogance generally precedes their departure. Their testimony to other churches about our arrogance will help humble us so we can advance.

All this reveals a renewed need for God to deal with our inner life and its need for continual cleansing so our outward life can function effectively within the Body of Christ. In all this we should seek for spiritual reality or the “trials” will benefit us very little. True “spiritual reality” is what leads to spiritual ministry. Learning more “spiritual facts” is a waste of time unless there is spiritual life.

The church must learn to reject the carnality of man rather than making excuses for it to function within the church. We can’t reject the person but we cannot accept the carnality as “normal.” Then we can develop and nurture the spiritual person in a much better atmosphere.

When we understanding that their carnality is the result of our ministry we may again turn inward. Then in the “inward life” we find it difficult to admit that our ministry was ineffective because we were not right before God. We may discover we failed in the ministry we attempted because our own lack of spiritual life. We may have a genuine call to ministry but we didn’t focus upon our inner life but instead began to focus upon an outward ministry.

All our “methods of Bible study” and “methods of prayer” and “methods of ministering the Word” are totally ineffective simply because none of the “methods” change or perfect the inner man of the one who “ministers.” Our failure is generally not doctrinal but it is a failure to develop our inner life so we have a valid ministry. Since the real ministry of the Word is by Spirit and Life it must rise up out of spirit and life within. Of course all this is subjective until it becomes revelation. Preaching out of the intellect is just ministering “words” and not the “ministry of the Word.” Like man’s body that is just a shell without life in it so also the Bible is just a shell until we can minister its spirit and life. Ministering the “shell” is popular but still ineffective.

The church has taught that ALL born again believers possess the Holy Spirit. We are not interested in arguing the point. However, it is evident that ALL born again believers are not “possessed By The Spirit.” This happens at the Consecration Offering and the inward anointing of 1 John 2: 27. The very essence and substance of the Bible is spiritual. When understood, even its history is spiritual and not just an accumulation of facts. The lack of spiritual life resulted in the lack of spiritual revelation which has produced a “Leadership Vacuum” that is the result intellectual training for the ministry. Only the spiritual man will generally discover the treasure of the Kingdom or the hidden mysteries in scriptures. It is ultimately the spiritual man that will bring up out of his treasures things from the old and also things from the new. It seems like the Old Man is afraid of the Old Testament and the New Man has trouble understanding the New Testament.

All this depends upon the light / revelation of God striking our spirit and for that light / life to penetrate deep into the inner man. The problem is this; it has to pass through years of debris left by the old nature. Also sometimes His Light will strike our spirit and for a moment we will see something but what we saw never gets to our understanding. Seldom can we recall this light for future ministry. The “Light” only becomes resident within us when there is spiritual understanding accompanying the light. Without the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding we minister thoughts.

Col 1:9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that **you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.** [10] so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Spiritual wisdom is not very effective for us unless we also have spiritual understanding of the wisdom. However, man’s natural weakness or mental dullness presents no hindrance to spiritual wisdom and revelation because this comes to our spirit and not to the intellect. However, intellectual strength, with spiritual dullness, ministers death in the pulpit. Finding the spiritual words to convey spiritual thoughts that have been given by the spirit will be the ministry of the Holy Place. The un-spiritual person eliminates himself from that ministry.

For example; Eph 2: 8] For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; [9] not as a result of works, that no one should boast. [10] For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

These are “spiritual words” that are so compressed that they go beyond the natural mind to understand the dimensions and depth of which they speak. They contain many layers of truth and after many years are still yielding new understanding. The natural man’s understanding has given these words interpretations that are far less than the full truth of God.

We may wonder why God has entrusted man with His Word because man has made such a mess of interpreting it for ministry. This is a great mystery why redeemed man has been given this great commission. Even redeemed man has eclipsed the truth of God’s Word with his own understanding and doctrinal correctness until it is made to say things the Holy Spirit won’t confirm. God has taken a great risk with man but in this way God determines who can qualify as His ministers of the Spirit, not of the letter.

If we can experience the working of the Holy Spirit in our inner man, we may release His Truth in ministry. Then we discover a marvelous and satisfying reward. We have called this “the anointing” in the past but now I want to call this the “inner anointing.” This is not limited to public ministry but is discovered in quiet times of isolation. The danger is not wanting to do any public ministry because of the preciousness of the “inner light.”

Still, God holds His revelation within His sovereignty and we can have no control over that. To submit to His sovereignty in these areas is the first lesson in full consecration. Trying to force revelation by threatening God with our prayer and fasting is not effective. Praying and fasting is not wrong but trying to use it as a tool to coerce God to give revelation is childish. After we receive revelation and understanding we still must be responsible to convey the understanding with carefulness and integrity so that we give proper food at the proper time to the proper people. The Christian Community, to which we have been assigned, can be penetrated and helped by the revelation when it is delivered by the spiritual work of the inner man! My hope is that this “ministry” will someday be carried out by every member of His body and not be assigned again to some pulpit ministry.

Many of us have been confronted with the question found in Psalms 8; “What **IS** man?” The New Testament confronts us with another question; “What should man become?” I am speculating that this question will become the central issue in the next restoration. Another focus will be upon the “Sons of God” and what that means. We suspect that a “son” is one in whom the Life of the Father has developed, matured and been manifested.

Too much of what has passed as “ministry” in the visible church is just instructing the soul with spiritual information and basic facts but has done nothing to feed and develop the spirit. As a result of this “soulish ministry” many believers can hardly recognize their spirit or to know if it is even alive. Soulsh ministry is more interested in human correctness and outward social reform than in spiritual growth and development of the inner life. For that reason no foundation for the

next restoration has been laid in the lives of many Christians.

Every work of God, in one way or another, is designed to strengthen the eternal qualities imparted to redeemed man or weaken the natural elements that remain from the fallen nature that cannot pass into eternity. These elements remain in the soul and may affect the body also. This is still the death that works in us! If it completes its work then life can work in others. We can recognize these fallen qualities in the fallen soul because they manifest pride in intellectual attainment, the big “I” attitude, and a rejection of God’s solution to human failures. They question and condemn spiritual truth as being irrelevant to modern life. This perversion is even found in the pulpits. Even immorality is seen as little concern because the grace of God covers it.

Even though the Law of Moses had no power to change the fallen nature in man, it did alert man to the fallen nature’s corrupt activity and its inability to conquer sin at its very root.

Without the Law there is no cognizance of sin and man is unaware that he has serious needs.

The inner Laws of God along with His Statutes and Ordinances that He puts on the inside of us by the New Covenant serve this purpose today. Unfortunately, it appears that our spiritual life must develop before we are able to read and understand these Laws that are put in our mind and written upon our hearts. Therefore, we may study the Bible and minister for several years before we are aware these Laws are condemning our words and actions and revealing our corrupt motives in doing the “ministry.” I suspect this is why so many in the pulpit are unaware that they have serious spiritual needs and blindly continue on in the “ministry.”

Reversing the process of the fall through the process and discipline of the spirit is not given very high priority in the church today because they focus upon the doctrine of “forgiveness of sins” rather than upon our call to fulfill God’s Eternal Purpose. Some ministers continue to function 100% in the soul / intellect realm after they complete “ministry training” and know nothing of the working of the Holy Spirit after being years in the pulpit. They may be living in bondage to the soul and not know it. What, then, can they minister that has eternal effectiveness.

We see evidence of this in the modern “worship service” where the “music” is focusing upon entertaining the believers. The worship is limited to the soul and the body simply because the spirit is unknown. We see this quite often in the youth meetings where the focus of worship is upon fun and is devoid of spirit. We can understand that among youth but it is evident also in adult worship.

I assume all this is the result of the emphasis upon the objective cross of Calvary and ignorance of the subjective, personal cross of discipleship. The “objective cross” focuses upon what has been done “for me.” The “subjective cross” focuses upon what God does “in me” to prepare me for eternity and create the spirit of worship in me. My theory is that “inner light / revelation” is the result of the personal cross doing its eternal work “in us.” Each “inner illumination” should cause us to advance in spiritual life and into His image and likeness.

Discouragement sets in to our life if we don’t experience these things happening even if we are

not aware they should be happening. This expectation is all part of our regeneration and is the activity of our reborn spirit. Many know something is wrong but don't know what it is. Some are moving from church to church seeking for an answer to this inner longing for spiritual reality.

If we ever expect to work together with God and to fulfill His Eternal Purpose, we must see a radical inner change, a transformation and development of our spirit. Why? Because in the Holy Place there is no natural light and everything will function under the illumination of the Seven Spirits of God. Without a mature and developed spirit we will be eliminated from that realm, in that glorious dimension. If we don't recognize the difference between our soul and our spirit we will be content in the natural light of the Outer Court.

Too many are just continuing on in the old creation and then trying to do spiritual ministry. If they speak in tongues they assume they are now 100% in the new creation. Of course if they read 1 Corinthians they would discover this is no indication of maturity but indicates they received the down payment upon the inheritance for which they must now qualify. Our first goal after the baptism of the Holy Spirit should be to develop a "God consciousness within" by developing our spirit.

As we have shared in the past, it is possible to get apathetic about our spiritual life and ignore our conscience until it gets defiled. Then it blocks our spirit until it loses its function and our inner life suffers. It is not easy to recover from this serious mistake because a "new" souliness arises and we dismiss the necessity of having a clear working conscience. The problem is we still continue in our spiritual activity and say spiritual words and act spiritual but the spirit no longer is functioning. We can still preach but we can't glorify God and we surely can't ministry spirit and life. We can still hold to our doctrines and insist upon their accuracy. Then our "feelings" are interpreted as His voice and trouble begins.

Some have ignored their conscience and reduced Christianity down to some simple philosophy involving a moral life, honesty and integrity or social ethics. Some reduce it down to gifts and prophesy or to public worship.

Restoring the reality of communion with God is not achieved very quickly and many things interfere with the spiritual life. Only the Seriously Consecrated will hold on and overcome all the distractions to the clear functioning of the inner life. This is ultimately the source of all "spiritual knowledge" but is seldom achieved by modern ministries who focus upon the outward ministry and neglect the source of outward ministry which is the inner life.

Very much of the next restoration will be experienced intuitively and logic will reject it because of revulsion. In all the past restorations this problem has not been as serious as it is today. The other restorations could be understood by logic because they took place in natural light. The revulsion in those restorations was ecclesiastical and doctrinal and were rejected because they were considered as a deviation from orthodoxy. Those who began in the spirit but now try to finish in the flesh will react violently to change.

It is NOT too late to begin NOW to make the transition from the natural to the spiritual.