

#106 THE DREAM AND A SPOKEN WORD.....

I am standing in a heavenly place. The area appears to be a large room with only a throne in it where I know God the Father is seated. Though I can see his majestic robes and form, I am unable to gaze at His face. I am awe-struck and make no attempt to look up at the Father. My head bowed in reverence, I peer to the side of the throne and observe Jesus standing there. I reason there must be some purpose I am here. Soon I notice another form enter the area and look to the room's other side to watch this person. The person begins to debate and is carrying on a contention which I understand concerns me. This is an evil spirit, and I am rather at peace knowing Christ is dealing with him and I am not being brought into the conversation.

While this debate continues I sense a Person's presence around me. I understand this is the Holy Spirit and am at deep peace. He fills my whole being, and I clearly hear His voice coming from inside my mind and spirit saying, "I give My gifts to whom I please." As I think about spiritual gifts and the conditions for receiving them, He speaks again, "The only thing you can do is to obey Me."

This dream came at a period when I was praying and fasting about my passport coming in the mail. I had been instructed by the Lord to make a short excursion to Israel to pray and intercede, and had been given a deadline for departure. The passport was held up somewhere in the mail system, and I was aware during this time of seeking that the devil was hindering and attempting to prevent its arrival. It was the third day of fasting and praying that I received this dream. Later that day my passport finally arrived. Then I perceived that the debate in heaven concerning me was also over my trip to Israel and the passport's release. I also understood that at that time it was Christ's place to deal with the devil and that I could do nothing. Christ stands before God to act as our advocate. He is our defense and knows well how to plead our case before the throne of God.

Satan attempts to hinder and stop our progress and the carrying out of our appointed duties to the Lord. We know that Satan came before the Lord to debate over Job. We know that one of his high-ranking spirits withstood the angel Gabriel for twenty-one days attempting to keep Daniel from receiving the Lord's revelations. Yes, it was Satan that hindered the apostle Paul. The Bible does not say Satan stopped him, but that he hindered or delayed his mission.

We must remember that often before plans can be carried out in the natural earthly realm, obstacles must be moved in the spiritual planes. Our responsibility is to have faith and obey what we have been given, knowing God will send his angels and His Holy Spirit to move things which we do not see or understand. Great faith is often needed on our part. We may feel like pawns in a chess game, but we are needed pawns in the spiritual war being waged on planet earth.

When we move and submit to God in Jesus's name, Christ takes it upon Himself to be our defense. He then becomes wisdom and help to us in carrying out our appointed duties. We are not given the whole blueprint nor shall we ever be. Trust and faith must hold us in place. We need only to be faithful and obedient to the will and light that He has given us. He will then take care of the unseen things.

The second part of this dream may not appear to have anything to do with the first part, but it did to me. In my prayer and fasting time I had been inquiring of the Lord as to spiritual gifts and ministries. The Holy Spirit spoke to my spirit, the place where He dwells in us. He moves in us and works outward from the spirit to the soul and even to the body at times. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit often is spoken of as coming on and clothing a person. In the New Testament He is spoken of as abiding deep within our spirits and coming forth from us. He is, as Paul states, able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the Power that works in us.

The Holy Spirit's speaking the two statements, "I give my gifts to whom I please" and "The only thing you can do is obey me," was an answer to some questions on my part, and was not intended to include every scriptural teaching on the subject. The first statement we find somewhat in these portions of the Bible:

"But now hath God set the members (with gifts appropriate) each one of them in the body (spiritual church), even as it pleased him" (I Corinthians 12:18).

"God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (Hebrews 2:4).

All believers seeking ministries, gifts and answers to prayer must be in the will of God with the necessary faith and obedience to obtain them. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. God must begin the process in us. Only by daily obedience to His will and Word, will we be able to discern and understand what we are to pray for and how to obtain the answers.

When God calls us for a ministry or gift it is important that we know and understand our calling and duty. We are to be wise in this area and know the will of the Lord. Paul surely knew his calling, as do all who are clearly led of the Holy Spirit. God does not wish us to be playing a guessing game as to our place and function in the body of Christ. When one moves out of the baby-stage it is time to know our work and duties before the Lord.

Some suggest that we are not to seek gifts but to seek the Giver. It sounds very noble but is contradictory to God's will and Word. Yes, our motivations, motives and priorities must be right, yet Paul tells us to "desire spiritual gifts", "to covet spiritual gifts" and "to desire earnestly the greater gifts"---read chapters twelve, thirteen and fourteen of I Corinthians. These same chapters emphasize love and fruit with the gifts. We know that ministries and gifts and even proclaiming the gospel are of no value to us personally if we have not the love and fruit of the Spirit. God's love needs proper channels here on earth, and our lives and ministries are such channels through which the Lord blesses others.

Supernatural gifts and ministries are intended to be channeled through us by the Holy Spirit. Faith and love, without spiritual works and deeds to reveal their out-workings, can indeed cause us to examine them to see if they really are from God. False faith can be a positive mental attitude or a mere mouthing of words and promises taken out of context; false love is human sentimentality and emotion which lay aside God's will and words. True faith and love come out of a pure heart---a heart yielded to God's Word and Spirit.

This faith and love will produce real spiritual results. Be careful with all the talk on our position in Christ if there is no practical fruit and spiritual work to prove its reality. Profession of position is no proof one has it! We must also remember this fact. The greater or higher the callings and gifts, the greater the cross and death to self that the Holy Spirit will have to work in us. Deeper humility and selflessness must be worked in the soul that God intends to take up higher in ministry or fruitfulness.

The harvest may indeed be white and the laborers few. God desires to call more laborers into the field, but those workers must meet God's conditions to hold those positions. God would do much more with His saints if they would put themselves more into His hands to mold them as He sees necessary. It is foolish to assume God will use baby, novice and spiritually slow Christians to accomplish deep spiritual works. Paul states it is the sanctified vessel that is ready for the Master's use.

Many believers seek higher service and ministry yet the Holy Spirit can not give it to them as they are still on milk and not able to eat meat. They are not ready to take meat and the corresponding greater accountability to God for stewardship. The apostle James warns that many should not seek to become teachers for they shall come under a stricter judgment before the Lord. The same principle applies to all higher callings and ministries. Many who want higher service are not even faithful to the duties they have already been given. Many possess much pride and self-interest and refuse to deny themselves and take up their cross for the Lord and His work. Therefore God may restrict His giving of higher callings and gifts until the conditions are met.

Let us also remember that once God bestows a calling or gift we are henceforth stewards of that gift and held accountable for it. We will not be released from that call or gift except by promotion to a higher calling or by our own rebellion. That rebellion will cost us greatly. Even Paul talks about his call to be an apostle and preacher with this understanding, "Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel." When Paul speaks of the gifts and callings of God being irrevocable, one point is this: stewardship, accountability and faithfulness will be demanded from the Lord for His extensions of grace and gifts.

We have many examples in the Old and New Testaments of those who failed to fulfill their ministries and duties---such as King Saul and King Solomon and some of Paul's helpers. We often read of the consequences suffered---God never gives warnings if He does not intend to carry through with them. Let us learn to be faithful in the little we are given so that we will be ready when God calls us to higher or newer fields of service.