

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

A person dressed in white, whom I discern to be an angel of the Lord, approaches and speaks to me, "Give God three hours a day. Do it for Jesus."

This was an answer to prayer as I had been asking the Lord how much time He wanted from me in prayer and waiting before Him. I understood this was not meant to be a binding rule for me, but applied for several weeks only. In this simple statement the angel, as God's messenger, was instructing me in the amount of time to be given and in whose name and service I was to accomplish it. God may give us instruction at different times but later withdraw the method. He does require at various periods more discipline, self-denial and sacrifice as the preparation or work demands.

Every ministry has its required duties and responsibilities. Ministries and gifts do not excuse us from Bible study, meditation and a practical daily prayer-life. The called preacher or teacher must still labor in the Word of God and prayer so that the Holy Spirit can further perfect and anoint him and his ministry. For God to perfect and cause one to excel in a ministry or gift that soul must spend more time before God in waiting and listening to the Holy Spirit.

It is not enough to say that we pray all through the day, or to say that we pray without ceasing. That is all good and well, but God demands our personal time, and much of it--time which must be undivided and alone. Many are used of the Lord to win hundreds to Him through their gifted evangelism, but they themselves are shallow and babes in really knowing the deeper things of God or in knowing God deeply. The Lord will honor His Word for it is truth. Even false and backslidden souls have proclaimed the truth and benefitted others, yet it will not profit the proclaimer whose heart is not right with God. Solomon was the wisest of men, truly gifted of God, yet his end was unpleasant and a reproach to God. He had wisdom but he did not heed the wisdom with which he had been gifted. This is why we must stay before the Lord in His Word and be subject to the searchings of His Spirit.

Many Christians fall under these two categories. One, they are so busy about God's work and ministry that they falsely assume this is their main priority. Two, they are not right in their personal lives before God, yet work and serve much, avoiding serious contact with the Lord lest He deal with their sin and selfishness. The first group really loves the Lord and desires to please Him, but often places God's work before their relationship with God. The second group tries either knowingly or unknowingly to appease God with their service and work, rather than obeying Him. We know that this is unacceptable to Him. Thus those good works become wood, hay and straw. They may bless others but will not profit themselves spiritually.

I wish to share here an event that happened to me many years ago when I was a young believer. I went to a great evangelistic meeting with thousands attending. Many came to God through this one man's preaching. Of all the sermons and activities that night, I remember a statement made by this evangelist that the Holy Spirit locked into my spirit. I never forgot it, nor do I now. Paraphrasing, he said something like this, "I have no respect for Christians who spend so much time in prayer yet do not win souls. Let them get out and work for God!" This did not sound good to me, yet the masses clapped their hands.

Four or five years later, this same evangelist was exposed for having an adulterous affair with his secretary, which had been ongoing for several years. If he had been spending more time before God He may never have given himself over to this gross sin. Many came to Christ by the preaching of this man. Did he think all those souls won and his many years of service would pacify God? Far from it! This man will live and die and go to hell unless he confesses and repents of his sin. Yes, many shall stand

before Christ proclaiming all their good words and deeds, but He will say unto them, “Depart from me ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:23).

The world’s system may hold the false assumption that, if there is a God to whom one day they will be accountable, hopefully their abundance of good works will outweigh their bad. A false belief indeed! Without Christ and His righteousness they will have no foundation at all. It is not man’s good works that make him righteous and usher him into heaven. Greasy-grace religion with its fire insurance and license to sin will not work either. Talk is cheap and professions are shallow if fruit is not forth coming. True faith and true righteousness will produce true spiritual works and a practical holiness to prove they are real.

So, my friends, our relationship with Christ must take the foremost place before all work or ministry. Otherwise, we too may be deceived and falsely assume we are pleasing to the Lord.