

RAINING ON PROFUNDITY'S PARADE

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Jesus dictated to John a letter addressed to the angel of the church in Thyatira.¹ He complimented them for their works, love, service, faith and patience. He then strongly condemned those who tolerated Jezebel, pointed out her seducing methods, warned of the filth of her fruits, and prophesied her ruin. Following that, He spoke specifically to the others:

"The rest of you Thyatirans, who have nothing to do with this outrage, who scorn this playing around with the Devil that gets paraded as profundity, be assured I'll not make life any harder for you than it already is. Hold on to the truth you have until I get there."

"Here's the reward I have for every conqueror, everyone who keeps at it, refusing to give up: You'll rule the nations, your Shepherd-King rule as firm as an iron staff, their resistance fragile as clay pots."²

Digging for deeper truths or joining the ranks of the super spirits serves no purpose in the pursuit of God's kingdom. Jesus promises the kingdom to those who bear the fruits of the kingdom.³ Such fruit is born as we simply *abide in the Vine*—Jesus.⁴

Here's what He wants:

- *Hold on to the truth you have.*
- *Keep at it.*
- *Refuse to give up.*

Here is what He promises:

- *You'll rule the nations.*
- *Your Shepherd-King rule is firm.*
- *Their resistance is fragile.*

Our confidence is placed in just such assurances, not in the accumulation of details, wives' tales, rabbit trails or demon tails (or tales). It is the words whispered in our hearts by the Spirit of God that produce faith,⁵ making wise the simple.⁶

Turn your eyes upon Jesus.
Look full in His wonderful face.
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.⁷

¹ Revelation 2:18-29

² Revelation 2:24-28a TM

³ Matthew 21:43

⁴ John 15:1-8

⁵ Romans 10:17

⁶ Psalm 19:7b

It is interesting to me that Paul did not suggest a study on demonology. His counsel was: *“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Stand.”*⁸

Immediately following Pentecost, believers *continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.*⁹ The beginning stages of the New Covenant church were overwhelmingly led and envisioned by the Holy Spirit who guided believers in lifestyles of simplicity and faith. Unprecedented growth followed, unhampered by clergy classes of competitive professionals. Jesus was realistically, functionally and practically the Head of His church. The twelve had not been selected by a pulpit committee, and did not carry the credentials normally required in many circles today.

*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.*¹⁰

Peter and John were not formally educated and trained, yet they exuded a boldness and a *knowing* for which there could be only one explanation: *they had been with Jesus.* This conclusion was consistent with Scripture’s explanation: they were filled with the Holy Spirit.¹¹ This is bottom line for all who serve the King. We must *be with Jesus*, full of His Spirit and faith.

I am blessed and privileged to be part of a team that includes formally educated and trained people. I rely upon and submit to them. I marvel at their depth of knowledge, their keen insights, and the meek and humble ways that they steward their training and their gifting. We are simple men and women who walk with Jesus. We do not rely upon our own understanding.

*For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*¹²

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.*¹³

Unlike Peter and John, Paul was formally educated and had a very impressive pedigree and resume.¹⁴ He put his own credentials in perspective.¹⁵ Paul’s bottom line:

*We are the circumcision, who (1) worship God in the Spirit, (2) rejoice in Christ Jesus, and (3) have no confidence in the flesh.*¹⁶

He feared that the believers’ minds would be *corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*¹⁷ Eugene Peterson puts a contemporary spin on this passage:

⁷ Helen H. Lemmel

⁸ Ephesians 6:10-17

⁹ Acts 2:42

¹⁰ Acts 4:13

¹¹ Verse 8

¹² Proverbs 2:6

¹³ Proverbs 3:5

¹⁴ Philippians 3:5-6

¹⁵ Philippians 3:7-11

¹⁶ Philippians 3:3

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 11:3

Will you put up with a little foolishness aside from me? Please, just for a moment. The thing that has me so upset is that I care about you so much—this is the passion of God burning inside me! I promised your hand in marriage to Christ, presented you as a pure virgin to her husband. And now I'm afraid that exactly as the Snake seduced Eve with his smooth patter, you are being lured away from the simple purity of your love for Christ.¹⁸

A nearby congregation is promoting our attendance to watch somebody jump over six school busses on a motorcycle. Such practices, the exercising of group dynamics and crowd manipulation, have a market because the body of Christ as a whole continues to demonstrate an appetite for such, thus rendering it profitable. Most of the spiritual sideshows and three-ring circuses would disappear overnight if there were no more market for them.

We have all become increasingly aware of the human tragedies resulting from prostituting God's anointing. As the body of Christ moves from an *anointing paradigm* to an *integral/wholeness paradigm*, simple accountability among the saints will eventually sort out and eliminate so much of what is being received as *anointing* in these days.

We have personally witnessed the power of the gospel spreading like wildfire—always in obscurity, never in the spotlight—in communist China. We were deeply impacted to be in the midst of underground church leaders, mostly young men and women, who are prepared to die for their faith. They know the power of the gospel because they know the power of the cross. They abide in the Vine, in the simplicity of Christ.

It was within a similar hostile environment that Paul pointed Timothy toward *a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence*.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.¹⁹

As we simplify in our belief systems and lifestyles, we will begin to appreciate the *Jesus* in one another. So many of our differences have everything to do with us, and nothing to do with Him. So little of what we defend has relevance in the new creation. Hear the parable of the Christmas tree.

For the customs of the peoples are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple.

They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves.

Do not be afraid of them. For they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good."²⁰

¹⁸ 2 Corinthians 11:1-3 TM

¹⁹ 1 Timothy 2:2-5

²⁰ Jeremiah 10:3-5