

Critical Blockage

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Picture a large pipe with a lot of water flowing freely from the end of it and you have a fairly reasonable parable of the love and grace (mercy and power) of God poured out upon mankind. Now picture this large amount of water being forced into a small fountain, such as a small drinking fountain, with a tiny trickle of water splashing outward toward a crowd of desperately thirsting people. What blockage is required to reduce the large quantity of water flowing from the pipe to the small quantity of water trickling to the crowd of people!

This is not merely the case of some aberrant rogue teacher – this is the condition of the average “church.” How can this be?

Picture again the large pipe with a lot of water flowing freely from the end of it and again recognize that this is a parable of the love and grace (mercy and power) of God poured out upon mankind. This water flows into five smaller pipes and flows out upon the people. From the people erupts an uncountable number of fountains that splash water on everyone around them.

This is not merely some wishful thinking about how the “church” should be – this is exactly what Paul said the grace (mercy and power) of God would do. Paul lists the “ones” of our life in God: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above and through all, and in us all. (Eph. 4:4-6) From this oneness springs the manifold grace which Paul describes by saying, “But [from this One-ness] to each one of us grace was given according to the measure by which Christ gives it.” (Eph. 4:7)

Paul then goes on to say that Christ gave some to be specific expressions of His grace – listing here apostles, prophets, heralds, shepherds and teachers (Eph. 4:11) and using other labels in the lists in his other writings. This is the quintessential proof-text verse for those who espouse the idea of the “five-fold ministry.” There are indeed five categories of how God dispenses His grace in this particular listing though some Greek scholars like to divide this list into four. Arguments for both four and five are valid. Some have even come up with a particular rule of Greek syntax (which cannot be found anywhere in ancient Greek texts but only in modern Greek textbooks) that “proves” that the last two are really one thing. But few have seemed to consider that Paul may have simply had traveling workers in mind for the first three and local workers in mind for the last two. But whether this is a list of four or five is immaterial and the whole argument is only a distraction away from the main point that God gives His manifold (many-sided, multi-faceted) grace to men for a specific purpose. It is equally certain that those who have transliterated these Greek words and turned these expressions of grace into modern ecclesiastical “offices” (especially that of “pastor,” “apostle” and “prophet”) in order to wield power over other believers are perhaps the most deceived of all.

Paul wrote,

“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace [that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel] was given, that I should [become a servant according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power and] preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the ekklesia to

the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.” (Eph. 3:6-12)

God’s gift of grace caused Paul to be an apostle (messenger) of Christ Jesus. The same manifold wisdom of God that gives us these expressions of His grace (mercy and power) is to be demonstrated by the ekklesia to the angelic beings the New Testament calls principalities and powers. This *is* the mystery of the gospel of Christ among men! This is the power source and method by which the more mature believers are to serve their younger brothers and sisters in Christ and this is the manner in which God has chosen to show the angels just how wise He is.

The primary task of the people given God’s specific gifts of grace is to simply express the grace of Christ given to them (see 1 Cor. 15:10, etc.) and give it to those around them and, in so doing, equip the body of saints to do the work of service to Christ, to His body and even to the world. (Eph. 4:12) They are, by sharing the grace of Christ, empowering the saints (putting them in contact with the grace of Christ and God through their work) so that the saints are then able to attend to the orphans and widows and the least (poorest, most insignificant) of Christ’s brothers (Jas. 1:27, Mt. 25:40, 45) and to love one another as He commanded. (Jn. 13:34-35) When these people with their specific expression of God’s grace, actively express the grace (mercy *and* power) that comes from their oneness with Christ and God and fulfill this work of equipping the saints, then – ***and only then!*** – will we begin to see among believing people the unanimity of the faith, the unanimity of our knowledge of the Son of God, true spiritual maturity and a tangible and visible similarity and resemblance between our lives and that of Christ Jesus. (Eph. 4:13) Surely one of the major reasons we are so divided is because carnal men seek to achieve doctrinal solidarity apart from the oneness of the Spirit of Christ and God. We have changed the original intention in the New Testament and concocted our own “better way” – often in ignorance or in blind obedience to “church” tradition that often excludes four of the five expressions of God’s grace! – and, like Cain, we are offended when our carnal offerings are rejected by God. (Gen. 4:5) It is an inescapable part of any true work *of* God that apart from Christ we can do *nothing* (Jn. 15:5) but in and through Christ we can do *all things*. (Phlp. 4:13)

The “pastor” who stands over his congregation – no matter how gifted, no matter how sincere, no matter how spiritual – stands as a critical blockage between the people and God. Not by virtue of his message, character or conduct but by way of the *position* he has taken. This is no accident. Long ago the Catholic sect took upon its clergy the title of pontifex and held that its priests were bridges between the people and God. This position is already held exclusively by Christ (1 Tim. 2:5) but bishops who had already ignorantly and blindly stepped into this place of Christ left writings that taught those who came after them to practice their priesthood in this manner and this deception has held sway ever since. The platform and pulpit paradigm stands as perhaps the most effective bottleneck against the flow of God’s Spirit and power in our midst, a critical blockage between the people and God – and the devil long ago planned that it should be so.

The tares, the sons of the devil, were sown by the devil among the wheat of the kingdom while men slept. (Mt. 13:25, 38) When men were unwary of what was being done to them, the devil enacted one of his greatest schemes to seek to demonstrate his ability to be like the Most High God. (2 Ths. 2:4, Isa. 14:14) This is the real origin of “church” doctrines and practices and it is no accident that the pulpit (which cannot be found anywhere in the New Testament but which is rather found to be the *ambo* of Greek rhetoric, sophistry and pagan idolatry) has become

the centerpiece of modern churchianity. Men were unwary about the origins of their practices and, through the centuries, turned them into time-honored traditions, the traditions of men that war against the word of God. (compare Mt. 15:9, etc.)

The tares, the sons of the devil, were sown so closely among the wheat that, if they had been immediately uprooted, some of the wheat, the true sons of the kingdom of God, would have been uprooted as well. God has chosen to leave the matter undisturbed until the wheat is mature enough to withstand the shock of seeing someone they thought was their brother in Christ forcibly removed by an angelic being and thrown screaming into an eternal fire. This is the close intertwining of “church” and ekklesia that has been transpiring over the centuries.

If God had shown His people the true nature of “church” centuries ago, what chance would there have been of Satan perpetuating his “church” lies and errors and bringing about the foretold apostasy, the falling away from the faith that occurs before Christ’s return? (2 Ths. 2:3, Mt. 24:10) None. They would have discarded the lies just as quickly as those who recognize them now are doing. God has permitted this scheme of the devil to continue until it reaches maturity because the wheat also needed to mature. Now He is allowing us to see more clearly the distinction because, very soon, the angels will come to separate the tares from the wheat. (Mt. 13:40-41) Now is the time when our actions, our response to the truth, will clearly demonstrate to the angels which camp we belong to. Those who will reject all of man’s traditions are the wheat. Those who find themselves unable to let go of their man-made “theologies” and practices are the tares.

Wheat and tares look a great deal alike. While they are very young, only a very close examination by experts reveals the difference. But when they mature, each plant develops a very distinctive difference. The tare, because it is a fluffy weed with no grainy head of substantial crop, stands erect. The wheat, precisely because it bears a grainy head of substantial crop, bows over. When the reapers come to remove the tares, they have a much easier time of recognizing which is which. The plants that are erect are to be uprooted and burned – the plants that are bowed over are the ones to be left for the harvest.

While the “church” and its self-exalted, titled leaders promote themselves and their “ministries,” methods and practices, the ekklesia will bow in simple humility before their Lord, King and Master. The tares will arrogantly continue to think they will be able to stand before God and justify their life and actions while the wheat will know that, apart from His grace, they are completely unable to do so. The “church” will put up billboards and make advertisements and use social media seeking to draw people to themselves. The ekklesia has nothing to sell or promote so they simply give away what the Lord has given them just as He personally directs them to do so. The tares, the sons of the devil, the “pastors,” “apostles,” “prophets” and other false leaders within the “church,” will continue to promote their own name, becoming the teachers that are heaped up to tickle the ears of those who want to hear fables about Jesus Christ and God (2 Tim. 4:3-4) – the foremost fable being that He has now become a God who can be known about with no attending requirements of being obeyed.

Don’t let the time-honored but man-made traditions of the tares and of the “church” fool you. They are only the schemes of the devil designed to rob you of your inheritance in the kingdom of God. The “pastor” and all other titled “leaders” who stand over and talk down to passively seated audiences are the critical blockage designed to keep God’s grace (mercy and power) from reaching the saints in any appreciable amount so as to keep them from being equipped and rising up to do the work that will demonstrate that Christ is the One True King of kings and Lord of lords. This deception will be stripped away when the tares are removed – but

then it will be too late for the tare to stop being a tare. The time to become wheat, a true son of the kingdom, is now – and that time is exceedingly short.

Long ago, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, saying, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you bolt the door to the kingdom of God in men’s faces – you neither go in yourselves, nor do you let in those who are trying to go in.” (Mt. 23:13) Very little, other than the names and titles of the play-actors moving across the stage, has changed. The religious game is still played the same way and all that remains is that we demonstrate, to God, to the people, to the angels, just whose side we are on. (Rev. 22:11)

Let he who has ears hear.

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