



Page I

MARCH 2016
THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS

Greetings saints!

We pray this edition of our Living Logos newsletter finds you walking in the peace that passes all understanding!

Well, by the time you receive this newsletter, our first television broadcast of “The Living Word” will be airing here in the Middle GA area!

We are very excited about getting the good news out that the Lord has given us via television and through other forms of media! Living Logos Ministries has generally focused on ministering in person and with the pen, but now, the Lord has opened the door for us to begin videoing our messages and putting them out on television, Facebook, YouTube, etc.

In my opinion, these various forms of media are how we are going to ultimately fulfill the Great Commission and preach the gospel of the Kingdom in all of the world. So I am excited about being a part of fulfilling this! Praise the Lord!

So the ministry is alive and kicking, and so are the Dickerson's! Allow me to give you brief update on the three of us individually...

Levi is wrapping up 3rd grade as Shannon is doing a great job homeschooling him. He is growing by leaps and bounds and is one smart cookie! It is amazing to me the memory this boy has! He is single focused like his daddy ☺ and when he puts his attention on it, he retains it. Levi's big interest is, of course, sports. He is currently playing baseball and “occasionally” gets dragged to the golf course by his daddy ☺.

Shannon is good as well, and is doing more and more ministering. The Lord gave her a word through Andrew Wommack that He was going to begin stretching her to play a bigger part in this ministry, and she has certainly stepped up to the plate! She has started heading up a monthly women's meeting here at the church- which has been a great success! She has helped teach the Sunday school class at church and has taught on the occasional Sunday night service. She has also been invited to share at a women's conference coming up in a couple of months too! I am so proud to see her walking into the fulfillment of all of the words that she has received over the years!

As for myself, the life of a pastor is one that takes much acclimation- learning to compartmentalize things and not stretch yourself too thin. I am certainly one of those people who is driven and believes in heartily serving the Lord, but learning when to draw the line is, in my opinion, very key towards longevity in ministry. As Andrew Wommack told me before regarding entering into the office of a pastor- “You will learn a lot, you will continue to learn, and you will never stop learning.”

The Dickerson's certainly covet your prayers. Please do uphold us as we continue to learn, grow and become better equipped for the work of the ministry. The good work He began, He will complete (Philippians 1:6)!

As for this month's teaching, I want to share with you some more along the lines of joy and some other vital keys to experiencing this joy that the world cannot take away. Let's start with our perspective...

PERSPECTIVE 101

This was something that the Apostle Paul possessed that we so desperately need to have as well- and that is a correct perspective. Paul viewed everything in life through a different filter than most people, simply because he recognized what was important and what was not.

Beginning in verse 12 of Philippians chapter 1, Paul delves into his current situation and his perception of it. He said in Philippians 1:12, "But I want you to know brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,"

Now, again, Paul was arrested, beaten, and imprisoned for his testimony of Christ. He was in chains; yet, he said here that the things which happened to him had actually resulted in the gospel being spread even further!

How could the gospel actually be "furthered" if Paul was in prison? Now I do not believe Paul had any idea of the entire scope of what God had in mind here when He inspired him to make this statement.

You see, through Paul's imprisonment, he was limited to sharing the good news through his epistles. And through him being forced to record his revelations on paper, we now have the mystery of the new covenant revealed to us through what we call "the Pauline Epistles" which have been canonized as Holy Scripture. Therefore, Paul's revelations have now been preached for over 2000 years to countless millions of people; wherein, if Paul would have been free to preach the gospel in person, his gospel would have been limited to those that he just came in physical contact with. Praise God!

So the enemy thought he was hindering the gospel by keeping Paul from personally evangelizing different regions of the world during his brief stay on this earth. But God had a plan that spread the good news beyond Paul's lifetime. God alone is wise!

And herein lies a good lesson regarding our perspective...

You see, we always need to stay aware of the fact that God sees our situations and circumstances differently than we do. From our earthly perspective, we see these things as accomplishing one thing, but our Great Air Traffic Controller in heaven sees a grander plan and purpose than we do! He sees the things that the enemy means for harm, and turns them around for our good on multiple levels. Praise God!

But even if Paul did not then realize all of what we now see in hindsight, what an awesome attitude he possessed to say that his imprisonment was for the furtherance of the gospel!

He goes on to explain how he could say this in verses 13-14 by saying that, through his imprisonment, the whole palace guard and many others in Rome were aware of his testimony, and that other believers had become more confident to preach the gospel without fear. Can you see here how Paul's focus was not on himself and his situation but on the gospel and the message of the Cross being spread? In other words, he was focused more on the gospel's advancement than he was on his own.

Friends, this kind of perspective is a major key to possessing joy...

It is only when we get focused on ourselves and our circumstances that we lose our joy. If our focus would stay on the testimony of Christ being exalted rather than what is involved in our own testimony then I can guarantee you we would be much happier people. Amen?

And not only did Paul have the temptation to feel sorry for himself because of his situation, but he also went on to mention how some of the people that were preaching Christ were doing it to hurt him because of their envy and selfishness (vs. 15-16).

But I just love what Paul says in verse 18. He says, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice." Wow! What a remarkable attitude he possessed! Instead of getting hurt and offended by the wrong motives of others, the Apostle Paul's perspective was set on the sole fact that Christ was being preached! What an absolutely selfless and honorable perspective he possessed! Amen?

This most definitely would not have been the attitude of most Christians, would it? Most of us would only have been able to see what those people were doing to us. We would not have been able to see all of the good in this situation. But Paul did!

And in this verse, we have his first statement of exultation and joy when he said, "...and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice" (Philippians 1:18)

The force of this statement just resounds with passion and conviction, does it not? It is as if he was saying, "I will rejoice in this and, yes, I will most definitely continue to rejoice in it!"

But why such a bold statement? What is the cause of such an emphatic proclamation? Well, I can see the Apostle Paul as giving himself a little pep talk here!

You see, I am sure he was dealing with temptations in his heart to be discouraged and offended like any normal human being would be regarding these things, but here I believe Paul was making this declaration, not for their information, but to inform his soul. Amen! He was telling himself- "I will rejoice in this! Oh yeah, I will rejoice!"

Saints, this is an extremely effective way to keep those negative emotions in check! Sometimes you just need to talk to your mind, will and emotions and let them know who is in charge!

As David said in the 103rd Psalm- "Bless the Lord Oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" Friends, this was not just poetry! David was actually talking to his soul and everything else within him- telling them that they were going to join in rejoicing in the Lord! Bless the Lord forevermore!

So what the Apostle Paul was doing here to counter the offense and discouragement that he was likely being tempted with was telling those unruly emotions that he was not going to yield to them. In fact, he was telling his soul what it was going to yield to- joy! Yes, he was choosing to look at the positive, not the negative. This is one of the reasons I consider the Apostle Paul as the professor of "Perspective 101."

THE ROOT OF OFFENSE

Now allow me to interject right here a good rule of wisdom regarding this subject of perspective.

What I consider to be one of the most deadly devices the devil uses to steal, kill and destroy with is offense. As Solomon teaches us in the Song of Solomon 2:15, there are little foxes out there that are trying

Page IV

to spoil our vines. And I believe offense is one of those subtle little foxes that will consume the fruit of the Spirit in our life if we let it.

So let me teach you a simple way to catch this little fox that seeks to steal our joy...

If you look at the main reason why people get offended with others, you will find that it generally is because expectations were not met.

You see, it is only when we expect people to do certain things and they fail to meet those expectations that we get hurt and offended. For example, if we expect our spouse to remember our anniversary and then they forget, we will be tempted to become disappointed. Also, if we expect someone to act a certain way and they fail to do what we consider to be the right thing, we can become offended.

So what do you figure is the key to not getting offended? It is in not having expectations on people, of course! So a good rule to live by would be to expect nothing from people and just appreciate everything they do. Amen?

This is why you see so much greater offense towards Christian leaders such as pastors. These Christian leaders that stand for holiness and are open about their views of morality become even greater targets for offense. Why? It is because people expect more out of them, and when they show their weaknesses then people are quick to become disappointed.

Did you know that there have been many church members that have become offended and left the church God sent them to for petty things such as the pastor not acknowledging them before or after the service? So many Christians get offended with their pastors over the smallest things like this, and why? It is exactly for the reason we are talking about here: they have higher expectations on their pastor. They see them as a "man of the cloth" and, therefore, expect them to be more than human. So when these men and women of God do even the smallest thing to not meet those expectations, the people get easily offended and oftentimes leave their local church.

But in my experience, the problem is usually in the expectations of the people, not the preachers themselves. They have put these men and women of God on such a high pedestal that no man can live up to those expectations. Therefore, they will eventually fail and fall short of that glory.

But this is just one example: There are people who have put too high of expectations on their spouse, on their children, on their employer, on their coworkers etc. But what if we just eliminated all of our expectations that we have put on people and just started appreciating everything that they do? Do you suppose we might eliminate many of those offenses we deal with on a daily basis? I guarantee you we would.

But someone will say: But they ought to be doing these things for me? How can I just remove all expectations? You do this by heeding the instructions given to us throughout the New Testament that we were crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20) and our life was hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Therefore, we have no rights any longer- for we were bought with a price and our life is not our own any longer. This is our basis for not having any expectations on people doing right by us.

HOPE IN GOD!

So if we are not placing any expectations on man, where should we put our expectations? We have to put them somewhere, right? We should put all of our expectations on God! Amen! We should "hope" in our God!

In the Psalms we see this phrase “hope in God” used repeatedly (see 31:24, 38:15, 39:7, 42:5, 42:11, 43:5, 78:7, 131:3, & 146:5). In the Hebrew language, this phrase describes putting our trust, confidence, and expectation in God as opposed to putting our hope in anything or anyone else. This is the power of hope!

This hope that the Bible speaks of is much different than our modern usage of it. When we use the word “hope” today, we are basically describing “wishful thinking.” But the hope referred to in the Bible can literally be defined as “expectation.” It denotes having a confident expectation of something or in someone. And the Word of God makes it very clear that we should only put our hope (or, expectations) in God and we should not hope (or, have expectations) in others. In other words, we should not put our hope in anyone or anything other than God. Saints, I want you to know that **the moment you begin to put your hope in anything that is temporal, that is the moment that your joy becomes temporal.** (Let that statement sink in for a moment)

You see, this is why we should never place our hope in people and only hope in God. Why? It is because people will let you down, but God will never let you down! The Scriptures teach us explicably that those who hope in the Lord will never be put to shame (Isaiah 49:23 & Romans 10:11). He will always, not only meet our expectations, but exceed our expectations! On the other hand, anything or any person in this temporal world we live in is certainly capable of failing to meet our expectations in some way. This is because all created things are ever changing and full of imperfections. But not the Creator! He is perfect and is incapable of letting you down! Amen!

But how often do we fail to do this? Most Christians put their hope in their spouse, their careers, their families, their friends, their hobbies etc. And the reason this is so easy to do is because most Christians are carnal and, therefore, tend to gravitate towards putting their hope in things of the flesh (i.e. natural things).

BROKEN CISTERNS

In Jeremiah 2:13 the Lord revealed such an important truth for us to understand- particularly regarding where we put our expectations. He said, “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns- broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

God’s case against Israel in Jeremiah chapter 2 was that they had forsaken their God in favor of other gods. He said that this was unprecedented, even amongst other nations (vs.11). But before we are quick to condemn Israel, we need to understand that we do this same thing all the time...

Now while most of us do not consciously reject Him and choose other gods to worship, we still do this through our actions. We choose “cisterns” that are broken and are unable to hold water in an attempt to obtain satisfaction and meet our needs when they simply cannot. These broken cisterns can be anything from relationships, hobbies, careers, possessions- namely, anything natural that we put first in our lives and put our hope in. When we do this, we will find that none of these things can truly satisfy us or give us joy.

The 17th chapter of Jeremiah tells us that we are cursed when we make flesh our strength and when our trust is in man. It also says that when our heart departs from the Lord like this we become like a shrub in the desert that is never satisfied (vs.5-6). On the other hand, verses 7-8 say that when we trust in the Lord and our hope is in Him we are like a tree whose roots will be spread out by the river where there is a constant flow of water both to keep our leaves green and to provide a continuous

Page VI

harvest of fruit. And verse 13 goes on to say that God is that fountain of living waters- identifying Him the same way as Jeremiah 2:13.

So when our hope is in the Lord, we are looking to Him to meet our needs; we are placing all of our expectancy in Him and not in other people or things. You see, when our hope is in these other things we are looking to them to draw our happiness, contentment, satisfaction, and strength from. We do not consciously know we are doing this, but we are actually making these things “idols” because we are putting our hope in these things rather than in the One True and Living God.

But the good news is found in Isaiah 55:1-2: “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.”

In these verses, the Lord is proclaiming the gospel to us! He is telling us that if we want to be truly satisfied and fulfilled, just come to Him! If we want our soul to delight itself in abundance, just draw near to Him! This abundant satisfaction for our souls is free! It is freely available by grace! All we need to do is to turn our lives fully over to Him and make Him our all in all.

Now He basically asks the question in verse 2- Why do we spend money on things that do not satisfy when He, the fountain of living waters, is free? But we do this all of the time, don't we? We spend all kinds of money, time, and energy on these broken cisterns that could never hold water in the first place! Sure, they might temporarily seem able to hold water, but eventually that water will drain out of those cracks and we will thirst again.

Friends, it is time we truly understand that God is the fountain of living waters and turn to Him for our joy, satisfaction, and contentment! His is an unending flow of life-giving water as opposed to those man-made cisterns that only temporarily hold water! Let's go to the source of that living water today- that river whose streams shall make glad the city of God (Psalm 46:4)!

Until next month... Maranatha!

Victoriously,

