



SERMON NOTES

US N^o. 106

Date: July 7th, 2013

Title: Our Damascus Journey

#14 in the Series on the Acts of the Apostles

1. Background and back story
 - a. Paul's biography
 - b. Achievements
 - c. The whole man: body, soul & spirit. 1 Thess. 5:23, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - d. The Church prospers under persecution
2. The Damascus Road
 - a. Discipline and Revelation
 - i. Discipline
 1. 2 Tim. 3:14-17, "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."
 2. Deut. 6:6-7, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."
 - ii. Revelation (to take the cover off); the glory of the resurrected Christ is such a great Light. Gen. 1:3, "Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light."
 1. The Light cleanses; exposure to the light leads to falling, humility, and grief
 2. The Light reveals truth to minds that are blinded to the light. 2 Cor. 4:3-4, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." And Jn. 1:5-10, "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."

- a. Mt. 16:15-17, "He said to them, *"But who do you say that I am?"* Simon Peter answered and said, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Jesus answered and said to him, *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."*
- b. Gal. 1:11-12, *"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ."*
- c. 1 Cor. 2:9-13, *"But as it is written: "EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."*
- d. 2 Cor. 4:6-7, *"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."*
- e. Eph. 1:17-20, *"that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,"*
- f. Eph. 3:1-11, *"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles –if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should 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 church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,"

3. Revelation leaves its mark upon men.
 - a. Gen. 32:24-32, *"Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." [heel catcher or supplanter] And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel [he will rule as God]; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Just as he crossed over Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank."*
 - b. Consider others: Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Matthew, Paul
4. Put yourself in the "Danger Zone;" you want to hear God, then place yourself in circumstances and situations where His light is most likely to shine.
 - b. Brokenness exposes our fleshly attempts to live life, to have our core needs of love, acceptance, worth, and security met in our own strength, and he shows how it is truly impossible to live the Christian life we want to live and make a radical difference in this world as long as we attempt to do it in our own strength and based on our own understanding and wisdom.
 - i. 2 Cor. 12:9-10, *"Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*
 - ii. Phil. 2:17, *"Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all."*
 - iii. Three biblical examples:
 1. Gideon (cf. Judges 7:16-20)
 - a. Luke 8:16, *"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light."*
 2. Jesus' anointing (cf. Mt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3)
 - a. The scene in Matthew and Mark takes place in Simon the Leper's house two days prior to Passover; the scene in John takes place in Lazarus' house six days prior to the Passover. One woman anoints His head, the other His feet.

3. Seeds; Jn. 12:24, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”*
 - a. Scarification
 - b. Old proverb, *“You can count the seeds in an apple, but you can't count the apples in a seed.”*
 - c. Seeds (ants, wind, wave, etc.) help wear the seed coat;
- iv. Paul is a broken man after his experience on the road; brokenness is needed to be useful. Phil. 3:7-9, *“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith...”*
 1. Our confidence must be shifted from ourselves to God; a holy desperation for His presence. If God doesn't show up...
- v. We are “earthen vessels” (cf. 2 Cor. 4:6-7) Mt. 5:16, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*
- vi. Hindrances to brokenness
 1. Blindness – rather than recognize God's hand in the process we attribute it to the opposition of men or perhaps circumstances.
 - a. 2 Cor. 3:14, *“But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.”*
 - b. 2 Cor. 4:3-4, *“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”*
 - c. Mt. 6:33-34, *“But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*
 2. Self-love – we may be seeking escape from the working of the cross of Christ in us because it is uncomfortable to us.
 - a. Mark 15:22-23, *“And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it.”*
- c. The essential infilling of the Holy Spirit; Luke 11:13, *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”*
 - i. Do not go without. Acts 1:4-5, *“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He*

said, *“you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*

ii. Why we need the Holy Spirit...

1. Helps and comforts; He brings peace (cf. Jn. 14:16, 26-27)
2. Teaches (cf. Jn. 14:26)
3. Brings to remembrance (cf. Jn. 14:26)
4. Reveals truth and guides us deeper into truth (cf. Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:8)
5. Testifies of Jesus (cf. Jn. 15:26)
6. He convicts us of sin (cf. Jn. 16:8)
7. He convicts us of righteousness (cf. Jn. 16:8)
8. He convicts us of judgment (cf. Jn. 16:8)
9. He glorifies Jesus (cf. Jn. 16:13)
10. He gives good gifts (cf. 1 Cor. 12)

iii. We find that the infilling of the Holy Spirit was often preceded by the laying on of hands. (cf. Acts 8:17-18; Acts 9:17; Acts 19:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; Heb. 6:2)

iv. The Holy Spirit creates an internal necessity for evangelistic and missionary work. He reveals the need of men for the remission of sins and Luke presents the presence of the Spirit as of primary importance for ministry.

3. Conclusions

- a. Carnal vs. Spiritual; soul vs. spirit; intellectual vs. spiritual
- b. Different experiences but we all must remain within the bounds laid down by the Bible.
- c. Marriage without passion; roommates
- d. We need a sort of holy desperation for His presence. If God doesn't show up...