

Cyber Truths By E-mail

5. Three Things (March 25, 2005)



Restoration Ministries International

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Dear Friends,

All our materials are now in digital format. Through the internet we're able to touch thousands all over the world. Just this past week we received three copies of our book, *Restoring the Early Church*, in German! This research is being translated into other languages as well, all because the internet can carry it where we ourselves can't.

Two unworthy people working from an office in a bedroom in a senior mobile home park are still fulfilling an agreement they made with the Lord in 1983:

To bless as many people as we can with as few knowing we lived. We gleaned this from a teacher at seminary, Elisabeth Elliot, in 1978. Many of you may remember that her husband Jim was martyred with four other men in Ecuador in 1956. She and her daughter stayed in Ecuador until they were able to live among the people who killed these men. Over the years, the very men who speared her husband not only became followers of Jesus, but also baptized the children of the men they martyred. O, the marvelous yet mysterious ways our Lord works!

One year after Sue and I began to follow Jesus, we were in a missions class taught by Elisabeth Elliot. She reminded us repeatedly how important it is to remember that we are clay pots. It is the message and the relationship with our Lord that is of supreme value. She hammered this home so often to us: "You are clay pots!"

A guiding passage of Scripture for us has been, "I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace" (Acts 20:24).

Receiving this understanding from a woman whose very life touched the face of God, you can never forget it! Thus we've made our goal in life: To bless as many people as we can with as few knowing we lived. A little insight for you to consider:

First, to those of you who have become our close friends over the years and shared your love with us, we've truly appreciated it. You have no idea how much your being "family" means to us in our desire to follow and serve our Lord Jesus.

No one should have to be pressured by someone else's false expectation that they be on a pedestal of spirituality. I [Mike] was a devout Roman Catholic for 31 years. We regarded the priests and nuns to be on a higher plane than ourselves. By doing this, we could expect a greater degree of holiness in their lives. And, we could all hide in our pet sins.

After becoming a follower of Jesus, Sue and I became just that — followers of Jesus. Since then we've never considered ourselves to be either Catholic or Protestant. In fact, we discovered over our years of ministering among both groups at our retreat ministry that there is no difference between the Protestant and Catholic approach to the clergy/laity divide. Both of them elevate clergy and others in ministry to a plane higher than themselves! And, people do this so they can hide in their pet sins. Tragically, both religious systems tolerate personal unrighteousness in order to attract people. But if those who profess to follow Jesus would repent of their sin rather than coddle it, this nation might see the difference and turn from sin too!

The clergy who have contacted us after they've read and prayed through our book, *Pastoring By Elders*, have

acknowledged that the role and function of "clergy" were derived from the practices of the Greek pagan priests, not from the pattern of biblical elders of the early Church. A number of retired clergymen have told us of their regret for the years they wasted in a position God never ordained.

Please, if you are outside the Nicolaitan religious establishment:

As our Lord unites you with other homes that uphold righteousness, elevate NO ONE but our Lord Jesus Christ. If you stay repentant and keep your home from sin, and if you join with others who do likewise, you will find the Lord in your midst. **YOUR ANSWERED PRAYERS BECAUSE YOU ARE WALKING IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF OBEDIENT TRUST WILL TESTIFY TO OUR LORD'S PLEASURE IN YOU!** This is what will get the Spirit of Jesus in you noticed by the world, as it did with the earliest followers of Jesus.

At the same time, as our Lord raises up the older men as shepherds among you, do not be enticed to place them between you and your Lord. You will recognize true leadership because they will have the servant nature of Jesus: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3,4). True servant leaders won't permit you to raise them above you! You'll always find them serving in the pattern of our Lord. They won't manage a 'group of people'. Like a true shepherd of the sheep, these men will know you personally and help you grow in the gifting and call our Lord has for you. Your gatherings together will increase your courage to live for Jesus in

the world.

Remember:

The clergy/layperson distinction is at the core of Nicolaitanism — a system our Lord not only despises, but is now warring against.

How else can you account for clergy being among the top three occupations for divorce, and for the rampant sexual misconduct among church leadership in the US? And, how else could you explain this system's people outpacing the "unchurched" in divorce? This is the Lord's doing because of the Spirit of Prostitution that now controls Nicolaitanism. This is what our Lord showed both Sue and me from our readings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. These prophets are still warning us just as they did the Israelites before the Lord chastised them:

STOP claiming to be God's while you're living as the world does!

When our Lord gave Jerusalem back to the Jewish people in 1967, fulfilling His promise in Luke 21:24, He also began to show the Gentile world the Hebraic foundations that undirgirded His earliest followers. As He shows His mercy by restoring the Jewish people to Israel, He is showing us Gentiles mercy by restoring to us the truths that enable us to be spiritually power and relationally intimate.

These truths HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ANYTHING YOU EXPERIENCED IN NICOLAITANISM!

Some of you may have fled the Nicolaitan religious establishment, but you have ruts to be filled in now! The Holy Spirit's method for you to walk in these biblical truths is far different from what the religious system used.

• These truths can never be appropriated as your way of life just by reading

about them!

• HOW our Father wants you to live for Him must be discussed first with others in your home, and then your extended spiritual family. Through discussion the Holy Spirit will show you how He wants His Word applied and lived out.

Be cautious! The desire to put others between you and your Lord is always a strong enticement, especially when you begin to tolerate sin in your life. Guard yourself and the person who is eldering from this trap by remaining repentant.

Be encouraged! By seeking to live in your own homes in the righteousness

our Lord demands of His followers, you won't want to place anyone between you and Him! Both your intimacy with the Lord Jesus, and your unrelenting desire to live righteously in trust-grounded obedience are the greatest testimony to your faith, and your greatest safeguard against error.

"May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones" (1Thessalonians 3:13),

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