

RESTORATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

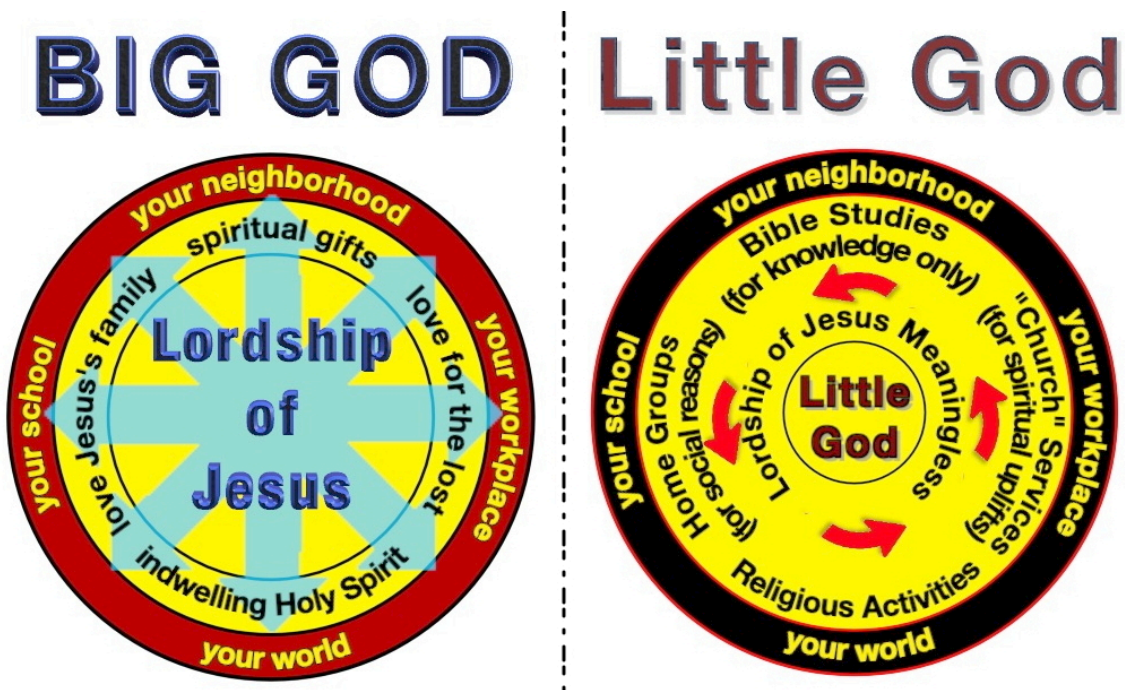
Prophetic Insight

11/7/2019 “Therefore we must pay much more careful heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away”

The Cost Of Having A BIG GOD

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

If you’ve used our materials for some years, you may recall Mike relating a vision the Holy Spirit gave him while he was driving home with our neighbor after a very difficult weekend men’s retreat. For several years in a row while we served at the retreat center, Mike went away on five retreats with men from a local Evangelical congregation. The congregation was big on learning about the Bible, but they were absolutely oblivious to how essential the Holy Spirit is



in the life of a follower of Jesus. As each retreat took place, the men grew increasingly more hostile over Mike's reliance on the Holy Spirit for guidance, empowerment, and Christ-like regard for others. On the way home from the last retreat, the one on which our neighbor drove, he asked Mike, “What is the difference between you and the rest of us guys in the congregation?” At that very moment the Holy Spirit showed Mike in front of the windshield a vision of that difference.

The two diagrams, below, represent the difference which the Holy Spirit showed Mike. The first diagram represented Mike’s personal view of his spiritual life with God’s supreme position and purposes in it. The second diagram displays what the Spirit revealed about the other men in their own view of God and in their organized religious programs:

In his early walk in Christ, Mike had been discipled to see the Bible as a flawless and grace-filled *reference book account* describing what God wanted to reveal to mankind about Himself and His plans, and about man's responsibility to love, trust

¹ “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Give careful thought to your ways’” (Haggai 1:7). <http://www.restorationministries.org/>

and obey Him. To *belong* to our Lord Jesus in obedient trust was demonstrated by your way of life (Matthew 7:24; Luke 8:21; Philippians 4:9; James 2:12-26). When you are born again the indwelling Holy Spirit makes it possible for you to fulfill our heavenly Father's will. And the same Spirit empowers followers of our Lord Jesus to love each other, to be used by Him through the spiritual gifts He apportions, and to bear Christ's burden for the lost who are around us both near and far away. Knowing and serving this BIG GOD under the Lordship of Jesus is the only way your life fulfills His will and is acceptable to our heavenly Father.

The second illustration in the vision Mike saw that day described the spiritual lives of the other men in the congregation who attended those retreats. Their religious lives were filled with scheduled activities (many of which took them away from their families in evenings and on weekends). They studied the Bible for knowledge sake rather than internalizing it for personal and mutual application. Their relationships within the congregation consisted of activities designed for social reasons. But the need of these men for mutual accountability to walk the way Jesus would have them walk and lead their families as He would have them lead was disregarded. The Holy Spirit was never discussed, and certainly no testimonies of His guidance or intervention were shared.

The Cost Of Having A BIG GOD

Mike: Before we go any further in our discussion, I'd like to encourage you who are being prepared for the days ahead and are already paying the cost of living with a BIG GOD:

As I was sitting down at daybreak to read the next 3 chapters of Jeremiah (28-30), the Holy Spirit said this to me: "Pay careful attention to your reading this morning. You will gain understanding into what others in Jesus need to know." He had my full attention, and Jeremiah's words to the Israelites who were exiled in Babylon leaped out: "*This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease'*" (Jeremiah 29:2-6). The last verse in Jeremiah 30, "*In days to come you will understand this*" (v. 24), especially caught my eye.

I believe this passage is specifically for you couples who are still bearing and raising children, and have a heart to raise them to know and love and serve Jesus as Lord of their lives. Don't let the coming chastisement of this nation stop you from raising Godly generations! The difficult times ahead are *not* the end of this nation but rather a time for our Father to restore the relational intimacy He wants with His children in union with Christ. Father is also setting the stage to restore the relational commitment of loving service which those who know and love the BIG GOD can share with each other.

One of the costly difficulties of having a BIG GOD view concerns your present relationships and the people you encounter each day. Many who love and serve the BIG GOD are finding that living by a BIG GOD perspective has cost them in lost relationships. Others who are lovingly striving to walk in Father's will are experiencing ostracism by relatives, friends and religious acquaintances. And still others are being mocked in derision by people around them who don't have the Holy Spirit abiding in them. Please keep this in mind: No matter how badly we who live with Jesus as our Lord are treated, He forbids us to respond in kind to their un-Christlike actions and attitudes. If you walk in Him as your Lord, His righteous and holy reputation is at stake through you. That means that by His Spirit and His grace, you need to respond with Christ's love, forgiveness and compassion toward all who treat you wrong:

Jesus: *“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also”* (Luke 6:27-29a).

If you haven't experienced any of this painful treatment yet, we can assure you that everyone who follows Jesus as Lord will go through Garden of Gethsemane experiences—you (and your spouse) find yourself alone and isolated. From a human social standpoint this can be very disconcerting. But from our Lord's viewpoint, He wants to know if He is all sufficient for you, your spouse and your family. We been through this cycle of relational “plenty” and “few” during our life journey in Jesus. Oftentimes we've found that we'd acquired several “religious props” in our faith walk to bolster us up, that is, until He took them away. What comes to mind is the old anthem, “tho none go with us, still we will follow. No turning back, no turning back.”

During our morning prayer walk this past Sunday, the Holy Spirit reiterated to us the truth we are sharing in this email: To have a BIG GOD walk is very costly. And one of the costly parts is *not turning back* when others will not go on with you. After we returned from our prayer walk, we read this wonderful account, below, from the wife of a young couple we've been corresponding with for some time as they together go through and discuss the Hebraic Restoration materials. She's at home raising two precious and very young children while her husband works outside their home.

“Just the other week I had a dream that I was climbing up stairs and each level represented a goal with there being 10 levels total. There was a coach watching on in the background. As I was walking up the levels, I started walking up with a friend (who I didn't recognize from real life), but she was a much slower climber who I was trying to bring up to my level. At the 4th level she wanted to quit, and because I didn't want to leave her I went with her. As I went off at the 4th level I heard the coach say- “you were *destined* to go to the 10th level.” I then woke up, shared it with [my husband], and as we prayed we felt it was a warning dream from the Lord telling me to be very careful of the friends I choose. It's been so difficult finding true disciples of Jesus (who aren't caught up with the facade of the Hellenistic model). Do you see believers who are true disciples coming together more during the chastisement?”

What an insightful dream the Holy Spirit gave her. You know it has to be impactful when you wake your weary husband to tell him about a dream! Her ending question, “*Do you see believers who are true disciples coming together more during the chastisement?*”, deserves an answer for all who are reading this. Yes, we do perceive this will happen! What we described above about what BIG GOD followers of Jesus are enduring now in their relationships is in fact the intent and design of our Lord preparing them to have their faith walk centered on HIM.

It's only with this Divine centrality that we who live with Jesus as our Lord can face the suffering and deprivation that will be all around us in the near future. This nation at large hasn't known widespread, devastating deprivation for nearly 90 years. At the same time, however, because of hatred, bigotry and racism, many in the Black, Latino, Native American, and other minority communities experience deprivation continuously. These who have undergone this

sort of suffering just may be more prepared for the chastisement than people who've lived comfortably and endured little or no sacrifice.

Consider this reality. For centuries our brothers and sisters in many other nations have lived under the heavy oppression of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Communism. They've been surrounded by neighbors and countrymen who hate them, rob them of economic opportunity, and take all avenues of justice away from them. They have been experiencing in an ongoing way the persecution and trials Jesus told us as His followers to expect. They've also walked along the way of those who are true to our Lord as described in Hebrews chapter 11.

In this nation as well as in several other lands, the Little God "Christians" can blend in with their society and even absorb its immoral ways and worldly goals without a thought. But within these same "Little God" countries an ever-increasing number of BIG GOD followers of Jesus have found fewer and fewer "Christians" who support their faith walk. Instead, those who follow a compromised "gospel" treat the wholehearted first with ostracism, and then outright ridicule. This has always been the path that ultimately leads to persecution.

We'd like to close this email with another account from our past about BIG GOD versus Little God:

Mike: Many years ago we and several others were studying the passage in Ezekiel 47 about the water that flowed out of the Temple. As you recall, the stream grew into an ever deepening river. I asked the group, "If you caught up with the river far away from the Temple, which way would you go, upstream or downstream?" To a man they replied, "Downstream." I offered a different view for them to consider. "You should always go upstream to the Source first!" So I say to you too, always go to the Source because there you'll find the origin at its purest. Please don't lose sight of this in your own life!

During that same time frame there was a particular congregation leader, "Bill", who always resisted whenever I pointed out a "Vertical view" on whatever we were discussing. You gain a "Vertical view" when you pray to glean the Holy Spirit's perspective on a matter. For many years Bill would come to our retreat center with the men from his congregation, always armed with the same resistance to the Holy Spirit. But one day he took me aside with a humble confession. God had given him a vivid dream. In the dream he and I were leading a group of people across a meadow toward a river. When we reached the river bank, he jumped in and told everyone else to follow him downstream.

He told me, "Mike, you stood on the bank and told everyone to jump into the river and go upstream. Everyone followed you in your upstream course." He continued, "I got out of the river and followed you along the banks. When you arrived at a waterfall, I figured you'd be stuck climbing it, and that I could beat you to the top.

"I discovered stairs carved into the rock and climbed them. When I reached the top I found the throne of God. He said to me, 'Bill, what are you doing here, and how did you get here?' I replied, 'I wanted to get to the top of the waterfall.' God admonished me, 'You didn't come the way I have prescribed. Look at the steps — you've muddied them. Now, go back down and clean them as you descend.'"

Bill added, "As I made my way down the rock stairs I looked over toward the waterfall. You were all holding hands and praying. Then I saw the Holy Spirit lift you all up the falls." As he finished recounting

his dream, Bill turned to face me. “Mike, I want to ask your forgiveness. I see now that you’ve been teaching us to live by the Spirit, not by our own strengths, and I’ve stubbornly resisted Him.”

This isn’t a story about Mike as much as an anecdote about how we were disciplined. It’s been BIG GOD since the get-go. Does that make us people to be put on a pedestal? Not at all! We want to encourage everyone that there is only one BIG GOD way to live—by the indwelling Spirit of our Lord. There are many Little God ways which in His eyes deny Him as GOD. We wanted to make sure that you not only see the difference, but also that you embrace the BIG GOD way of life and willingly embrace the consequences. It is costly — but Oh so worth it!

Mike & Sue