

Prophetic Insights

Do You Live In La La Land?

June 4, 2014

The past few weeks we've been prompted by the Holy Spirit to produce a forthcoming series of convicting lessons based upon our Hebraic Article, ***The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation***. We get a sense that these lessons aren't intended to be informative or instructional, but rather *admonishing* and *reprimanding* in nature.

Why? Most Christians today *fear being corrected and/or rejected*. Probably because of the influence of this increasingly effeminized society they perceive any form of correction or rebuke as rejection.

But this view isn't so from our Lord's perspective. Our heavenly Father rebukes us because He *does* love us (Hebrews 12:5-11). His rebuke/discipline/correction can be painful, but its purpose is essential for our lives: it produces "righteousness and peace," and that's something He knows we desperately need on an ongoing basis. And, our Father uses human agents to help each of us change:

*"We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are working hard among you, those who are guiding you in the Lord and **confronting you in order to help you change**" (1Thessalonians 5:12 CJB).*

The Spirit has quickened a particular focus of emphasis to guide us in preparing these forthcoming lessons:

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, **rebuking, correcting** and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His*

*Kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; **correct, rebuke and encourage** — with great patience and careful instruction" (2Timothy 3:16-4:2; see also Psalms 141:5).*

The Holy Spirit has also been revealing that we'll be pointing the scriptural way to salvation for the host of people who have practiced **Christianity Without Christ as LORD**. Even the intense tone He's giving us in these writings indicates the seriousness of the deliberate steps people must take in order for Jesus to truly be LORD of their lives.

So many of you participate in non-confrontive, complacent faith communities in which you're being *taught at* but never corrected or rebuked to live a life pleasing to our Father and doing His will in obedient love. While you may accumulate more knowledge, you remain basically unchanged, and held relationally accountable to no one. Let's face it. While you can be friendly with each other, you lack the conviction to serve Jesus as the LORD and Center of your life. And since everyone else is pretty much just like you, you perceive that kind of life is all Jesus requires of you.

But beware of the deceptive trap you've walked into! In his letter to Titus Paul warns his protege against deceived teachers who are **"mere talkers"**(1:10). What is a *mere talker*, whether preacher or congregant? It's someone who "blows in the wind" with Christian opinions, but has no heartfelt conviction which would produce Christ-like response and action.

The difference between **opinion** and **conviction** is this: with *conviction* you put into practice what you've learned, something that's been tested by God and found to be

true. Conviction then becomes part of your character, something you *value deeply and* which both guides and prompts you to *take action* as you yield to the Spirit.

Holding an *opinion*, however, doesn't evoke emotional commitment nor does it require a subsequent response. Spouting opinions only satisfies the ego.

Sad to say, most pulpit preaching has become nothing more than **man-contrived, palatable opinions** which feed your mind and/or entertain you. The words have cost the speaker nothing to say them, and the listener only develops opinions in hearing them. Sunday after Sunday the fruitless pattern drones on.

The preacher has *never been tested* by our Father to determine if what he shares is part of his conviction and has therefore brought about change in some area of his life. In fact, he strenuously avoids being corrected by anyone out of fear that he's being rejected. And whether pleasantness is an expression of his inner self or not, it helps him be accepted, while using the title "pastor" keeps him above correction.

The weekly barrage of "sermonized opinions" has kept Christianity in this nation divided and ineffectual. The majority of congregants respond with **opinionated complacency**. And whether you're being taught in a congregation or through some TV preacher, you've been *seduced*. The person teaching you has entrapped you: you're no more than an opinionated listener who pays their bills. Those with the biggest egos extend their opinionated venue by getting on TV to further seduce people into being financially supportive listeners with even stronger opinions. And this is the prison all too many prefer: **Christianity without Christ as LORD**. But, as

Jeremiah laments, "*What will you do in the end?*" (5:31).

To Embrace *The Gospel of the Covenant* You Can't Live in **La La Land**

- **La La Land** is imagining (pipe dreaming) something you want to happen, but the chances of it coming to fruition are improbable or impossible because you lack the persistence to do what's necessary to bring it about.
- **La La Land** is your self-deception that our heavenly Father *isn't* holding you fully responsible for your biblical role as a father, mother, spouse, employee, business owner, spiritual brother or sister, etc.
- **La La Land** is refusing to ask our Lord directly how He wants you to live. You don't even *want* to know the Biblical standards which belonging to Jesus and following Him entails, because that would mean obedience.

Your own Christian relationships may be perpetuating your journey through La La Land. For instance, just talking about Jesus or attending religious services doesn't mean you belong to Jesus as LORD. Most likely all you've done is learned to speak and behave with **Christianese**—the language which those who claim to belong Jesus use with each other. But Christian-ese only creates a comfortable, mutually supportive *subculture* of people who voice spiritual ideas but in reality live according to their own interests and goals (see Ephesians 5:6-11).

The truly sad thing is that by word and deed they encourage each other to *pay no heed* to our Lord's requirement to actively serve Him out of grateful love, a response of obedience which would fulfill our Father's will (Ephesians 5:15-17). And few dare to ask themselves this question and seek an answer that accords with the Bible rather than self-evaluated wishful thinking: "**Does Jesus see me as**

one of His own?” How would they know if they belonged to Jesus? They would demonstrate His love and His burden for the lost in their daily lives. (See Ephesians 5:1,2; John 3:16-18.)

Some Recurring Examples of Living in La La Land

In advance of our upcoming lessons on the Gospel of the Covenant let's examine some of the unChrist-like mindsets found in Christendom. Maybe you'll recognize yourself in one or more of these **La La Lands**, often perpetuated through Christianese conversations.

- In one type of **La La Land** you feel that you're basically a “good person.” Because of that self-evaluation you won't even consider the depravity of your own sin nature. You neglect searching God's Word because you might discover within its text of truth just how greatly you have violated God from HIS holy perspective, whether through sinful acts you've committed or sins of omission you've neglected to obey. From your point of view Jesus really isn't the Incarnate God Who is your LORD. Rather, He's part of your religious belief system but certainly not the Core of your daily life. That's why you have no testimony of either *needing* Him or even being *known by* Him.

- Another type of **La La Land** is exhibited by two seemingly different groups. The first are those who drift from congregation to congregation. Initially they exult, “We're really getting fed here!” Or they extol the worship, the youth group, or the men's (or women's) meetings. But over time they find themselves dissatisfied about *something*, so they drift on to yet another congregation. These people define insanity, *repeat-*

ing the same action and expecting a different outcome.

Related to this group are those who stay in the same congregation for years but are always grumbling about something in it. Others refuse to leave their congregation because they fear losing relationships. Both categories may find themselves “selling their souls” as they compromise their faith with teachings and practices they know are against God's Word. And they're equally insane, *continuing to do the same thing and expecting a different outcome.*

Neither of the people described here turn to the LORDship of Jesus alone for His will for a life of loving service on His behalf. In fact, the central issue of your religious life is the personal gratification rather than sacrificial love enacted through your obedience to Jesus as LORD.

- Another type of **La La Land** exists among many Christian men who are “trapped by fantasy.” They conjecture and dream about the future and what they'd like to see happen—but they never persevere in the methodical step-by-step completion of each job set before them. If these men are married, they weary their wives by their “pipe dreams.” You can recognize these guys by the trail of unfinished tasks or projects that litter their lives. And while they mouth grandiose opinions, they lack the heart conviction that would bring about follow through.

- Still another form of **La La Land** describes those who consistently talk themselves out of doing something they need to do. They're so absorbed in thinking about the *entire task* instead of the one step at a time that's needed to accomplish it that they are overwhelmed into paralysis. Their lives are a history of things they *talk about* but never start. A

pundit once said, "I've had many fears, none of which ever came true." This saying depicts the people who are "all talk and no action." Any excuse for inaction will do! *"The sluggard says, 'There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!' As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed"* (Proverbs 26:13,14).

- Also within **La La Land** are those who "play other people's cards for them." For example, they don't call someone who's on their heart at that moment because they perceive the other person may be too busy. They don't initiate contact or invite someone over because they fear refusal or rejection. In all these cases the end result is that the other person isn't blessed because someone declined to take a positive step of good. Isolated within their innermost being, these represent the majority of Christians today.

- The delusion of **La La Land** is lived out by grumbling wives with marriage problems and by many women who are divorced. La La Land residents refuse to take responsibility for their own inadequacies as the suitable, God-given helper and intimate companion for their husband. All too often their conversations with other women cast blame but never cover their own responsibility to God's design for the wife described by Paul in Titus 2:4,5. Instead, they camouflage their own shortcomings by angrily pointing out their husband's failures; but they *never* bring up how they failed him.

- **La La Land** is also the dwelling of husbands who have marriage problems, and many men who are divorced. Refusing to take advice from their wives or from any man who gives them wise counsel, these are the *Hardened* and *Mocking Fools* about which God's Word

warns. Just knowing these men is frustrating. Being married to one is torture! And when they get together their conversations are a cesspool of inconsequential, unedifying blah-blah.

- Through **La La Land** thinking, people make major decisions without first determining God's will. It's a sad commentary on the state of contemporary western Christendom that so exceedingly few can specify how God guided them in major decisions. Most often they saw an advantage to themselves in their decision and therefore chose it, hoping that God would bless it.

Please pay attention! This is a critical truth affecting where you'll spend eternity:

Our heavenly Father wants NOTHING LESS than a Father/child, trust-based relationship that's accomplished through obedient loving trust in His Son Jesus. Seeking and doing His will must be foremost in your life so that He alone gets the glory! Keep in mind that when you do know the present step of His will, He will test you to see how really convicted you are about completing it. That's part of this Father/child love relationship which He demonstrated with the Israelites: *"He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you"* (Deuteronomy 8:16). What manna was for Israel is what *rhema* is for us who follow Jesus as LORD today: *"Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word [rhema] that comes from the mouth of God"* (Matthew 4:4).

If the Spirit has revealed to you His guidance, you'll be tested to separate the opinionated from the convicted. Our Father won't accept La La Land opinions when it comes to His will. As our Lord Jesus warns us: Entry into the kingdom of

heaven means doing His Father's will (Matthew 7:21). He means it!

Remember when you're being tested how wonderful the goal is!

*“These have come so that **your faith**—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—**may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.** Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you trust in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, **for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls**” (1Peter 1:7-9).*

Too many in Christendom misperceive trials and testing as the result of something being wrong with them. And the unbiblical promises of a euphoric life by the “Health and Wealth” or “Name it and Claim it” deceivers only compound your sorrow: *“If you're suffering or being tested, there must be something wrong with your faith!”* Listen! Peter is telling you why trials and testing come your way. Trust his words!

- One last **La La Land** concerns you who take credit for the money your job produces. You slap God in the face with your self-sufficient attitude about your income! He is **Jehovah Jireh**, God the Provider. Your job is His means of providing for you and of putting you in proximity to people so you can represent Him and His Word (Matthew 28:19,20). Here's God's perspective:

“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers, as it is today” (Deuteronomy 8:17,18).

You're in La La Land if you believe your income defines your success. If this is you, then you're trapped by the love of money and all that it implies (1Timothy 6:10). You can't serve both God and money (Matthew 6:24), so don't live in material La La Land thinking you won't face consequences for your worldly priorities. Your misplaced love is causing you to depart the path to salvation!

From our hearts to yours:

We'd love for everyone who reads what the Spirit gives us to share to reflect a way of life with Jesus as LORD of all they think, say, and do. If He truly is your LORD, your way of life will fulfill your Father's will. Don't look around for the opinionated to go with you! Their life hinges on what they know, not on Who they love and serve.

The time for our ministry may be getting short. We know that most of you can't feel what's coming upon this nation. But for the sake of the salvation of you and those you care about, we hope you'll discuss and use these forthcoming lessons with a spirit of determination. The moment of salvation and the moment in which God's wrath is enacted against those who aren't in Christ will happen suddenly. May it be the moment of salvation for each of you who live convicted — free from **La La Land**.

Mike & Sue