

October 27, 2010

True Faith Has Emotion!

We've just returned from four weeks away with relatives and some of their friends. Rather than a vacation, it proved to be a time of gaining insight into the darkness that hinders so many "churchgoers" from the freedom Jesus promises those who wholeheartedly love Him as Lord of their life. We do rejoice that with a few who had left behind the religious system we were able to share and experience together the joy of following Jesus as a way of life.

But our hearts grieve for those who have placed denominational allegiance over the love-grounded, obedient trust in Him alone that's so prominent in His wonderful Word. The frequent response we encountered was firm resistance to hear anything about the fullness of joy in our love for Jesus and our determination to serve Him no matter what the cost. For the most part it was an emotionally painful several weeks to feel so fruitless among people we care about who are content with the darkness of religion without relationship in His Spirit. But our Lord wanted to use the intensity of our pain for a future objective. (More on this in a moment.)

During the middle of our time away, the Holy Spirit prompted us to write Kingdom Living, 38. *Those Who Feared The Lord Talked With Each Other*. As you read about Jack's interaction with the ten clergy he'd previously met with and the integrity of their hearts to pursue Jesus at all cost, try to sense for yourself the courage it takes to be totally true to our Lord and His purposes for your life as His beloved servant. See if you can experience the gut feeling it takes to value Jesus above everything else around you. Ask yourself if you have the passion to pursue what matters most to our Lord Jesus—to become more like Him day by day through His Spirit at work in you, and the salvation of the people you encounter each day. And PRAY that His yearning for them to encounter Him, to love Him and to live in Him will become your heart's goal as well.

We've written before about the emotional intensity that's embraced in the Hebrew word for "faith," ***emunah***. It flows out of your heart's conviction to not only fully trust our Lord with every aspect of your being but also to do His will without hesitation. (And by His grace He's given you His Spirit to do that!) To truly trust Him calls you to wholeheartedly yield yourself to our Lord Jesus unconditionally. That love-grounded yieldedness will be evidenced in your daily choices and decisions of how you live. There *is* no trust if that trust doesn't lead to action. In other words, your responsive action reveals the level of your trust.

***"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on Me,
because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor"***

(Isaiah 61:1,2 as apperceived by Jesus in Luke 4:18,19)

The portion of this verse, "*to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,*" epitomized what the Spirit of Jesus was showing us during our time away. Consider the purpose our Father gave us for our ministry:

***Sharing the Hebraic Foundations of the Earliest Followers of Jesus
Preparing Today's Followers Of Jesus To Do Their Part in His Kingdom***

As a result of this trip, we realized that in order to accomplish these two purposes we needed to increase our attention on helping to free captives from demonic oppression as well as release them from the prison of religious darkness. During our time among so many who are imprisoned in spiritual darkness within **clergy-controlled systems** it became evident to us of the prophetic timing of our last e-mail which introduced Kingdom Living Today 37. *Are You Emotionally Supportive Of Others?* (Please reread that e-mail to refresh your understanding of where our current discussion is going.)

In that e-mail we discussed three different types of relationships — Positional, Activity-based and Value-based. During this trip we observed that clergy-controlled religious systems are kept in power through people who have imprisoned themselves in *Positional* and *Activity-based* Relationships. The former rely on unquestioning allegiance to the denomination their parents raised them in. Imprisoned in their position, they're unable and for the most part unwilling to wholeheartedly pursue Jesus and His will for their lives (see Hebrews 11:6) because they fear rejection by their family and others in their religious sphere.

Activity-based people are held captive in a myriad of comfortable, people-pleasing religious programs and social events. Giving way to the clergy who need warm bodies to keep the religious system running, they're either deluded into believing that their busyness pleases God or don't consider Him at all in their value equation. They remain captive in religious darkness with little or no determination to be transformed into the character of Jesus or seek His will for themselves through His Spirit and by His Word. Thus, they never experience the AUTHENTIC FREEDOM Jesus promises His own (John 8:36).

Through personal revelation and prophetic insight that was shared with us during our time away, we did find a deeper understanding of the nature of the most important and deepest type of relationship: **Value-based**.

Value-based relationships involve a significant amount of personal responsibility for one another because they spring forth from your heart. They are demonstrated in:

- **common aspirations** — *to be more like Jesus,*
- **common values** — *to apply God's Word to your lives,*
- **common goals** — *your focus on eternity with Christ and how many people you can bring with you as Father draws them to Jesus.*

While we were gone we kept our home fellowship family apprised of what was going on so they could be praying for us and sharing any insights the Spirit might give them. In the middle of our most difficult trial the Holy Spirit prompted in one of them the lyrics of an old folk song, "If I Had A Hammer":

If I had a hammer (bell) (song)
I'd hammer (ring it) (sing it) in the morning
I'd hammer (ring it) (sing it) in the evening all over this land
I'd hammer (ring) (sing) out danger
I'd hammer (ring) (sing) out warning
I'd hammer (ring) (sing) out love between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land.

Well I've got a hammer
And I've got a bell
And I've got a song to sing
All over this land
It's the hammer of **justice**
It's the bell of **freedom**
It's the song about **love** between my brothers and my sisters
All over this land.

The sequence of *justice* leading to *freedom* and then *love* was an insight which the Lord gave us and through it touched us deeply. That brought us further clarity to the nature of the darkness in which we saw so many imprisoned. We hope this insight will bless any of you who have not experienced the true freedom Jesus offers—freedom that reveals itself in unabashed love for Him and for others as we fulfill His will in our lives. Let's examine this principle a little further in light of this directive from Jesus:

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12)

In the past several Kingdom Living Today anecdotes we've been citing this summation of God's commands for His people. To do for others what you'd have them do for you is the basis to *justice*, a value our God highly esteems. As a first step in being a *just* person, our Lord wants you to put yourself in the shoes of other people and consider both *how* you're treating them and *why* you're doing it that way.

As the progression of the lyrics reveals: The pursuit of *justice* (hammer) leads to *freedom* (bell) and ultimately displays itself through *love* (song) — a sacrificial responsiveness that places the interests of others above your own. The love which a just heart demonstrates can readily identify with Paul's command, ***"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves"*** (Philippians 2:3).

This discussion carries special responsibility if you're a parent or grandparent, or if you serve in that capacity to others in your relational sphere. It's critical for the spiritual well-being of these younger people that you come alongside them to train them to treat other people the way they themselves would want to be treated. Their ability to develop and grow in relational love that looks to the well-being of others is based on the scriptural mandate of justice.

We recognized this past month that adults who've been raised in homes without the foundation of justice that's found in Matthew 7:12 continue to live in the dark bondage of **relational intimidation**. In other words, they live imprisoned in codependency. In general, the oldest children continue on into adult life intimidating their younger siblings and anyone else who lets them get away with it. (See Teaching E-mail 36. *Are You Dancing Around Each Other?*, for more on the bondage of codependency.)

Many adult younger siblings live in fear of getting on the wrong side of their older brothers or sisters or anyone else who desires to intimidate them. *Confrontation* that would clear the air by letting everyone's perspective get aired is avoided out of fear of how that eldest person will react. As a result, the deeper relational growth that could take place is stifled, and "old files" of interaction are never updated or altered even after decades of change.

Failure to experience *justice* in the Positional Relationship of their family hinders those intimidated throughout adulthood from experiencing relational freedom and authentic love. Sadly, the clergy-controlled religious establishment thrives on this bondage since these "prisoners" are reluctant to question things, or take a stand, or rattle the well-organized system they've complacently accepted as "that's the way it is."

See if you recognize yourself:

- The intimidators don't let the feelings of others be expressed. They terminate conversations before others can share what's going on inside. Or, they control others through meaningless long stories that express no personal values or goals. We talked about this in Kingdom Living Today #37. People who are imprisoned relationally rely on "newspaper talk" in which they just exchange facts or opinions with others. There's little passion or heart involved in their conversation because it's not anything that personally impacts anyone's life.
- Others are unable to experience relational freedom because they live in apprehension of intimidators. Since childhood all they've ever known is the prison of injustice because they've never been treated equally by their older siblings. For instance, while you may find that you can express yourself more freely with those outside your biological family, that openness is squelched by the "shared history" that relatives may keep you chained to. Operating from the way you used to be, they're unwilling to allow the "transformed you" to emerge and be reckoned with.

A thought to consider: During our 10+ years conducting retreats, we recognized how devastating the attitude of oldest adult children was to the relational harmony that's

needed in group cooperation. Any time we had a preponderance of oldest children in a group, there was always tension—these "eldest" wanted it their way and relied on intimidation and manipulation to get it. If their desires were thwarted they just pouted. (We do admit that although we found this occurring most often in the oldest child, those further down the pecking order were equally capable of control, manipulation and pouting!)

When retreaters comprised mostly middle adult children, relational harmony was readily apparent. They easily worked things out together and willingly relied on each other's input and ideas. Can this be why we see God throughout the Bible often by-passing the oldest child and selecting a younger one to do His work?

We share these insights so that you may consider if the injustice of Positional Relationships that may have developed during your upbringing may be hindering the development of Value-based Relationships in your marriage or other close associations. Until you experience the **freedom** and **love** that are borne from **just** hearts, you'll never know the freedom Jesus speaks of: ***"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"*** (John 8:36).

"Freedom is a Light for Which Many Men Have Died in Darkness"

George Washington's farewell address, September 17, 1796

On the day before our flight back to Colorado Springs we took a train into Philadelphia. On our walk from the train station to the Liberty Bell and Independence and Constitution Halls we passed through Washington Square. It's a small park where many unnamed soldiers who died during the Revolution were buried. In the far corner of the park we spotted the monument pictured above, and the Spirit of Christ compelled us to go see what had been written behind the statue of Washington.

When we saw the words, "Freedom is a Light for Which Many Men Have Died in Darkness," we envisioned all of the people passively sitting in pews week after week dying in the **darkness of religious self-satisfaction**. A burning zeal rushed over us that we needed to focus more effort to help people experience the authentic freedom Jesus promises those who are born from above. It's a freedom experienced among the Kingdom-minded — *those who earnestly seek to be more like our Lord Jesus and to unhesitatingly do His will.*

With fire in our hearts to set people free we then entered Independence Hall. We were flooded with an understanding of the motives of our Founding Fathers, the strength of their character and their purpose for meeting in that place to break away from the tyranny and injustice of English rule. Some of you know that Sue's ancestor, Josiah Bartlett, the first Governor of New Hampshire, signed the Declaration of Independence. If you've ever met Sue, you know that this man would be proud of her determination and steadfastness.

What these men risked on behalf of freedom for their families and the generations to

come is too easily overlooked in today's me-oriented, pleasure-bent society. Have you seen the bumper sticker, "Freedom isn't free. Someone paid dearly for it!"? For us who follow Jesus, this is so true! This is why we feel so compelled to fight even harder in the heavenlies for the spiritual freedom our Lord Jesus obtained for all who trust Him.

Next on our tour of Philly we went to visit the chambers of the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress Hall. In the House of Representatives was a statue similar to the one below.

The combination of the *scale* and the *sword* again reminded us of Matthew 7:12, because justice and the willingness to fight to preserve it are intertwined. The sword also brought to mind Ephesians 6:17, "**Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**" During the difficult conversations with our relatives, the Spirit had reminded us that our most important identity is being our Father's children. Because His Word attests that we are HIS children, we personally can no longer submit to the prison of injustice in which our unbelieving siblings try to keep us confined. Perhaps you're in this relational situation as well. (See Luke 8:21 and Romans 8:17 for our Father's perspective on authentic family in Jesus.)

In our pilgrimage to our salvation, our Father never wants His children to lose sight of our *eternal* family relationships. The freedom we have in these Value-based relationships is made possible by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. We prosper these relationships by our unflinching fight to remain free from slavery to the expectations of Positional and Activity-based people. Paul, who once persecuted the family of Christ, understood all too clearly the steadfast resolve it takes to remain free from unscriptural dictates imposed by others: "**It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery**" (Galatians 5:1).

We're reminded by the "*sword of the Spirit*" reference in Ephesians 6:17 of the battle we're engaged in for the souls of mankind. The "*word of God*" is His *rhema*, His revealed will empowered by His Spirit for His own to put into practice in specific situations. The example of King David as well as the earliest followers of Jesus demonstrate that they habitually sought God's guidance in order to be victorious. As you've noticed, we repeatedly point you to the Spirit of Christ within you for guidance, and to confirmation of His will by two or three others in Him. This is the best way to stay free of the prison of religious establishments, and free to serve our Lord's purposes out of love for Him and a desire to please our Father.

If you're already outside the religious system, please note this admonition and warning: Press on into all that our Lord Jesus is calling you to do in His Kingdom so that you may be commended on the day of Judgment. Too many of you keep looking back and speaking critically about the religious system you fled. Don't be like Lot's wife who looked back and became frozen in time. Press on in your spiritual race and *don't look*

back!(Luke 9:62)

God's servants wanting to help you serve our King,
Mike & Sue