

Issachar Prophetic Teaching newsletter
for October 2005

“Stirred hearts and willing spirits”
A resting place for the apostolic anointing

Please read this verse first; it's NOT just a preamble to my message!

“Then everyone came whose **heart was stirred** and everyone whose **spirit was willing.**”
(Exodus 35: 21).

Similar phrases are used again in verses 22, 26, 29 and 36:2. Compare also 1 Chronicles 29:9 and Ezra 1: 5.

The Lord God commanded that the articles for the Tabernacle tent should only be made from offerings given by those who had a willing heart (Exo. 35:5). A stirred heart and a willing spirit were absolutely necessary for the furnishing of the Tabernacle. If this was so for the building of a physical TENT how much more so for the spiritual HOUSE being built amongst believers!

Yet how many today truly possess a stirred heart and a willing spirit?

Moses was an apostle figure, a father to the newly-birthed nation of Israel. If Moses was to build and furnish a material tent from items freely given by willing hearts, how much more so would the nation of Israel need to be built “within themselves” by open spirits and receptive hearts?

Is it any different today? The Lord has already built the House, the church of the One Body; it's His purpose to have such an abode in which He will dwell. But it needs furnishing with the gifts of the Spirit, and with the character of Jesus Christ Himself (Gal. 5:25). But following the pattern He set for the Tabernacle, it requires open hearts.

And this is the very point. Let me share a personal reflection for a moment if you will.

I've ministered the gospel now for 31 years, 26 of those years in a denominational organisation. The past 5 years I've ministered independently in a more free-style New Testament type of assembly. I ministered for 18 years in the last denominational setup, seeing people come to salvation, filled with the Holy Spirit, go into ministry themselves, travel on outreach to other nations, etc. My calling as Teacher gave much scope to impart what I discerned was required for spiritual growth. Many did come to a measurably stage of maturity, which I rejoice in.

However, when I resigned from that denomination about half of the brethren chose to come with me. Some who left moved out of the rural town where we were, and moved to a city. The remainder of those who stayed within the denominational setup had a big shock! No sooner had my wife and I left that structure, than the “spirit of religion” surfaced in that church and wrested back control from the remnant of “Spirit-filled” believers there.

In my naivety I had thought we'd put to death such religiosity, especially after 18 years! Not so; it rose up within months of our departure and drew that particular congregation back under its spell. I share this, not to slight that denomination or particular congregation, but to show how ineffectual teaching can be if it doesn't deeply impact the hearers.

It was a salutary and humbling lesson for me to realise I hadn't made such an impact as I had thought. It caused me both angst and repentance to see this happen right before my eyes.

On reflection since, I have come to a number of conclusions. One is, that I obviously thought more highly of my pastoral and teaching “skills” than I actually possessed. I needed a lesson in humility. Another lesson I learnt was that teachable minds (or hearts) are a priority in sharing mature insights from the Word.

Hence the verse mentioned above about “stirred hearts and willing spirits”. How many of us in ministry, especially the pastors and teachers, have taught and taught and taught, and seen little fruit from it? We preach or teach on a subject such as “walking in the Spirit” and see little (or sometimes NO) fruit from it. Next month or so we give “prayer” a plug; with the same result. And on it goes throughout our ministry. When we move on we hope we’ve left a substantial deposit. But we later (or sooner, as in my case) find we didn’t impact our hearers to the extent we imagined we did. Nothing new in this really – this is the pattern many of us in ministry are so painfully aware of.

What is the cause of all this? Is the pastor or teacher to blame for not properly instructing? Or is it the congregation who fail to hear what is actually being said?

Well, blame isn’t something I’d like to throw around. But there is a reason for this kind of thing happening so regularly and widely in the church. **It’s to do with apostolic anointing and willing hearts.**

More and more I see that those who are given opportunity to preach or teach MUST be anointed to do so. There may be many who are capable of giving an exhortation, an insight from Scripture, etc, but who may not be actually anointed to GIVE THE WORD. It’s becoming more apparent to me that we in leadership need to get this clear in our thinking.

How many times do we see and hear believers “preach” who really shouldn’t be up there? And how often it is that the brethren are robbed because of this. It’s not that the “preacher” up there can’t give a “good message” – they often do. It’s that for the House of the Lord to be furnished within, we need anointed believers who are called to help furnish the House by an anointed Word, whether by preaching, teaching, exhortation or prophecy.

Putting people on the “preaching roster” simply because they are good at public speaking and can “deliver a word” doesn’t really hold up to either human or Biblical scrutiny. When we get the Biblical order right we’ll begin to see a definite change in spiritual growth among the believers, AND among the preachers and teachers!

This is where we begin. We’ll see a congregation moved by the message when the message has first anointed the heart of the speaker.

The other most vital part of spiritual advancement is to do with those who have a willing heart to receive. “Teachability” is a phrase we could use here. Generally speaking there are relatively few in most congregations who have this.

Could it be that just as there needs to be an anointed speaker there also needs to be anointed listeners?

I once heard someone use the phrase “Crowds lie!” Quite blunt when you think about it. The bigger the congregation the more likelihood there is for compromise, simply because the leadership has to allow for a greater variety of so-called “Christian thinking” amongst the people. When a congregation, especially a large one, doesn’t have the spirit of unity borne out of single-mindedness according to Scripture, then we find trouble. The ability to hear what the Spirit is saying can so easily be stifled.

Perhaps it’s in the smaller group settings or the little assemblies where we’ll find receptive hearts. Yet there’s no guarantee just because the group is small that they’ll be more teachable. However, the thought seems very alluring. What if an anointed teacher were to teach the “deep things of God” to a relatively small group of believers who all had “stirred hearts and willing spirits” to not only hear the message but also act on it?

How could we get believers to be like this? Is there simply a remnant hovering out there somewhere we have to discover who’ll be willing to sit and be taught? How can we gather such like-minded ones?

Be warned; such thinking can lead us either into depression (because we're not likely to find such a group around the next corner anyway) or move us to form a cult-like gathering who feasts only on what is handed out by "the anointed one". No, there is another way; one based on solid Biblical principles.

The principle is this. **God imparts spiritual understanding to those who sincerely desire it in the first place.** It's most likely that those who gave generously of their gold and silver for the building of the Tabernacle were those who already had generous and open hearts – not only in the natural by the giving of their worldly possessions to family and friends – but who had a inward generosity of heart anyway.

In other words, open-heartedness is a pre-condition for openness to spiritual understanding. Teachability goes hand in hand with this openness.

Have you ever noticed that only when you act on previous revelation do you get further revelation? This is a standard Biblical principle. Obey, and you move on in God. Disobey and you'll be put through the same lesson again until you understand what God is trying to instruct you in.

In fact it could be said that because of disobedience and even a lack of willingness to understand, God's favour can be temporarily held back (see Isa. 27:11). Lack of understanding actually brings forth a judgment.

The Lord requires a people, individually to start with, and then corporately, in whom He can impart a spirit of knowledge, understanding and wisdom. The point is: who today actually WANTS understanding? Many say they do, but are they willing to pay the price?

The apostolic anointing that is increasingly coming upon today's church needs a "place" where it can rest and abide. Those who have a teachable spirit openly welcome apostolic anointing. When they do, the anointing rests in them, and bears the intended fruit.

Reception of the apostolic anointing is vital to the on-going maturity of the Body. Out of this will come that *one mind* and *one heart* of willingness that was evidenced in the building of the Tabernacle. When this occurs we'll see God's will arise on the face of the earth in a way rarely seen. See also this same pattern that was there after Pentecost (Acts 4:32).

What can be done? We can ask the Lord to grant us to want to understand. "Lord cause me to understand your ways". This asking Him to cause it to happen doesn't mean He will make it happen. Rather it means He can move upon us in such a way that we begin to "hunger to want". In fact we then begin **to desire to want to be hungry for it to happen!** How desperately we need such yearnings, and how jealousy does the Lord want this for His Body.

This willingness of heart and spirit may in fact be one of the great hallmarks of the Body for this generation.

May this hour come upon the Body today so that we truly become that "glorious Body" proclaimed by Paul (Eph. 5: 27).

Grace upon grace to you who have a stirred spirit and a willing heart!

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