

THEOLOGY OR EXPERIENCE

I'd like to start by sharing a prayer that the Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers in chapter three. He also included all of God's people in this prayer. I'll read it from the amplified version.

May He grant you out of the riches of His glory, to be strengthened *and* spiritually energized with power through His Spirit in your inner self, [indwelling your innermost being and personality], so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through your faith. And may you, having been [deeply] rooted and [securely] grounded in love, be fully capable of comprehending with all the saints (all of God's people) the width and length and height and depth of His love [fully experiencing that amazing, endless love]; and [that you may come] to know [practically, through personal experience] the love of Christ which far surpasses [mere] knowledge [without experience], that you may be filled up [throughout your being] to all the fullness of God [so that you may have the richest experience of God's presence in your lives, completely filled and flooded with God Himself].

Please note that Paul was not praying that they would increase their Bible knowledge, but to expand their experience of God Himself.

In verse 19 he prayed;
[that you may come] to know [practically, through personal experience] the love of Christ which far surpasses [mere] knowledge [without experience]

And the reason that he prayed this is so;
that you may be filled up [throughout your being] to all the fullness of God [so that you may have the richest experience of God's presence in your lives, completely filled and flooded with God Himself].

Whenever God expands our understanding, it's to lead us into a greater experience of Him. He's not just trying to create great theology in us. He wants us to know Him.

The Pharisees, were the religious leaders of Jesus' day. They made a rigorous lifelong commitment to study every stroke of the law.

Jesus scolded them saying;
"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. John 5.39

They were content with an academic understanding of the Bible but didn't recognize their greatest need --- a relationship with God through His Son Jesus.

There are people today who study the Bible day and night. They may be able to ace any Bible quiz, but they can't manifest God's eternal life or His Kingdom's reality in their lives.

God didn't send Jesus to Earth to suffer the gruesome death of crucifixion just to create a whole Kingdom full of church going bible students.

Jesus came to redeem all of God's sons and daughters back into His family as His heirs, and joint heirs with Christ, sharing His inheritance.

When Jesus had His private conversation with Nicodemus, He didn't say, Nic you really need to study your bible more.

He said, unless you are born again, you cannot even see the Kingdom. And, unless you are born of the Spirit you will never enter the kingdom. So in the only place in the Bible that being born again by God is even mentioned, Jesus made it very clear that the purpose of being born again by God is to enter into God's Kingdom as His children. John 3.3

Jesus preached everywhere, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It wasn't repent of this sin or that one. It was repent of the spiritually dead nature that you inherited from Adam and Eve, because the one that God created you for is available to you now.

God's plan was to completely re-create and redeem His creations back into His family and fill them to overflowing with His Holy Spirit and make them His children, His heirs, and joint heirs with Christ, sharing His inheritance, and utilizing them as the Ambassadors of His Kingdom.

Any one with a good education and public speaking skills can preach an academic Gospel.

The Apostle Paul described his presentation of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

My message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power, that your faith would not rest in the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. 1 Corinthians 2.4

And when he was explaining spiritual gifts to the Corinthian believers he said;

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestaion of the Spirit for the common good.

So it appears that God's plan to proclaim His Gospel of the Kingdom to the entire world was not to have highly educated public speakers preach a powerless academic Gospel. His plan was to fill His redeemed Sons and Daughters with His Love and His Eternal Life and utilize them to draw all of His creations back into this transforming covenant relationship with Him.

The Pharisees comittment to study every stroke of the Law and observe outwardly all of it's teachings, was a lifelong and deeply committed effort, but it did not produce the manifestation of God's eternal life or His kingdom.

Jesus rebuked them because their academic pursuits did not benefit the people at all.

He said to them, Woe, judgement is coming to you self righteous scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven in front of people: for you do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow those who are in the process of entering to do so. Matthew 23.13 amp

Please note that the only people Jesus ever rebuked were religious people

In their attempt at perfect performance of the Law, the Pharisees asked Jesus which is the greatest comandment? He raised their focus from outward performance of commands to serious heart issues. He told them, you shall love the Lord your God with all you heart, all your soul and all your mind. and the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two hang all of the Law and the Prophets.

So it appears from these scriptures that God's plan was not to forgive our sins, have us straighten up our lives and get our theology right.

It was to have His redeemed sons and daughters experience the fullness of His love, be filled with His supernatural presence, and fulfill the Father's unwavering desire to get all of His creations back into His family as His children, His heirs, and joint heirs with Christ sharing His transforming love for them.

Let's not accept a powerless academic Gospel and outward observance to commands as a substitute for experiencing the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge without experience, and being filled up, throughout your being, to all the fullness of God, so that you may have the richest experience of God's presence in your lives, completely filled and flooded with God Himself.

God's Love Never Fails.

God bless you.

Jim Fuller

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