

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Becoming God's Mouthpiece

Dear Friend,

After graduating from college, I spent some time working as a substitute teacher, mainly in elementary schools. You notice things being around kids, especially when they are playing on the playground. Their interaction with each other can be a microcosm of how society in general interacts.

For instance, one group of kids are obviously the most popular kids that the rest look to for acceptance. Their opinion carries weight among the whole group and their rejection often means a child is relegated to playing alone or with the other outcasts. Does this bring back some painful schoolyard memories, especially if you were one of the outcasts? A child learns quickly that **acceptance is paramount** and fitting into the mold society determines acceptable is crucial for survival. In my case, I learned in High School that if I indulged in certain vices I immediately fit in and was accepted. Boy what a mistake that was.

As we grow up we carry that same mentality with us into adulthood. We strive for the right jobs, the right houses, the right automobiles, and the right schools for our kids, often in an effort to be accepted by our peers. Sadly, the same mentality has crept into the church, even the spirit filled church. We strive to fit into the mold that a particular church says we are to fit into and if we don't then we are cast out, just like on the playground. Sometimes it's the "bully" of the group that takes it upon themselves to be the enforcer and weed out anyone who challenges the norm.

Take for example a situation in which a person attends a church that does not teach or promote speaking in tongues and suddenly they desire to learn more about tongues, what happens? We have all heard and seen cases like this and all too often the sad outcome has been that they are asked to stop their pursuit of truth or leave the church. The mentality of the group tends to be: "We have all the truth here there is and we are not open to anything other than what we believe." They might even say something like this: "Do you think you know more than us!" The truth of the matter is that if the Holy Ghost has revealed something

from God's Word to you that the "group" has not yet seen then in that one singular area you have more understanding and should not be apologetic for what God has revealed to you.

We all are at different places in our spiritual development and we should not expect at any given moment that our understanding of God's word will be identical to everyone else. Where there are areas that we have received more enlightenment we shouldn't allow those areas to become a wedge between us and the rest of the Body. Likewise, we also shouldn't be expected to acquiesce to the demands of the "group" to conform to their doctrine when it is revealed to us by the Holy Ghost to be a man-made doctrine and not a Holy Ghost inspired doctrine. It takes God's wisdom to know how to traverse those doctrinal minefields. Some of us have had our legs blown off unexpectedly because of such issues.

Please don't misunderstand; these doctrinal issues that I'm referring to are not core issues such as Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Nor am I promoting the idea that we need to spend our time looking for things to divide us from one another. What I am suggesting is that no one group has all the revelation from God's Word and each of us are at different stages of spiritual development. When we begin promoting the idea that "we have it all" and "those other guys are miles behind us" then we are wrong. In my case, I never intended to challenge the teachings promoted by the leadership. I followed the leadership of the Holy Ghost and He walked me right into a hornet's nest of controversy. You talk about an uncomfortable situation for Debbie and me.

The crux of the issue dealt with how God leads us and communicates with us. The Holy Ghost continued to prompt me to teach messages about the subtle ways He leads us and how fulfilling God's plan for our lives requires us to step out in faith even when He gives us nothing more than the peace in our hearts to follow. This came in direct opposition to a widely held belief in the group that God lays out our path to us in advance like a blueprint that we follow and without a blueprint we must sit and wait for instructions. The New Testament, particularly the book of Acts examples that God continued to bring to my attention, directly contradicted this belief. What was I to do?

Thank God for men who have gone before us who set an example of what we are to do when faced with such dilemmas. Take for example a man like Martin Luther, a German professor of Theology, who challenged the beliefs of an entire system, the late medieval Catholic Church, and changed the course of this world. Luther taught that salvation was not something that could be earned, but that it is a gift from God by faith. This one man's stand for truth against the entire established church of his day made him a seminal figure in what we have come

to know as the Protestant Reformation. Yes, Luther's stand for truth did result in his excommunication from the church, but thank God he was willing to challenge their wrong doctrine for the sake of truth.

Put yourself in Luther's shoes, he had no idea that his stand for truth would open the door to the greatest influx of believers in the modern age. All he knew at the time was that what was happening was wrong and someone had to make a stand for truth. Luther's stand for truth reached its pinnacle when he nailed his "Ninety-Five Theses" to the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, sparking the Reformation. Thank God for Martin Luther and his commitment to truth and willingness to stand against the wrong doctrine, even when it meant becoming an outcast.

Martin Luther recognized his first and foremost responsibility was to uphold truth, regardless of what the "group" believed or taught. As believers, our "calling", like Luther's, is to uphold truth, declare truth, and to live by the truth, even when the "group" has compromised the truth, even in those cases when it seems to be a small issue. Luther stood for the truth, the just should live by faith, and we are enjoying the fruit of his accomplishments today.

Similarly, the early church struggled with wrong doctrine that threatened its foundation. Mainly, it was the belief that to truly be saved a person had to also observe the Law of Moses. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, he took direct aim at this issue, scolding the people for allowing themselves to be brow beaten into following the Law. (Galatians 3:11)

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith."

This idea of having to follow the Law of Moses was spreading like wild fire throughout the churches, threatening to derail the entire message that: "the just shall live by faith." It's interesting to see how Martin Luther and Paul were both at war with the same wrong doctrine, the doctrine based in works rather than faith in the completed work of Christ Jesus. In both cases, the popular belief of their day was contrary to the truth of God's Word. Consequently, they had to stand up in the face of tremendous opposition and speak truth contrary to the ideas of the majority.

In one instance, (Galatians 2:11-14) Paul came face to face with one of the original twelve disciples, Peter, as he wrongfully supported this doctrine by separating himself from the Gentiles prior to the arrival of the leadership from Jerusalem. Peter separated himself out of fear of retribution, not yet ready to

make a stand for truth. Yet he was **the same man** whom God used to bring the revelation into the earth that God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34)

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.’ ”

Peter had the revelation that the new birth was the great equalizer, that there was no longer any difference between the Jew and the Gentile. All differences had been done away at the cross. Along with that understanding should have also come the understanding that the faith which produced the new birth is the same faith we are to live by, believing we are justified by faith in the finished work of the cross and not by adhering to the Law of Moses. (Galatians 3:13-14)

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (14) That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.”

Paul refused to allow Peter’s act of hypocrisy to go unchallenged. This meant challenging one of the original twelve who walked with Jesus. Picture the scene; Peter hears the approaching leadership and separates himself from the Gentiles. Paul witnesses Peter’s act of hypocrisy and has a decision to make, whether or not he is willing to challenge the actions of his peers, specifically those of Peter. Anyone else in Paul’s position might have concluded that they didn’t want to take on the “establishment”, because they are just one person against an entire group.

People tend to take the path of least resistance and refuse to make a stand for truth. It would be easy to see how someone faced with Paul’s decision might question whether or not they are the right person to make such a stand. They might even doubt whether or not they have the right to contradict those in authority, especially someone who walked with Jesus. No one wants to be the odd man out. Everyone likes to be liked. We all tend to gravitate towards those who accept us, and all too often speaking truth, as Paul did to Peter, results in rejection and not acceptance. Does that mean we are to keep our mouth shut? No.

Notice how the ideas of the “Group” in charge set the standard for what was acceptable and not acceptable beliefs and behaviors. Challenging that standard took courage and an unwavering loyalty to God and His Word above all else. The idea that: “We should just fall in line and accept the ideas of the group in order to keep the peace”, was not the mentality of those who brought about

change. Was this their calling? Had God anointed them to be the stick that He used to stir things up and bring about change? What if they had refused to step into their calling? What if someone like Luther was waiting for the leadership of the Catholic Church to embrace what God had showed him regarding faith? Had that been the case, we would never have heard of Martin Luther.

All too often we fall into the trap of looking to man to give their stamp of approval on what the Lord is showing us. In Paul's second letter to young Pastor Timothy, Paul gives the young struggling Pastor some valuable counsel that we can glean from today. (II Timothy 2:15)

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”

We all are to give ourselves over to the study of God's Word, no matter our calling. In so doing we qualify ourselves in God's approval process for His use of our lives in His kingdom in whatever way He chooses. We should expect God to use us as He sees fit. We must stop looking to man to validate our calling, determine our readiness or usability by God to fulfill His call, or to preapprove the message God puts in our mouth.

We might never feel quite ready to fulfill what God has called us to do. Likewise, others might not agree with what **we know in our heart** God has called us to do or the words God has given us to speak. This idea that many have of needing to attend one more Bible College or get one more degree behind their name and then they will be ready is often an attempt by the person to convince others that they are qualified. A person can have an entire alphabet of degrees behind their name and still not be qualified. No matter what calling a person has in the Body of Christ, the proof of their readiness to fulfill that calling isn't the degrees behind their name or the stamp of approval of man, it is the work that has been accomplished on the inside by the Holy Ghost as He has taken the Word of God they've sown in their heart and worked true change from the inside out. (Psalm 75:6-7)

“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, (7) But God is the judge, He putteth down one and setteth up another.”

No one has all the answers but God, and no group has all the revelation from God's Word. We must never accept the notion that we have uncovered all the revelation there is or that our group is “the” group with all the answers.

When we make Jesus Christ the Lord of our life we are reborn with a calling. Immediately thereafter we start down the path of spiritual development on our way to fulfilling His plan for our life. We should not look to anyone else for validation or acceptance or to tell us what God wants to do in our lives. That doesn't mean that we should not have mentors in our life that we trust to help us in the process of discovering who we have become in the Body of Christ. But, the problem begins when we start **looking for people's** acceptance or their acknowledgment of our anointing for our proof of His calling. In the event we say or do something they don't like and they withdraw their acceptance are we going to be able to survive?

What must come first and foremost is our personal relationship with Jesus Christ and from that grows a confidence in knowing who we are and what God has called us to do. If our confidence is in man's acceptance, man's approval, man's promotion, then we are setting ourselves up for pain and possible destruction. What Debbie and I experienced almost destroyed us. That my friend is not God. Who's to blame? I blame myself. I should have never invested so much trust and confidence in man or in their back slaps or accolades because when those stopped I felt as though I had failed, when all the while I was following the Holy Ghost.

I write this not for the sake of pity, but as a warning. Never look to man for the things that only God can give. God may walk you right into a situation where He wants to use you to shake things up and if you are looking for their acceptance, how will He ever be able to use you effectively? Look to God and God alone and you will never be ashamed. In these last of the last days God will need people who are not interested in the acceptance of their peers. The only thing they want is the acceptance of God. That way, God will be able to send them anywhere He needs a mouthpiece and they will go without hesitation. Will you be that person?

~ Jesus Loves You!

Mark Jenkins