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October 2015 "Are You Ready to Teach?"

Dear Friends,

After Jesus rose from the dead and just before He ascended back to Heaven, He gave the following instructions to His disciples,

¹⁸And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Jesus was telling them to teach others about putting faith in Him for salvation and then disciple those who accepted Him as their Savior. Briefly stated, to disciple a Christian means to teach that person what God has said in His Word. According to Isaiah 28:9-10, this teaching must be done line-upon-line and precept-upon-precept. This is revealed even more in the following passages:

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

¹⁶All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Discipleship requires two things: a teacher and one who receives the teaching. As a teacher, I can testify that not all Christians appear to want to receive what is taught. Very often, it seems the cares of this world and the distractions of other things diminish their willingness to be disciplined. Regardless, I am to teach what the Lord wants me to teach even if I don't think most people in the congregation are receiving. Once truth is delivered, those hearing (in person, watching a video or listening to a recording) are accountable for what they have heard.

Over the years I have observed how it seems that most Christians tend to leave all of the discipling to those who stand behind a pulpit or oversee a Sunday School class. It's as though they want information, but not in depth, line-upon-line comprehension of scripture. The impression is that they see no reason to rightly divide God's Word. However, the responsibility to disciple new converts and baby Christians extends to ALL Believers, not just those called to the five-fold ministry offices or teaching in a Sunday School class. Consider what is written in 1 Peter 3:15:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear

Peter's instruction was not just to Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. His opening statements in chapter one reveal this letter was written to all Christians. This means every single Believer should be able to use scripture **IN CONTEXT** to explain why he believes what he believes. A Christian does not need to have a five-fold ministry calling to be capable of understanding the Bible in this way. Likewise, it does not require a seminary degree or detailed understanding of the Greek and Hebrew languages to do what God is telling us in 1 Peter 3:15.

If we believe in healing, we must be able to use scripture to explain why. If we believe Christians are no longer under the Law of Moses, we need to be able to confirm as much using the Bible. All Christians have opinions about what they believe the Bibles says, but opinions are not truth. Opinions are essentially a conviction and thought arrived at through personal interpretation of events and what is read. Opinions can keep people in bondage; truth will make people free. God's Word, left in context, must be the **ONLY** foundation for what we believe.

Taking this even further, read what God has said in Hebrews 5:11-6:3,

¹¹Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. ¹²For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. ¹³For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. ¹⁴But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. ¹Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, ²of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³And this will we do, if God permit.

This was written to people who had been Christians long enough that they should have been able to teach new converts and baby Christians the "entry-level" fundamentals of Christianity. The problem was that they were so lazy in their own walk with God that they needed to be taught the same things over and over. They should have been skillful in understanding deeper things of scripture, but their lethargic approach to God's Word meant they were still living on an occasional drink of the milk of the Word. In other words, even though they had been saved long enough to have greatly matured spiritually, they were still baby Christians.

One of the worst results of their lackluster interest in scripture was that they were unable to discern between good and evil. In the context of this passage, the good and evil mentioned is not speaking of discerning what is or is not sin. Rather, it is speaking of the ability to discern between right and wrong doctrine. To describe it another way, they had become so secure in believing they were saved and all was good between them and the Lord that they saw no need to dig deeper into truth. They did not realize that they were setting themselves up to be deceived and led away from truth.

In this passage from Hebrews, God gives an instruction that Christians are to leave, or grow beyond, the basic principles of the doctrine of Christ and the need for the foundational teachings of the following:

- 1) Repentance from dead works
- 2) Faith toward God
- 3) The doctrine of baptisms
- 4) Laying on of hands
- 5) The resurrection of the dead
- 6) Eternal judgment

God gave those instructions to Believers nearly 2,000 years ago. Even so, is there anything about them which would not apply to Believers today? If God expected Christians of that time to mature in such a way, then His expectations have not changed centuries later. This being undeniably true, do you know what is meant by "repentance from dead works"? Do you even know what the dead works are? Do you know what baptisms (plural) He is talking about? Is your church like so many that teach salvation through faith in Jesus, yet do not believe in the laying on of hands? Do you clearly understand about eternal judgment, or do you buy into the error which teaches that God's grace negates the concept of eternal judgment?

Keep in mind that in the passage we've read in Hebrews, not only does God expect Christians to mature to the point they clearly understand all of those subjects, He also expects Christians to be able to teach these things to others. If we cannot do this, then according to Hebrews 5:13, we are immature, spiritual babies. I just wonder how many reading this would be able to clearly and contextually explain the six points above. Further, I wonder how many seminary graduates would be able to teach them.

Proverbs 22:6 tells us we are to train up children in the way they are to go. This is not only true for children in the natural, but for spiritual children as well. As such, what we read in Hebrews are subjects that should be taught to new converts of any age. Knowing that God considers the six points above to be very basic, elementary spiritual concepts, is it possible that not clearly knowing them hinders our ability to understand the deeper revelations of scripture? I believe it does.

As a pastor, I have taught on all of the points identified in Hebrews 5:11-6:3. Even so, acknowledging the information presented in a sermon does not mean the hearer is ready to teach what has been presented. It takes more than simply hearing a sermon one time to be able to teach the same to others. As it is recorded in 2nd Timothy, we are supposed to study to show ourselves approved unto God.

I would like to make a suggestion. Begin digging into scripture and prepare lessons on the following:

- 1) Repentance from dead works
- 2) Faith toward God
- 3) The doctrine of baptisms
- 4) Laying on of hands
- 5) The resurrection of the dead
- 6) Eternal judgment

The goal is to prepare a lesson that is at least 30 minutes long on each of the above points. Use scripture in context to prove what you are teaching; your own thoughts and opinions are not to be used. Remember, as Christians, we should understand these subjects so thoroughly we could teach them in a group setting, a church service or just one-on-one. Additionally, here are ten more topics about which you may want to consider preparing lessons.

- 1) Explain how to study the Bible.
- 2) What does the phrase "born again" mean?
- 3) What does the word "salvation" mean?
- 4) Who is Paul describing in Romans chapter seven?
- 5) Is it possible for a person who has accepted Jesus as Savior to still go to Hell? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- 6) Does a Christian have a sin nature?
- 7) What is Paul talking about in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10?
- 8) Identify and explain five benefits of worship.
- 9) What is Luke 6:38 talking about?
- 10) Identify and explain three things praying in tongues will do for a Christian.

Don't forget that you **MUST** use scripture in context as you develop your lesson plan. This is all about your walk with God. It is not necessary to send me copies of your work; this is for your spiritual benefit. Once you have developed these lessons, hold on to them because you never know when you might be asked to teach in a class or a Bible study. Furthermore, if you believe God has called you to be a preacher and you don't know why God isn't promoting you in ministry, is it possible He hasn't been using you because you are not as ready as you think? Preparing these lessons will only serve to help you mature as a Believer.

I am convinced that once you begin this adventure in God's Word you will find it more and more exciting. I encourage you to pray in the Spirit as you are studying and developing your lessons. All the time and work you put into this will not be in vain. By the time you are finished, you will know Jesus more intimately than ever and understand even more about your salvation.

In His Grace,

Jim

**** 2016 Spring Prayer and Power Conference ****

Due to new people being added to our mailing list, it is important that I continually put the conference information in my letters. This is especially helpful for those living in other nations as it helps them prepare for the trip and secure a passport and visa. The conference dates are Sunday, April 24 through Friday, April 29. Our host hotel is:

Country Inn and Suites (Fairborn South)
3971 Colonel Glenn Highway
Fairborn, Ohio 45324
(937) 429-2222 Fax number is (937) 427-2204
www.countryinns.com/fairbornoh email: **cx_fabo@countryinns.com**

Discounted room rates are \$94 per night, plus tax. When you contact the hotel you **must ask** for the Grace Christian Center conference rate in order to receive the discount. Our Group Block Code is **0321GRACEC**. Many events take place in the Dayton area from March through June and hotels fill very quickly. It would be wise to make your reservations as soon as possible. For those traveling from other countries, our ministry will not be providing finances for your airplane ticket, hotel room and meals. If you have any questions about the conference send them to PastorJimGCC@gmail.com.

**** Important Sermon Offer ****

Not long ago I preached a sermon I believe is one of the most important the Lord has ever had me preach. No matter what struggles you may be facing or what hardships you may be enduring, you need this sermon. Additionally, if you or anyone you know has ever questioned why God has "allowed" problems, tragedy or difficulties to take place, this sermon can bring great clarity and provide answers. The title is, "Three Critical Revelations," and you can receive a copy of it on CD at no charge by mailing the form below.



_____ Check here to receive a CD of the sermon "Three Critical Revelations."

[PLEASE PRINT] Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Country _____

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My love gift is: \$ _____ (Make checks payable to "Jim Martin Ministries.")

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