***Admonishment and Counseling  
  
Colossians 1:25-29  
  
COL-219***

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Our subject is "The Mystery of the Church," segment number 34, in Colossians 1:25-29.

**Our Job is to Witness**

Every Christian is commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to be His witness in the world. And that is the point of this service tonight – to help us, once more, to focus upon the fact that you are the witness of the Lord God. And if you are not doing that job, there will be an accountability someday before Christ. Every Christian, then, is in full-time Christian service in the eyes of God. There is no such thing as clergy and laity, except in the formalistic organization of the church structure that man has put together. There is no difference between the pulpit and the pew. They are equally responsible to be the witnesses of God. The difference is the responsibility and approach that each has to accomplish that mission.

All of a believer's life, then, is to revolve around proclaiming Jesus Christ to the world. And the first sign that a believer's life revolves around this, and that he is taking this seriously, and he's being faithful to this calling, is that when these doors are open for instruction in the Word of God: he is not sitting at home, resting; he's not sitting at home watching TV Sunday morning or Sunday night; and, he's not finding excuses why he should not exert himself, and exhaust himself. He is just one place. Just like tomorrow morning, he will not ask himself twice whether he should get out of the sack and head for his job. He will just do that, because that is his calling.

Well, why does Word of God, and the mission of God, and the service of God get short shrift (second calling) to anything else in life – the consideration of how we feel about being out there to be prepared for enabling our lives to revive around the person of Jesus Christ? You do not do that on your own. That is our mission. That is our calling. The Christian's message is the call to the lost to be reconciled to God's standard of absolute righteousness, through faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior. This Salvation is a permanent Grace gift from God to the believing sinner, apart from any human doing in the form of religious rituals, or of good works. It is very important that people understand that. It is very hard to find someone who can present the gospel, and do it in a biblical way, so that God the Holy Spirit has the information in the person's mind, by which He can bring about the conviction of sin, and save that person.

It is amazing how Satan has distorted the gospel message. Following a lost sinner's salvation, the church-age believer is to direct the convert into the full counsel of the Word of God – all that pertains to the grace age way of life.

This ministry of proclaiming Jesus Christ to people in the devil's world is the only reason for a Christian's daily existence. And it is the only basis for a meaningful life. If you are not proclaiming Christ, in one way or another, through your spiritual gifts, you're living a useless life.

**Admonishment and Counseling**

So, in Colossians 1:28, the apostle Paul has said, "And we proclaim him." We declare. Following the acceptance of the proclamation of God's witnesses, we proclaim what the Word of God says about the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we proceed to admonish the convert. The word "admonish," as we found this morning, means to counsel one with information from God, received through Scripture. At the heart of this counseling (of this admonition) is the warning concept of the potential of spiritual reversion wisdom to the believer. The believer is warned to develop spiritual maturity through the learning and the practice of Bible doctrine principles, not the least of which is the confession of known sin – maintaining temporal fellowship, so that God the Spirit is running the life, and the believer can function in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The believer is warned to live the Christian life in the church age by the power system of the indwelling Holy Spirit guiding and enabling the saint to do right, and to serve with genuine good works performed through the believer by God the Holy Spirit. The faithful Christian witness is to be prepared to be opposed, rejected, ridiculed, and misrepresented by the people of Satan's world. But that is not to dissuade us for one moment from proclaiming the Word of Truth.

Now, the worldlings will look at us, and they will not be able to believe that we Christians, who take the Word of God seriously, and who know it, and who are in fellowship with our heavenly Father, that these worldlings would not join these people in indulging the lust patterns of the old sin nature. So, godly Christians are slandered as fanatics; as people who are lacking in compassion; and, who are extremists.

You'll never get a good report from the liberal mentality out there in any realm of our American society. And that is going to become less so, now that God has moved increasingly in the position of abandoning this nation to the consequences of its having abandoned Him. But that makes our mission all the more important. That makes our proclaiming work enormously more important.

Furthermore, God our Father does not forget the believers who rejects the values of the world system of Satan, and who remain true to the Word of doctrine, and who continue to serve as witnesses in spite of suffering. He will not forget what we do.

Each church age believer at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be recognized for his faithfulness to his divine mission in life. That's a simple little concept, drawn together briefly, but that's what is behind, and we proclaim Him. Admonishing is explaining, with cautions and warning, so that believers do not fall prey to the trickery of Satan.

**Every Man**

The extent of this admonishing, that we are to do, Paul says, is: "Every man." And the word "man" is one of those words you should know here. It's the Greek word "anthrópos" (anth'-ro-pos). This word does not mean man as a male person. There's a different word for that. This is the word "man," in terms of mankind – humanity. So, it includes both males and females. What this word does is it stresses the focus of admonition to every person as an individual. In the Greek language, this is a singular in number. It is not plural, indicating that what we are to do in our work of proclaiming and admonishing is that we are just to do that to mankind as a whole. No, this means by one person at a time.

So, every person is personally entitled to know the doctrine of salvation. And every person who is saved is entitled to have the admonition warnings in doctrine from his pastor-teacher. And for that reason, we always welcome those who are positive to the warnings that they receive.

Paul's care of believers was always individual. Yes, he talked to big groups. Yes, he dealt with large numbers of people. Yes, he was widespread in the outreach of his ministry. But when Paul was on site, his ministry was to people person-by-person. His focus was on that individual.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12, Paul says, "Just as you know how we were exhorting, and encouraging, and imploring each one of you, as a father would his own children, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who called you into His own kingdom and His own glory:" "Each one of you."

1 Thessalonians 2:11, "Just as you know how we were exhorting, and encouraging, and imploring *each one of you*." That little phrase is very significant (indicative) that this was not just in big group rallies. This was not just in group meetings. But each one of you, personally (one-by-one), as well as being in a setting where you are being reached personally, as you are now, in a different direction because, this is not a dialogue. This is a monologue. This is not somebody confusing and interjecting questions (which may be legitimate), but side-tracking your mind from focusing upon the Word of Truth. So, in this setting you have the ability to be personally instructed by the Word of God.

Paul's care was for believers. So, in Colossians, he said, "What we did, we did to you people one-by-one." And Paul did that through his associate, Ephesus, who was on the scene in the city of Colossae.

However, there are people who are not going to listen. And all of us who are serious about the Word of God, and transmitting that Word of God, are going to find people who don't want it. They are not interested. Now, how shall we conduct ourselves?

Titus 3:10: "Reject a factious man after a first and second warning:" "Reject a factious man;" that is, one who wants to dispute," the context says. This is one who wants to dispute about the Law of Moses. This is one who wants a dispute about things that are worthless; unprofitable; and, of no point, because they are ignorant of the Word of God. What do you do with a person like that? That's a contender. That's a factious man. That's a contentious person. After giving him a first and second warning, forget him.

Titus 3:11 says, "Knowing that such a person is perverted, and is sinning being, self-condemned." You leave him to the just deserts of what he says.

Now, many people who just know that their denominational views are correct, fall in this category. They will not even discuss things with you. They just know that they could not have been born into a system that isn't the truth. They just know that what they were born into – that is the truth.

So, if he's a Muslim, he knows that he has the truth. If he's a Jew, he knows that he has the truth. If he's a Hindu, he just knows that he has the truth. And that blindness is on everybody until God the Holy Spirit comes in, and takes the scales off the eyes. And this person suddenly sees as a result of the information we have given people – the admonition of the gospel and the warnings of the conduct of the Christian life of those who are believers. Suddenly, they see the truth, and only then are they capable of being saved.

In Luke 10:10-12, we have further guidance on how we should deal with this: "But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into the street and say, "Even the dust of your city, which clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet be sure of this: that the kingdom of God has come near. I say to you, it will be more tolerable in the day for Sodom than for that city." When you find a group of people, or a location where people are totally antagonistic (negative) toward all attempts to admonish them, and to inform them with the Word of God, then you walk away.

Now if you're the kind of a person who likes to debate, and you like to have discussions (which is nothing wrong in itself), but it has its place. But as somebody recently said, "This is so hard for me to do when somebody wants to reject the Word of God. When somebody blows off what I've said, I want to come and charge right in with the evidence, with the proof." But if God does not enable that person to understand what the truth is, and does not make that heart receptive to the truth, they will never accept what you're saying, and they will blow you off. So, what should you do? Just walk off from him.

The problem is that most Christians (most churches) have this strange capacity of wanting to focus on somebody who's negative. And after warning them a time or two, and giving them information, they want to keep working with the spiritual rebels. And when they do that, it never occurs to them that here are a dozen people out here that are ready. If you would inform them, and bring them in, they're ready to be responsive. You have one negative kid, but there are a dozen out here that, if you found them, and got in touch with them, they'd receive what you said with open arms.

So, that's why the Lord says, "Don't waste your time on the negative person. If He will not receive the truth, forget him." But He does say that having alerted that individual with the truth, you have now put him in the position where his punishment in eternity is going to be a whole lot worse. And it's hard to believe – to hear Jesus say that it's going to be worse than it will be for Sodom. Nothing could have been worse than what happened to that city of homosexuality in the Old Testament. And for the people of that city, the suffering of those who have entered into the lake of fire, it's going to be enormous.

**Different Degrees of Suffering**

There are different degrees of suffering. That particular sin is called an abomination. It is one of the most loathsome responses in the heart of God. So, here is a person who was put in the same category because you were told the truth, and he thumbed your nose.

You can see why, even Christians, are in a pretty dangerous state when they ignore the Word of God, and they treat lightly their opportunities for the Word of God.

Acts 13:48-52: "And when the gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing, and glorifying the Word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life, believed." The apostle Paul, on a Sabbath day (Saturday) is proclaiming the Word of God to a group of people. Many are contradicting Paul. They're blaspheming God. They're attacking Paul and Barnabas.

However, Acts 13:46 says, "Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly: 'It was necessary that the Word of God be spoken to you (the Jews first). Since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the gentiles." That is exactly what the Lord Jesus said: "When they will not listen to the truth, don't waste your time on them. You give them a couple of chances, then look for the next person.

Act 13:47: "I have placed you as a light for the gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth." Well, there were some gentiles, when they heard this (that salvation had been brought to them, and that there was a provision to be able to go to heaven), the light of the Spirit of God hit them. And the ones that it hit, who was it?

Acts 13:48 says, "Those who had been appointed to eternal life." When somebody is rejecting (resisting) what you're saying of the gospel message, that's one of your first signs that that person is a non-elect sinner. Those who are elect are going to respond. They're going to believe it.

Acts 13:49-50: "And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. But the Jews aroused the devout women of prominence, and leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district." The Jewish leaders resented this proclamation concerning Jesus Christ, and the resented the warnings of admonition that Paul and Barnabas were giving to these people if they reject this truth.

So, first of all, they very wisely worked on the women, who are more easily reached via an emotional frame of reference. And then the women can egg the men on, to carry through this resistance. So, pretty soon there's a huge, huge movement against what Paul and Barnabas are preaching. So, what did they do? Well, they knew exactly what to do by doctrinal instruction.

Acts 13:51-52: "But they shook the dust of their feet in protest against them, and they went to Iconium. And disciples were continually filled with joy, and with the Holy Spirit." Those who believed now found what it was to enter the dynamic power system of the church age. They were filled with the joy that the indwelling Holy Spirit gave them. And they were filled with the power to be able now to learn how to go to spiritual maturity, and how to make their lives significant for God.

**Just Don't Die**

Those were the people that Paul and Barnabas focused on. And for the rest, they walked away. They said, "Fine. If this is what you want, we will go on to the next city, and find the people who are elect there, that will respond to our message. We don't know who they are. We have to speak to the whole group. But out of that, God will raise those who are His own. And what could they say to those who are resistors? I guess they could have said, "Those of you who have rejected this message, leading men and leading women in this community, you're a power people. You're a power structure. And you are rejecting us as those who are inferior intellectually, and in our understanding of the things of God. You are important people, but here's my advice to you." Perhaps, Paul could say," Just don't die."

So, to every person, this message of admonition was to be given. The local church is the agency that prepares people to give this message. So, the local church has to be in full function, or people cannot do that.

Then Paul says, "Not only do we proclaim (explain the truth about Jesus Christ, and then admonish warning of information from on high to every individual, (having done that – they have accepted), we now proceed to teach. This is the Greek word "didasko." What an enormously important word this is in the New Testament: didasko" (did-as'-ko). This word means "teaching." This word refers to giving information on some topic. Here, it refers to the orderly instruction of believers in the various categories of doctrine.

We don't take a newborn Christian, and then say, "Adios muchacho. OK, you're on your own." What you do is take that person, and now you begin teaching that individual all that is pertaining to his lifestyle in the church age. In the Greek language, this is in the present tense, which says that Paul continually did this. He continually took the new people who believed, and then he proceeded to carry them on to maturity. Its active voice, which indicates that Paul personally was engaged in doing this. He was not engaged in stirring up their emotions, and getting them to feel good. He was engaged in one thing – giving them the full counsel of the Word of God. He gave them information – doctrinal principles. And this is a spiritual principle that is enunciated here.

**The Grace System of Perception**

So, God the Father has provided the church-age believer with the grace system for learning spiritual phenomena in the local church, from the pastor-teacher, through the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is the grace system of learning things. This is the grace system of perception. What's involved?

**The Local Church**

Well, first of all, as you know, there's the local church organization.

**The Completed Bible**

Secondly, there is the completed Bible – the completed Old and New Testament. It is inerrant (the inspired Word of God), that has now been produced by God through very human means, but always with the superintendent of the Spirit of God – preserving it from error.

**Elders (Bishops, Overseers, or Pastor-Teachers)**

Then God raises up an elder. He is called a bishop; he is called an overseer; and, he is called a pastor-teacher. Those three titles in Scripture all refer to the same person. And you'll find them, for example, in Acts 20. These terms are used interchangeably. So, now there is someone who just (by a spiritual gift that not everyone has) has the ability to be able to explain Scripture, and the ability to be able to see the connections, and draw things together, and hook together what belongs to the church age, and remove what belongs to the age of the Law, and simply to be able to lay out for people that which is pertaining to them as Christians under the power system of the Spirit of God.

That pastor-teacher not only has to have the ability, obviously, but he has to have information. Someone has to teach him, and he has to have the tools by which he can learn. And he certainly has to have the time by which he can study, and prepare the Word of God for the people of God. He is the chief communicator. And from him, the believers, in various aspects of the local church, are also communicators of the Word of God. He has prepared those Sunday school teachers; he has prepared those training union leaders; he has prepared those club leaders; and, he has prepared those Christian day-school teachers. All of them are oriented from what happens in the local church.

Now, they are to be there in the church service. But the church service has become a very indifferent thing in many groups, especially in the evening. It's no longer an important time. The church service becomes an inspirational pep rally type of thing, rather than instruction the Word of God. But when the pastor-teacher is doing his expository work, he has the ability to teach (yes), but he also has the ability to shepherd the flock. And it's a combination think. The reason we say pastor-teacher is because the Greek ties the two together in John 11, where this is being laid out.

So, we have the setup of the local church prepared to do this job. Now, the believer comes along. Under this setup, the believer now enters the picture. He comes in, and doctrine has been given him in a service, such as we are in right now. And the pastor-teacher explains the Word of God. The Bible calls that "knowledge." The Greek word is “gnosis” (gno'-sis) (note that the "g" is not sounded in this word). So, the person is there, and he takes "gnósis." Your mind does two things. Your mind learns things (it perceives truth); and, then your mind decides things.

So, first, the Word of God comes, and you learn a principle of truth. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit then takes this truth, and makes it clear to you. We use the word "illumination." And you say, "Ah, I understand that principle. I understand that doctrinal truth." Now, you may grasp it, and you can say, "I don't want to do that. I don't like that. I don't like to hear you telling me that I'm a steward of God. I don't like to hear that all of my cleverness; all this money I've earned; and, all these material things I've pulled together don't belong to me. I'd rather be a Jew in the Old Testament. At least nine-tenths of it belonged to him. All he had a fork over was 10%. But you're telling me that God can call on everything? Yes, and I'm also telling you that the Scripture says that when you make that spiritual sacrifice, he will also restock you, like the woman's jar of oil. He will replace what you have given, so that you can keep storing treasures in heaven with these material treasures that he continues to supply to you.

Now, that takes some Christian maturity. That takes a lot of Christian maturity to be able to do that. But if you are a believer who says, "I accept what the Word of God says. It's a hard thing to say, perhaps, but I believe it." Well, you have acted in faith. Immediately, that information, which was "gnósis" becomes "epignósis" (ep-ig'-no-sis)." And it's translated in the Bible as "full knowledge," or something like that. The translators tried to distinguish it from this word "gnósis," which is just information. It doesn't do you any good. Christians can get in trouble, and you might say, "Why did you do that? You knew better than that. The Word of God told you what to do on that." And he might say, "Yeah, I did. But I didn't say amen to it. I didn't subject myself to it. I just listened to it, and said, 'Yeah, but I don't want to do it that way.'" But you can't do that with the principles of the Word of God.

However, when you say, "Yes," then here in your human spirit (and we won't go into the Scriptures that tell us that the human spirit is the storage of the mind of God), this becomes filled with little categories of doctrinal truth. This is the truth about the world system; truth about the person of Christ; truth about temporal fellowship; truth about finances; truth about the marriage relationship; truth about lines of authority; and, truth of all these categories that deal with the person and the essence of God.

Well, there was one thing, I'll guarantee you: when some horrendous tragedy hits you, and you can wonder, "How could this happen?" Now, you can weep, as Jesus wept, because his friend Lazarus died – that shortest verse in the Bible. And yet Jesus knew that, in a few minutes, He was going to raise him from the dead. But death is always a point of sorrow. It is always a point of sadness. That's why, in the book of the Revelation, what is the last thing that's removed? Death. All deaths will be reversed, and it's going to be completely eliminated in the eternity of God.

However, right now, the best of people and the worst of people are going to suffer death, because of what Adam did in bringing us into this condition of death.

Now, if you don't know the essence of God, and some horrendous, like an out-of-the-blue experience of death comes, you'll not be able to know that, whatever the tragedy is on your level, and whatever the tears may be in the presence of death, as there was with Jesus, you don't flake. You don't come apart. You don't show that all you are is just a nice carnal person, like a person of the world, who meets death (the same condition) in the same way that as person of the world would meet it. You remember that God is sovereign. You remember that God is absolute righteousness. You remember that God is love. You remember that God is omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. You remember that God is truth. He is veracity. And He has all the qualities that characterize God.

So, when you get hit out of the blue with some great tragedy, the first thing to do is to sit down, and look into your human spirit, and review the essence of God. Then you'll say: "A God like This is the One who is treating me to this experience, and if He is this kind of a person, then this experience is, in the long run, to my great blessing and joy. That's the thing you will then understand.

So, you said, "Yes, I do believe it." Now the Word of God is here. And this is where the Holy Spirit comes in. When you are in temporal fellowship, the Holy Spirit takes the light of guidance, and He shines it into the particular truth that you need. Do you see what a tragedy is? I can guarantee you that the people who are not here tonight in these chairs – among them, are people who particularly need to hear what is being said tonight. The devil has whipped them. The devil has brought them down. Consequently, there's going to be a little vacancy here in the reservoir of their human spirit. At some point, they will they need to know some perceptive truth (like they would have gotten tonight), and it'll not be there for the Spirit of God to use to guide them. But if it is under the filling of the Holy Spirit, God brings that information up to your mind.

Remember that God does not work through emotions, and He does not work through your will. He works through the mentality of the soul. Now your mind has God's particular viewpoint to guide it. What will it do? Well, it will guide you in spiritual things, and it will guide you in temporal things. What you have from your human spirit doctrine, God will say, "This is what the spiritual thing is for you to do. Don't do this. Do this." He will guide you in temporal things: "Do this. Don't do this."

However, if instead you have become negative to what is in the Word of God, there's nothing to give you information. So, what happens is that the old sin nature directs your volition to negative responses, and you're into human good actions left and right. The old sin nature is feeding information to your mind, because you have none to be fed spiritually. The old sin nature gives you information to your directive mind, and you do the wrong thing in temporal things, and you do the wrong thing in spiritual things, because it will affect your emotions on spiritual and temporal things. But now the sin nature is running it. And in terms of your actions, your volition, if you have the mind of God, you'll have positive volition, and you'll be producing divine good actions. If you have negative volition, you'll be producing human good actions, and here's where the devil will bring you down. It's a very simple arrangement, but it's the only way that a human being can deal with God.

So, here you have the local church giving you this information that you need, and giving you the opportunity to store this full knowledge, so that, under the filling of the Holy Spirit, you have the very mind of God to control your emotions, and to control your will. Now, you can say no to the old sin nature. If you can't do this, your mind is filled with mental attitude sins. If you're operating from the old sin nature, it's kicking all kinds of sewage into your emotions, and into your will. God's system works. And the devil's systems will destroy you.

So, now the believer is being filled with the Holy Spirit. He learns doctrine being taught. Positive volition converts doctoral knowledge into full knowledge, stored in the human spirit reservoir. The Holy Spirit directs the Christian in temporal fellowship, if he's in temporal fellowship, and the use of full knowledge doctrine, to guide his mind, and his emotions, and his will. And over time, what happens? The Christian who lives like this becomes more and more grown up. He becomes a mature Christian with a fully mature spiritual maturity structure. And he goes on up where his cup runs over to the super-grace level of life. This is spiritual maturity at the prime of life.

The spirit by the mature believer is capable of great divine good works. God the Holy Spirit can do great things for you in God's service, resulting in your rewards in heaven.

What is this in the Scripture? Well, it's that principle in Ephesians 4:11: "And He (God) gave some apostles (as communicators), and some prophets (as communicators – we don't have those anymore. And He gave some evangelists (who are communicators – we do have those, and those: who have missionary capacity to evangelize), and some as (and here the Greek says “pastors and teachers,” but it hooks the two together) pastors-teachers.

So, you have four categories of communicators of divine viewpoint. Before the Bible was written, you had to use the apostles and the prophets. Once Scripture was written, the evangelist does the outreach job, and those of you who are passing out the evangelism brochure, this is where your part comes in. And then, once they're saved, you bring them in, and the pastor-teacher takes over to develop them into spiritual maturity, by this system that we've just shown you.

The result is Ephesians 4:12: "For the equipping of the saints." This is a military term. You get the Christian equipped to be able to live in the devil's world as a spiritual Christian, and not as a casualty: "For the work of service," so that that Christian can now, as a mature Christian, serve the Lord in proclaiming Christ, and admonishing people, and teaching them the full counsel of the Word of God, to the building up of the body of Christ.

Now, in the Greek language, these three phrases are connected by prepositions. And these prepositions say, "For the equipping of the saints." That first word "for" (in this English Bible verse) is the preposition "pros" (pros). That preposition means "face-to-face." Isn't that interesting? It is face-to-face. If you are going to develop this kind of character in Christ (this kind of spiritual strength), you do it here in this room.

Now, you can learn things from books, and you can learn things from reading the Bible yourself, but when the crises in life come, you have been prepared to handle your problem. And, at that point in time, is when you need to be right there, face-to-face with that pastor-teacher. So, the next time you have a big crisis coming up, or the next time you have a big tragedy in your life, the first thing you want to do is run down to church, and get face-to-face, because there you'll be equipped to meet whatever the problem is of the moment.

Then it next says, "For the work of the ministry." This "For" in the English is a different word in Greek: "eis" (ice). And the reason it's different is because it hooks to the first "for." Unless the pastor-teacher has equipped the saints with doctrinal instruction, they cannot do the work of Christian service. Isn't that amazing? You cannot do the work of building up the body of Christ. So, how are we doing in the Christian community?

Then: "To the building up of the body of Christ" is the last "for." And this "for", is the same Greek word "eis" (ice) again. That preposition hooks up to the previous one. Obviously, you cannot build up the body of Christ; you cannot build the Christian community; and, you cannot get people saved, and they develop unto maturity, unless you have been engaged in the work of Christian service – the mission of your particular kind of Christian service. So, it's hooked to the one before it. But isn't it amazing that it all starts (this whole great system of perception) right here at this sacred desk – the pulpit. And if the pastor-teacher is not doing his job of personal study and preparation, and walking himself, as he must, with all of his frailties, in temporal fellowship, so that, like a good drill instructor, he may equip the saints with the Word of God, so that they may then perform the work of Christian service, so that the result will be: they will be adding to the building up of the church, the body of Christ.

Then we have Ephesians 4:13: "Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." We will grow to where we are at super-grace spiritual maturity.

**Sincerity**

Now, that is what God has for us. But what does the average Christian fall back on? What is the implication to the average Christian on how he is to deal with God? Sincerity: "Oh, if I'm sincere, I know that God will treat me right. Yes, I'm a Muslim and I look to Muhammad. There is no God but Allah," who happens to be a moon god (a demon moon god) from the Arabian culture that Muhammad decided he got the revelation from whoever was talking to him – that this is the real god. They had all kinds of gods, but he said, "This is really the only god, Allah, who is the moon God: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." Muhammad is his voice. Through what? "Through the Quran – not through Jesus Christ. Oh, I grew up in a Muslim home, and I can't believe that God would forget my sincerity.

Well, please notice the beginning of the word "sincerity:" "sin." That is at the heart of sincerity. The old sin nature is at the heart of it: "If I think that I do right with my own good intentions, I will come through." No: "I can't believe that God is going to reject me as a Hindu when I'm so sincere." And I've warned people in charismatic groups that Satan is deceiving them on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and they don't believe they can keep their salvation. I've warned them, "If you think you can lose your salvation, you're basing it on something you have done. And that is not salvation. And you will not go to heaven." How many times I've had them say, "I can't believe that God would not recognize my sincerity, and my genuine effort to do right?"

Well, He will see it, and He will be sympathetic, and He will understand it. But His justice will not permit you to come into heaven on the basis of your "SINsincerity." That is because, at the heart of your sincerity is your old sin nature. "Osincerity:" make a new word out of it. That is the real meaning of sincerity.

So it's not going to substitute for the truth of God. And it's not going to take you into the presence of God.

Now, what is the extent of this? To whom is this outreach to be made? That brings us to another interesting facet of who and how this whole system of our proclaiming; our admonishing; and, our teaching as individual believers should take place. And that one we will look at next time.

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