

THE WORD OF MY PATIENCE

You are welcome to this edition of Light In The Evening Time. We are continuing in our meditation on God's Pattern Church. We will go straight into the scriptures. Come with me to Revelation 3: 7-10. Our burden is on the one condition given for the total protection promised in verse 10: the word of my patience. That is where the emphasis will be placed. However, to begin, we will touch on certain things that assist having a clear understanding.

“...And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, these things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth;

I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ...”

We have previously observed that the proper functioning of the local ekklesia, the congregation of God's people in any given locality centres around four things. We know that there is a close connection between the building of the church and the ministry of the word, the diverse ministrations of God's Spirit that takes place among God's people, week after week. When we are talking about the proper functioning of the local church, the emphasis is on what things, if found among God's people would sponsor their growth unto perfection. What are the things which found in the midst of a local assembly of God's people, a local church, will make all know that they are walking in the will of God, and that all of the Lord's promises, for full redemption will be realised by them.

The first of the four things is submitting to the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, that will mean allowing him to do our thinking for us. One of the problems in the visible church systems is that there is an importation of man's mind into how the affairs of the church are to be run. And whereas there might be sincerity and good intentions, when these things do not agree with the principles of God's word, they are in effect, a setting aside the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first of the four things is submitting to the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. In practical terms that will mean operating according to the principles of God's word and submitting to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Then the second is the presence of persons whom the Lord has called to the estate of ministry, persons suitably engraced to stand in the room of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. Not all of these five offices may be present in an assembly, but there should be a reasonable number of persons who have come to the estate of the five-fold ministry. That is the second condition. And Ephesians 4:11-15 tells us the reason why.

The third is that there must be present in the midst of the local assembly, in the weekly meetings of the people, several persons, who though have not come into the estate of the five-fold ministry, are involved in ministering Christ. So, there is a ministry to the body through those who have come into the estate of the five-fold ministry, and there is the ministry of the body to itself, building up itself in love. Now, there is no professionalism in ministry. There is no clergy laity distinction that places the responsibility of ministry on some who stand in an official way, while the other remain at the receiving end. Ephesians 4:11, 12 and 13 governs the first aspect of ministry which we have talked about i.e. ministry to the body of those who have come to the estate of the five-fold ministry, while Ephesians 4:14, 15, and 16 talk about this other aspect, the ministry of the body unto the edification, the building up of itself in love. And perfection can only be realised when these conditions are found in a local congregation.

In fact, the very way verse 12 of Ephesians 4 reads is that one of the principal functions of those who has come to the estate of the five-fold ministry is to prepare the Lord's people for the work of the ministry. That is, the effect of their daily labours among the brethren is that some grow up having the ability to minister Christ effectively to others.

Then, the fourth is the consecration of the Lord's people. In the New Testament, all who have given their lives to Christ, who have obtained forgiveness of sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, all those who know that Christ died substitutionally and that his death was for their lifting up from sin, who also have witnessed to the same by the coming of the Holy Spirit into their lives, all spirit-filled believers are members of the royal priesthood. And the responsibility to minister Christ rests squarely upon all shoulders. The meaning of that is that God's people are to live in

consecration. Consecration is a word that has come again and again in our ministrations, and God willing, at sometime we will be able to go details into what all of that means. But essentially Mathew 16:24 captures what that point to: denying oneself, taking up ones cross and following Jesus.

And then, we move on to the emphasis here in Revelation 3. When these four things – submitting to the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, allowing him to do our thinking for us, as He does through the medium of the written word and through the workings of the Holy spirit who minister Christ to us in the word, and who opens to us the things that are in the mind of God; then the ministry to the body of persons that have being called to the estate of ministry. I am not talking of “*full time ministry*” as it is viewed in the visible church systems, but a grace to manifest and stand in the room of the five-fold dimension of ministry listed in Ephesians 4:11; the ministry of the body to itself, and finally a life of consecration evident in all vital members of the body – where these obtain, these develops a situation similar to the church of Philadelphia.

I will want to draw your attention first to verse 8 and then to verse 10. In verse 8, he says, “*Thou hast kept my word*”. And we said that the Greek language is very rich, in the sense that a specific thought is conveyed very forcefully by a specific word. That which is translated here as word in the English language is “*Logos*” and it speaks about the full range of God’s word. It takes all of God’s word to influence Christian character and to mould Christian ministry. When the word of the Lord is not abundant, if it is not rich, if it does not cover the full range of God’s plan and purposes in redemption, there will be something lacking in the character of God’s people, and there will be something lacking in the ministry of God’s servants. “*Because thou hast kept my Logos*”.

One of the problems of God’s people is that quite often, that which pertains to their immediate care is what they give their time and attention to. This hinders spiritual growth and relevance to the divine purpose. For many, there is the understanding that God’s deal is not realisable. But He says, “*Because thou hast kept my word, my Logos...*”. The church in Philadelphia is a constant challenge to all: God’s pleasure can be satisfied.

Remember, He says, “*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience I also will keep thee from the hour of tribulation that shall come upon all the world*”. Notice that “*hour*” shall test all of humanity but there would be some that are kept from it. There will be refuge in the time of great calamities, great momentous and disastrous events that shall vex nations, whole societies, whole countries, in this last hour and shake them to their very foundation. There is a refuge. God is the refuge of His people. And here, the one condition for that blessedness is given, “*because thou hast kept the word of my patience*”.

Now, turn with me then to 1 Corinthians 13: 13.

“...And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. ...”

Notice there is that which abideth forever. Whatever answers to a blessing from the Lord will something that flows either from the works of faith, or something that relates to the blessed hope or something that expresses agape love. But let us look at this in a more definitive form in 1 Thessalonians 1:3. We read from verse 1. Our emphasis is to see what the *Logos* is and to show that there is a commitment, a total commitment from the throne of God towards the total deliverance, preservation and total blessing of His people when they indeed keep the *Logos*. This is important, because there is a close connection between the light of God’s word, and the flow of God’s power to bless and to keep. That is why it is said in Psalm 27, “*the Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat my flesh, they stumbled and fell*”.

Now that grace, that glory round about the Lord’s people that can accomplish the situation described in verse 2 of Psalm 27, flows from the condition given in the verse 1 of the same Psalm. It is as He is our light that He becomes our salvation. We must first respond to the light of God’s word. For example, the Bible says, “*believe on the lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved*”. And then the question: what shall I believe? And the Bible says, “*that he died for you, that he might break the power of sin over your life, that your sin may be forgiven, and that he might come to dwell in your heart, lifting you up to the honours of the divine life*”. So, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you shall be saved from sin, you shall be saved from the nature of sin, you shall be grown in the nature of Christ and you shall inherit eternal life. When the light is not clear, faith cannot be exercised faith is spiritual understanding. The things that belong to the final aspect of our redemption, God will trumpet at this last hour. And the promise to deliver, to keep, in the midst of a world that is becoming increasingly insecure, having no respect for human life, we must come back to God who is our refuge.

If you come with me to 1 Thessalonians 3, you see how these three things that constitute the *Logos* are given to us in a more definitive form. We read from verse 1:

“...PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;...”

The three things are the works of faith, the labours of love and the patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to see how these three things are presented. For faith, there is a working, for love, there is a labour, and for hope, there is patience. So, he says the patience of hope. What hope? And we answer back; it is the blessed hope; blessed hope of partaking with Christ in the glory of his manifestation that comes at the close of the age.

We are all expecting the coming of the Lord; He comes with glory and great power. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:4). That hope of seeing and partaking of that glory is the blessed hope, and it calls for patience (we shall touch on that later). The blessed hope of his appearing and our partaking in his full glory. If you don't see it, you cannot partake of it. 1 John 3: 1 says *“Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”*. There is a close connection between seeing the glory by the eyes of faith, as the blessed hope is thoroughly proclaimed and as we are enlightened thereby, and our receiving the change. II Corinthians 3:18 says, and we beholding in a mirror the glory of the Lord are changed from glory to glory. As we see him we become like him. May the Lord help our understanding.

So, we are seeing the three divisions of the inheritance: the works of faith, the labours of love and the patience of hope. In the parable of the kingdom, seven in number, as rendered in Mathew 13, we have the knowledge of the glorious beginning the church had on the day of Pentecost. The tremendous ministries fulfilled by the apostles enabled the early church to be thoroughly enlightened as to the things that belonged to their inheritance. Not quite 300 years after there was a complete loss of the truth of redemption. And three of these parables, the fifth, sixth and seventh parable detail to us the recovery of truth in three particulars.

In the first of the three parables we are told, *“the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hid in a field”* (Mathew 13:44). That speaks to us of the works of faith. Martin Luther was a principal instrument amongst many, by which this truth was recovered and made public and available to the church world: *by grace are ye saved through faith* (Ephesians 2:8). Then the next parable says, *“The kingdom of heaven can be likened unto a merchant man seeking for goodly pearl, a pearl of great price”* (Mathew 13:45). That pearl of great price is our becoming one with the Lord Jesus

Christ in every sense, fully in his image, fully in his likeness. That representation and manifestation of Christ in all of His glory is the blessed hope. And its recovery is represented in the sixth parable. The seventh parable (Mathew 13:47), the parable of the drag net speaks of the work of harvest, the labours of love.

But, our concern and emphasis, brethren, is on the patience of hope. Why is this called the patience of hope? Because the hope of full union with Christ, the hope of glorification, coming into the fullness of his nature and glory, if truly found in the believer, births a life style now. There is a patience that is called for. There is a patient endurance that is called for in the now, because of the glory that is to be possessed in the future. Now, let us go to Titus 2. We shall be reading verses 11, 12 and 13, the passage, which include the mention of the phrase “*the blessed hope*” Titus 2: 11-13.

**“...For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
Teaching us that denying ungodly and worldly lusts, we should live soberly,
righteously, and godly, in this present world;
Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our
Saviour Jesus Christ. ...”**

Here we are shown that there is a life style that is birthed when the true hope of becoming one with the Lord Jesus Christ in all of his glory is in a man’s heart. That hope empowers us to live in the spirit of the fear of God, to live a life, which is here, called the patience of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact I John 3, which we read earlier, says in the third verse, everyone who has this hope in Him has power to purify himself even as He is pure. The way a man lives his life is a reflection of how concrete in him the hope of glorification with Christ is. In Romans 8:17, Paul puts it this way, “*if we suffer with him, we shall be glorified together*”. There is a condition attached to glorification with Christ. May the Lord help our understanding, in Jesus name.

Coming back to the mainstream of our meditation, what does it mean to keep the word of his patience? The word of his patience enlightening us on how to conduct ourselves in the midst of God’s people, how to conduct ourselves in the midst of family members, and in the world. It calls for an understanding that the time to rule is not now, in terms of lordly controls. The Lord’s people should live like believers in Christ Jesus who have him as their head.

Now, one of the painful things that we see in the midst of the denominational church systems is men and women becoming tin gods in the midst of their brethren. Paul was writing and alluding to this. He said, “*oh, you are already reigning, you are reigning without us*”. Brethren, the time to reign is not now, and we are talking of exercising such lordly controls over fellow human

beings. When the church is perfected, she shall rule over the nations. It could be with an iron rod, bringing the nations into submission to God, but the church will also shepherd the nations into the perfect worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. But that time has not come. And there is the need for men to live in the humility displayed in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“...Because thou hast kept the word that restrain your excesses, because you have kept the word of my patience, waiting patiently for me to come to set up the kingdom of heaven over all the earth, because you live daily in the light of what shall be, and walk humbly in obedience to my word and will, I will keep you from the hour of tribulation that shall come upon all the world...”

Things are preached in the visible church systems that hold out a hope for God's people that is so much of falsehood. It is as we walk in obedience to God that we are able to have the Lord, by His spirit, open our understanding into His word and will. The way to know that God's people are living in the light of God's will is how much of His word, How much of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, is opened to their understanding.

Titus 2:14 says, *“looking for...”*. The word *“looking for”* means eagerly and longingly expecting, living in the consciousness that the time is near. May the Lord really help us to live in the awareness of the glory of the blessed hope.

Turn with me to Revelation 1:9, you will find this same phrase appearing, the need for patience, the need to live and operate by *“Another person's mind”*, the mind of Christ. Not by our own minds, but allowing the mind of Christ to crystallise in us, so that we are led and guided as he will have us do. Revelation 1:9, John was writing concerning his experiences and he wrote;

“...I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ...”

In I Thessalonians 1, we are told of the patience of hope in Jesus Christ. Are we being daily exercised in the spirit of the fear of God, living victoriously over the allurements of this world? Is the Lord your head, is he your captain, or some other man or some other men are acting as head over you. We have need of patience, not to use our strength to intimidate others but to walk humbly before men. And we trust that as the full force of these words dawn on us in the enlightenment that He gives, we will all begin to yield and respond to Him. And the church of Jesus Christ will again be cleansed, and be fully empowered to come into the full glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord bless you in Jesus name.