

Restoring the Word and Spirit to Our Generation

A Facebook friend of mine wrote me the following, concerning the Word and the Spirit that men of old carried:

“The men and women of old knew nothing of the extensiveness of error in the cotton candy gospel of today. They nipped it in the bud. They stated without apology that without holiness we won’t see the Lord. They knew Scripture far better than today’s Bible professors. Sister Pauline Parham, the daughter-in-law of Charles Parham, told me in Dallas in the early ’80s that the old preachers knew the Word far better than the new generation, and powerful moves of the Spirit not seen today were common.”—(Charles Parham [1883-1929] was the first preacher to articulate Pentecostalism’s distinctive doctrine of evidential tongues, and to expand the movement.)

Add to that the following prophecy given to F.F. Bosworth’s granddaughter:

“The ministers of your grandfather’s day lit a Pentecostal fire that swept the world in their generation, but that fire has now died down to where only ashes and embers are left. But I am going to use your grandfather’s recordings to breathe on these embers with the wind of My Spirit, and that fire will rekindle and sweep the world again in a new Pentecostal revival.”

We are facing a huge famine today of the true word of the Lord, sound doctrine, and the genuine move of the Holy Spirit.

Our gospel lacks substance. Our salvation message is man-centered and defective. The theme of repentance is clearly absent. Excessive teachings on self-improvement and self-esteem have malnourished us. Our silence on sin and the Law of God in combination with the extreme hyper-grace and hyper-

prosperity message have crippled the church.

Many are waking up and realizing there is something terribly wrong.

Not only are we weak in sound doctrine, but the Spirit's demonstrations and power are so uncommon. Preachers are talking themselves and their audiences to death. Have we forgotten that "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4:20)?

Yes, we will always need preaching and teaching, but the apostle Paul said that his "preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and power of God." This doesn't only mean that the demonstration of the Spirit and power of God will confirm the preaching of the Word itself, but that the preaching is also to be a demonstration and that our words are filled with fire and utterances from heaven.

Where is the fire of God in our preaching?

Before Oral Roberts' departure to heaven, he was stirred by a vision from the Lord and emphatically stated, "We've got to get back to preaching the cross with fire in our bellies!" Men of old and past giants of the faith knew something about this.

And where is the preaching of the cross?

The constant popular emphasis on making the gospel relevant to our culture is obnoxious and misguided because it is rooted in the error that modern people must be reached on a humanistic level of their self-interest—that they are otherwise incapable of patiently hearing the gospel before becoming offended by its demands for righteousness and holiness. We must defeat that kind of thinking by showing that the real gospel is "the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16) for all people, for all time.

An extreme deluge of falsehood in both the Word and the Spirit are diluting the church's influence and long term fruit. Additionally, the cheap imitation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the gross superficial display of personal prophecy and prophetic ministry is keeping the church hollow and empty. Forms and formulas, hype and heresy have robbed us of the true faith of our forefathers.

Concerning prophecy and prophetic ministry, what we've mostly witnessed has been visualizations and imaginings and just speaking whatever pops up in our heads, and calling it prophecy. In other more serious cases, ministers have given over to familiar spirits through performance.

Anything that brings attention to flesh and the greatness of man is not an utterance from the Spirit of God. How many times have you turned on Christian television and heard some version of the following from another one of the many false prophets?

"You are about to be blessed and favored. The Lord has shown me that you are about to be wealthy beyond your dreams. You do not realize how much Daddy loves you and wants to bless you." So many other such prophecies being touted from our nation's pulpits through the air waves are sickeningly similar. Still others are utterly meaningless, high probability predictions.

There is a cry for the genuine gospel and the real power and demonstration of the Spirit. Many younger ministers and those of my generation are waking up to it and realizing that what they are doing is not working. Something is missing.

"Everywhere I go, and I mean everywhere—in Europe and Africa, younger ministers are approaching me and saying, 'This stuff we're preaching just does not work. Tell us something that works. Tell us about how to get ahold of the old-time power your father and mother walked in'."—Dr. Ladonna Osborn, T.L. Osborn's daughter.

The principles and power that men of old walked in are fading from this generation. One of the problems we have is the lack of wisdom to blend the old and the new.

Let us read this Scripture carefully:

“Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things that are new and fresh and things that are old and familiar” (Matt. 13:52, AMP).

“Then He added, ‘Those experts in Jewish law who are now my disciples have double treasures—from the Old Testament as well as from the New!’” (Matt. 13:52, TLB).

One of the things Jesus is saying here is that knowledge of the Old Testament provides insight into Jesus’ new message of the kingdom of God. In the same way, knowledge of what the past giants of the faith taught and practiced needs to be blended with what God is doing and saying today. The wise scribe or householder will build on each truth that is revealed.

Excesses, extremes, and abuses will surely be manifest, but we must learn to garner the wheat into our spiritual storehouses and burn up the chaff. As one wise old man used to say, “Have the sense of an old cow—eat the hay and leave the sticks.”

We cannot afford to throw out the baby with the dirty bath water. This is another area where many believers miss it. There are great truths on tongues and the operations of the Holy Spirit, on finances, and on faith and healing that have come to us in this generation, but because of some excesses and extremes people throw everything out. Don’t do that.

Recognizing the difference between the wheat and the chaff is the key. Being exposed to the wheat is vital in making the distinction. Just as bank tellers learn to distinguish counterfeit bills from the real by being familiar with the

real, so it is with the things of the Spirit.

Blend the old with the new and have a balance of the true Word and the Spirit.