

Tradition or Truth? (Part 4)

In our contrast between tradition and truth we've seen that it is possible that a lot of what we have that we call "faith" did not come from God in the first place! We find ourselves possessing, then, a lot of religious information not leading to Christ-like transformation. Jesus was insistent that "What I have I received from My Father." (see Jo 7:16) And so was Paul, "My gospel didn't come from my fellow man, I received it from Jesus Christ." (see Ga 1:11-12). How confidently can we say the same?

In the Bible, "tradition" is that which is handed over or handed down by man alone. It is a "second hand" type of faith resulting in outer forms and externalized practices. Tradition has a way of "de-throning" God (Mk 7:13) and leading its adherents into heaviness (Acts 15:10), blindness (Matt 15:14), captivity (Col 2:18), and an ugly form of "holiness." Truth, however, freely given by God to those with ears to hear, is "first-hand" faith (I Jo 2:27) with an inner knowing resulting in internalized realities that are life giving (Jo 5:39-40). In embracing what God gives, He is enthroned with our every "Amen! I believe You!" - leading to a lightness (Matt 11:28-30), a liberation (Jo 8:31-32), a return to the beauty of holiness (Ps 96:6).

One thing is clear: Not all "inspiration" is divine! (see I Jo 4:1) And, the burden of proof is upon the hearer - "You test the spirits...", "You see to it no one misleads you" (Mk 13:5). While there doesn't seem to be any direct teaching in the Bible on "How" to hear God, there are enough pointers concerning "WHO" is in the best position to hear Him. First and foremost is a sense of expectancy - is your God a speaking/revealing/communicative God? (We'll not listen for what we don't believe is possible!) Our God is a speaking God - our very "life" depends upon that (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4). The liveliness of our lives comes by Divine intake, from a God who is seeking us, calling us, making Himself known to us so we may share life with Him in the here and now. How does He do that? Anyway He wants - He is God! (Creation, impressions, phenomena, scriptures, other people, audible voice, inner desire... to name a few.)

We have been given "ears to hear" (Jo 8:47; 10:47; 18:37). We have a response ability that implies a choice (Matt 11:15). Let's "take care how (we) listen)" (Lk 8:18) -with a sense of expectancy and a readiness to trust and obey.

(Next month: Those Most Likely to Hear)

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 **GREETINGS** 

Because of God's grace we are learning to recognize or re-know (re + cognize) ourselves. We are to recognize ourselves dead to certain things and alive to certain things. We are to recognize what expressions of life to put off and what expressions of death to be put on. We are learning to recognize ourselves according to what God says we are, not what others say we are.

We are learning to re-know ourselves as those who've been brought home and made new in Christ. Our faith - our "Amen! I believe You!" - is the response to what God in His amazing grace has already done. To put our faith in any object that is "not God" is to make a fatal mistake.

Think Adam and Eve - they trusted a voice that was "not God" and began thinking of what they thought of each other (not what God thought!). They "fell" from a godly self-awareness to a self-awareness based on their own ideas of good and evil. Their very self knowledge was altered.

In and through Christ, God does not alter His mind about us, He alters us! As we by faith come to re-know (re + cognize) ourselves according to His "say so", we learn to walk in our newly created lives. We do, indeed, recognize that in Him, and in Him alone, "we live and move and have our (true) being." (Acts 17:28)

Greet yourself - your true self - in Christ each day this month. Greet and speak to the true self in our brothers and sisters... who are not yet able to see themselves as they are in Him.

June

1-4 Louisville, KY (502-245-4581)
11,18,25 CCF
13 Alachua Study
27 Ocala Study


July


11 Alachua Study
28-30 Waldorf, MD (301-751-4408)

AUGUST


11-13 Fruitland Park, FL (352-431-3935)

 **PRAISE and PRAYER** 

 Thanks for a speaking God

 Thanks for ears to hear

 To see ourselves as God sees us

 To boldly speak to the "new man" in others