

Calling the Bride

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THE THREE PILLARS

“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” – John 8:32

The Apostle Paul recognized that James, Peter and John were “pillars” in the church (Galatians 2:9). The dictionary defines a pillar as a column of support in a building or a person of authority. While these men certainly were a supporting authority in the early church, they also represent the three pillars of foundational doctrine that are vital to the spiritual health of the believer.

It is a sad, Biblical fact that when the original anointed leadership of the church dies out the people begin to fall away. We see this happening shortly after Joshua’s death (Judges 2) and the same was true of the early Christians. After the first century, the church slowly began the long descent into the prophesied apostasy, (II Timothy 4:3.) While there have been revivals and reformation along the way, they are always needed and God is always calling His remnant back to her foundation.

When the church falls away from the Word of God, it falls into apostasy. The Word of God is very simple and the Apostles were the expositors that were ordained by God to explain His message. John, Peter and James were the ones that were handpicked by God to be foundational pillars of the church. When we begin to place others above these first foundational leaders apostasy is not very far behind.

What about the Apostle Paul? Paul was called directly by God and after a time in Arabia returned to the Apostles to receive confirmation that what he had received from the Lord was correct. Paul’s doctrine is based on the original three pillars of doctrine and Paul is a similitude of the believer who is called and receives his confirmation directly from the Word of God and does not divert from its authority.

In the book of Ezekiel chapters forty through forty-two, contains a detailed description of Ezekiel’s vision of a temple. In chapter forty-three we are told this is God’s building. God tells Ezekiel that the people have placed the “setting of their threshold by My thresholds, and their post by My posts,” (verse eight). In this verse God tells Ezekiel that His people have defiled His work “by their abominations.”

God’s work, His building in Ezekiel’s vision is symbolic of God’s Word, His pattern, His design which has been defiled by the addition of posts and thresholds of doctrine and practices that were never part of God’s original message to His people.

God brought great judgments upon Israel when they diverted from their purpose. It was vital that they remained holy and separated to their God, for they were

the womb through which God would birth our Messiah Jesus. It is also vital for the present day church to remain separated and holy in order to bring a credible witness to the Gospel in these last days.

We fall into apostasy when we fail to cleave to the foundational pillars of the first century church and in order to hold on to them, we need to understand exactly what they are.

The pillars themselves are grounded firmly upon the foundation of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah. The first pillar represented by the Apostle John, is the first to emerge from this foundation. John’s doctrine emphasizes the Gospel of love. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life,” (John 3:16.) It is the gospel of God’s forgiving grace and mercy.

The Gospel is the purpose of the church, without it we have no church and no reason to exist. The church or individual Christian that allows the Gospel to take second place to anything else is a church that has made the first step toward apostasy. The Gospel of the first century emphasized repentance and faith in the blood atonement through a thorough understanding of the Messiah’s role as outlined in the Old Testament. The Apostles did not have as yet the Gospels in writing when they first began to preach. They preached from seeing Jesus in the Old Testament and lived the fulfillment of it in the New. The plan of salvation was the same. We are saved by repentance and faith in blood atonement, for without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins (Leviticus 17:11.)

Salvation in the Old Testament was never achieved by legalistic works. The law was always accompanied by the provision for the forgiveness of sins through repentance and atonement as outlined in the plan of the Tabernacle that was given to Moses along with the Ten Commandments.

In the New Testament, The Old Testament sacrifices had been replaced and fulfilled in the onetime offering of the Lamb of God. Now in the fulfillment of the Divine Plan, God Himself is joined to the believer through the blood of Jesus by His Holy Spirit - *Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit (I John 4:13)* - and we have access to God the Father by One Spirit (Ephesians 2:18.) This union with God through His Son produces the fruit of a changed life, as we “Abide in the Vine,” (John 15:4.)

When the Gospel is presented according to the pattern contained in the Scriptures, it produces within the true

believer a conversion of heart, for without a genuine repentance, there cannot be a genuine change.

Out of this “conversion of heart” arises the second pillar represented by the Apostle Peter. Peter’s Epistles directs us to an understanding of the ‘Divine Nature,’ (II Peter 1:4) a God – breathed holiness, void of legalism, and a willing separation or cleaving to God.

A reformed life is the evidence of a genuine response to the Gospel. A church that does not emphasize a God produced holiness as the result of the Gospel is a church that is opening the door to the apostasy of compromise. It is a church that is not concerned with the inner reformation of the believer and cannot produce disciples or reproducers of the faith.

A God breathed holiness produces people who adorn the Gospel of Christ with credibility. The testimony of their lives glorifies God and draws people to Jesus.

The third pillar arises naturally, because those who have been so transformed practice a living faith that serves others as the Holy Spirit will lead them to do. The Holy Spirit is the “leaven” in these souls that causes them to rise and be seen as living testimonies of the new life that is operating inside of them.

James’ Epistle and this third pillar characterizes the fruit of a genuine response to the first two pillars. A genuine faith will serve or “work,” because faith without works is a dead faith, (James 2:17.) A Christian in whom the living Christ abides will possess the compassion that naturally will reach out to serve those in need.

In summary, the church that is not based on the three pillars of Christianity is a church in apostasy.

The three pillars are – the Gospel, Holiness and Service. Each one must be well balanced and supported by the other. For example, if a church emphasizes holiness without an equal view of the Gospel of Grace, then we get a church whose service is tainted with legalism. If we serve without holiness, we breed hypocrisy and discredit our witness. If we diminish the Gospel of repentance, atonement, and holiness we end up with a liberal apostate church whose service will never bear fruit that can be pleasing to God.

If the Gospel that is being preached is not producing changed lives zealous to serve, it is not the gospel of the Bible.

If the Gospel is preached without Biblical repentance, it will not produce changed lives.

If the Gospel is preached without the Biblical pillar of holiness it will produce compromise.

If the Gospel is preached without the Biblical pillar of a call to serve, it will produce the stupor of a Laodicean complacency.

Without these fundamental pillars of doctrine, we will find that the church has fallen into the deception of preaching another gospel that our founding apostles did not preach.

The pillars of our faith were eyewitnesses and handled the word of Glory, Jesus, (II Peter 1:16.) It is wisdom to cling to the support these Apostles offer and if we do so we can be assured we will not fall away into apostasy and the work we are building for God will stand fully supported and secure for eternity.

Communion - The Bread that is Broken

...This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.

...This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.” – Luke 22:19,20

Jesus sits before His disciples and offers us His bread and wine with the words – “Do this in remembrance of Me.”

As we look at those elements before us that represent His broken body and His shed blood, we are to remember His suffering for us; the voluntary pouring out of His life to remove our sins and give us His eternal life.

So we take the bread that represents His body and place it within our mouths. We begin to chew, to mangle the substance, to deform it, to pierce it, to crush it; and we realize that we are the ones who broke His body with our sins.

The bread dissolves upon our tongues and we ingest this representative of our Lord, who died so that He could come inside of us and live there. Thus the pain we have inflicted becomes a blessing.

We take the cup that represents His blood, and we drink it. The life in His blood, is willingly given to us, flowing in the wake of the broken, mangled frame that we crushed. Forgiveness and new life is the refreshment and relief that washes down the pain.

Yes, Lord, we will always remember you, and what we have done to You; and the forgiveness You have given to us.

Trust Me

*How foolish are your contentions,
Saiñ the Lord.*

*I have made the heart, I have made the mind,
And both are Mine to play.*

*Confusion is the sound of the song
When man is the musician.*

Children,

*Give all your instruments to My hand alone,
And trust Me for your music.*

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