

VOICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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PUTTING THE WILL OF GOD ON DISPLAY "The House of God Under an Open Heaven"

I want to start by stating—we were born again under the open heaven, and without that very special blessing we would not be able to bring heaven's resources to this earth. I know that most of you are wondering what I mean by the term "open heaven". I will get to that in a few minutes, but first I want to talk about the House of God. I am incredibly excited about the movement of God's power that I am seeing in the church today. At a recent meeting in Fortuna, California, there was a woman with a destroyed optical nerve; the doctors had said that she would never see out of that eye again, but she was healed and now can see. A deaf person was also instantly healed that night, as was a woman bound to a wheel chair because of crippling arthritis. This woman is reported to have danced and shouted, expressing the joy of her deliverance. Another wonderful miracle took place as a group of young students prayed for a child with club feet. The child was healed!

The church is becoming the dwelling place of God that was promised in the Bible. Yes, we have hungered for more, prayed for more, and now we are receiving "the revelation of Jesus" into our privileges and responsibilities. These are fresh winds blowing and bringing insights of revelation that are no longer being ignored, but are being acted upon by more and more Christians. God's will for His people is being done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Bible speaks a lot about our being a dwelling place for God. It often refers to "God's House" on earth. There are some questions that need to be answered concerning the above statement. What does the Bible mean when it states, "God's house?" Why does this concept matter? How should it change the way we live our everyday Christian lives? What does it have to do with the renewing of our minds? In answering these questions, I want to start off by stating that the concept of "God's house" has everything to do with these questions.

Let us look at the first mention of the House of God in the Bible: **"Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. . . . Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it. And he was afraid and said, How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven! . . . And he called the name of the place Bethel. . . ." (Genesis 28:10-13, 16-17, 19).** As already stated, this is the first mention in the Bible of the House of God, and thus this passage defines the nature of this subject for the rest of Scripture

IF GOD DEFEATED SATAN, WHAT'S GOING ON?

You and I can agree that Satan is alive and well on planet earth in 2007. Is this a contradiction to the Word of God when the Word teaches that Satan has been defeated? Was Satan's power destroyed at the cross? Did the resurrection give me authority over the enemy? If Satan is the force behind the evil of today, then why isn't he stopped? First, let me say that Satan's power is attached to a positional truth. The positional truth is that all of the above mentioned is fulfilled in Jesus. The acceptance of Jesus into our lives and allowing Him to administer that work over Satan is what stops him. Satan shutters when he knows that we walk in the authority of Jesus and tests us often concerning that knowledge. He wants to know what we know about his position and his ability to carry out his work against us. You see, Satan's power is limited to what we allow him to do. If we consent to evil, he has an avenue to attack us. If we yield to temptation, he has the same. If we walk in righteousness, Satan has no avenue to attack us or defeat us. I believe that we should verbally declare our knowledge of Jesus' work to him and let our actions prove it. Satan has no legal rights as some would declare; he just preys on our lack of knowledge and wrong actions. Satan isn't next to God in power, we are. Our authoritative voice is the same as Jesus speaking to Satan when done in faith and knowledge and that is how we control him in our lives. He preys on our fear of him. Fear reveals a lack of knowledge in the completed work of Jesus for us. Fear enthrones him to a position that he doesn't hold. Leave him alone and he'll leave you alone is a lie. He will not leave you alone, but rather look for an opportune time to destroy you. Put him in his position and then and only then will he leave you alone. Resist him with the truth and he will flee. Take back the stolen ground of your life and learn to walk in the victory given to us in the resurrection of our Lord.

HE LIVES!

FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

Ephesians 4:8, “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (11) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

(KJV)”

There is much controversy today about the Five-Fold Ministry. Much of the Church world today believes they do not exist, at least not in the way the Holy Spirit presented them in our scripture, or they are not needed today. This is the farthest from the truth. We desperately need the Five-Fold Ministry working in the Church today. Many of the problems we see arising are due to the lack of the influence of the God given Five-Fold Ministry.

Do you believe the Apostle Paul would have allowed some of the ungodly things to go on in the churches he was given the charge over that we see taking place in our churches today? He would not have put up with them at all. We have an example of Paul’s office at work in 1 Corinthians where Paul pointed out sin in the Church (a man having sex with his stepmother) that the Church was not dealing with. Paul instructed them to place him outside the covering of the Church until such time as he had repented. In II Corinthians we see where the man had repented, the Church had not allowed him back in the fellowship of the believers and Paul had to instruct them to allow him back in. After all, if God had forgiven the man, who were they to judge him?

Today’s church has reduced the Teacher to a Sunday School teacher that teaches a pre-prepared lesson; the Apostle is a missionary working in some third world country (this is needed, but it is not the only work of an Apostle), and the Prophet has been eliminated because of the accountability he brings to the church and to individuals, most of the era we now live in is not willing to accept responsibility for their actions and does not want a Prophet reminding them of what God is expecting of them. Only the offices of the Evangelist and the Pastor remain intact, with some variations of what the true gift really is.

Gifts: The Lord Jesus, Who ascended on high, gave the gift of the Five-Fold Ministry to the Church. Gift, as used in verse eight, is the Greek word “doma”, which means a gift that has been made a gift of. For example, He takes the gift of pastor, gives it to man and then He takes the man and his God given gift to make a gift of them to the Church. Take our pastor, Brother George for an example; Jesus gave Bro. George the gift of the office of pastor; He then took Bro. George and his gift of the office of pastor and made a gift of them to us. There are far too many people serving in the office of Pastor because of the fame it can bring, they see it as an easy life, or because they felt enough commendation and pressure from family or religious leaders instead of having a true calling from God. Some are filling the office because they believe they owe it to God to repay Him for what He has done for them through His Son Jesus.

God Calls: God calls and sets these offices. God places a calling on a person to a certain office of the Five-Fold Ministry. When the person accepts the calling of God on his life, God then sets (establishes) him in the office to which he has been called. Man cannot call himself or another man; neither can he set himself or another man, only God can accomplish this. Whenever you see or hear someone announcing himself to be a five-fold minister, you should be very wary of his calling. If he is truly called, it will show in his life and in his ministry; also, sometimes God may move on another person to confirm a minister’s calling so people will know that the calling is true, this will always be a confirmation and not a calling.

There is many a person filling a Five-Fold Ministry office today who is miserable and unhappy because they were not called to the office they are trying to fill. Some felt a conviction to draw closer to God and misinterpreted this conviction as a calling to the ministry. Many were influenced by others, especially their parents or Church leaders, to go into the ministry because it seemed the right thing to do.

These ministers who were not called of God will lack the anointing of the Spirit in their ministry. They can and will accomplish many good things for the Kingdom of God, and because of God’s love for His children He will allow the Holy Spirit to minister through this person, but it would be so much better to have the man God has at the Church where God would have him.

Just as God calls and sets ministers, He calls and sets churches. There are many churches today that were started as the result of a split in a church. A church that was started as a result of a church split is a church that had its origin in rebellion. This can be overcome by the guilty party asking forgiveness and by God’s mercy, but this does not happen very often. Usually pride keeps this from happening.

God calls and sets the offices, not man. God calls and sets churches, not man.

If man establishes, it will not work. If God establishes, it will work.

Stir up your gift: 2 Timothy 1:6, *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands (KJV).* Paul instructed Timothy to stir up the gift that God had given him. “To stir,” means to rekindle or to light a small fire in order to start a larger fire. Our gifts grow as we use them. Another way to stir up our gifts is by praying in tongues. When we pray in tongues we are praying the absolute true will of God; our spirit is communicating with the Spirit of God and the result is the kindling of a fire within us.

Gift: Proverbs 17:8, *A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.* (Use it and it will grow)

Proverbs 18:16, *A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.* (The person that has a gift does not have to announce himself or force himself on others; his gift will be recognized and make room for him).

Proverbs 25:14, *Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain. (KJV)* (A false gift has no fruits, where there are clouds and wind usually there is rain.)

DEAR CHURCH,

As this four month mission trip draws close to the end, I am in awe reviewing the pictures my Father has painted in my heart. They remind me of Heaven, the most brilliant scenery bursting with color and life adorned and glistening with love, joy and peace. I am on my knees thanking my precious Lord for all He

has shown this country girl and all of the parts of His body He has give me the opportunity to discover. Most of all Saints, I praise Him for allowing me to be His servant, serving His children, the highest call of my life.

The month of March was awesome! We traveled all around Malaysia and Singapore sharing the love of our Lord. We returned to some of the places we went last year, plus many new areas. We were informed of healings from last year and saw many more this year. What an adventure it is to be a missionary, servant of God, telling of His unending love.

To Singapore, after a second morning service, when we had prayed for all that were in the prayer line, I sat down to rest. A lady came and kneeled down beside me. She said, "Sister Bess, please pray for me, I am having chest pain." I anointed her and began to pray. The Lord told me to put my arms around her and let His love flow to her. When I put my arms around her, the love of the Holy Spirit was very evident and she began to cry. The Lord showed me that she had a lot of hurt and pain in her heart due to abuse and it was causing her stress and thus chest pain. His love began to wash away the pain. She laid in my arms for about thirty minutes crying. My dress was wet with tears but Glory to God, she had no more pain and knew God's love in a mighty way. Later that day she sent the church secretary a message on her phone to tell me she was healed physically and emotionally.

I did not do anything but pray for this lady and let God's love flow through me. Each of us can be that conduit for God's love to flow through. There are so many hurting people in this world. Reach out to them. Let God use you. The fields are white unto harvest, but there are not many laborers. Step into the most awesome adventure of your life, be a laborer for our Lord. I will see you soon with many more stories of the love our Father has poured out to His children.

Much Love, Your Missionary Bess Graham

PUTTING THE WILL OF GOD ON DISPLAY (Continued from Page One)

The first important fact that I want to relate here is the fact that Jacob was there and did not know that God was there in His midst. In fact he said, "**God is here and I didn't even know it.**" This tells me that it is possible to be in the presence of the "House of

God" and never know it's there (*I will define "House of God" in a moment*). This is a good place to bring up a point of truth—without a revelation—in Jacob's case a dream—we can be oblivious to the presence and work of God around us or in our lives. This happens all the time in the Church and its services. God transforms one person's life and the person next to him or her is clueless that God was even in the house. The Pastor announces that the Holy Spirit has now come upon the congregation, and some say, "I don't feel anything," while others are having total reconstruction just a few feet away. They are like Jacob before his dream, God was there, and they didn't know it.

I mentioned at the beginning of the lesson that I would define what is meant by an "open heaven". From Jacob's dream we can see that the House of God functioned under an "open heaven", meaning the demonic realm was broken off and there was clarity between the realm of God's dominion and what was happening on earth. In that dream, we find a ladder with angels ascending and descending from heaven. They ascended when they completed an assignment, and descend when they are on their way to perform a supernatural task. It is my firm belief that angels are waiting for Christians to start living risk filled lifestyles exposing and destroying the devil's work. Why? So as to assist us in bringing the reality of God's rule into situations that afflict and torment humans.

We read in Hebrews 1:14; "**Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?**" It's time the Church realize that angels are used by God to complete His assignments on earth. In Psalm 104:3, the Bible says that God "**walks on the wings of the wind.**" The wind is described as an angelic presence. God is ushered into a situation by riding on angelic presence. This is the "open heaven" that the Book of Genesis talks about. Remember, a Christian's lifestyle without risks has little need for angelic assistance. Why? Because that Christian will be residing in "self life," and believes that self sufficiency is a fact in his or her life. They can not see or understand God's "open heaven."

Gene R. Brown, Associate Pastor

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