

Following Jesus - His Way

by Stella Paterson

There are countless religions and cults around the world, with beliefs more often than not, of man's creation. Even in what are considered 'Christian' nations that have dispatched missionaries around the world, the diversity of beliefs is astonishing. Of course, all claim to be based on the 'Word of God.' And all believe they have the truth, and go about preaching a 'gospel' according to any number of Bible 'versions.'

How many are there in 'Christianity' today who profess to be followers of Jesus? And then they vigorously pursue the task of *making disciples* to whom they teach their fleshly perception of 'Jesus.'

Sadly, the 'Jesus' followed by millions of people is a far cry from the Son of the Living God. Their 'Jesus' in no way resembles the Man who "**emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.**" (Philippians 2:7-8) Instead, they 'see' Him only through eyes blinded by error. As a result, they have made a mockery of the One who gave His life that we might live.

What does it mean to "follow Jesus"?

In verses 5 and 6, leading up to those just quoted, Paul said "*Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but . . .*" Jesus was in *the form of God* but did not consider it a thing to be boastful of. Rather, He humbled Himself and went the way of the Cross.

Here is the full passage:

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.
Philippians 2:7-8

If we are desirous of following Him, we must see this as the starting point. We must empty our selves and become *obedient even unto death*. There is no other way; *self* must go!

We must surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit.

Titles, hierarchy - hogwash!

Today, we have an over-abundance of 'titled' religious *leaders*; all clamoring after superiority among their 'peers,' and seeking recognition from the masses. Have they never read the book of Philippians? Have all the bishops, prophets, prophetesses, pastors and apostles, etc., taken up their cross to follow Jesus? Or do they use their self-exalting titles to lord it over those to whom they 'minister'; somehow deluded into believing it makes them appear *authoritative*?

This time, we will look specifically at "apostles."

Most of us are aware of the *apostle movement* currently taking their self-appointed position in the *church*, and purporting themselves as THE ones with a special mandate from God.

To expose such foolishness we must understand where the word *apostle* originated.

Acts 13:2 tells us this: "*And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, **Separate** me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*"

How often do we--myself included--refer to Paul as *Apostle Paul*? I have to confess, I have ignorantly used the title in most my articles where I quote Paul because of the work the Holy Spirit called him to. He is referred to as an apostle in the Bible, so it is not unseemly to use it, right? It is one of those traditions we have inherited, due to the hierarchical bias of the King James Bible translators.

Take this one example. The first chapter of the book of Romans begins with "*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, **called to be an apostle**, separated unto the gospel of God,*" (Romans 1:1)

Paul did not say he was *called to be an apostle*; the KJV translators merely told us that is what he said. Since a lot of Bible versions say the same, it goes without saying that they simply used the KJV as a major reference tool.

Okay; so what did Paul actually say?

The Greek word for "apostle" (*apostolos*) is used as what, in English, we would call a "noun." The 'verb' from which it was taken is the Greek word *apostello*, and is defined as "*set apart, that is, (by implication) to send out (properly on a mission) literally or figuratively.*"

In reality, Paul said he was *set apart* by the Holy Spirit and *separated unto* the Gospel, to take the good news to the Gentiles--he was not given a title.

In the body of Christ there are no 'offices' or 'titles.' There is especially no such thing as 'hierarchy!' Jesus made this abundantly clear, when He told His disciples this:

You call me, Master, and, Lord: and you say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither **one that is sent** [Greek: 'apostolos'] greater than he that sent him. John 13:13-16

We must surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit.

'Authority'

The problem with man's believing he has been endowed with authority--because he has a 'title'--leaves the mistaken impression that people must *obey* the 'titled' one. I have seen too much abuse in this, particularly by 'pastors.' Then they use their favorite *control* phrase, "Touch not mine anointed."

Judgment begins at the house of God, or in the family of God. He will be 'cleaning house' one day very soon. And all the "pastors" who have abused others by using their cherished 'authority' will answer to Almighty God for what they have done to His sheep. Jeremiah said it well. "*Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.*" (Jeremiah 23:1)

The word "authority" comes from the Greek word *exousia*, which means, primarily, "(in the sense of *ability*); *privilege*." The word comes from another word "*exesti*" which includes in its meaning the declaration, "*I exist* (used only when emphatic)." The Greek word for it is "*eimi*."

We must keep in mind that God is known as "I AM," and Jesus too is "I AM," as we see in John 8:58, where He said, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*"

Then we find Jesus using the word *authority* in Matthew 28:18-20.

And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All **authority** has been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them **into the name** of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things

whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [Greek: 'age'].

Note: The King James Version used the word "power" in their translation of the Greek word *exousia*.

If all *authority* has been given to Jesus, where does man get off taking some imagined authority and using it in his quest to become great in the Kingdom?

If we desire to make disciples, it is necessary that we let go of *self*, bow humbly before Him, and . . .

We must surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit.

Separated unto the Holy Spirit

It is one thing for us to recognize the error in the Body of Christ, but we can become so caught up in "*they* this," or "*they* that," that we fail to examine our own hearts to see if we are in right relationship to the Son of God. Each of us is accountable for *myself*, just as *they* are accountable for *themselves*. There is a dangerous trap we can fall into. And that is the trap of pride which can creep into our hearts when we recognize the failings of others and begin to focus on what *they* do, or do not do. We must ever remember the admonition, "*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*" (James 4:6) As Andrew Murray said, "God can only reveal His will to a heart that is humble and tender and empty."

We earlier quoted Acts 13:2, where the Holy Spirit had said "Separate [to] me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them." Notice the "[to]" before "me," which is the true meaning of what the Spirit said, according to the Greek word.

It is the Spirit who *separates* us to Himself for the work to which we are called. The reason is very simple. Being the Spirit of Jesus, He is the power and authority at work in and through us to accomplish the will of God. As Jesus said, "*Without me you can do nothing.*" (John 15:5) The EMTV puts it this way: *I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing.* And "nothing" means NOTHING! Yet how often we take it upon ourselves, armed with truth as we see it, and go out like the proverbial "bull in a china shop" to *convince* those we see in error and/or in need of salvation.

The *fruit* we are to bear, is the Fruit of the Spirit; and only He can produce it. The first fruit Paul spoke of is "Love." (Galatians 5:22-23) It is the main fruit, with the other that is mentioned being all-encompassed in Love.

It is the *love* we have one for another that shows we are His disciples. (John 13:35) God is Love; Jesus is Love, and we who are born of His Spirit will manifest Love, "*because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us.*" (Romans 5:5)

We must surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit.

Understanding Grace

The Grace of God is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. But there is a tradition prevalent in the 'church,' which says grace is "God's unmerited favor." What an insult to the Spirit of Grace! He is given to us to do what we cannot do! That is why Grace replaces works, and why Grace replaced the Law, as Paul showed when he said, "*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid.*" (Romans 6:14-15)

It is tragic how some have come to believe that because they are *under grace* they have 'license' to sin. That too, is an insult to the precious Holy Spirit.

Equally tragic, is the belief in too many Christians that what **we do** is pleasing to God. *Without faith it is impossible to please God!* (Hebrews 11:6) We must forsake that inner drive, fuelled by the knowledge of good and evil, to perform. If only we could follow the example Jesus gave, as quoted earlier, and give up the right to *self* through the "death of the cross." If only we could embrace the Grace of God, as He imparts life to us, rather than insisting on our own way in a misguided effort to please Him.

We must surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit.

"Bibles"

Much of the responsibility for the erroneous doctrine of *grace* is attributable to the numerous Bible versions we now have. The reason being, that Bibles have become so corrupted by man's injecting his own beliefs into the various translations.

Years ago, a friend told me how she had an *Amplified Bible*. I had never heard of it, as it was fairly new on the market. She said she would lend it to me to help me in my studies. I'm thankful we never did follow through on her offer. It was not until I was working on my book that I saw a copy of that "Bible," when I purchased the electronic version for the e-Sword program to use for reference.

At the publisher's urging, I quoted various Bible versions in my book, including the occasional quote from the *Amplified Bible*. And only then, if the word meanings were true to the Greek and Hebrew definitions.

In his desire to "amplify" what God's Spirit inspired so long ago, man has added a multitude of words that are far from the definition of the original words. For example, in the *Amplified Bible* the "Grace" definition is one that is particularly misleading, with "Grace" being *amplified* to mean "God's unmerited favor." There is no perfect Bible version; they all have been tainted by man's concept of word meanings, and imposing his ideas regarding hierarchy, offices and titles, to name only a few. Whatever version we have, we must remember it is only man's translation of the old language manuscripts, penned by the scribes of old as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit to express God's heart and mind. Only that same Holy Spirit can illuminate the inspired word in our understanding. As in everything pertaining to God's will for us . . .

We must surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit.

Separating the sheep from the goats

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he admonished them to . . .

Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial [Hebrew/Greek: 'worthlessness']? or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has a temple of God with idols? for **we are a temple of the living God**; even as God said, **I will dwell in them, and walk in them**; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore **Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and you shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Belial is an epithet of Satan and, as the old languages show, means "worthlessness." That spirit of *worthlessness* is very much at work these days, along with the spirit of religion in those with eyes blind to the truth. If the promised "strong delusion" from God has not already come upon them, I believe it soon will, because they did not receive the love of the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:11)

The word *separate* means "set off by boundary," and is used in such verses as the one where the Holy Spirit said "separate me Barnabas and Saul," and where Paul said he was "separated unto the Gospel." It is also used in the passage in Matthew 13, where we find the *severing* of the wicked from the just in the *parable*

of the tares; and again in Matthew 25, where Jesus told of the *dividing* of the sheep and goats.

The same word for *separate* is used in each quote in the above three paragraphs. We see a correlation in several passages which are pertinent to our lives, especially today.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, when speaking of coming out and being separate, the Lord's words also were "touch no unclean thing." In almost every verse where this *unclean* is used, it is in reference to "unclean spirits." The definition for the Greek word is "specifically (*demonic*)."

In Revelation we find another *call* to come out, using the same Greek word for *unclean*; this time, also translated "foul."

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every **foul** spirit, and a cage of every **unclean** and hateful bird . . . And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. Revelation 18:2 & 4

True followers (disciples) of Jesus have come out, and separated themselves from the *unclean*. But it has not been in the strength of *self*. The Holy Spirit is the Revealer of Truth, and opens our blind eyes to see Jesus. He draws us to Himself and, living in us, continues the work of sanctification in our lives. His Grace perfects in and through us those things we are incapable of, because He dwells in us, and the Fruit of the Spirit is the evidence. We cannot even die to self of our own volition; when the Life of Jesus, His Spirit, enters us, the flesh cannot live in His presence. As long as we are in this body, we must choose to walk by the Spirit. We must never turn back to trusting in *self*, with the ever-present and persistent knowledge of good and evil.

To follow Jesus **His way** . . . We must surrender to the working of the Holy Spirit!

Important - related article:

[Separated unto the Holy Ghost](#) by Andrew Murray

©2004-2009 ekklesia4him.net. Permission is granted for not-for-profit reproduction or distribution (without any changes) provided this notice appears and this link is included: http://www.ekklesia4him.net/following_Jesus_his_way.html