

In the Word 1-9-00

I really feel like we as a body are on a mission. I have a very real sense that God is leading us, and I'm not saying that figuratively, or glibly, but with a great deal of excitement. I believe He always leads his children, it is just that we can see it so plainly right now. The things that Bonnie began her sharing time with are things that have been in messages over this last 6 months and she had no way of knowing that. Eldership, the priesthood of the believers, each believer being called, personal relationship, getting into God's word, these are all things God has had us examine. And then with the beginning of the New Year challenging you to be in God's word daily and our first Bible study of the year about examining the Word more carefully, I can see the clear direction of God.

Last week we met in three locations, here with the guests and my son in my home, at Will's with a group and Helen and her family met in her home. They tried to make it to Will's but turned back when they started slipping and sliding. So they worshipped together around the Word their home too. I don't think that is a coincidence that the first Sunday of the year 2000 we were in three locations. I'm guessing now, but I think that may be what God is going to do as we grow. The Lord could have any number of home churches if we will grow in the Word so that he could use us as teachers. Do you remember that passage in Hebrews when the author tells them by this time they should be teachers? Heb 5:12 Then once a month or however the Lord leads we may rent a hall to get us all together for a time of worship and sharing how God is leading the different groups. I'm guessing and I don't want to get the cart before the horse, but I just want to share some of my excitement with you. Not excitement in the format or numbers but that God is working to see us mature where something like that could happen. By the way, both the group in my home and Helen's said they had a great time of worship.

Lets briefly review last weeks message that was given at Will's. 2 Chron 29 We looked at Hezekiah bringing restoration to Judah in worship. Any one remember anything from that message? His first act was to open the Temple gates and repair them, and we compared them to the gates of our heart being in good condition to swing wide open to the Lord as He knocks. We looked at the work of cleaning the defilement from the Sanctuary, 8 days on the outer court, 8 on the inner, and how the Word was the guideline. The application is obvious. As we are in God's Word the Holy Spirit shows us anything that needs to be cleaned out and dumped in both our inner and outer sanctuary, for you are the Temple of the HS. And then worship was restored with the incense burning, our prayers – and the sacrifice on the altar, remembering what the Lord has done for us in a fresh way each day. This was a real revival and one we need as a group. I challenged you to be in God's word daily this year and I want to continue on that topic this morning.

The challenge is not a formula to maturity, but if we don't eat we are not going to grow. Once a week may keep you barely alive but we need to be on a more regular feeding schedule if we want to grow and mature. Taking time to sit at the table of the LORD. As we once discussed before Jesus told us we need to eat his flesh and drink his blood. Now the Son of God is the Living Word and the blood is a picture of the Life giving Spirit. We can't be only in the Word as the Pharisees were and ignore the Spirit. We need both the bread and the wine.

How are you going to carve out that time with your schedule? How desperate are you? How hungry and thirsty are you for righteousness? Does your schedule revolve around your time with the Lord or your time with the Lord revolve around your schedule. You've heard the old preacher's phrase, "The Word will keep you from sin or Sin will keep you from the Word." That's not a Scripture but it is Scriptural. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not it is sin."

I'm not trying to beat you over the head with this to say conform, you gotta act this certain way, but I am saying here is food for your soul. Eat – Eat regularly and if you don't, examine your priorities, for in these words you will meet the Maker of heaven and earth. He is more real than everything you see around you for his Words created everything you see around you.

The wonder of God speaking to you personally through the Word is worth changing priorities. Our spirits need the communion of the living Word, made alive by the Spirit. Remember Jesus told Martha that this one thing was NECESSARY! To sit at his feet and listen to his words is not optional. Eating is not optional. Imagine how we would grow if we placed as much importance on eating spiritually as we do physically. What would that do for your spiritual life? Think about that for a second.

We have recognized that God desires sons and daughters and wants them to be mature, not infants. As I look at some of the key passages in regard to this maturity I find it always connected with the Word. 1Pt 2:1-3 James 1:21-25 Psalms 119:9-16 Notice that word "neglect"

Now to 1Jn 2:12-14 See how we relate to the Word in an increasing way. Children have just received the Word in their lives, born again by the word of God, an introduction to the Father. Young men have found strength in the Word, it lives in them. They apply it like a sword in overcoming the evil One, just as Christ did in His temptation. The next step in maturity is to parent a child, making you a father. The Word has become productive for the Kingdom. The fathers have let the Word reveal God to them. Here then are the stages: discovery of the Word, application in your life, and finally a servant of the Word.

As we grow together in the Word over the coming year I look forward to our time of sharing being filled more and more with what the Lord is showing you from his Word. Out of that real relationship and wonder of Him speaking to you personally we will all touch the Living Lord. At the end of the message you will have cross-references to share of the things He spoke to you through the week.

But it begins with desire to meet the Living Word. If that desire is not strong in you pray for it to become stronger. Taste and see the Lord is good and develop a greater hunger. The more time you spend there with Him the more you will want to spend there.