

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-1027

We Speak the Truth in Love

March 11, 2010

If you have not done so already, please read the last three issues #04-1024 through #04-1026, for these build upon one another.

In the previous issues, attention has been drawn to the corrupt state of our political system and the judgment that I believe is coming upon it and its leaders. However, the question arises: Are we much different than they are? Is the church-at-large exempt from such judgment? Have we as the Lord's people strayed from the Lord and knowing Him as our trust and walking by His faith?

Our country and its leaders may be a reflection of the condition of the church-at-large, and they may be instruments through which God judges His people, **for it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God** (1 Peter 4:17). These words were penned about 2,000 years ago; how much truer are they as we near the end of our present wicked eon? For this reason, we need to pay heed to the words and actions of our leaders, for God speaks to us through them.

As Christians, it is easy for us to stand in judgment of our political leaders, as if we are different from them; but are we? We need to heed the Lord's exhortation, or else we too will be counted among the hypocrites.

(1) "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. (2) For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. (3) Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:1-5 NASB)

Politicians may speak falsehood, but how much falsehood is spoken within the church that calls upon the name of the Lord? The politicians speak falsehood to one another; but do we speak the truth in love, not only to one another but to the world? They speak of reconciliation; but are we living ambassadors for Christ who proclaim the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)? They speak as agnostics; but do we live by faith in the living God? They speak of bipartisanship; but are we wholly devoted to Christ and His righteousness? They speak of the end as justifying the means; but do we declare the end from the beginning as our God has revealed it to us (Isaiah 46:10)? They speak of hope and change; but do we know and live according to the One who is Hope and who will bring the fundamental change of righteousness to the entire world? They may have a speck in their eye; but do we have a log?

These might be catchy phrases and questions to make a point, but the main point is this: Are we living the very life of Christ in this day? Are we the embodiment of the righteousness of Christ? It is not so much about doing as it is about being; being Christ-like in all we do, say, and think. Are we growing up in Christ? See article #6, February 2008, *To Know Him*, and issues #03-09149, August 19, 2009, *A Life Lived, Not Taught*, and #03-09150, August 20, 2009, *To Be Living Is Christ*.

As noted previously, politics in our day is "crafty; tricky; given to forming crafty schemes or plots." But the same danger has come upon the church-at-large, for it has been infected with the same craftiness, trickery, and scheming. Consider the warning from Paul, the beloved apostle.

(14) As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; (15) but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.... (Ephesians 4:14-15 NASB)

As much as we might not want to admit it, every wind of doctrine has been embraced within the church that claims Jesus as Lord. The trickery and craftiness of men have deceived many into falling into their trap of deceitful scheming, resulting in them accepting lies and failing to grow up in all aspects into Christ. Consequently, they remain as babes in Christ, men of flesh, and unable to discern spiritual to spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:10-3:3).

Why must judgment come upon the household of God? Why must the nations be judged along with us? We have been unwilling to suffer as a Christian and to glorify God in this name (1 Peter 4:16), choosing instead to be friends with the world, even loving the world (*kosmos*; orderly arrangement of man's doing) that is passing away (1 John 2:15-17). We have listened to the many false prophets of the media and of the church that have gone out in the world. See issue #03-09165, September 15, 2009, *Modern-Day False Prophets*. We need to repent! See article #12, August 2008, *Repent!*

The **spirit of antichrist** has been in the world since John's day (1 John 4:1-3), and it is alive and well in our day. See issue #02-08133, October 27, 2008, *The Spirit of Antichrist*. What is this spirit? It is the spirit that places itself on the throne, as if it rules in the place of Christ. It is not so much a spirit that stands against Christ openly and outwardly but a spirit that says it shall prevail, **who have said, "With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"** (Psalm 12:4 NASB). It refuses to sanctify Christ as Lord in its heart (1 Peter 3:15). This is the spirit of antichrist, and this spirit has no use for the coming of God's one and only Anointed King. God's Son came to this earth over 2,000 years ago and manifested Himself as a Man, and He is coming soon to manifest Himself again as the Immortal Conqueror to His body of conquerors who will be sent forth to teach the inhabitants of the world righteousness (Isaiah 26:9) as His kingdom takes root among the nations and expands over the next 1,000 years.

Dear brethren, isn't it time for us to speak the truth in love to one another and to the world? But do we know the truth that needs to be spoken? Jesus prayed to his Father: **"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth"** (John 17:17 NASB).

As Jesus was headed to the cross, Pilate asked Him: **"What is truth?"** (John 18:38). Jesus had given Pilate the answer already, but he was unable to receive the truth, so he questioned truth in general.

(36) Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." (37) Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (John 18:36-37 NASB)

What is the truth? Jesus, the Word of God, is the Truth. But notice that Jesus acknowledged before Pilate that He came into the world to testify of one glorious truth. The truth is that He was born a king, and, in fact, He is the King; He is God's King (Psalm 2).

The Spirit of truth has come to guide us into all the truth (John 16:13), and we must not avoid the truth that Jesus is the King of the nations. We must speak this truth in love to one another and to the world, and all the more as we see the day drawing near. Please see article #2, October 2007, *Do Not Abandon the Hope*.

The world and the nations, along with its leaders, do not know it, but they have no hope apart from the Anointed (Christ) King who is the King-Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Let us not lose sight of this truth, and let us not refrain from declaring it to the glory of God the Father. This is speaking the truth in love. **For yet in a little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one shall live by faith** (Hebrews 10:37-38a).