

January 17, 2010

Commitment for unity and Peace (Leviticus 25:35-42, 2 Cor 4:1-5, Mat 8:5-13)

Our God is God the Father, Son and the Holy spirit in blessed trinity and is always committed to peace and unity of humanity. On the other hand Satan is always on his relentless mission of dividing people and destroy them .Peace and unity are not the products which we can make. They are the products of God . God the Father is God of all peace (Romans 16:20). God the son is called prince of peace(Is 9:6) who by shedding his blood destroyed all the hate that divides humanity(Col 2:13-15) . Peace is the fruit of the Holy spirit (Gal 5:22). God's salvation plan is to unite all things in heaven and earth in Christ Jesus(Ep 1:10).Committing to unity and peace means becoming a part of God's plan and purpose .

Commitment to unity can only begin with our becoming one with Christ and commitment to peace is possible only when we have peace with God. The two things which can unite all believers are 1) Faith 2) the knowledge of the Son of God. With out faith we can never achieve unity .We grow in faith by our obedience to His word. It is only by the love that is poured into our hearts by the Holy spirit we can be united .Only those who are born of water and spirit can give the fruit of the spirit love .Therefore unity is possible only when there is love. When we are born again the lamps of the spirit that are put off by Satan's winds of hate are lighted by Jesus who is the true light of life and love. Only those whose lamps of life are lighted by Jesus can love. In the world there is no peace and people are torn apart because they refuse to come to the light or walk in light. There fore we must first of all realize our spiritual blindness. This is today's epistle lesson. Except Jesus the true light of life lights our darkened lives we can never bring out the fruit of spirit. Only then we can show compassion and love towards our fellow beings. This is today's Old Testament and Gospel lessons.

Epistle lesson : 2 Cor 4:1-15 **Let us light our lamps of the spirit, and be the vessels that God can use**

Paul wrote many letters to the Corinthian church but God included only two letters in our Scriptures. All Paul's letters provide

solutions for all the problems that arise in the church. Lord Jesus said that the reason for people to err was that they knew not the scriptures or the power of God(Mark 12:24). Therefore all the deacons, elders and others in the positions of leadership in the church should know the scriptures so that they may not err. Only the Scriptures help us to grow in faith. When we obey the word, the knowledge of the scripture becomes the knowledge in experience(gnosis becomes epi- gnosis). This in turn makes us strong to do great things for God(Dan 11:32). Therefore those who are in the church leadership positions should make every effort to know the scriptures. To know the true God of the Bible they should first of all light the lamps of their spirits .Paul is the greatest model for all those who are in the ministry of the church though all may not have the same ministry as that of Paul. Whether we are in the ministry or not we are exhorted to imitate Paul .Following the example of Paul, those who are in the ministry of the church what ever ministry it may be, should

1. Renounce all secret and shameful ways .
2. Not use deception
3. Should commend themselves to everyman's conscience in the sight of God (Acts 24:16)
4. Should die daily by way of spiritual self crucifixion so that the life of Jesus may be reveled in their lives. In other words they need to crucify their self, their flesh with all its passions and desires and all pride(Gal 2;20,5:24,6:14).
5. Even though we are earthen vessels , God has kept in us the treasure of the Gospel. There fore we should be always clean and be available that God may use at any time.

When we work in this way like Paul , we will not loose heart even when people slander us like they did to Paul because God will be merciful and always will comfort us like He did to Paul. To be like Paul and be approved by God we must know the sovereign power of God like the centurion in today's gospel lesson.

The Gospel lesson: Mathew 8:5-13
Let us acquire faith that the Lord commends

Here the centurion was commended by the Lord for his faith. Lord said that the centurion had faith which was greater than that of any other Israel. Why? Because the centurion recognized that Jesus was God and his word had power .That's why he was commended by the Lord . There fore we too should know that there is power in His

word and should increase our faith by seeing and reading His word and glory in nothing but His word. Then He will be pleased with us also (Jer 9:23,24). That is why all those who think that they are serving the Lord should diligently read the word (Is 34:16), study the word (2 Tim 2:15), memorize the word (Pr 7:1,2) and meditate on the word (Jos 1:8). Beware, anybody who is in the ministry of the Lord and doesn't do these things to acquire the knowledge of God will be discarded by God (Hos 4:6). When we read, study, memorize and meditate on the word of God we will increase the magnitude of our faith and accordingly God gives us the gifts of the spirit to serve His church like Barnabas in the early church. Then we will be sensitive to the needs of the others and can come to their rescue. This is what God wanted the Israelites to do in today Old Testament lesson.

Old Testament lesson :Levi 25:35-42 Let us love our neighbors

Leviticus is the book which tells Israelites to be Holy because their God is holy. To day the church is His new Israel. It is called to be cleansed by His blood and be holy. Therefore we have to live in this world by perfecting our holiness by using the word of God (2 Pet 1:4, 2 Cor 7:1). We have to walk in love like Jesus. We need to love not with words or tongue but with actions (1John 3:18). No body should die on account of us. In stead we should be agents of life. If any of our brothers are in poverty we need to help them. That's our responsibility and the responsibility of the Church. In this way God is asking us to be compassionate. With the coming of Jesus the Jubilee year has begun. He paid all our debts. Therefore we should never see anybody as our servants but love them as the Lord has loved. Then the world recognizes us as His disciples and God will be glorified by our lives and our churches. May we be united in the spirit by the bond of peace ! Amen !

Life Application :

1. Let us all light the lamps of our spirit so that the spirit unites us in the bond of peace.
2. Only when we are lead by the spirit we can be united by the bond of peace.
3. When we sow the word of God in spirit we reap the fruit of eternal life by harvesting faith and the knowledge of Jesus Christ that can unite us.