

February 21, 2010

## **Spirituality and Materialism** **(2 kings 21:1-16, 1John 2:15-17, Mk 1:43-45)**

When we look at the words of Jesus

***"It is the Spirit who gives life [He is the Life-giver]; the flesh conveys no benefit whatever [there is no profit in it]. The words (truths) that I have been speaking to you are spirit and life. John 6:63(Amplified)***

***For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life [<sup>U</sup>in the eternal kingdom of God]? Mark 8:36(Amplified)***

***But I will warn you whom you should fear: fear Him Who, after killing, has power to hurl into hell (Gehenna); yes, I say to you, fear Him!" Luke 12:5(Amplified)***

we find that the most important thing in our life is to guard our souls from being thrown into hell. But from the time we get up till we go to bed in a day, the work we do and the thoughts we think will always be concerning our bodies. Spirituality means to live according to God's definition.

From the Bible we find that living according to God's definition is to live in accordance with the spirit and His word(John 8;63, Rom 8:5,Mat 4:4).In contrast to this, life according to the world is what we drink, what we eat and what we acquire. Lord Jesus very clearly taught His disciples that life was not food, fashion or the fabulous things we crave to acquire .He taught that the life was more than food, body was more than clothes and man's life did not consist in the abundance of things he possesses but life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom he had sent (Math 6:25,Lk 12:15,Jn 17:3). Just as food is necessary for the body the word of God is the spiritual food that is necessary for the soul. Spirituality is concerned about our inner spiritual being. Our going to church, giving tithes, praying and doing good works is not the indicators of our spirituality. What we should never forget is that living according to God is to always to remember the word of God we hear and receive, obeying and repenting accordingly (Rev 3:2).

Therefore spirituality is what is concerned with our inner hearts. It is to walk according to the Word of God which is our life, fear God

always and become new in Christ Jesus. It is not observing some external sacraments like circumcision or baptism (Gal 6:15). In the Old Testament times a leper has to offer what Moses has commanded only after he is cleansed from his leprosy. With out being cleansed from the leprosy, offering what Mosses has commanded is of no use in any way. This is what God wants us to learn from today's gospel lesson.

Even after we are made new in Christ Jesus by accepting Him as our personal savior, gradually we become old Just as car or any other thing looses its newness if it is not dusted daily. So we need to dust our souls daily to clear the dust of the lust of the eye, lust of the flesh and the pride our life that settles on our souls. This is today's epistle lesson. Through the lives of Ahab and Jezebel in today's Old Testament lesson God is warning us how excessive greed to acquire material things in this world brings total destruction on us.

### **The Gospel Lesson: Mark 1:40-45 The heart is the centre of our Spirituality**

Our Lord Jesus came to this world to fulfill the Law. When He was on the earth He always observed all the Old Testament laws. Like the Pharisees and Scribes of His day who used to observe all the man made traditions but set aside the commands of God, today we also feel that it is enough to go though all the religious rituals and traditions and refuse to accept Jesus Christ who is the salvation which God has prepared in the sight of all people (Lk 2:29-32) .Leprosy in the Bible symbolizes sin. The Bible tells that all who have heart are sick beyond cure (Jer 17:9). Jesus Christ has come into this world as the only greatest physician who can cure this incurable disease sin and wants all to be cured of this dreadful disease .He is ready to touch all those who come to Him in faith like the leper who has come to him in today's lesson. Giving to God with out accepting Him as our personal savior is like offering what Moses has commanded with out being cleansed from leprosy. God is not interested in our offerings. The sacrifices which God will not despise are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart(Ps 51:17). All the apostles taught that spirituality was not observance of external rituals but becoming new creation in Jesus Christ. What did Jesus say to the very religious Nicodemus? Today He is telling us the same. i.e except we are born again we can never be spiritual though we may be very religious. Our religiosity won't take us to heaven.

Even though we have become new in Christ Jesus to inherit eternal life, Satan like a roaring lion is prowling to devour us. He wants to make us old by tempting us always to sin. Therefore living spiritually is like being in constant battle. The enemies we constantly face are 1.The flesh 2.The world 3.Devil. All the apostles wrote in their epistles how to defeat these enemies.

Offering that which Moses has commanded after being cleansed of Leprosy which is Jesus' stern command shows us the importance of obeying the word of God after we are saved .It is growing in our salvation by desiring the sincere milk of the word(1 Pet 2:1,2). One day we will be like Him. All those who have this hope has to purify himself as God is pure ( I John 3:3).This is today's epistle lesson.

**The Epistle Lesson:1 John 2:15-17**  
**The flesh, the world and the devil are our spiritual enemies.**

What is the use of having a spirituality that does not take us to heaven? If we think going to Church every Sunday is spirituality let us see what God says in Isaiah 1:12, 16

When you come to appear before me,  
who has asked this of you,  
this trampling of my courts? (V12)

Wash and make yourselves clean.  
Take your evil deeds  
out of my sight!  
Stop doing wrong (V16).

If we think saying prayers is spirituality God is reminding us that He will never hear the prayers we pray living in sin (Isaiah 1::15).

John who learnt the lesson that only those who do the will of God will go to heaven, well, taught it in His gospel (Jn 3:3).Just as we say thirty immediately to the question what is six times five, we need to say the verses John 6:40,I Thes 4:3, Romans 12:1 by heart in response to the question what is the will of God that takes us to heaven. Spirituality is living by every word that comes out of the mouth of God (Mat 4:4).

Spirituality is becoming new day by day by putting to death our old nature (lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, the pride of life) on the

cross. Growing spiritually is learning to follow Jesus carrying the cross daily (Rom 6:6 → Gal 2; 20, 5:24, 6:14). Those who despise the word of God and do not follow Jesus daily carrying the cross and still want to do His work will be cursed and ultimately be destroyed like Ahab and Jezebel in today's Old Testament lesson .

**The Old Testament Lesson: 1 Kings 21:1-16**  
**The flesh, the world and the devil are our spiritual foes.**

Do you know what the first thing the Israelite King appointed by God has to do after he takes the throne? He has to go to the priest and write a copy of the Law that is there with the priest, for him( Deut 17:18) and read it daily to learn to fear God (Deut 17:19-21).But the King Ahab and the queen Jezebel defied the law and killed Naboth in order to grab his vineyard. Ultimately we know that both Ahab and Jezebel reaped what they had sown and were destroyed. All those who despise the word of God will reap the same consequences. The lesson we have to carefully learn to day from the lives of Ahab and Jezebel is to be on guard against all kinds of greed and that man's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses (Luke 12:15). Therefore let us learn that love of money and the cares of this world are hindrances for our growth in spirituality and crucify them daily to be renewed and transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Therefore let us renew our commitment to study the word of God in order to find the perfect, good and pleasing will of God and be transformed by doing it from all our heart. May God help us to do that!

**Life Application:**

1. According to God's definition, living is to live by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.
2. Despising the word of God is the high way to destruction.
3. The cross is the only weapon that can defeat the devil .Therefore let all of us who follow Lent learn to carry the cross on a daily basis.

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