

STRIVING FOR THE MASTERY

By: Phillip Hayes

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [1Corinthians 9:24-27].

It seems to me that the church has lost its direction. Proverbs warned that a people without vision would perish (Pro. 29:18). As we look about the Kingdom we realize we have lost our moral compass as well. We have become spiritually dysfunctional as a church. Doctrinal differences, politics, denominational feuding and the like have rendered us helpless when confronting the demonic in our generation.

Everyone has a different vision of what the church should be looking for, or where the church should be heading. Should we look for the rapture at any moment? Maybe we should keep our eyes on the middle east and Israel for our direction? Or, should we be looking for the antichrist to arise in Iraq, Iran or Hoboken, New Jersey? Maybe we should be watching out for some guy that wants to tattoo a bar code on our forehead or right hand? And don't forget the great tribulation; should we look for it now?

Without the mark, you can't buy and sell! Got your beans canned up? Don't forget the toilet paper! You will need a lot of it over three and one half years! Maybe that's what we should all be doing; hoarding up all the stuff we can.

Most of the saints are looking for the grave and that is their vision. Just dying and getting it all over with. Some are trying to get saved, others are trying to stay saved and most are content to hold on to the status quo of religion until their hoped for rapture comes, or the death angel decides to finally pay them a visit. Truthfully, I am getting depressed just writing about the miserable condition of the majority of Christians today.

Where are the Overcomers we read about in the Bible? Where is that glorious church, without spot or wrinkle that Jesus is coming for?

Personally, I have not lost my vision *of a soon to be revealed* Chosen Generation that knows their God! I foresee a Glorious Church Purchased by the Blood of Jesus Christ! They are the Overcoming, Predestinated, Devil Chasing, Holy Ghost Filled Army of Jesus Christ marching throughout this world casting out devils, healing the sick and raising the dead! Fear, doubt and unbelief is not in their vocabulary! Faith is their shield and The Word of God is their weapon. They are the Overcoming people we read about in the book of Revelation. They have attained unto the Mastery. They are the Master Christians of the end time!

While others are striving for the things of this world I am striving for the Mastery. While others are content with waiting for the grave, I am believing that the grave IS NOT in my future!

Apostle Paul revealed a mystery to us. He said, "*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*" [1Corinthians 15:51].

I believe Jesus will soon come suddenly to His temple. I believe that before our Lord's physical return, He is coming to be revealed and glorified in His saints. *"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" [2Thessalonians 1:10].*

The Bible also says, *"Behold, He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him . . ."* The clouds that are coming with Him are clouds full of rain: Holy Ghost Rain! They are filled with rivers of Living Water! Praise God, the world will see Him in us. We are the written epistles of the Lord that will be read of all men. We are His temple!

Jesus said, *"When you have seen me, you have seen the Father."* How did they see the Father? Jesus told them plainly, *"Believe me for the works sake". "It is not I that doeth the works, but the Father that dwells in me, He doeth the works" [St. John 14].*

When Jesus healed the sick, gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, they saw the Father!

Soon, those that have achieved the Mastery will be empowered to say, "When you have seen me, you have seen Jesus". Why? How? Because they have come to the place that they no longer live; but Christ is living in them in His fullness! They have fully crucified the flesh, the cross they bear has finally did its duty. These Overcomers have eaten of the hidden manna! The fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Jesus Christ, thus that same fullness will also dwell in the Overcomers. *"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" [Ephesians 3:19].*

These Master Builders will reveal the real Christ to a world given wholly over to the doctrines of devils. They will not only preach the Truth, they will demonstrate it!

The Apostle Paul was very plain that the Gospel he preached was not of man. He was adamant that his Gospel of the Kingdom was not in word, but in power: *"But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power"* [1Corinthians 4:19-20].

The world needs the Truth! The True Gospel is not only presented in words, but it is also in demonstration of the power of God. *"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God"* [1Corinthians 2:4-5].

Today, most people's faith is based on the wisdom of men. Men and women are trained in various Bible Schools how to present their concept of the Gospel in such a way as to be believed and received. In addition to teaching them their particular denominations doctrine, they are also taught language skills and proper body language. They learn how to formulate a sermon and how it should be delivered. Believe it or not, some also teach what colors of clothing to wear and not to wear. You see, it's all about the flesh! No Power of God!

The world is hungry for change! As a matter of fact I believe all of nature is groaning and travailing waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. That manifestation or revealing is soon to take place.

Children of God, it is high time we grow up! We have been on milk too long. It is time to eat strong meat and become the mature sons of God that God has predestinated us to become. *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"* [Romans

8:29]. The word conformed means: *jointly formed, to be fashioned like unto*. Therefore, we are going to be in His image!

You might be thinking of being in His image beyond the grave, but I believe we can be conformed in this life!

The Apostle Paul knew there was a realm he could attain unto in this life that was beyond his Pentecostal experiences. Unlike ministers today, Apostle Paul taught his followers that they could excel in their spiritual life. He let the church know they did not have to be content with speaking in tongues, they could excel to the level of interpretation or prophesy. *"I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying"* [1Corinthians 14:5]. And again, *"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret"* [1Corinthians 14:12-13].

I do not think anyone would argue that fact that Paul was a man greatly gifted of God. All the gifts of the Spirit is evident in his life. He stated that he spoke with tongues more than any. He received the revelation of Jesus Christ from Jesus Himself. He healed the sick, raised the dead, once he struck a man blind, and devils were subject to him. He was a man of vision and purpose. His knowledge of the Word of God far exceeded his peers. But, he was not satisfied! Why was he not content in his Apostleship? What

did he seek for? What was beyond the gifts of the Spirit and the laying on of hands? What indeed!

Let's examine his heart's desire a moment. We find it in his epistle to the Philippians: *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you"* [Philippians 3:8-15].

His goal was perfection! Jesus had apprehended (*arrested, got a hold of*) Paul, now Paul was striving to apprehend or get a hold of Jesus. His heart's desire was to attain unto the very likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing else mattered to him, but to be like the Master. He had suffered the loss of all things and counted it all as dung!

His eye was on the prize! His hearts cry was, "*That I may know Him*"! Oh my friends, Paul knew the Lord far better than any of us today. Yes he did! But he found the more he knew Him, the more he wanted to know Him. There was an intimacy Paul desired that has escaped most of us.

I want to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings! Is that your hearts cry dear friend? Have you tasted Him and found just how really good He is? Would you like to have a relationship with our Lord Jesus beyond what you are now having? I hope your answer is yes, yes I do!

If your answer is yes, then you are on your way to the mastery. Yes, the mastery is obtainable. What is it? It is to be like Jesus! Like Him in Consecration; like Him in Power!

Jesus said, "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*" [Matthew 5:48]. Be perfect? Someone might respond, "I thought you couldn't be perfect"? Yes, that is what most ministers tell us, but why would Jesus tell us to be perfect as His Father which is in heaven is perfect? To be that perfect, one would have to be like God! Do you believe He would ask us to do something we could not do? I think not!

So according to our Lord; to be perfect is to be like the Father. How can we know the measure of such perfection? How could we possibly understand the goal of even reaching such a lofty position?

Here is our answer, *"The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master"* [Luke 6:40]. Jesus is our measuring stick! He is the way!

Remember Jesus said, *"When you have seen me, you have seen the Father."* If you want to see the Father, you will only see Him in Christ, for He is the very image of God! *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"* [2Corinthians 4:4]. *"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"* [Hebrews 1:3]. Perfection is being wholly conformed to the image of the Son of God! That is the Mastery! That is perfection!

Look how Paul described the occupation of the ministry: *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"* [Ephesians 4:11-13]. God placed the ministry in His church for the specific purpose of perfecting it! Until we all come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! Jesus is our measuring stick! Our Pattern! Our example! We shall be like Him!

What are you looking for? What are you striving for my friend? The grave? A little cabin over in glory land? A beautiful mansion in the heavenlies? The antichrist, the mark of the beast, the tribulation? What indeed is your vision of tomorrow?

The writer of Hebrews summed up all that I have been saying in this message: Hebrews Chapter 5, verse 12: *"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat"*. I have always been amazed by this verse. If Paul viewed the church of his day as being in need of teaching the milk of the Word rather than the deep things of God, what would he think of us today?

Verse 13: *"For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe"*. If we are on milk today, Paul says we are babes in Christ and unskillful in righteousness. There is little doubt in my mind that the majority of Christians today haven't a clue what the meat of God's Word is.

Verse 14: *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"*. Strong meat is for mature Christians. It is impossible for babies to comprehend strong meat. Folks, it is time to grow up.

I firmly believe in the physical second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But I also believe that He will not return for a back slid, cold, lukewarm, powerless church. I believe He will return for a glorious church without spot, blemish or

wrinkle. I believe God has predestinated a people that will be conformed to the image of His only Son.

Hebrews Chapter 6, verse 1 says: *"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God"*. Let us go on! The writer is directing the church to press into another realm, another level in God! It is time to get out of the water and ascend into the heavenlies!

Verse 2: *"Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment"*. Doctrines are good and necessary. Laying on of hands is the wonderful means of imparting healing and deliverance. However, the writer is clearly pointing us into a direction beyond these doctrinal truths. Verse 3 says, *"And this will we do, if God permit"*. He is not talking about dying or flying away to live in heaven. He is talking about a level in God that no man other than our Lord Jesus has ever attained unto. It is for a chosen generation, predestinated before the dawning of time.

"If God permits". God sent forth His son in the fullness of time. I believe God will also send forth His sons in His appointed time. Yes, there is a time appointed of the Father that He will allow a people to attain the Mastery!

If we are indeed living in the end of time when all things written will be fulfilled, rest assured God will have a many membered corporate body of believers that will attain unto the fullness of God. Why not let this be your hearts cry that you may be one of those that will attain unto their full potential in Christ.