

#17 Habitation versus Visitation

John tells us that the Incarnate Word “made His dwelling among us.” (John 1:14) And Jesus Himself said that “If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (John 14:23) Living in the Word (as opposed to in the world) is about habitation--Jesus dwelling in us and us in Him. And yet, the common problem for most of us is that we tend toward visitation. We are commuters to the Kingdom rather than residents. Effective prophetic ministry is done by those dwelling in the Kingdom. It's about relationship--relationship with the Person of Jesus. It's not about what we do for the Lord, or what the Lord does for us or through us. We are ambassadors for Christ. (2 Cor. 5:20) To duly represent Him we must have an intimate relationship with Him.

Peter, for all of his faults, recognized that regardless of what others thought of Jesus, and regardless of how difficult life could and would become in being with Jesus, he knew that Jesus was the Promised One. Many of Jesus' followers gave up on Him. He didn't match what they thought the Messiah should be. Many couldn't bear the “hard sayings,” and “many of His disciples drew back and no longer went about with Him.” This troubled our Lord and He asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” Peter replied, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” But Jesus knew that Peter's inclusion of all the twelve was not true. He said, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:60-71)

Judas was not ready for habitation. He was pleased to be counted among Christ's followers, and he did works for Christ. But Judas was not willing to believe that the Person, Jesus, was the one in whom he must dwell. He didn't have an intimate relationship with Jesus. He could embrace the religion, but not the Person. He had his own ideas about who the Messiah should be and what He should do for Israel.

How does this relate to prophetic ministry? Even when people understand the difference between spiritual discernment and human decision making, they still find it hard to know when it is the Lord and when it is their flesh. When we divorce ourselves from habitation--intimacy with the Lord--we lose that spiritual perspective. We become commuters at best. The habitation is like Peter's choice: total commitment to the Lord. What this means is that when we are functioning prophetically there is a proverbial blank check offered to the Lord. “Whatever You want me to do or to say, Lord, that is what I will do. I live with you. This is YOUR word.”

Peter was sold out to the Lord. The Lord had a blank check with him. Peter wasn't perfect--he made many mistakes. He couldn't believe his release from prison was real--he thought it a dream. (Acts 12) Paul rebuked Peter for his attitude regarding the Gentiles. (Gal. 2:11) But Peter made his habitation with the Lord, and the Lord made His home with Peter. He spoke boldly in the Name of Jesus. He was obedient when Jesus told him to welcome the Gentiles into the Body. (Acts 10) He did signs and wonders in the Name of Jesus. He spoke the Word, wrote the Word, and even today when his letters are read, we declare, “The Word of the Lord.”

Habitation. We are not commuters to the Kingdom. Jesus said, “If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (John 14:23) That is the place of prophecy. Do you want to be effective in the prophetic ministry of the Church? Dwell with Him. Let Jesus make His home with you.