

I Will Build My Church

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With so much activity in the religious world today, the Christian needs spiritual guidelines so that he might not be taken in by every "wind of doctrine."

Man was made to be under authority--the authority of God, and to hold positions of authority himself. But misuse of this capacity many times has had devastating results. Much of what is seen today in so-called spiritual movements is no more than man trying to build the kingdom of God with natural authority. This will end up being no more than another tower of Babel.

With the lack of spiritual understanding and discernment in leaders of these movements of our day, we need God's Word to be the light to show us the way. We need to know what God is doing in this hour and how He is working out His plan in believers' lives.

If the believer can discern spiritual authority by the Spirit and know the limits of spiritual authority (whom it affects and how it affects them), this will be a big step in keeping God's people from falling into error.

Christians need to understand that God is doing only one thing, and that is building His church. They need to know that the church is expressed locally and that there is no higher authority than that which is recognized in the local expression. When these truths are understood, they will protect many from the discipling and shepherding movements of today.

We pray that you will read and consider what has been written in this article and move in God's plan, under spiritual authority and within the limits of God.

The Importance of Seeing God's Authority

If we are going to see how the church is designed to bring each member to a place of maturity, we must see what the church is and how it functions under the authority of the head, Christ. Lack of understanding in this area is usually the result of not seeing the true church by the Spirit. Many say that they see the church, but what they see is the concepts they have been taught. Others have different theories about the way the church is supposed to function. The unrest and the lack of revelation in the hearts of many cause definitions of the church to differ, and most do not see the outworking of spiritual authority because it is seen only by revelation.

The vast majority of Christians today define the church to be God's people in an area or locality, without regard to the group they belong to. This definition causes the church to embrace all who name the name of Christ. Assuming we take man's definition for the church, we are in real trouble when it comes to spiritual authority. We must then define authority to fit our definition of the local church. When we will not accept what God's Word says about division and compromise, we must set up our own standard and make God's people feel, when they will not compromise the Word, that they do not love. But love has never been that which allows us to live in sin or stay unseparated from sin.

If there is no revelation of the church, man will continue to try to be the authority because he doesn't see the real authority. But any kind of ministry that does not build and strengthen the local expression of the church is not a gift given by God to the church. You can test all ministry by what is said and done regarding the local church, yet not every group that is local is a church.

Many would say, "Don't come out of your church." The reason they say this is that they do not see the church. This is why the city concept of the church and leadership exists today. It also gives room for the discipleship and shepherding concept that is seen in so many groups. They see an authority, but not spiritual authority; however, they call it spiritual authority.

Matthew 28:18, *"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth.'"*

Acts 13:1-3, *"Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."*

Ephesians 1:22-23, *"And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*

The authority that the scriptures speak of is local authority. It is spiritual authority, working through local brethren in a place of overseership and ministry. This local church authority, in connection with apostolic authority, is the only authority revealed in Scripture.

Apostles and Elders

When we speak about apostles today, we are talking about those who are called and sent out by God. They have authority only as one sent by God. Apostles are not called or sent by the church, but are called by God, sent forth by the Spirit, and work under the authority of the Spirit. Their movement and authority comes directly from the Spirit. In Acts 13:1-3, the Spirit said, *"Separate unto Me..."*

When an apostle goes beyond the local gathering, he is directly under the Holy Spirit, not the local church. We must still understand what this means. God is directing the apostle and those who are with him, and he must answer to God. The apostle is not a freelancer. If he is a spiritual man he will be subject to spiritual brethren, yet not in the direction of his call and ministry. The apostle's authority is his because of the revelation God has given him and the work he is called to do--establishing and building up the local church. When elders have been duly recognized in the local church, there is no higher authority than God's working in the local expression of the body of Christ.

The only extra-local authority is the apostle, and his authority is for the purpose of establishing and building up the local church. The apostle does not have authority over the local church or its elders. We must always remember that spiritual authority is first recognized by spiritual brethren, and it is not so the one in authority may be ruling or lording over, but for the purpose of doing God's will in establishing. At the end of his life, Paul said, "I have finished my course." The Spirit has a course for each one He calls and sends forth. An apostle has spiritual authority only when he is moving and functioning where God wants him to be. Spiritual authority can only be exercised because one is under God's authority and direction, not because one has a position or office.

If spiritual brethren recognize an apostle's establishing ministry, they can benefit greatly, but if they refuse to recognize his authority, he has no authority to move in, take over, remove recognized eldership or set himself up as an authority. He does not have authority over a group or church even if God used him to bring it into expression. Christ is the authority in the church and He directs the work, that work being done by spiritual brethren called and sent by God.

The authority in the local church is also for discipling and watching over the saints. It is spiritual authority, not legal authority, and must be recognized by spiritual brethren. Without spiritual authority there can be no working through elders in the local church or through the apostles who have been sent forth by the Spirit. And this authority never opposes itself. All authority is given to Christ in heaven and earth. God's order and plan are perfect; therefore let us not think that we can come up with a better plan, or that we can do the work of God without seeing and submitting to Christ as the authority, in the church and in those He has called.

Unless a man is seeing and functioning in the local church, he has no spiritual authority or ministry. The apostle sees and is working to bring into manifestation local expressions of the church. Those who are building upon their own organizations or personalities do not see, nor do they have any authority other than their own authority. If we or others are moving in our own authority, we cannot build or function in the church. It is only through Him that we can have access in one Spirit to the Father.

God has never called one man to be His authority in the local church, nor has He called a group of men to be His authority in the church. He has called men who will allow His authority to flow through them, that His purpose might be done and that God's people might be cared for by God through men who are themselves under authority. A man who is not under authority himself has no authority. When we say he has no authority, we mean that there is no way God's authority can flow through him or be revealed unless he is under authority and being controlled by the Spirit himself (Matthew 8:5-10).

"The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1 Corinthians 2:14). In order for the church to function as a theocracy, spiritual authority must be recognized and submitted to. God has not given His authority to just anyone or everyone. All authority has been given to Christ in the building of the church. The church is His body, *"the fullness of Him who fills all in all"* (Ephesians 1:23).

"The manifold wisdom of God is now being made known through the church, to rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10-11).

Man cannot work for God on his own. He cannot "do his own thing" or create his own work or ministry within the work of God. Christ gave gifts, and they must function under His authority to build in what God is building. Man cannot under any circumstances become an authority in himself, nor can he start a work just because he sees the need. All true ministry is building the local expression of the one church. Many men are working for God, but are without a call or a revelation of the body of Christ and its working. Paul said, *"Let each man be careful how he builds upon the foundation."* He goes on to say in I Corinthians 3:14, *"If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward."*

An apostle has spiritual authority because of the revelation he has from the Lord. If there is no revelation, there is no authority. The apostle must have a revelation to be able to labor in the work and ministry of establishing and discipling the local church. This can be said of every man that is called of God to a ministry either in the local church or an extra-local ministry such as that of the apostle, prophet or teacher.

When a man tries to establish even a spiritual fellowship and goes beyond the framework of the local assembly, there are many dangers that may come in to take away from the authority God has placed in the local gathering. Authority can be created that is not recognized and established in the gathering, but develops out of brothers with strong personalities or ministries. When we go farther than God goes, we

open ourselves up for trouble which could destroy the witness God intended to be given by the local church.

This does not mean we are not to have fellowship with other Christians in other assemblies. We would only warn against creating a continuing fellowship that takes away from God's ordained authority in the local assembly. If brethren or ministries want to have fellowship with other believers and assemblies, let it be within the local gathering, with that local authority as the spiritual covering. If we would abide by this simple rule, much trouble could be eliminated.

We believe that all of God's servants can benefit greatly from fellowship with older brethren and ministries from other areas, but some have gone too far. If we would keep this in proper balance, we would have nothing to fear and all to gain, since we can learn from others' experience. We do not want to close the door to any fellowship the Lord would give us. At the same time, we would not want to begin a gathering of God's people that is out from under the local care of the overseers whom God has given to care for souls which they must give an account for (Hebrews 13:17).

If overseers are going to give account to God for souls under them, they must be elders in the midst of a local gathering of believers, watching over souls in the same gathering. They could not be a gathering of elders or workers from different elderships, watching over more than one assembly. There may be many different arrangements that sound good and even seem beneficial for a time, but nothing short of God's pattern can witness to His life and authority. We must never forget, it is Christ who is building His church, and He does not need man's programs or changes. Do we think we know more than the Lord?

Even in the Old Testament, eldership was the order in the cities. Each city had its own elders. We cannot use this city government of the Old Testament as a pattern for church government, but the spirit of the working of eldership on the basis of authority is the same. The difference is that eldership in the church is a ministry of grace functioning through spiritual brethren in one local assembly. Even apostles with spiritual authority and a call from God cannot be rulers over a group of local assemblies. Each gathering must be under the headship of Christ.

God's Order

In the working of the local gathering with elders called of God, the Lord has not called one elder to be over the other elders. Elders have been called to serve among the brethren according to the measure of grace they have received. Other brethren are also called to minister according to His grace. For the local church to function properly, spiritual brethren must be moving as the Head directs by the Spirit. If one brother has a greater ministry than another brother, this does not make him the head of the elders, it simply gives him a greater place of ministry and responsibility for the grace the Lord has given him.

In the world, man is prone to submit to the stronger, and it is no different in the church. The less gifted brethren are inclined to sit back and not function with the ability they do have from the Lord, thereby allowing the more gifted brethren to have control. Excessive influence by any one man can come when brothers fail to function together under Christ, or when they go beyond God's pattern of the church. We need to know what the church is and how it functions, and this means that we must see and function under God's authority and according to His pattern.

If the glory of God's presence has departed, man usually moves in with his own government and program to hold the group together. Then man answers to man rather than recognizing God's spiritual authority flowing through spiritual brethren, called and functioning according to the measure of grace

given them for the building up of the church. But all glory belongs to the Lord and we do not need to reach out to hold up in our own strength what God is doing by the Spirit. In the past when man has moved out of God's pattern, there has always been heartache and trouble in the end. We need to see where God places His authority and blessings, and move in that direction. The Spirit is restoring God's order where hearts are hungry for God and men are moving under His direction and doing His will.

From the beginning of the church, God laid out His pattern through those who were under His authority. The pattern of sending forth apostles came from Antioch, not Jerusalem. We see the church in Jerusalem as a mixture of law and grace, having a mixture of leadership which was not God's design. Much error comes from using Jerusalem as the pattern. We need to know God's pattern, but we also need for the Lord to be in control. The church and work must be under His authority.

The trouble today is that man's direction is taking the place of the Holy Spirit, and the will of men in official positions is taking the place of the will of God. In order for believers to do God's will in the power of the Spirit, they must know what God is doing, how He is doing it, and where He is doing it. The believer must be spiritually alive to God and under His control. If men really saw by revelation what God is doing, they would not believe in the many other things being done in the name of Christ.

Today man wants to do his own thing and call it "an arm of the church" or "a work for God." But to have the Lord show you the church means that you cannot do as you wish any longer. Everybody calls their work a work of God, but the Lord doesn't call everything His. What belongs to man cannot belong to the Lord. What is moving by man's direction cannot be moving by the Spirit. We have too many people doing what they say God has called them to do and then asking God to bless their efforts. We can come to only one conclusion: these men and women have never come under the authority of God, nor have they been called to labor.

The reason we have so many different works and ministries to different groups of people is that a need has been seen, but the way to meet that need has not been truly seen. All must labor under the Spirit's direction, and the first thing we must see is that God is doing only one thing: He is building His church. God's church is under His control. God's church is being expressed in the locality where believers live. When we go beyond God's limits, man is in control and it is not the church.

The local church and the apostle are God's only "schooling" for disciples. Education in the church is not in the mind, but in life and through revelation: a place of learning and a place to express the life that is being worked in our walk. Discipleship works out in two ways: in the local assembly and in the work of an apostle. I believe we can see that those who traveled with Paul were being trained in the calling they had from the Lord for an apostolic ministry. All those in this kind of ministry would have the work of building up the local church. Within the local church, the working is to make disciples out of every believer. Continuing training enables each member to function and minister to others.

God's program and purpose was never meant to include various groups such as Youth With a Mission, Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, Navigators, and many other groups that fall into the same category. The only reason men continue to accept them as the working of God is that they cannot see the church. If anyone sees the church and its working, he will know that all works and ministries must be a part of the church. That which is not according to God's plan can never bring God's results. The men who begin such groups or organizations do not have a revelation of the church. They may have a ministry, but we would question the lasting effects of that ministry if they are not building the local church.

While men may say they are "an arm of the church," we can see they do not see what the church is, nor can they find a place within the structure of God's plan to labor. So they make their own place and

answer to man rather than to God. They are independent in spirit, but they want to be accepted and recognized by all groups, fundamental and evangelical. They have seen the need, but not God's plan, so they cannot be laboring under spiritual authority. Most of these ministries try to work with all denominations, which reveals their spiritual blindness. Man can serve the Lord any way he wants to, and ask God's blessings on his work, as long as he doesn't have to labor in God's way. It seems that everyone wants to "do their own thing" for God.

If judgment is to start in the church, let us get on with whatever needs to be done to bring us back to God's plan, because the Lord is not going to change His plans. He is still building His church. Each member, minister and government must find his function under the Head.

Returning to God's Purpose

It doesn't take much to start a new movement, but to work and function within the church takes God and His direction. Any man can do what he wants to for God, but God wants to build us together into a habitation for Himself. The church does need revival--it needs to come back to what God intended at the beginning. The church, to be the church, must be what God wants, and directed by the Holy Spirit. To name a group a church does not make it the church. Only when you are in Christ and moving by the Spirit in God's purpose can God say you are His church. Too often we say we are the church when there is no witness in His Word--when we are not in God's order or under God's authority. We can submit to each other as long as we can do what we feel is right, and as long as the ones we submit to agree with our opinions about what God is doing. Most men moving on their own do not want God's limits on them, or they want to steal the glory from the Lord. But if we are going to be disciples of the Lord, we must lose all.

Communication being what it is today, it is easy for man to go beyond the course God has laid out for him. We might feel that what we have is so good, the whole world needs to know about it--but if we will instead be faithful in building as the Lord has given the ability, God's work will be strengthened and nurtured. There are no spiritual restraints on worldwide ministries; consequently they have done much damage to the sheep who were not grounded in God's Word. Far worse, the shepherds have not been spiritual enough to warn or give direction concerning much of the teaching of our day. This doesn't speak too highly of the spiritual leaders of our day. They are not grounded in the Word enough to lead the sheep. There is no vision, no revelation. The enemy comes in as an angel of light to deceive the sheep, and most leaders receive him with open arms and are deceived themselves as well.

The angel of light has brought in his own definition of love; thus we have something called "love" that falls very short of being the nature of God. The love that we see today doesn't warn or correct or discipline. Every group has its own definition of love. Where is the real laying down of our lives for each other? When we feel that love never "rocks the boat," or takes a stand for righteousness, we are in for trouble. Where is the strong stand against sin? Where are our standards? There seem to be no real convictions on anything. This can only be a result of no real relationship with the Lord. There is too much "head religion" rather than a life walked out in the power of the Spirit in the presence of the Lord.

Every one has his own special concept, all kinds of new expressions--kingdom living, discipleship, shepherding, etc. But these don't seem to be producing real holy living. Men talk about holy lives, but the teachings they follow make a place for sin. Some say that if you sin, "you lose your inheritance, but you are still on your way to heaven." Some have lost their reasoning. It is amazing to see how blind people can be when it comes to understanding the way God has made for us to walk in. No doubt there

are many sincere souls, sincerely wrong.

Spiritual Discernment

Does God make a place for ignorance? No, I am afraid not. We have the Spirit with us to lead us into all truth, and we have the Scriptures to study to show ourselves approved unto God. What we are seeing today is the lukewarmness that is spoken of in Revelation. All the fowls of the air are coming to rest in the tree grown from a mustard seed (Luke 13:19). They are all saying, "Lord, Lord," but does He know them?

With a perverted view of the real standard, most Christians can't even discern fruit in each other's lives. As long as they can hug their necks and make a big fuss over them, they call it love. Some use this as a reason--if they need one--to go around hugging and kissing both brothers and sisters. I am sure they are having the time of their lives and call this fellowship. But we sure have slipped a long way in a hundred years--or maybe it hasn't been that long since we had spiritual standards. It doesn't seem to be getting any better either. I wonder where it will all end? This has all come about because there is no relationship with a holy God.

If anything is going to change, we must begin at the root of the problem--right with the heart and with our relationship with the Lord. When we start to enjoy fellowship with God, our attitudes will change. We cannot have fellowship with God without knowing His character and having our own character changed. When we see God's judgments in the book of Acts, how can we think that God will overlook what we see around us in this day? We need real repentance and a returning to the Word to know God's plan. Then we need to be willing to move in His purpose within His limits.

We always have those among us who would deceive, but with spiritual oversight, and God's people not following after them but rather separating themselves from them, they will stand less of a chance of gaining the place which they have in our day. It is children who run to and fro, not mature Christians. God's children must be willing to be disciplined. They must be grounded and settled in the revelation of Christ and His body, the church. The closer we get to the day of the Lord, the more deceptive men will become. Paul warned the Corinthians that the devil would come as an angel of light, and his ministers as ministers of righteousness. If God's children do not have spiritual discernment, they will be deceived. Many today cannot discern spiritually. We must be in the last days.

One of the protections God has given to His people is the shepherds He has placed in their midst. This is where seeing and submitting to spiritual authority come in. If we have not been exercised to recognize spiritual authority we surely will not be able to submit to it. In the church leadership is God's first line of defense against those who would come in to defile God's people by their teachings. God's people need to be in a place of rest, where they can feed in green pastures, but when there is not a proper working of the church, they must look after themselves, and most are not qualified to watch over their own souls. God never intended the church to function in that way.

The further we go into this lukewarmness, the less we know about true repentance. If there is going to be victory in believers' lives, they must know the Lord's definition of repentance. First, repentance clears God to forgive. Without repentance no man can see God. Not only are we sorry for what we have done, but now we do not continue in that which we have been set free from. We cannot continue in sin and think that we have eternal life. Repentance takes us out of sin and causes us to hate sin as God hates sin. It is His goodness, His love that draws us to repentance. Real repentance is without regret, leading to salvation. We need to be sorrowful according to the will of God. The sorrow of the world will only produce death.

Most of the repentance of our day is not true repentance, but a kind of worldly sorrow. God will not forgive without repentance because you cannot accept God's way of salvation until you have first seen yourself and your sinfulness. Repentance is the heart's attitude toward the world and the things in the world, and an attitude made right toward God. You cannot repent and continue to live as you have in the past. Salvation, if it means anything, means we have been taken from one kingdom and put into another kingdom.

There are few people who say after they have repented that they want to live a new life. They have formed their own usage of the word "repentance." They want to continue to live for and in themselves while they are here on earth, but they also want eternal life. This is because they are spiritually blind and have never really repented. We cannot have the world and the things of the world, and believe we love God. We cannot love both at once--it is an impossibility. A person that has repented first of all has a right attitude toward God in all things, and then goes on to put right his relationship with the world, people, and things. Repentance brings us to the place where our lives find expression in His will.

As long as our understanding of repentance allows us to live in sin and out of fellowship with God (this is what our "cheap believism" has done), we will not know the Lord or His power in our lives and in the assembly of believers. This is the reason that man has had to bring in his programs, and define the church for himself. If believers lived in the presence of God, they would have a fear of God. They would not feel at liberty to do their own thing, but would have a reverence for God and not dare to displease Him.

Men have made the "church" what they want it to be, rather than allowing the Lord to build them as living stones into the church. God says there is only one church, but most call every religious group or meeting place "the church." If they really saw the church that is spoken about in the Word of God, they would not speak so lightly about the church or refer to every building as the church. But the devil has educated us to live with sin, and sin has blinded the eyes of those that say, "Lord, Lord." The light has become darkness to many, and they are blinded by it. Christ's demands are too high for those who have not tasted of repentance. When the light shines in to some gatherings, the cry goes up, "You are legal," "You don't have love!" Repentance will bring a new expression of love and that expression will not allow us to live in sin and darkness. Without repentance we would not go on to maturity. Man continues more and more to make for himself a cheap way to heaven--or at least he says he is going to heaven. But a heaven without Jesus is hell.

Why do believers want to hold on to self, the expression of "me," not under the direction of the Lord? As long as man continues down this road, God's church and His ways will become more and more dim. Many are being deceived because they have no personal relationship with the Lord. The devil has given them the substitute of mind religion and man's opinions for real fellowship and knowing the Lord in the Spirit. Most of the mind religions today are not found in false cults, but right among those that claim the fullness of the Spirit. Man is hearing a lot of things; his ears are being tickled because he does not want to hear God for himself. He is willing to follow man and his doctrines. He cannot recognize spiritual authority because he doesn't want to hear and obey God's Word.

Abiding In the Vine

There is no easy way to produce fruit in our lives. We must abide in Christ. This is a whole way of life and basis for life. To abide in Christ is to abide in His Word. This doesn't mean just reading the Word or studying the Word, but allowing the Word to become our experience through our relationship with the Lord. This means we must know His Word spoken by Him to our hearts, allow our hearts to be set aside for His working, and then obey His Word. This is the only way the Word can become our life. As we abide in His Word, His nature and character will be revealed in our lives. This is how we know believers by their fruit. We cannot walk on our own and produce fruit. The only way we can produce fruit is by abiding in Him.

Read 1 John 3:24, 2:5, and 2:17. *"He who does the will of God abides forever."* Fruit produced shows that life is flowing in and out of our relationship with the Lord. It is only in our walk in faith that the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in our lives. This walk of faith is utter dependence on Him. Faith can only walk in the Word, for that is the foundation or the beginning of faith. In our faith (abiding) we will add those fruits that give our lives real purpose. Fruit comes from a process of God's working in us and the outworking of His grace. We must know what Jesus did for us when He took our sins on the cross. Then what He has done must become our experience. If we live only in theory, we have no reality; but through faith we can experience all that God accomplished for us in Christ Jesus.

By faith, we have died with Christ. By faith, we have been resurrected in the newness of life. We were in the old man, "Adam," but now by faith we are in the new man, Christ. We are not trying to die to the old man. We are not part of or in the old man. If we have life in Christ we are in Christ; we are a new creation. Now through our fellowship in the Spirit we live in this new man, Christ. This is not something we do in our own strength, but by faith we walk in newness of life. Our strength is Christ; our ability comes from our personal fellowship with God. Keep in mind what John said, *"He that does God's will abides in Him"* (1 John 2:17b). Our possession is always in Christ. Our walk is always in faith.

Many believers today are looking at their own experience and then trying to find a verse to prove their experience. When we start by looking at ourselves, we are deceived, and this can only lead to a fruitless life being lived in the power of the flesh. Let each one look at the living Word and find life in and through that Word. In Christ we are not those who are always looking for the victory; we are overcomers. Scripture tells us that faith is the victory. We must abandon ourselves to Christ if we are going to live His life.

This is eternal life: to know Him. To reach the goal, we are going to walk God's way, according to His plans. The Lord has called us unto Himself and promised us rest. If we will not come to Him, He cannot give us rest. He wants to work through us, but we must come to Him. When we come to Him, we cease our working, and the real work begins. It is this work which He has ordained that we should walk in. We cannot please Him unless we have faith, and faith rests in Christ. Jesus said, "I will build my church," and as we have said, as long as we are building in our own way, He cannot build in our lives or build our lives together as He has designed. Jesus said that building on the rock, on the firm foundation, was hearing and acting on what we hear. This is His way of building. We must come to Him and wait on Him.

Holiness is not a matter of painstaking conformity to the individual precepts of a law-code; it is rather a question of the Holy Spirit producing His fruit in our lives. Time is necessary for our walk in holiness. Fruit, as we have said, is that which is produced in our lives out of fellowship and by His power--by putting our wills into His will. We are growing in grace as He produces fruit through us, not for us but

for the Lord, and that others might glorify the Lord as they look on.

To abide in Christ and to walk in faith, God's people need understanding, and this comes to us only in Christ. He has become knowledge to us who believe. We cannot abide in our own understanding or by our own ability; it takes the Lord working in and through us by the Spirit. Our ability is Christ, and this is a reality only as we walk in His Word. Our whole man must come under the control and discipline of His Word by the Spirit. It is by faith that we enter into the fullness of what God has accomplished in Christ Jesus.