

WHAT REALLY MATTERS

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“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.” (Rev. 3:18)

When Yeshua speaks to His Body today, this is the counsel that He gives. We are living in an extremely selfish and decadent time in history. Never have there been such luxuries and comforts. Never have there been so many millions that live in this kind of splendor here in America and in many nations of the earth. Even royal courts of times past did not live as well as we do. Indeed, many of us boast:

“...I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing...” (Rev.3:17a)

Now, I am not against prosperity. It is a gift from God. He loves to lavish upon us His provision and love. I am thankful for all of our wonderful blessings that have come to us in our modern age. But, in my heart I also know that we are really missing it somehow.

From our earliest childhoods, we have been trained to be consumers. America, in particular, consumes more and throws away more garbage than any other country. We have been taught to cater to our flesh. We have been taught to give up quickly if something is difficult and to find an easier and more convenient path. We want everything instantly and without any effort on our parts.

What concerns me is that most people do not recognize how desperately needy they truly are. We have just become drunk on our own pursuits of pleasure, money and power. We have been duped! Satan, the enemy of our souls, has done a terrible work during the last 100 years to erode and destroy WHAT REALLY MATTERS spiritually in our culture and in the present day church.

The scary thing is this: the vast majority of us are so busy with our lives that we don't even know what has happened. We have been deceived into thinking that everything is all right, but all the while our consciences will not let us rest. Deep down, we all somehow can tell that we aren't where we should be.

So what can we do? Because of the fall of man and the sin nature, none of us has any hope apart from God's grace. He has to come and rescue each of us on a daily basis, or we would surely perish.

Yeshua spoke to the Laodicean church (us!) and He said that we (as a whole) are lukewarm and spiritually bankrupt! But, He has made a way to bring us into not only physical prosperity, but spiritual prosperity as well. He does not want us to be poor in WHAT REALLY MATTERS!

I was meditating on this whole passage some weeks ago. Wherever I have ministered this year, I have not been able to get very far away from it. The LORD brought a revelation out of this passage, which I have preached everywhere I have been this fall. I was sitting in the Taipei business lounge, in the end of September, and waiting to board a plane to Jakarta, Indonesia when

this message first came to me. I want to share it with you! I pray that the LORD would open your heart to hear what the Spirit is saying! Amen.

He said to me:

“Most of my people are wasting their lives. They are living only for the present moment, with no thought of eternity. They are investing themselves in worthless activities. They do not value what I value. They do not love what I love. They do not hate what I hate. Most of all, they live only for this present world and their own pursuits of pleasure. They are in love with it more than in love with Me. They have not come to me and cried out for the knowledge of the truth in this area. Many are in great deception. They think everything is ok. They are not looking at their lives through My eyes. They do not allow me to purify their motives. I want you to warn them of the great danger of this last hour. They are not aware of WHAT REALLY MATTERS!”

Then, as I was looking at Revelation 3:18, three phrases seemed to jump out at me in bold relief:

“I counsel thee to buy of me GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE, that thou mayest be rich; and WHITE RAINMENT, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and ANOINT THINE EYES WITH EYESALVE, THAT THOU MAYEST SEE.”

Then He said:

“Do you know what these three things are? They are the true riches of the overcoming Bride who is waiting for the Kingdom to come. They are the most important things to have in the midnight hour that you are now in. They are the only way for My Bride to be ready for My return. You must seek for these with all of your heart in prayer so that you will not be ashamed when I appear. They are WHAT REALLY MATTERS.”

Then I turned to Matthew 25, at the Holy Spirit’s instruction, and I began to experience what I have come to call a “revelation download”. It came flooding in so fast I could hardly keep up. The LORD just opened that whole chapter up to me and dumped it into my spirit. I suddenly understood WHAT REALLY MATTERS.

Matthew chapter 25 contains three parables. They are the qualifications of the Bride who has made Herself ready. These three parables talk about:

GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE; WHITE RAINMENT; AND EYESALVE. Gold tried in the fire represents the true eternal riches: the fire of holiness/ true worship and souls won for the Messiah! White raiment represents the righteous deeds of the saints as we forsake all and obey our Master moment by moment each day. Eye salve represents the ability to SEE and RECOGNIZE Yeshua when He comes to you in this life in disguise. This is all THAT REALLY MATTERS!!!!

The first parable talks about the wise and foolish virgins. They were all waiting for the Bridegroom to return at the midnight hour. But, only half were ready. Only half were prepared. Only the wise virgins had enough oil for their lamps to stay lit. All seemed to start out all right, but only the wise OVERCAME the darkness of the midnight hour.

The LORD said to me:

“Many have heard the message that I am coming soon. Many have heard the gospel message, but they are not lit with My fire. All have lamps: this represents worship. Man is a worshipping being. He is always lit with some kind of fire. Man is made to be a lamp burning brightly with My Holy Fire. Whatever You worship, that is the kind of oil that you put in your lamp. Many are not lit with the fire of the Holy Spirit, but instead their lamps are lit with the strange fires of idolatry.”

I began thinking about some examples from my observations in the past. When I lived in New York City a few years ago. I used to walk our dog early in the morning. We lived in a loft apartment for about a year or so down in the heart of the financial district. Wall street was literally one block away. I used to watch as the people poured out of the subways, cabs, and limousines every morning and went to work. They had a cruel expression on their faces. They all seemed to be driven at a frantic pace. I saw much fear and anxiety on their faces. Most of all, what struck me was HOW THEY ALL SEEMED TO BE THE SAME. They were “lit” with the fire from the altar of their god: mammon. They were literally “serving Money”.

One day I had a vision, in December of the year 2003. It was so cold in the city and the wind would just rip around the tall office buildings. I was walking our dog on a weekday morning as usual. I suddenly saw these multitudes of financial workers in the spirit, and they were all chained together like slaves being driven into their offices. Mammon is such a hard taskmaster! He is cruel. I saw as their blood was sucked out of them in exchange for their temporary power and money. Then I saw their hearts explode from the poison of greed and fear as they died. Then I watched as thousands upon thousands went off a cliff and into the eternal lake of fire. They were all chained together. They couldn't escape. There was no hope for them. They were lost for all of eternity. I was stunned. I had to go into a coffee shop and warm up, sit down to pull myself together. It really frightened me.

Then I remembered another experience from my music school days in Philadelphia, PA. There was a street named Spruce St. that was only a block away from Curtis Institute of Music, where I attended. I had to walk on it when I went back and forth from my apartment to school. Spruce St. was, at that time in the early eighties, a popular hangout for homosexuals. I always hated walking there, because I could feel them undressing me with their eyes. I could literally feel the spirit of lust in them trying to attach itself to me. I would run sometimes and did my best to avoid that area. Sometimes, particularly at night, I would go way out of my way to avoid that street.

One time, it was a Friday night and I was returning from an evening recital at Curtis Hall. When I came to Spruce St. that night, I saw two “men” that were leering at me. They passed me on the sidewalk, and as they did, I suddenly saw them in the spirit: a blue fire with red in the center that was burning inside and all around both of them. They were completely wrapped up in what looked like green snakes that slithered in and out of their mouths, eyes, and ears as well as other body openings. Then I realized it was those snake-like demons that were leering at me through their eyes. I could hear them as they hissed at me. They were saying words that I cannot write here. Then, as they walked past me, I suddenly smelled the worst stench I had ever smelled. I gagged and almost threw up right there on the sidewalk! As they passed me, I smelled what was burning in them spiritually – the strange fire of unclean spirits. It was the worst smell! Thankfully, they didn't follow me for long. I ran home and quickly locked the door behind me. I didn't really understand visions back then, so that really shook me up!

There are many different altars that people go to light their lamps. Only the worship of the Most High God and our Messiah Yeshua is safe, pure, and altogether lovely. Stay lit with the fire of coals from off the altar of God Almighty!

The law of worship is: You become like whatever god you worship. You take on its' nature and you burn with its' fire.

The only One that we can worship without it destroying us is the LORD.

We must be lit with the true fire of the LORD and not the strange fires of idolatry. That is the only oil that lights the lamps of the Bride. Only this can refine our inner lives to produce the true riches: gold tried in the fire.

The second parable concerns the proper stewardship of our gifts, our talents, and our resources. We see in this parable three different levels of God's gifts given to man. A few people are given the stewardship of "five talents". More are given the stewardship of "two talents". Most of us are given "one talent".

We see these three levels of giftings in all areas, whether in artistic giftings, or music, or in finances, or in medicine, law, or any other occupation. Perhaps, we see this most clearly in the financial realm. About 3-6% of the population actually is gifted from God to *create* wealth. They become the Bill Gates, the Rupert Murdoch's, and the Howard Hughes' of the world. They create the billions of dollars. These are "five talent" people. Then about 10-15% of the population manages the business empires of those finance geniuses for them. They do pretty well financially as "two talent" people. The rest of the population (over 75% of us) just work from paycheck to paycheck, if you will – working for those that manage the few multi-billionaires' businesses, etc. That is how our free enterprise system operates.

Regardless of what realm of life we are in, God wants us to increase and grow in our giftings, talents, and finances. But just increasing is not enough. We must sow our "talents" into Kingdom of God. We must lay down all that we have been given for the sake of the Gospel. We must BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITH ALL THAT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN and not squander it on our own selfish pursuits. Gold tried in the fire is the true riches: the salvation of the lost souls of man. All must be sown into the Kingdom for this purpose alone. We must allow the cross to do its' deep work in us until we realize that all we have been given is not our own. We must steward it with eternity in mind.

Finally, the most sobering parable in this chapter is all about this:

DO YOU RECOGNIZE YESHUA WHEN HE COMES TO YOU IN DISGUISE?

The LORD said this to me:

"When I come to you in this life, I do not appear to you in My glory, unless it is for the purposes of ministry. I appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos and let Him see Me in My resurrection glory, but only a few have been ordained for such. I always will come to you in disguise. Every day you can find Me, if you are looking. But your eyes must be anointed to see with My compassion. I come to you as the poor, the destitute, the fatherless, the orphans, the widows, the rejected and downtrodden, the sick, the needy, the homeless, those whom the world despises, and the all the hurting around you in your world. How do you receive them? How do you minister to

them? How you receive and minister to them is how you receive and minister to Me. I come to you daily disguised as the least of your brothers and sisters in My Body.

“The only way to recognize Me when I come to you is if you let me give you the eye salve from heaven. Only My Bride recognizes Me when I appear to them in this way. They take care of the least of these just as they would Me. My final judgment is based on whether you are a sheep or a goat: Has your nature really been changed? Are you really born again? Then you will love with My love and help those that I send to you. This is the only way to bring the lost to salvation. You must not look for anything in return, except on that day when you stand before Me. If you do give all away for Me and My Kingdom, you will find that you will not be able to give your all away. It will keep coming back again and again so you can give more. That is the true purpose and function of prosperity.

Feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; give the stranger a home; clothe the naked; visit the sick; go to the prisoners, and you will find Me right there. I am not interested in your fancy church buildings and your programs if you neglect the least of My brothers and sisters. Bring the Gospel into Your world NOT ONLY IN WORD BUT IN DEED at all costs. That is WHAT REALLY MATTERS”

Then I was reminded of a vision given to William Booth. He was the founder of the Salvation Army. God called him into ministry when he gave him a vision of the lost. His account appears below:

A Vision Of The Lost

By William Booth (1829-1912)

“On one of my recent journeys, as I gazed from the coach window, I was led into a train of thought concerning the condition of the multitudes around me. They were living carelessly in the most open and shameless rebellion against God, without a thought for their eternal welfare. As I looked out of the window, I seemed to see them all . . . millions of people all around me given up to their drink and their pleasure, their dancing and their music, their business and their anxieties, their politics and their troubles. Ignorant - willfully ignorant in many cases - and in other instances knowing all about the truth and not caring at all. But all of them, the whole mass of them, sweeping on and up in their blasphemies and devilries to the Throne of God. While my mind was thus engaged, I had a vision.

I saw a dark and stormy ocean. Over it the black clouds hung heavily; through them every now and then vivid lightening flashed and loud thunder rolled, while the winds moaned, and the waves rose and foamed, towered and broke, only to rise and foam, tower and break again.

In that ocean I thought I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, shouting and shrieking, cursing and struggling and drowning; and as

they cursed and screamed they rose and shrieked again, and then some sank to rise no more.

And I saw out of this dark angry ocean, a mighty rock that rose up with its summit towering high above the black clouds that overhung the stormy sea. And all around the base of this great rock I saw a vast platform. Onto this platform, I saw with delight a number of the poor struggling, drowning wretches continually climbing out of the angry ocean. And I saw that a few of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the place of safety.

On looking more closely I found a number of those who had been rescued, industriously working and scheming by ladders, ropes, boats and other means more effective, to deliver the poor strugglers out of the sea. Here and there were some who actually jumped into the water, regardless of the consequences in their passion to "rescue the perishing." And I hardly know which gladdened me the most - the sight of the poor drowning people climbing onto the rocks reaching a place of safety, or the devotion and self-sacrifice of those whose whole being was wrapped up in the effort for their deliverance.

As I looked on, I saw that the occupants of that platform were quite a mixed company. That is, they were divided into different "sets" or classes, and they occupied themselves with different pleasures and employments. But only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get the people out of the sea.

But what puzzled me most was the fact that though all of them had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean, nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten all about it. Anyway, it seemed the memory of its darkness and danger no longer troubled them at all. And what seemed equally strange and perplexing to me was that these people did not even seem to have any care - that is any agonizing care - about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning right before their very eyes . . . many of whom were their own husbands and wives, brothers and sisters and even their own children.

Now this astonishing unconcern could not have been the result of ignorance or lack of knowledge, because they lived right there in full sight of it all and even talked about it sometimes. Many even went regularly to hear lectures and sermons in which the awful state of these poor drowning creatures was described.

I have always said that the occupants of this platform were engaged in different pursuits and pastimes. Some of them were absorbed day and night in trading and business in order to make gain, storing up their savings in boxes, safes and the like.

Many spent their time in amusing themselves with growing flowers on the side of the rock, others in painting pieces of cloth or in playing music, or in dressing themselves up in different styles and walking about to be admired. Some occupied themselves chiefly in eating and drinking, others were taken up with arguing about the poor drowning creatures that had already been rescued.

But the thing to me that seemed the most amazing was that those on the platform to whom He called, who heard His voice and felt that they ought to obey it - at least they said they did - those who confessed to love Him much were in full sympathy with Him in the task He had undertaken - who worshipped Him or who professed to do so - were so taken up with their trades and professions, their money saving and pleasures, their families and circles, their religions and arguments about it, and their preparation for going to the mainland, that they did not listen to the cry that came to them from this Wonderful Being who had Himself gone down into the sea. Anyway, if they heard it they did not heed it. They did not care. And so the multitude went on right before them struggling and shrieking and drowning in the darkness.

*And then I saw something that seemed to me even stranger than anything that had gone on before in this strange vision. I saw that some of these people on the platform, whom this Wonderful Being had called to, wanting them to come and help Him in His difficult task of saving these perishing creatures, were always praying and crying out to Him **to come to them!***

Some wanted Him to come and stay with them, and spend His time and strength in making them happier. Others wanted Him to come and take away various doubts and misgivings they had concerning the truth of some letters He had written them. Some wanted Him to come and make them feel more secure on the rock - so secure that they would be quite sure that they should never slip off again into the ocean. Numbers of others wanted Him to make them feel quite certain that they would really get off the rock and onto the mainland someday: because as a matter of fact, it was well known that some had walked so carelessly as to lose their footing, and had fallen back again into the stormy waters.

*So these people used to meet and get up as high on the rock as they could, and looking towards the mainland (where they thought the Great Being was) they would cry out, "Come to us! Come and help us!" And all the while He was down (by His Spirit) among the poor struggling, drowning creatures in the angry deep, with His arms around them trying to drag them out, and looking up - oh! So longingly but all in vain - to those on the rock, crying to them with His voice all hoarse from calling, "Come to **Me!** Come, and help **Me!***

And then I understood it all. It was plain enough. The sea was the ocean of life - the sea of real, actual human existence. That lightening was the gleaming of piercing truth coming from Jehovah's Throne. That thunder was the distant echoing of the wrath of God. Those multitudes of people shrieking, struggling and agonizing in the stormy sea, was the thousands and thousands of poor harlots and harlot-makers, of drunkards and drunkard makers, of thieves, liars, blasphemers and ungodly people of every kindred, tongue and nation.

Oh what a black sea it was! And oh, what multitudes of rich and poor, ignorant and educated were there. They were all so unlike in their outward circumstances and conditions, yet all alike in one thing - all sinners before God - all held by, and holding onto, some iniquity, fascinated by some idol, the slaves of some devilish lust, and ruled by the foul fiend from the bottomless pit!

*"All alike in one thing?" No, all alike in **two things** - not only the same in their wickedness but, unless rescued, the same in their sinking, sinking . . . down, down, down . . . to the same terrible doom. That great sheltering rock represented Calvary, the place where Jesus had died for them. And the people on it were those who had been rescued. The way they used their energies, gifts and time represented the occupations and amusements of those who professed to be saved from sin and hell - followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The handful of fierce, determined ones, who were risking their own lives in saving the perishing were true soldiers of the cross of Jesus. That Mighty Being who was calling to them from the midst of the angry waters was the Son of God, "the same yesterday, today and forever" who is still struggling and interceding to save the dying multitudes about us from this terrible doom of damnation, and whose voice can be heard above the music, machinery, and noise of life, calling on the rescued to come and help Him save the world.*

My friends in Christ, you are rescued from the waters, you are on the rock, He is in the dark sea calling on you to come to Him and help Him. Will you go? Look for yourselves. The surging sea of life, crowded with perishing multitudes rolls up to the very spot on which you stand. Leaving the vision, I now come to speak of the fact - a fact that is as real as the Bible, as real as the Christ who hung upon the cross, as real as the judgment day will be, and as real as the heaven and hell that will follow it.

*Look! Don't be deceived by appearances - men and things are not what they seem. **All who are not on the rock are in the sea!** Look at them from the standpoint of the great White Throne, and what a sight you have! Jesus Christ, the Son of God is, through His Spirit, in the midst of this dying multitude, struggling to save them. And He is calling on **you** to jump into the sea - to go right away to His side and help Him in the holy strife. Will you jump? That is, will you go to His feet and place yourself absolutely at His disposal?*

A young Christian once came to me, and told me that for some time she had been giving the Lord her profession and prayers and money, but now she wanted to give Him her life. She wanted to go right into the fight. In other words, she wanted to go to His assistance in the sea. As when a man from the shore, seeing another struggling in the water, takes off those outer garments that would hinder his efforts and leaps to the rescue, so will you who still linger on the bank, thinking and singing and praying about the poor perishing souls, lay aside your shame, your pride, your cares about other people's opinions, your love of ease and all the selfish loves that have kept you back for so long, and rush to the rescue of this multitude of dying men and women.

Does the surging sea look dark and dangerous? Unquestionably it is so. There is no doubt that the leap for you, as for everyone who takes it, means difficulty and scorn and suffering. For you it may mean more than this. It may mean death. He who beckons you from the sea however, knows what it will mean - and knowing, He still calls to you and bids to you to come.

You must do it! You cannot hold back. You have enjoyed yourself in Christianity long enough. You have had pleasant feelings, pleasant songs, pleasant meetings,

and pleasant prospects. There has been much of human happiness, much clapping of hands and shouting of praises - very much of heaven on earth.

Now then, go to God and tell Him you are prepared as much as necessary to turn your back upon it all, and that you are willing to spend the rest of your days struggling in the midst of these perishing multitudes, whatever it may cost you.

*You **must** do it. With the light that is now broken in upon your mind and the call that is now sounding in your ears, and the beckoning hands that are now before your eyes, you have no alternative. To go down among the perishing crowds is your duty. Your happiness from now on will consist in sharing their misery, your ease in sharing their pain, your crown in helping them to bear their cross, and your heaven in going into the very jaws of hell to rescue them.*

Now what will you do?"
William Booth

I pray that the LORD will help you to heed this message of WHAT REALLY MATTERS!

You must not just hear it but DO it. Amen.

The LORD is coming so soon!! I pray that you will be a part of the overcoming Bride of Messiah!

May the LORD continue to have mercy on us and pour His love and grace upon us all!

Love in our Messiah,

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