

dec 13, 2022

not by might nor by power

"'not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts." zech 4:6

following up on yesterday's message, we must all be defenders of the truth, fighting the good fight of faith. back in the 80's the church stepped into the political arena, endorsing and electing ronald reagan, a great president. the church (the christian coalition) took pride and began to flex its muscles. the church took pride in its new-found influence while confusing it with spiritual power.

the differences between the first-century church and today's church twenty centuries later can be summarized in two words, influence and power. the early church did not have enough influence to keep peter out of prison, but the believers had enough power to pray him out.

the world is confused today, needing to witness actions representing "genuine" christianity. we need to get back to our roots; back to the basics of the gospel. "but now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?" gal 4:9

this is not a religion we cling to. it is a relationship. that is what distinguishes christianity from all other world religions. that relationship is

born in the spirit and must operate in the spirit.  
that's where all the power is. the rest are just  
beggarly elements.

most other religions focus on man's quest to guarantee  
himself a place in heaven through good works, penance,  
giving, and the like, all of which are feeble attempts  
by sinful humans to gain acceptance by a holy God. but  
christianity is not about man trying to get to God.  
it's about God trying to get to man. it's about God  
loving us so much and reaching out even to the point of  
taking on our human frailty. and what does the word  
say? He "was in all points tempted as we are, yet  
without sin." heb 4:15

our Lord set the example for us to follow; to follow  
Him into peace, fulfillment and joy unspeakable?  
"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.: 1  
cor 15:50 neither can works or good intentions. take  
upon yourselves the Lord Jesus Christ. inherit His  
very nature and works will follow; not as requirements  
to get there, but as blessings to receive when you  
arrive. in the spirit of that, i give you the  
beatitudes from matthew 5.

blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the  
kingdom of heaven.

blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be  
comforted.

blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

blessed are those who hunger and thirst for  
righteousness, for they shall be filled.

blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." eph 6:12

the fight is on. we struggle in the flesh but we overcome in the spirit. what is the consolation our Savior left us with? "these things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. in the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." john 16:33