

Afternoon Session - Mr. Rod McNair - "Teaching is Following—We are the Pipeline, Not the Spring"

Matthew 28:18 - "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..." They weren't just to teach whatever they wanted. He didn't say, "Hey, I'm going away, but I'm not going to tell you what to think. One 'truth' might be different from another. Find the truth within yourself." Yet how many times do we hear this? No, He said, "I've been with you these last three years, and I want you to take the next step. If you follow Me, you will have the full power of the universe behind you!" This commission continues to this day.

II Timothy 2:1 – “You, my son, be strong in the grace that's in Christ Jesus... And the things that you've heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” This is through four different levels: Paul to Timothy, Timothy to other teachers, and other teachers to yet other teachers.

Am I the spring or fountain? Are the answers somehow inside me? This is the super secular way of looking at things today. "Find your own answers." The other way is that we're a conduit by which information passes through. A person receives something, then they carry it forward faithfully. That's not popular in our country. "Wow, how unthinking and unoriginal." Somehow, we're not a thinker if we just pass on what we've been taught. When we're in a teaching role, we're not the spring, we're the pipeline.

Who is the Source we look to? Of course, it's Jesus Christ. Do we have an idea baby or a clever analogy, but perhaps we discover it really doesn't jive with Scripture? We cannot be the source of Truth. John 7:37 - "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." Who's the Source? Jesus Christ. But it does say that rivers of living water will come from us if we follow it faithfully. If we're giving sermonettes, we need to remain as close to the Source as possible. Don't add any toxic substances or additives to what we've received. The recipients need to receive a clear, refreshing message.

What if we're not teachers? We might be instructing on the job, or in the home, or elsewhere. You're likely using all kinds of biblical principles and teaching them without actually quoting Scripture. How are we teaching in the home? Wives should look to their husbands for answers. Children can learn from their parents' examples. We can be conduits to our families of the Truth.

This doesn't mean that we don't have inspiration from time to time, or that new connections aren't being made. But if we're going way out on a limb, we need to reexamine where such ideas might come from. *UnCorinthian Leadership: Thematic Reflections on 1 Corinthians* [by David Ian Starling] has a lot of solid principles. I Corinthians has every kind of problem you can

imagine happening in a church area. They drew their ideas from the surrounding culture. There were some very talented people in Corinth. 1 Corinthians 1:4 - Paul acknowledged that some of these men were very talented and gifted speakers. They were likely very confident and assertive and full of their own ideas. "The cult of celebrity." This is what we see all around us today. Who are the leaders today? Those who are the most confident and aggressive and win the debate. They point to themselves all too often. "I'm deciding what I believe. I'm the authority." They weren't looking to the apostles for direction.

Yet Paul told them that there was a crisis in followership there. They were nowhere near ready to be in any kind of leadership role. They couldn't follow anyone. Paul noted that he didn't come with persuasive words and human wisdom, but with demonstration of the spirit and the power of God. "I'm not coming with great confidence and aggression and charisma. I'm pointing you to the Source." 4:1 - Paul didn't care if they judged him. He was, however, a careful steward of the word of God. A steward is not the owner of the property, but a caretaker of the property. He was very careful with what was entrusted to him.

4:6 -- What do I have that I didn't receive? Remember this passage. Whenever I have the opportunity to talk, read or convey a message, I'm only passing on what I've received. Yet there are times in the Church today where, because we're in deceitful days, people fall prey to the idea that they know better despite having evangelists preach to them, had hands laid on them, etc. This is a serious warning for us! We do NOT check our brains at the door. But we are a section of pipe in the pipeline. We received the Truth from someone, and they received it from someone else, and they did, too. And we pass it on so that others downstream get it accurately, as well. People have thoughts, but all too often, it's NOT an original thought. They read or heard it somewhere else. We don't have ideas in a vacuum, and that's the irony.

John 10:1 - The older you get, the more you realize we all are sheep. That's not a derogatory statement! As sheep, we *want* to follow someone or something. So when individuals get off-track, they're not their own ideas, but they're following someone who wasn't commissioned to that particular position. A shepherd leads his sheep and they know his voice and follow him. So we follow Christ. Even as teachers, we are following. We're simply teaching from the substance we've already been given.

Revelation 3:14 - There's a huge temptation in this world and a tax on the Church to see ourselves as the Source. That's what this era deals with. "I am rich, have become wealthy and have need of nothing" and don't know that we're wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Remember that Christ has used His faithful ministers to teach these things.