

# Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: November 18, 2012

## Joint-Heirs, Fellow-Workers

by Dan Trygg

"...we are God's co-workers..."

I Corinthians 3:9

"Working-together-with Him, also we encourage y'all not to welcome/receive God's grace/provision unto emptiness/vanity."

II Corinthians 6:1

"I am the Vine, y'all are the branches. The one abiding in Me, and I in him, this-one bears much fruit, because apart-from Me not are y'all able/strong to do not-one-thing."

John 15:5

**It is not uncommon for believers to get a skewed or unbalanced perspective of some aspect of theology or Christian experience. We go through various phases in our spiritual lives,** where one aspect or another of our relationship with God, or our new identity in Christ, begins to take on a new significance to us. We tend to interpret almost everything else in light of that momentary insight. Then, as we are able to internalize some of what we have learned, there will be a *different* insight which will come into focus for us. It will begin to loom "larger than life" in our perception of reality, and we tend to reinterpret things from that new perspective. **This is a natural process, and it should be expected.** As we become more established in our understanding, the dramatic swings in emphasis generally become less, though the process continues. Sometimes, even after many years, we can receive insights which kick off a huge paradigm shift in our thinking, and we seemingly have to readjust our perspective in a big way. **Sometimes we begin to panic when someone else seems to be over-emphasizing some aspect of truth, and immediately we want to "fix them".** That is, we want to convince them to see things as we do. **That inner panic or compulsion to get them to conform to our understanding is often of the flesh. The truth is the reality that is out there for anyone to discover. We don't need to panic if someone sees one aspect differently than we do. It doesn't mean that truth is relative, it just means that one or both of us only has a partial understanding.** The apostle Paul told us that *we can expect this, too* (I Cor. 13:9,12). It just means we have to dig a little deeper. Paul says that it is not necessary for the Lord's bondservant to be quarrelsome. Instead, we are to be kind, patient, and we are to gently offer the perspective of the truth that we may see. We are not to put pressure on them, or manipulate or browbeat them. We are to pray that God may grant them a change of perspective that leads to a fuller, experiential knowledge of the truth. While we are at it, if we are honest and humble, we ought to pray the same for ourselves! Hopefully, through our interaction we can help one another toward a clearer, more complete understanding. **Part of what the members of the Body can do is help each other see, appreciate, and experience different aspects of our relationship with God. This gives us different insights into reality, than what we otherwise would have discovered on our own.** The church *should* be an interactive think-tank, ...our gatherings a common "download session", where we can share with one another what God has been doing, teaching and revealing through the many individual experiences in each one of our lives. We will never see the larger picture if we do not have a way to share with each other.

**My little piece to bring to the table today has to do with the concept of being a fellow-worker-with-God. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, it is quite clear that God has been in the business of recruiting a people for His own, a people who could then reveal, display and communicate the heart of God to the rest of the human race.** Because the church is built upon the foundation of OT promises, the apostle Peter quotes some of these OT declarations. These were originally spoken to Israel, but have now been extended to non-Jews who, by faith in Jesus as their King, have now been joined to the great host of God's people: "...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..." (I Pet. 2:9; cf. Eph. 2:11-22). Notice that this passage says that:

**(1.) We belong to God.** He possesses us. He created us, and He redeemed us, or purchased us, for Himself. We do not possess Him in the same way. We did not save Him from anything. We did not create Him, or purchase Him. Our relationship with Him is *not* one where we can *demand* that He do things for us, or fulfill our will, on our terms. He is *not* the Cosmic Bellhop. He is *not* a genie who is here to fulfill *our* every wish. No, He is the Almighty King of the Universe, and **He has scooped us up out of our low estate, our spiritual poverty and degradation, to bring us into His household, to heal and restore us, to nurture and equip us, so that we might fulfill our original created purpose of serving Him and His agenda.** He is gracious, and magnanimous, ...and He desires to have relationship with us, to include us, and He even will respond to *some* of our wishes and desires, as long as they are consistent with His larger purposes. Nevertheless, let us never lose sight of the fact that, **although God has done, and continues to do, so much for us, He does not live to serve us; we exist to serve Him.**

**(2.) God has called us to something wonderful!** In the passage above, Peter says He has called us out of darkness into His *marvelous* light. The word for "marvelous", also means "amazing, incredible, wonderful". It is, obviously, meant to communicate that **God has redeemed us for something which is very positive**. The opposing word pictures of "darkness" and "His wonderful light", are illustrations that we can relate to on an emotional or intuitive level, but which are not spelled out in detail. The word for "darkness" also means "gloom" and tends to communicate the ideas of blindness, confusion, heaviness, oppression, fear, and evil. "Light" is a more positive, cheerful concept, also implying freedom, clarity of thought and understanding, truth and goodness. The fact that this is further described as "God's *marvelous* light" *accentuates* the goodness, rightness and safety which this concept can convey. If *any* light would be preferable over darkness, how much *more* the light which comes from God? Colossians 1:12,13 describes this difference in terms of "kingdoms". There are two kingdoms mentioned here, the dominion of darkness, and the Kingdom of God's beloved Son, Jesus. God has transferred us, our citizenship, our identity and our obligation, from the dominion of darkness (Satan's realm) to the Kingdom of Messiah Jesus, where we are qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Jesus' promise is that the one who follows Him will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life (Jn. 8:12). The words of God give light to the simple and provide direction to their way (Psa. 119:105,130). Both of these last concepts imply obedience in following God's instruction. As in Jn. 10:10, **the wonderful thing which God calls us to is available to those who obey and live in Him**. The marvelous light and life of God are *experienced* by those who walk in responsive agreement with Him.

**(3.) God, as King, has an agenda, a purpose, which we have been recruited to help realize.** God's vision and purpose are much larger than what we see from our personal perspective. The fact that God has a wonderful plan for our lives is not separate from His purposes in this world. He is not here to serve us, but to free and equip us to walk in obedient partnership with Him. **God's "wonderful plan" for our lives is not a specific job, task, function, spiritual gift or calling, so much as it is to walk obediently with Him at every moment. The "wonderful experience" is to be filled with Him as we walk out His will in this world.**

**(4.) God has chosen to work in partnership with us.** This is a wonderful privilege, *and* a great responsibility. **It means that things will not get done, if we choose not to be involved. He will not simply "do it without us"**. The word translated as "fellow-laborers" or "co-workers" implies joint activity, where both parties are simultaneously doing the work. He has chosen to limit Himself to work with us. **This also means, however, that our lives can be highly significant not only in God's plan for this world, but also in affecting the lives of others.** Again, God has chosen not to do it without us. Yet, He is eagerly and unceasingly watching for those who will be willing to give themselves unreservedly to Him, ready to act powerfully in their lives to accomplish His purposes. "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He might put forth His strength on behalf of those whose heart is completely His" (II Chron. 16:9). **He is ready to empower us to do His will!**

**(5.) The ability or power of God is expressed through those who are abiding in Him.** Apart from Him we can do nothing, but with Him, nothing shall be impossible (Jn. 15:5; Matt. 17:20;19:26; cf. Matt. 28:18-20). Normally, we think of "abiding" as an ongoing, continual indwelling. This is true, and this is the ideal we ought to be pursuing. There is another understanding of this word which is also true. That is that at any moment where we are responding to the leading of the Holy Spirit, He is abiding in us, and, at that moment, we are abiding in Him, so the awesome power of God is ready and able to do its work. **Never lose sight of the fact that the power of God is dependent less on the consistency of your walk with Him and more on your present willingness to engage yourself in what He wants to do at that present moment.**

**(6.) Finally, it is possible to "welcome" or "receive" the grace of God, and waste it.** The passage in II Cor. 6 tells us to not receive or welcome the grace of God in vain. Paul would not tell us that if it were not a very real possibility. How often does God's Spirit provide gifts, both revelations and power to do God-sized things, but we do not make use of it? We either are not allowed, by the dynamics of the meeting, to ever interact, or we are afraid to say or do what we are being prompted to do by the Holy Spirit. **If we are truly "fellow-laborers" or "co-workers" with God in any real sense, then if we do not do our part, nothing gets accomplished.**

**It is very important that we learn to identify when God is drawing us to do something, ...that we create an environment where anyone can speak up, or take action, and it will be looked at as a positive act of discovery, not as a disruption, ...and where we actively test-out-by-trial-to-discover the will of God.** When I say "we", of course I mean "you", because we each need to take ownership of this discovery process, both for ourselves and for the group, or it will never happen. If what Paul says in I Cor. 12 is true, **we ought to expect that the Holy Spirit will visit our meetings, and distribute His gifts for the common good.** We ought to expect it, and we ought to be seeing it happen. **Anything less than that does not seem to be consistent with the NT. It is sub-normal Christianity,** an anemic version that looks for the grace of God, but does nothing when it is provided.