

182 – Experience versus belief

How would you preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the evangel of Yeshua the Messiah – to people who don't know Him personally and intimately, but who ARE “spiritual”? These are people who are *looking*; they may *believe* in something that answers some of their questions, but they are aware of yet a deeper need – it's as if they are somehow in touch with what Barbara calls the God-shaped vacuum in everyone who has never encountered the real Jesus – the real Yeshua; the One Who meets needs and heals hurts, and Who came to lead all mankind to the Father.

The people whom Barbara is meeting recently – the ones who are attracted to her – are quite the mix of what seems to me to be a common denominator: They've all heard of Jesus through the lens of Christianity, but Christianity's God offends their sensibilities, and if Jesus is His Son, they would rather be adopted into a different family. It seems that the only real points of “offense” are 1) Christianity represents Jesus and God, but makes no sense, because love and hell don't go together in their minds; and 2) Jesus Christ is the only way to God; and the only reason that's a problem is because of the first point of offense.

I totally understand why someone would turn toward almost any belief system other than Christianity – and the particular brand of it wouldn't matter, 'cause it's all a mess, frankly. What drew me to the Father was the SOUND of His Spirit, moving among people. The SOUND of people praying and singing in the Spirit went into some deep place in me and called to me. If anyone had started preaching, I probably would have turned them off. I'm grateful that no one said anything, but let the Holy Spirit – the Ruach Ha Kodesh – speak for itself and draw me to the Father.

When someone DID say something, it was a simple invitation: “If you have never accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and would like to do so tonight, just stand. You don't have to go anywhere; just stand up where you are.” All I knew at the time was that I wanted more of what I had just heard. I recognized an experience that was unique, warm, and soothing unlike anything I had experienced before. The invitation was so simple: “Just stand and acknowledge Him.” No teaching, no preaching – and I thought, “Well, if this is the way to get more of *that* (meaning the sound of the Spirit), I'm in; sign me up.”

I was just as turned off at preaching and most teaching as I had been before. The Father had won my heart, but I could NOT warm up to the preachers I heard; that is, until I had

another experience, like that which drew me to the Lord in the first place: I heard one man teach, *from the Scriptures*, that God's plan included *everyone* and that no eternal hell awaited *anyone*. When I heard this, the words went straight into that same, deep part in me that was still crying out for meaning in this life.

I also learned that the Scriptures – not the Bible I had been reading and had heard taught from, but the Scriptures that the Father originally inspired to be written – contained the His revelation of Himself and His purpose, and all of it added up. He made sense and so did His purpose. My mind did not resist, as it had when I heard almost anyone else teach from the Bible.

In between these two experiences was a third: when I asked the Father to fill me with His Spirit and I spoke in tongues, languages that my mind could not understand and still doesn't 42 years later.

This brings me to what I believe is the most important common denominator among the people whom the Father is attracting to Barbara – it is based on something she has said for many years: “A person with an opinion will always be at the mercy of someone with an experience.”

Everyone Barbara is meeting – shoot, everyone any of us meet -- has an opinion – actually, they all have a belief or a set of beliefs. Barbara has an experience ... she has a whole lot of experiences, and it is her experiences that are drawing them to the Father. They may not know it yet, but Barbara's experiences – her testimony, if you will – is doing what no preaching could ever do. Her experiences OF God and WITH God are bypassing the gates of all their beliefs and opinions, and IMPARTING Who He IS -- His nature and His character – straight into their hearts.

To be sure, Yeshua is a point of stumbling; He is supposed to be! The Apostles, Paul and Peter, referred to Isaiah's prophesy about this:

Romans 9:30-33

What, then, shall we be declaring? That the nations who are not pursuing righteousness overtook righteousness, yet a righteousness which is out of faith.

31 Yet Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, into a law of righteousness does not outstrip.

32 Wherefore? Seeing that it is not out of faith, but as out of law works, they stumble on the stumbling stone,

33 according as it is written: Lo! I am laying in Zion a Stumbling Stone and a Snare Rock, And the one believing on Him shall not be disgraced.

1 Peter 2:1-10

Putting off, then, all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies and all vilifications,
2 as recently born babes, long for the unadulterated milk of the word that by it you may be growing into salvation,

3 if so be that you taste that the Lord is kind:

4 Whom approaching, a living Stone, having been rejected indeed by men, yet chosen by God, held in honor,

5 you, also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, into a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, most acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

6 Because of this it is included in the scripture: **Lo! I am laying in Zion a corner capstone, chosen, held in honor, and he who is believing on it may by no means be disgraced.**

7 To you, then, who are believing, is the honor, yet to the unbelieving: **"A Stone which is rejected by the builders, this came to be for the head of the corner,"**

8 and a stumbling stone and a snare rock; who are stumbling also at the word, being stubborn, to which they were appointed also.

9 Yet you are a chosen race, a "royal priesthood," a "holy nation," a procured people, so that you should be recounting the virtues of Him Who calls you out of darkness into His marvelous light,

10 who once were "not a people" yet now are the people of God, who "have not enjoyed mercy," yet now are "being shown mercy."

Both men referred to Isaiah 8:13-15:

Yahweh of hosts, Him shall you sanctify,

And He shall be your fear, and He, your terror.

14 And if you are expectant toward Him, He will be a Sanctuary

And not a Stone of tripping or a Rock of stumbling,

Yet for the two houses of Israel, a Snare,

And a Trap for the dweller of Jerusalem.

15 Many will stumble among them,

And they will fall and be broken,

And they will be trapped and seized.

People grab on to different belief systems because of offense. God didn't offend them, however, and I don't think that Yeshua offended them; rather, I think *Christianity* offended them. Jesus has a big credibility problem, it's called Christianity.

As Barbara and I talked about this in our time together in the Father's presence this morning, she asked, "Well, what are we?" If we don't identify ourselves as Christians because of the negative association over the past 2,000 years, then what are we?

I said, "We are sons and daughters of God." That's what the word of YaHoVeH declares through His Apostle Paul.

Romans 8:14

14 For whoever are being led by God's spirit, these are sons of God.

Romans 9:26

*"And it shall be, in the place where it was declared to them, 'Not My people are you,'
There "they shall be called 'sons of the living God.'"*

2 Corinthians 6:16-18

*For you are the temple of the living God, according as God said, that I will be making
My home and will be walking in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My
people.*

*17 Wherefore, Come out of their midst and be severed, the Lord is saying. And touch
not the unclean, and I will admit you,*

*18 and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the
Lord Almighty.*

It will come as no surprise to anyone listening live tonight, that I am not at all happy about being identified as a Christian, because I see and hear so much in Christendom that is indistinguishable from the rest of the world in its state of health physically and maritally. I cannot think of anything to recommend a rational person to Christianity over any other belief system. I get the objections that are raised against believing in the Christian God, of Whom it is said He is love, and of Whom it also said that He will banish people who don't acknowledge Him and His Son, Jesus, to a place of unending torment. There is nothing attractive to me about that picture, and I can't imagine that it would attract anyone else.

Christianity is a man-made belief system among many others – name the religion. When Yeshua *appears* to you, however, and says, "When are you just going to trust me?" Who says later on, "Start walking," and Who follows up those words 30 days later with miraculous healing of a genetically inherited, life-threatening disease, THAT which was

once a only a belief has been transformed immediately and permanently into an experience.

There is an enormous difference between *believing* and *knowing*. Believing is merely *hopeful*, but knowing is *certain*. Atheists believe that there is no God. They can't possibly KNOW that – they merely believe it. Christians *believe* in Jesus Christ and God the Father; sons and daughters of YaHoVeH, however, KNOW them both by the Spirit that lives in them – In Hebrew it's the Ruach ha Kodesh. Our experience of the Father's Spirit living and operating within us likewise transforms what was once only a belief for us too. We have a literal relationship to them that is more profound than any fleshly relationship. Today, you and I don't have to rely only on a belief. We have moved from a shaky *hope* into certain *expectation*, and from merely *believing* into *knowing*.

Do you remember how those curly-Q cords would get all balled up, and the only thing you could do after a while was to dangle the receiver and let the cord unwind itself? Religions, including Christianity, are like those old style telephone phone cord. When people get all balled up in the complexity of a religion – any religion or belief system constructed by human beings, they become all convoluted, twisted around back on themselves. They've been at it a long time too, and it will probably take Yeshua's return to straighten them out.

We don't *need* cords that get all twisted and balled up today. When we moved into this house, Verizon came out to hook up the Fiber optic system, but to take full advantage of the Fiber optic speed, we upgraded the speed we ordered to the highest, which was 6-10 times faster than the cable system we had before, and that was faster than the DSL hookup we had before that; and who can remember limping along on a dial-up connection? When we ordered the highest speeds possible, we also got the best router to handle the connection. We live in a wireless age when the Father is like the world wide web, Yeshua is the Ethernet cable or wireless card, and the holy Spirit – the Ruach ha Kodesh is the highest speed router ever conceived. We communicate directly with the Father, because we are hooked up to Him by Yeshua and our signal is carried instantly by the Holy Spirit.

If we keep going with the analogy here, we can see that all three components are present and active. We decide to boot up our own systems – our own program, if you will – to establish communication. Once that's done, it's always on, unless we power down or disconnect.

The best router is not Buddhism, Hinduism, spirituality. People who are involved in any of them know that they work, but they all experience outages, they all drop the connection, Why? Because they are built on a human being's opinion, a human being's belief. Spirituality outside of the Messiah is like a dial-up connection. Clearly, various spiritual practices get people out there into the spirit realm; they do have an experience; they gain knowledge, and they may even be better people than they might be otherwise. If that's *all* you want, then, God bless you.

Yeshua said that He is the way, the truth and the life, and that no one comes to the Father but through Him. Christians didn't invent that statement; Yeshua said it. Before He arrived on the scene, YaHoVeH declared possibly hundreds of times, "I am Elohim."

Here's just one instance from **Isaiah 43:10-13**

- ¹⁰ **You are My witnesses, averring is Yahweh,
And My servant whom I have chosen,
That you may know and believe [>] Me,
And you may understand that I am He:
Before Me no^t el was formed,
And after Me none shall come to be.**
- ¹¹ **I, I am Yahweh, And there is no Saviour^{l f} apart from Me.**
- ¹² **I Myself tell and save and announce,
And there is no alien^l god ^tamong you;
And you are My witnesses, averring is Yahweh,
And I am EL.**
- ¹³ **^{mr}Ever ^fsince day was, I am He,
And there is no rescuing from My hand;
I shall effect it, and ^awho shall reverse it?**

Yeshua did not and does not offer merely *another* opinion, like other religious figures in history. He stated boldly, "***I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who is believing in Me, even if he should be dying, shall be living***" (John 11:25). Yeshua didn't build a religion around Himself; that was neither His mission nor His instruction. He simply had a direct connection with the Father and He imparts that to us still today. Can the same be said for any other religion?

No one among the ancient Jewish people had to rely on mere *belief* in God; the Red Sea parted before their eyes, water came out of a rock, and food showed up every morning for 40 years in the desert. They had an *experience* with YaHoVeH; a *literal, physical*

experience. So does every son or daughter who receives Yeshua, and is filled with the Holy Spirit.

There is at least one YouTube video that shows an MRI study of the difference in brain activity between people engaged in meditation, and spirit-filled people speaking in tongues. The MRI's show that all the brain activity during meditation was in the superficial areas where conscious thought occurs, while the deeper areas of the subconscious were silent. The *opposite* results were found in people who were speaking the language of their own spirit. The deep, subconscious areas of their brains were lit up, while the superficial, conscious area was completely silent.

The Apostle Paul didn't have an MRI study when he wrote this statement:

1 Corinthians 14:14

For if I should be praying in a language, my spirit is praying, yet my mind is unfruitful.

We could add there, "My *CONSCIOUS mind*."

The conscious mind is where we construct beliefs for example, which are so fragile that we have to consciously keep them operating. We don't construct beliefs in our subconscious minds; rather, we store experiences. We don't consciously decide HOW or WHERE to store them; it happens automatically.

Many of the people Barbara is meeting were drawn to God, but the church turned them off with hell. When they meet the real Jesus – the real Yeshua – and the real God – the real YaHoVeH – through Barbara's profound experiences of Him and with Him, they become like curious little children. Those who remain suspicious are simply deciding to carry their wounds rather than experience healing. Wasn't it the same in Yeshua's day?

experience versus Belief

deep versus Superficial

genuine versus fake

impartation versus teaching

reality versus fantasy

revelation versus imagination

These and other conflicts are resolved by the Spirit of God and by no other means.