

REVIVAL NEWS

From Revival Ministries Australia

P.O. Box 2718 BC TOOWOOMBA Q4350 Australia

Phone: 61-7-46130633; e-mail: rma@revivalministries.org.au

Website: www.revivalministries.org.au

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AN APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

Many Christians

There are many Christians all over the world. There are many when asked if they believe in Jesus that will give some response of faith. My experience though, is that while there are many who express some faith, there is very little knowledge of the Word of God. This means that the faith which is expressed is limited, shallow and not established in the *“knowledge of the truth”* **1 Timothy 2:4b**. There is much work to do. The *“harvest truly is plentiful”* (**Matthew 9:37**) and Jesus is calling for more labourers to work in this great harvest of feeding God’s people *“with knowledge and understanding”* **Jeremiah 3:15**.

Discipleship is the key

The message of discipleship still needs to be proclaimed all over the nations. We are commanded to *“make disciples of all the nations”* (**Matthew 28:19**), and it is imperative to keep this focus and not be trapped in *“building a church”*. Discipleship equips you to know and speak the Word. **Isaiah** prophesied *“The Lord Yahweh has given Me the tongue of the learned [literally “disciple”], that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned [disciple]”* **Isaiah 50:4**. Being a disciple is the key to learning how to hear the Word and how to speak the Word. This means we always have an answer ready; a word to speak that brings refreshment to weary souls; and we have the hearing of faith to guard us against the attacks of the enemy, the *“shield of faith with which we quench the fiery darts of the devil”* **Ephesians 6:16**.

Discipleship is a lifestyle that is noticed

Recently on a short family holiday God gave us numerous opportunities to testify of Jesus and the Word of God to people who were drawn to us because of our way of life. We read the Bible as a family together every morning and celebrate the Lord’s Table together no matter where we are. This caused many conversations with those camping around us. Our life witnesses the gospel and opens opportunities to speak the Word. Peter told the listeners on the Day of Pentecost, *“Be saved from this perverse generation”* **Acts 2:40**. Salvation is coming out of the way this world lives, even the religious world, and learning to live a whole new way of life, *“continuing steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, in fellowship, in the*

breaking of bread and in prayers” Acts 2:42. The lifestyle attracts those outside Christ, “...and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” Acts 2:47.

Discipleship established you in the apostolic vision

Discipleship establishes you in the truth of the Word so that you know what the vision is and are able to give yourself to it. Jesus said to the Jews who believed, *“If you abide in My Word then you are My disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” John 8:31-32.* Disciples are free in the truth; they are free to share the truth and are not hung up in religious bondage. Disciples share the vision clearly because they are living in the reality of it. Often when talking with Christians around the place one of the first questions they will ask is, *which church do you go to?* I have learnt to tell them that I am a part of the church that Jesus said He would build in **Matthew 16:18.**

I told a retired pastor I met on holiday that I am part of the *“One body, One Spirit, One hope of your calling, One Lord, One faith, One baptism and One God and Father of all” Ephesians 4:4-6.* He immediately asked me if I had been to Bible school. I told him that I had not been to Bible school but that I had been well disciplined by a spiritual father. This opened the door to talk about discipleship a little bit with this man. I am a disciple!! Disciples speak the Word and share the vision of a mature church that is growing up to a *“perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” Ephesians 4:13.* Disciples share the vision of the *“earth being filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the earth” Habakkuk 2:14.* The authority comes from the Word, not from appointments and ordinations of men. Disciples speak the Word with authority!

Beware of pitfalls and distractions

In Australia, and many nations it seems, there has been a rise in fascination and proclamation of *“conspiracy theories”.* Many believers have been snared by this and feed on information they have received through social media and the internet. This information is full of fear, it glorifies evil people and the devil, and gives a demonic vision for the future without the hope of Christ and *“the comfort of the Scriptures” Romans 15:4.* We are called to preach *“the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” Acts 8:12.* Beware not to get caught in the world of *conspiracy theories.* Even if what is shared may be true in some regard, there is no edification in Christ as we are to *“strengthen the souls of the disciples, exhort them to continue in the faith, and say, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God’” Acts 14:22.*

Do not say, ‘A conspiracy’

Yahweh spoke to Isaiah strongly that he should *“not walk in the way of this people” Isaiah 8:11.* The way of the people of God was in talking about *“A Conspiracy” v.12.* But God spoke to Isaiah saying, *“Do not say, ‘A conspiracy’, concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled” Isaiah 8:12.* These *conspiracies* were rooted in fear, threats and

causing trouble. They give more power to evil and the devil. God said, ***“Yahweh of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread”*** Isaiah 8:13. We must stay focused on who Jesus is and give Him glory and fear Him!

A man who confessed some faith was speaking to me on my holiday about all the people who are behind all the evil in the world. His eyes were being opened, from the wrong tree, to all the evil power structures and his speech had no hope, no Jesus, no kingdom of God, and no victory over the devil. We always are to ***“give thanks to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ”*** 2 Corinthians 2:14a. We have victory. ***“Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world”*** 1 John 4:4. I told this man that Jesus is the King. I told him of the kingdom of God. I told him that even if everything he said was true that it does not move me because of who I know Jesus to be! It is time to positively challenge brethren who are given to speaking demonic destinies.

Do not let your love grow cold

We must guard against the poison of the world and let the Scriptures inform our understanding. Jesus said, ***“And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold”*** Matthew 24:12. When believers give themselves to ***conspiracies*** of the evil in the world it causes fear, bitterness, doubt, and a dismal expectation of the future. This causes many to get angry at world leaders and blame politicians and see people in power as enemies, and hatred grows. We must guard against this. Keep your love hot! 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 heavenlies”*** Ephesians 6:12. We are to pray for ***“kings and those in authority”*** 1 Timothy 2:1-2. Stay in the love of the gospel and realise your enemy is the devil and it is a spiritual battle. Give yourself to more prayer and stay intentionally in love for God and people. As the lawlessness abounds may ***“the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another, and to all”*** 1 Thessalonians 3:12. Jesus said that ***“he who endures to the end will be saved”*** Matthew 24:13. This is in the context of not letting your love grow cold. We must endure in love, self-sacrificial love, until the end.

Abide in Christ – stay in discipleship

Isaiah continued to prophesy that Yahweh ***“will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel”*** Isaiah 8:14. Being in Christ as our holy abode, a sanctuary, is the answer. It is simple to combat the world we live in. Stay in Christ! Abide in His word and let His words abide in you (John 15:7). Then God tells Isaiah the secret to the way we should live in these days, ***“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples”*** Isaiah 8:16. Discipleship is the key. Stay a disciple and do not be moved away by ***conspiracy theories*** or strange end time doctrines. ***Seal the law [literally ‘teaching, instruction’] among my disciples.*** We overcome the devil by ***“the word***

of our testimony” Revelation 12:11. Stay in the Word. Have the teaching sealed in you so you can live and share the reality of the Word of God.

We are for signs and wonders!

We need patience in times of difficulty and to have the attitude to “*wait on Yahweh... hope in Him*” **Isaiah 8:17**. Our lifestyle will speak, “*Here am I and the children whom Yahweh has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel*” **Isaiah 8:18**. What we have continued to discover is that the way we live stands out. “*For your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything*” **1 Thessalonians 1:8**. It is a sign and a wonder to all those around us. We are the signs and wonders that the world is looking for. A vibrant, Spirit-filled, authentic, faith-filled, hope-filled and love-filled community of disciples who are unashamed to proclaim who Jesus is and the reality of the kingdom of God and the Word of God!

Be encouraged to stay on track!

Stay in the revival of discipleship!

Keep in the patience and comfort of the Scriptures

Beware of pitfalls and side-tracks!

We are for signs and wonders in all the earth!