

New Morning Magical – 8-8-20

Don't get hung up on this

Before we jump back into our exploration in 1 Corinthians today, I want to take a quick minute to emphasize what I think was the most important takeaway from yesterday's MM:

Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:9 – *"Faithful is God, through Whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord."*

Everything we are, everything we know, every insight we have, and every expectation we depend on, depends entirely on the Father's faithfulness. If we are uncertain about that, then nothing is certain. If we do not KNOW that God is faithful in every cell of our bodies, in every synapse of our minds, and in every stirring of our spirits, we are completely lost.

Now, turn all those statements around: When we are unshakably certain about the Father's faithfulness, then everything we believe and expect is entirely certain. When we KNOW that God is faithful in every cell of our bodies, in every synapse of our minds, and in every stirring of our spirits, we are completely at ease, because, truly, nothing else matters. The world around us can collapse completely and nothing in us changes, because God is faithful and our *"fellowship of His Son, Yeshua, our Lord"* is as life-sustaining as every molecule of oxygen we breathe.

I just didn't want to lose the importance of such a simple but such a profound statement.

So now, picking up from where we left off yesterday, in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 11:

11 For it was made evident to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe, that there are strifes among you.

12 Now I am saying this, that each of you is saying, "I, indeed, am of Paul," yet "I of Apollos," yet "I of Cephas," yet "I of Christ."

13 Christ is parted! Not Paul was crucified for your sakes! Or into the name of Paul are you baptized?

Paul wanted nothing to do with being seen as some kind of substitute Messiah. People do the same thing today, following this authority figure or that, rather than following Christ. In my earliest days as a baby Christian, I followed the only guy who seemed to be teaching and preaching in the power of the Spirit, fire-breathing and all. Funny thing, though, when I heard of a guy who had lost his church, because of what the Scriptures revealed in the original language,

including the salvation of all mankind, everything in me wanted to know more; it had life all over it, instead of fear and condemnation like the other guy. The final straw was an attempt by someone to prevent me from learning about the idea that all mankind would be saved. If you don't want me to be exposed to this that is so different from what you're convinced of, because it's so dangerous, then I know I have to explore it.

Thank you, Father for the witness of Your Spirit inside us, and the thrill of discovering a bigger and better God than I would have ever known otherwise!

This was Paul's discovery too, and can you imagine how overcome he must have been sometimes, to see the contrast between the Judaic system he was extricated from unceremoniously by the risen Lord, and the unique and sweeping revelations he was shown, many of which we have yet to peer into? So, the idea that anyone would hold him – or anyone else – up as cult figures – was unthinkable, which is what he was really indicating in verse 12:

"each of you is saying, "I, indeed, am of Paul," yet "I of Apollos," yet "I of Cephas," yet "I of Christ."

Paul is addressing what he saw as factions, or divisions, within the faith, which is exactly what denominations are, if you'll permit me. He could just as easily have said, *"I'm a Catholic," "I'm a Methodist, "I'm a Pentecostal," or "I'm a Lutheran."*

And then Paul goes on to say, *"Christ is parted!"* Christ is divided into different bits and pieces, and this cannot be! He goes on to say, *"Not Paul was crucified for your sakes!"* I'm not the one who died for you, so don't make me out to be any kind of substitute for the real Christ! I think Paul would have rather been rejected entirely than to be raised up as any kind of Christ-like figure.

Now listen to the end of verse 13 and on into verses 14-17

Or into the name of Paul are you baptized?

14 I am thanking God that I baptize not one of you except Crispus and Gaius,

15 lest anyone may be saying that you are baptized into my name.

16 Yet I baptize the household of Stephanas also. Furthermore, I am not aware if I baptize any other.

Listen to this:

17 For **Christ does not commission me to be baptizing, but to be bringing the evangel, not in wisdom of word, lest the cross of Christ may be made void.**

The issue of baptism is one of the most hotly contested points of church doctrine throughout 2000 years of Christian history. At least one denomination states that if you are not baptized – if you are not properly immersed in water – you are not even saved, let alone qualified to be called a Christian! I'm serious! Barbara and I have gone round and round with people who are adamant that salvation depends on being baptized in water, despite the fact that nothing of the sort is found in the Scriptures; not in Yeshua's words, nor Paul's, nor any of the other apostles!

Look at verse 17 again:

17 For Christ does not commission me to be baptizing.

If baptism was so important that your salvation depended on it, wouldn't you think that Paul would be baptizing everyone he could get his hands on in these ecclesias, or prescribing it as an essential step for new believers? NO! He's not even commissioned to do it, much less require it of anyone else. Baptism became to Christians what circumcision was to Jews, and it remains true today; yet, here's the most important of all the apostles (forgive me, Paul) thanking God that he didn't baptize but a small handful of people, precisely so that no one would worship him instead of Christ.

Paul makes it clear in the second part of verse 17 that his commission as an apostle, is *"to be bringing the evangel"* That's it! That's my commission from God; and then he says, *"not in wisdom of word, lest the cross of Christ may be made void."* In other words, *"You aren't gonna be impressed with how I speak, 'cause it's nothing fancy, because what Yeshua accomplished through His blood sacrifice on the cross is all that matters, and I'm never gonna distract you from seeing that with some kind of polished speech-making!"*

Billy Graham was a man who knew what he was called to do and what he wasn't. He was a powerful speaker, but he depended on the Gospel, not his oratory, to draw people to the altar during his crusades that saw thousands at a time confess their faith in Yeshua. I don't think that anyone would dispute the salvation that was won for millions of people ultimately, through Billy Graham's preaching. But, can you think of anything specific that was missing in ALL of his crusades? Go pull up a YouTube video of Billy Graham's crusades and watch until close to the end, when he makes his call to come forward to confess faith in Christ. Something is missing from everyone of his crusades. Can you guess what it is? Where's the pool to baptize all these people?

Ooops! Well, maybe the literature that people were handed had instructions on how to get baptized in their local churches. But, churches baptize in all kinds of different ways. My mother told me that one of her greatest difficulties of joining the Methodist church where I grew up and the "Christian Church," aka "Disciples of Christ" church where she grew up was that her church sprinkled water over peoples' heads during baptism, and this new fangled Methodist church poured water over their heads. Of course, Baptist churches and others have big troughs to fully immerse people.

My, my, what a crisis of faith! Well, here comes Paul declaring his gratitude that baptism had nothing to do with his commission as an apostle of Yeshua.

All this to say, if you want to be baptized, have at it, but don't get into a legalistic quandary over something that Paul was glad not to be burdened with ... and you need not be either.

I think we'll stop here for today and look at more of 1 Corinthians tomorrow, when Paul begins by saying, "*For the word of the cross is stupidity.*" There's more to that statement of course, but it'll keep until we meet again.

For now,
May Yahweh bless you and keep you;
May Yahweh light up His face toward you
and be gracious to you;
May Yahweh lift His face to you
and appoint peace for you.

AMEN