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A Vision of a Sickle

By Neil Johnson 5/10/2009

Introduction

The recent article ‘A new wave,’ by Michael has been both very challenging and encouraging to me. It has also brought to mind many thoughts the Lord has prompted in me in recent years. In the past few weeks, these thoughts have been most prevalent in my mind, with my heart thirsting deeply for God’s sovereign restoration of His children, particularly in the area of hearing and obeying His living word.

I live with my family in Cardiff, Wales. The church here in the United Kingdom is, despite promising small pockets spread out, on the whole very poorly trained and practised in listening to our Father’s voice and living out His love by the power of His Spirit and with the knowledge of Jesus.

Proverbs 9:10 *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy one is understanding.*

and 24:3 *Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established*

teach us that knowledge of the Holy one is understanding, and that it is by understanding that He establishes His house.

I suppose that Jesus will have had scriptures like the two just mentioned from the book of Proverbs on His heart, when He taught that, if we hear His words and put them into practice, then we are like a wise man who builds his house on a rock (**Matthew 7:24**). So, to hear the Word of God in our heart is to receive knowledge, and to apply God's Word in our living is to show understanding, and so by this we are building a house of faith founded upon Jesus the Rock.

It seems that few are really building their houses of faith on that Rock, because we see so many people still relying heavily on preachers and books for inspiration and wisdom, not fully knowing that the ‘I AM’ is with them, ready to help and guide.

Often I feel overwhelmed by the need for God here in Wales, and also often feel that there are few who really hear His voice and show great signs of being prepared to get working with the strength and power of the Holy Spirit. And yet our Father is doing something tremendous and is encouraging many to keep receiving His Grace.

The vision

I am reminded of a vision I experienced some years ago that I found very encouraging: it is timeless in the sense of the ever ready harvest of **Matthew 9:37,38**:

Then He said to His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will send out laborers into His harvest.

I was on the edge of a wheat crop, which was desperately in need of harvesting. It was many acres, I was the only worker there and all I had was a small sickle. I said "Father, how can I harvest this crop with just this? I have no machinery and no helpers." Father said to me to just swing the sickle anyway, and enjoy myself. So I did, and as I swung, the sickle suddenly became very, very long, so long that it cut one acre in one go, yet I felt it had the weight of only a small hand tool.

God gave me understanding in this that I need not be concerned about anything I or others lack, but to focus on being faithful with what I have been given and trust the Holy Spirit for the strength and the power. Revival and Harvest is not about how good we are, or about the giftings we have. It is about God's grace and faithfulness to accomplish that which He has promised us (**Philippians 1:6**. *..being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*).

Jesus taught an important lesson from a story called the parable of the talents (**Matthew 25:14-30**).

This parable teaches us that, if we are faithful with the little we are given, then God will add to us. But if we disregard the little we have been given, God will take it from us and give it to those who have used what they have to gain more.

We are in a time when many will be embarrassed by the little they feel they have to give when God calls the work to begin. And yet my experience is that those who have little but are faithful with it, giving thanks to God, will achieve great works giving glory to our Father. I believe that this is just as it says in **2 Chronicles 16:9** that "*..the eyes of the Lord range throughout the Earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.*"

In the harvest spoken of in **Matthew 9:37,38**, Jesus also told us that our Father will "*send out labourers*". Even when it seems no one else is about, we need never think we are the only one. God will send the labourers, plural (as we pray fervently). Elijah once complained to God that he was the only one being faithful (**1 Kings 19:14**), and he was quickly corrected by God saying that there were still seven thousand faithful in Israel.

Not only does Jesus teach us to pray to our Father for the other labourers to be sent but it is also our Father's heart that we be united together with Him as a complete Family unit, as Jesus prayed to His Father in **John 17:23**, "*I in them, and You in Me, that they may be completed into one.*" The Father is in Jesus and He is in us, binding us together with the Father.

Applications

Many people feel like a friend who recently told me that he could only think of one scripture that he felt God had really given him insight on in a personal way. If you are one of those, I wish to encourage you just as I said to him, “so you should give thanks to God for the food He has given you and be faithful with it and share it. Then He will add to you, and you will be blessed with God’s overflowing grace and peace. If Jesus can feed five thousand with a few fishes and loaves, then you can encourage a great many brothers and sisters with just one verse of scripture that God has armed you with.”

Here in the UK I now feel like I did in that wheat field of the vision. And I hear Father’s gentle and powerful voice telling me to get ready to work, and how to do so. I hear Him saying to keep it simple, to be obedient and that He loves me and wants me to succeed. And I know others here who are also hearing this same message. *"Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord"* (**Zechariah 4:6**).

I am often encouraged by recent and past experiences of doing God's work, God's way. When this has happened, the work is light, I feel rested, I enjoy myself and I enjoy the company of the others involved. Any opposition looks small compared to the evident grace and power of God and any divisive situations within the team at work can be quickly resolved and forgotten. Without quoting many scriptures from the Gospels that this brings to mind, if you do God's work, God's way, everything about it is Jesus and the character He proved to be.

May we be encouraged by Jesus' prayer for all believers, recorded in **John 17:20-26**, which shows some of His heart for us to know our Father as intimately as He does. In particular the closing verse says, *"I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."*

People Matter

By Kevin Grant

*I*t's all to do with people
That's how the Kingdom works
So give up all your I, I, I's
Those sentimental quirks.

*I*t's all about the other bloke,
Let's try to put him first.
Forget about our wants and needs,
Let's satisfy his thirst.

*L*et's get down and wash some feet,
Our Jesus did, you know,
And that one selfless act I've felt
Just wasn't done for show.

*H*e showed us if we want to lead
We first of all must serve.
That won't go down too well with some,
But let's all show some nerve.

*L*et's get real amongst our friends,
Transparency is good.
It seems so good on paper, friends,
I really wish we would.

*P*eople really matter,
We've heard it all the time.
Let's put them all above ourselves,
The result – it's just sublime.

*O*f course, they will be different,
Like us in days gone by.
But now we're looking awesome,
It's certainly worth a try.

*J*ust ask the Spirit for His strength
To witness to the lost.
You'll be surprised how easily
Your words can thaw a frost.

*W*e have to be so careful
That our hearts are right,
That we're doing it for His great Name,
And not our own delight.

*N*ow we're all a walking miracle,
That's not hard to guess,
The reason for our new found hopes
Is because we answered Yes.

*I*t really is about people,
That's right! – I see you smile.
Let's give them God's example,
And go that extra mile.

*W*hy me? I often murmur,
Someone else should have a turn.
It's just not fair – believe me,

The alternative – they burn.

I know we've all got problems,
Me probably, more than most,
But our Victor fights on our side,
Proclaim Him Lord of Hosts.

We've got to fight their battles,
To warfare we must go.
Remember, that a soul once saved
Will put our Lord on show.

We've got to cry out for the lost,
It should be our greatest prayer.
We're not alone – we've always had
The Lord to lead us there.

He'll use us – if we let Him –
To heal the broken heart,
To soothe the sick and raise the dead,
Now that's the easy part!

We just have to be a servant,
Give Him credit and the praise,
Trust Him daily with our lives,
You'll set the world ablaze.

It tells me in the Bible,
Now this is no surprise,
That winning souls for our dear Lord
Is something very wise.

So now we've come full circle,
Remember, when you pray,
To ask for opportunities
In each and every day.

Won't it be amazing
When we're standing by His throne,
To see the lives that have been saved
By the seeds that we have sown.