

Revelation Is Sufficient

by Chip Brogden

The sermon highlights the necessity of divine revelation of Jesus Christ for true spiritual understanding and growth in faith.

Scripture: Daniel 12:4, John 14:6, Acts 7:54, Acts 26:16, Galatians 1:11, Philippians 3:7, Colossians 2:3, 2 Timothy 3:7, 1 Peter 2:8

Topics: "Divine Revelation", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Chip Brogden emphasizes the importance of receiving revelation from God, contrasting earthly knowledge with spiritual truth revealed by the Heavenly Father. He highlights that true spiritual growth comes from knowing Jesus Christ through divine revelation, not just accumulating facts from various sources. Brogden explains that the foundation of the Church, the Ecclesia, is built upon individuals who have received the Revelation of Jesus Christ, as seen in the transformation of Paul from a persecutor to a preacher through divine revelation.

Transcript

One characteristic of the last days is people will run to and fro and knowledge will be increased (Daniel 12:4). They will be ever learning, but in spite of this abundance of knowledge they will never come to a realization of the truth (II Timothy 3:7). The accumulation of knowledge in the Information Age is highly sought after and prized, yet it is possible to know all the right answers and still not come into an experiential knowledge of Truth.

Please note that when Simon Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", Jesus did not congratulate him for figuring this out through intense study and research, as if THAT would have made any difference. Instead, the Lord tells Peter that he is blessed: not just for knowing Who He is, but for the WAY in which he came to know Who He is. How did Peter know that Jesus is the Son of God? Because it was revealed to him by the Heavenly Father.

Here, Jesus contrasts "flesh and blood" knowledge with Truth which is revealed by God (and of course, Jesus is Truth [John 14:6]). The two are as different as night and day. In the matter of flesh and blood knowledge obtained from human, earthly sources we may have reason to boast in our ability to study, investigate, reason, and decide. This is the Tree of Knowledge. In the case of revelation, we have definitely no room to boast, for revelation is simply that which is revealed to us from heaven by the Lord. We cannot work to obtain it nor do we merit it. Additionally, no man may give it to us. Its source is God

working in us through His Holy Spirit. This is the Tree of Life.

If in our quest for spiritual growth our idea is only to learn a few facts about the Bible, glean tidbits of information from this preacher and that teacher, fill our brains with facts and fill our libraries with more books and magazines, we run the risk of fooling ourselves into thinking that we know and understand God - when it could be that we are ever learning "truths" without knowing the Truth. Have you met someone like this? They seem to have all the right answers, but they have the wrong spirit. They tenaciously cling to their minute opinions and cannot be persuaded otherwise. Their knowledge has not changed them, except to make them worse: for now they are puffed up in the vanity of their own mind (I Corinthians 8:1,2). True spiritual growth is characterized by grace (not works) and an increased knowledge of Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18). And, we maintain that this knowledge of Jesus Christ cannot be obtained by study, but is only granted by way of revelation.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

What do we mean by revelation? We affirm that there is really only one revelation, and that is The Revelation of Jesus Christ. People use the term "revelation" rather loosely and flagrantly, flippantly categorizing every new thing, random thought, impression, leading, feeling, teaching, vision, voice, or dream as "revelation". They consider every notion that flashes across their brain to be "revelation". Not only is this fraught with danger, it is extra-biblical.

We simply say that Jesus Christ is the only thing God reveals to us. "In [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3)." It is not that God gives us revelation into five, ten, one hundred, or one thousand things. None of these "things" by themselves really matter. Rather, He has placed all those "things" within Christ, and reveals Christ to us. He will not reveal anything to us apart from the Revelation of Jesus Christ. To possess the Son is to possess all that pertains to the Son, for the Scriptures declare, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things (Romans 8:32)?" Christ is the sum of all spiritual things, the fullness of God in a bodily form (Colossians 2:9). Again, it is not that God desires to give us revelation into these many things, but for us to have the Revelation of Jesus Christ. By apprehending Him we will subsequently gain insight in those "things". To seek revelation into the "things" apart from the Revelation of Christ fails to give Christ the preeminence. We dare not circumvent the knowledge of Him in the pursuit of "things", even spiritual things, for they are all summed up into Him.

Jesus Christ is the Mystery which has been hidden for ages and generations, but is now made manifest to the saints (Colossians 1:26, 27). The Old Testament proclaims the Mystery and prepares the way for the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It is full of types, shadows, and symbology. The New Testament reveals that which was previously hidden. It explains the types and shadows of the Mystery and gives us the Revelation as substance and reality.

Nevertheless, the Lord will not manifest or reveal Himself to the world at large because the world in general will not love or receive Him (John 14:21-23). So, He establishes the Ecclesia, the called-out-of-the-world assembly of those who have been given the Revelation of Jesus, that they may translate it into the Testimony of Jesus by bearing witness to what they have seen and heard. Indeed, God has purposely hidden the knowledge of Jesus Christ and will only grant it to individuals by way of revelation once they have humbled themselves as children. This fact is so foundational to our understanding that we will quote it here:

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast HID these things from the wise and prudent, and hast REVEALED them unto BABES: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to Me of my Father: and no man [through human, flesh and blood knowledge] knoweth Who the Son is, BUT THE FATHER [Who He has chosen to reveal it only unto babes]; and Who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him. And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them (Luke 10:21-24, emphasis and bracketed comments mine)."

Although we are using many words to explain this, in actual experience it is neither complicated nor difficult. It actually takes longer to explain it than it does to comprehend and participate in it. Basically, the difference is between "learning" and "seeing". Not, "blessed are the minds that have studied and learned" but "blessed are the eyes that SEE."

The whole purpose of prophetic speaking and writing is to bring further revelation of Jesus to the Church and to the world. We refer to this as the Testimony of Jesus. "It is the truth concerning JESUS that inspires ALL prophecy (Revelation 19:10, Knox, emphasis mine)." A majority of what is called "prophetic" today is merely eschatological, that is, inspired by the study of end time events, but not necessarily inspired by the Spirit to bring us into a further revealing of Jesus Christ. We do a disservice to the Church if we muddy the waters between that which is prophetic and that which is eschatological: for the Church is not established upon her understanding of end time events, but upon her revelation knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Even the Book of Revelation itself is not primarily the revelation of what the end of the world will be like (although we do learn that), but the Revelation and Testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:1,2). We are immediately confronted with a vision of Jesus Christ standing in the midst of the Ecclesia: it is quite different from the image of the suffering Messiah, despised and rejected of men. So, this is a further unveiling or revealing of the Lord Jesus and is genuinely prophetic. The rest of the book, its symbols, and its meaning may be unclear, and we may disagree with the interpretations thereof, but the main gist of the book, the revealing of Jesus Christ as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, is beyond dispute.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE ECCLESIA

Why is it vital that we have this Revelation of Christ? Because the Church that Jesus is building, the Ecclesia, consists of all those who have this Revelation. Without the Revelation we cannot know the Way to the Father, and thus can have no membership in the Ecclesia, for Jesus is the Way (John 14:6). How can we know what the Church is apart from knowing Jesus Christ? How can we apprehend the Body if we do not apprehend the Head? The Church is not built upon Peter the individual, but upon all those who know Jesus Christ by revelation (Matthew 16:17,18). Apart from this we cannot be numbered among the Ecclesia. This IS the Church: those to whom the Father has revealed the Son by the Spirit.

Whereas Peter was a good Jew but a plain fellow, Paul, formerly known as Saul, was a self-proclaimed "Pharisee of the Pharisees", religious, devout, learned, and righteous according to the law of Moses, zealous for the things of God and the traditions of the Jews. Yet, we find him to be persecuting the Church of Jesus Christ, erroneously thinking that God was pleased with him. How is it that Saul, with all his learning, did not understand Who Jesus Christ was? Simply because it had not been revealed to him by

the Heavenly Father. Indeed, it was the Pharisees and other religious leaders and teachers who rejected the Lord and had Him crucified. They lacked the Revelation. They had the written Word memorized, but there stands the Word made flesh and all they see is "the carpenter's son", a demon-possessed man, a blasphemer, a magician. This demonstrates how worthless religious flesh and blood knowledge is.

One day the grace of God determined to grant Saul the Revelation of Jesus. That is to say, Saul was not seeking revelation, he believed he had it already. He and his peers had concluded that Jesus was not the Son of God. So Saul was on his way to Damascus to arrest the followers of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem in chains. How zealous he was for "truth"! Without warning a bright light appeared to him, casting him to the ground, and a Voice called to him saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul asked, "Who are you?" And the Voice replied, "I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting!"

All it takes is a millisecond of time for the Revelation to strike you down. I recall when I first received the Revelation of Jesus Christ. I had had many religious and spiritual experiences up to that point, more than the average person. I had been a pastor and teacher for many years. I thought I really knew the Lord. But one day God revealed His Son IN me. I was sitting in the backyard reading the Word and without warning, in my heart of hearts, I "saw" (not with my eyes, but inwardly) Jesus seated at God's right hand, and I saw myself raised and seated with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). That day was like walking out of one room and into another, closing the door behind me. I got a glimpse into another world. I finally knew what before I had only talked about. Though not as outwardly dramatic as Paul's experience, inwardly a massive earthquake had taken place and my foundations were ripped to shreds. It was the beginning of the end of my career as a preacher for Organized Religion. I saw the real Jesus and realized He was nothing like flesh and blood had said. Hallelujah!

When Saul met the Lord, Jesus didn't say, "Why are you persecuting My people?" With the simple words, "I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting," Paul received revelation into the Person of Jesus Christ as well as the Church. To persecute the followers of Jesus is to persecute Jesus Himself. Why? Because Christ and the Church are one! It would be a few years before Paul was able to pen the beautiful passages of Scripture describing the Body of Christ, but it all began with this initial Revelation of Jesus Christ there on the dusty road to Damascus. The Revelation of Jesus is the foundation of the Church.

BEING A "CHRISTIAN" VERSUS KNOWING THE LORD

How did Paul learn the Gospel? Who taught it to him? "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11,12)." What a glorious statement! Five words uttered by revelation are worth more than ten thousand words obtained through flesh and blood. Dear friend, do you really know the Lord? Is this knowledge based on revelation, or is it merely your idea, or what you've been taught by flesh and blood? Now is the time to examine your foundation and discover if you have been building on rock or on sand. We now know how it is possible for one to do many mighty works in Jesus' Name, yet not know the Lord: revelation is the difference between religious activity and true knowing (Matthew 7:23).

It is quite possible that we have been "Christians" for many years and not known the Lord. I used to find that hard to believe but not anymore. I can truthfully say that I have been a "Christian" all my life, but I have only KNOWN the Lord a few years. Calling yourself a Christian these days is almost the same as calling yourself a Republican or Democrat. It has become more of a label for social convenience sake than

a true testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, dwelling within me.

A. W. Tozer wrote: "I see and hear of things that Christian people are doing. As I watch them operate within the profession of Christianity I do raise the question of whether they have been truly converted."

In the 1980's I used to go out with other brothers and sisters knocking on doors and passing out tracts. We would ask, "Are you born again? Are you saved? Are you a Christian?" But these terms in recent years have become so watered-down and vague that most everyone who has ever attended a steeple house on Christmas or Easter claims to be a born again Christian - but they don't have the Revelation of Christ! That the potential exists for us to do things in the name of Jesus without truly knowing and being known of Him ought to put us on our face before the Lord, praying for experiential knowledge of Him by way of revelation. There's no other way to truly know Him. God has made sure of that.

How much of what we hear being preached and peddled around the world in the Name of Jesus is but the regurgitations and ramblings of people who can only repeat what everyone else is saying? Where is the Revelation of Jesus Christ? Who is the man or the woman that refuses to confer with flesh and blood, but only speaks according to what they have seen and heard by revelation through the Spirit? Most teachers are teaching what was taught to them, and their teachers learned it from their teachers, and so on it goes until we no longer have Spirit-birthed revelation, we have third and fourth-generational head-knowledge, yesterday's manna and hand-me-down flesh and blood doctrines. As one of my brothers puts it: there are many echoes in the land, but few voices. There is an ocean of difference between repeating what you have heard and speaking of what you have experienced! Is it any wonder that there is much learning, but no experiential knowledge of Truth? If we speak of ourselves then we can only impart knowledge. But, if we resolve to only speak by revelation, we can impart Life. Only revelation can change a person.

Immediately upon hearing this message some may be tempted to ask, "What do I have to do to get this revelation?" The answer is nothing, because it is all of grace. Along with Paul, we may certainly pray for "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened (Ephesians 1:17,18)." Beyond that, we need only trust that the Spirit will indeed reveal the Lord to us if we humble ourselves as children as ask. Once we realize that revelation is all that matters, and God is the only one who can give it, we will stop trying to impress people with our knowledge, powerful speaking, or title. Instead, we will humble ourselves and ask the Father to reveal His Son in us.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS MEANS THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS

What about Paul's commission to preach the Gospel? He did not seek credentials, ordination, or affiliation with a human organization. He did not wait for anyone to confirm the call on his life. He did not seek for hands to be laid on him. But "when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus (Galatians 1:15-17)." Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ was renegade enough, but to preach the gospel to the Gentiles was a departure from the norm for even the Church at that time. It would later prove to be quite controversial and divisive. Prudence would dictate that it would be better to check with the other apostles and get their opinion and feedback before striking out in a new direction. Yet, Paul says once he obtained revelation he had no need to confer with flesh and blood. Why, because he was a maverick, an independent spirit, a rebel? No, it is only because the Revelation of Jesus is sufficient guidance. Flesh and blood cannot add to or take away from

the Revelation.

Paul's testimony before Agrippa expounds upon this initial conversation with the Lord. He says the Lord told him, "I have shown Myself to you for a reason - you are chosen to be my servant and a witness of those revelations of Me that you have already had, and of those in which I shall yet appear to you (Acts 26:16,17, 20th Century NT)." This was Paul's commission - to testify as to what he has seen, not what he has theorized about, and not what he has heard someone else say. He was to bring the Revelation of Jesus to the world. And so he did. How rich was his understanding! How profound his writings! And oh how great his sufferings!

And what of all that Paul learned as a devout student of Gamaliel? What about his former rank and influence among the religious elite of his day? "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ (Philippians 3:7,8)." When a person has the Revelation of Christ they will gladly and with great joy suffer the loss of all things. A person who has the Revelation will willingly lay down their life for what they have seen (Revelation 6:9;12:11).

The Revelation of Jesus Christ will be the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense to Organized Religion (1 Peter 2:8). When Stephen was called to give an account to the religious leaders his testimony convicted them so that they ground their teeth in anger. With face shining as an angel, being full of the Holy Ghost, he lifted up his eyes and saw Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:54-56). What a blessed, holy moment; what a vision! - but just look and see what the revelation cost Stephen. They dragged him outside and stoned him to death.

To be sure, when you really and truly meet Jesus of Nazareth, when you "see" Him for the first time, when He reveals Himself to you, it will immediately put you at enmity with those who claim to see but do not see: mostly, the religious and "spiritual" ones, the denominations and Towers of Babel which dot the landscape of Christendom, the scribes and Pharisees of Organized Religion.

How blessed are they which do see and hear the Lord! Many are seeking power, anointing, spiritual gifts, title, office, position, and audience. But revelation is sufficient. If we have the Revelation of Jesus Christ we don't need anything else. And if we don't have the Revelation, nothing else will make any difference.

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