

THE PRESENT TRUTH

Pastor Stephen D. Lewis

Camp Meeting Attendance Is Imperative

It is important that the members of our churches should attend our camp-meetings. The enemies of truth are many, and because our numbers are few, we should present as strong a front as possible. Individually, you need the benefits of the meeting, and God calls upon you to number one in the ranks of truth.

Some will say "It is expensive to travel, and it would be better for me to save the money, and give it to the advancement of the work where it is so much needed." Do not reason in this way; God calls upon you to take your place among the rank and file of his people. Strengthen the meeting all you possibly can by being present with your families. Put forth extra exertion to attend the gathering of God's people.

Brethren and sisters, it would be far better for you to let your business suffer than to neglect the opportunity of hearing the message God has for you. Make no excuse that will keep you from gaining every spiritual advantage possible. You need every ray of light. You need to become qualified to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. You cannot afford to lose one such privilege.

Anciently the Lord instructed his people to assemble three times a year for his worship. To these holy convocations the children of Israel came, bringing to the house of God their tithes, their sin-offerings, and their offerings of gratitude.

They met to recount God's mercies, to make known his wonderful works, and to offer praise and thanksgiving to his name. And they were to unite in the sacrificial service which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Thus they were to be preserved from the corrupting power of worldliness and idolatry. Faith and love and gratitude were to be kept alive in their hearts, and through their association together in this sacred service they were to be bound closer to God and to one another.

In the days of Christ these feasts were attended by vast multitudes of people from all lands, and had they been kept as God intended, in the spirit of true worship, the light of truth might through them have been given to all nations of the world.

With those who lived at a distance from the tabernacle, more than a month of every year must have been occupied in attendance upon these holy convocations. The Lord saw that these gatherings were necessary for the spiritual life of His people. They needed to turn away from their worldly cares, to commune with God, and to contemplate unseen realities.

If the children of Israel needed the benefit of these holy convocations in their time, how much more do we need them in these last days of peril and conflict? And if the people of the world then needed the light which God has committed to his church, how much more do they need it now?

This is a time for every one to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. The forces of the enemy are strengthening, and as a people we are misrepresented. We desire the people to become acquainted with our doctrines and work. We want them to know what we are, and what we believe. We must find our way to their hearts. Let the army of the Lord be on the ground to represent the work and cause of God. Do not plead an excuse. The Lord has need of you. He does not do his work without the co-operation of the human agent. Go to the camp-meeting, even though you have to make a sacrifice to do so. Go with a will to work. And make every effort to induce your friends to go, not in your place, but to go with you, to stand on the Lord's side and obey his commandments. Help those who are interested to attend, if necessary providing them with food and lodging. Angels who are commissioned to minister to those who are heirs of salvation will accompany you. God will do great things for his people. He will bless every effort to honor His cause and advance his work. {Pamphlet 130, Pg.9-10}

While preparing for the meeting each individual should closely and critically examine his own heart before God. If there have been unpleasant feelings, discord, or strife in families, it should be one of the first acts of preparation to confess these faults one to another and pray with and for one another. Humble yourselves before God, and make an earnest effort to empty the soul temple of all rubbish--all envyings, all jealousies, all suspicions, all faultfindings. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

The Lord speaks; enter into your closet, and in silence commune with your own heart; listen to the voice of truth and conscience. Nothing will give such clear views of self as secret prayer. He who seeth in secret and knoweth all things will enlighten your understanding and answer your petitions. Plain, simple duties that must not be neglected will open before you. Make a covenant with God to yield yourselves and all your powers to His service. Do not carry this undone work to the camp meeting. If it is not done at home, your own soul will suffer, and others will be greatly injured by your coldness, your stupor, your spiritual lethargy.

I have seen the condition of the people professing the truth. The words of the prophet Ezekiel are applicable to them at this time: "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols."

If we love the things of the world and have pleasure in unrighteousness or fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness we have put the stumbling block of our iniquity before our face and have set up idols in our heart. And unless by determined effort we put them away we shall never be acknowledged as the sons and daughters of God.

Here is a work for families to engage in before coming up to our holy convocations. Let the preparation for eating and dressing be a secondary matter, but let deep heart searching commence at home. Pray three times a day, and, like Jacob, be importunate. At home is the place to find Jesus; then take Him with you to the meeting, and how precious will be the hours you spend there. But how can you expect to feel the presence of the Lord and see His power displayed when the individual work of preparation for that time is neglected?

For your soul's sake, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of others, work at home. Pray as you are not accustomed to pray. Let the heart break before God. Set your house in order. Prepare your children for the occasion. Teach them that it is not of so much consequence that they appear with fine clothes as that they appear before God with clean hands and pure hearts. Remove every obstacle that may have been in their way,--all differences that may have existed among themselves or between you and them. By so doing you will invite the Lord's presence into your homes, and holy angels will attend you as you go up to the meeting, and their light and presence will press back the darkness of evil angels. Even unbelievers will feel the holy atmosphere as they enter the encampment. Oh, how much is lost by neglecting this important work! You may be pleased with the preaching, you may become animated and revived, but the converting, reforming power of God will not be felt in the heart, and the work will not be so deep, thorough, and lasting as it should be. Let pride be crucified and the soul be clad with the priceless robe of Christ's righteousness, and what a meeting will you enjoy. It will be to your soul even as the gate of heaven.

The same work of humiliation and heart-searching should also go on in the church, so that all differences and alienations among brethren may be laid aside before appearing before the Lord at these annual gatherings. Set about this work in earnest, and rest not until it is accomplished; for if you come up to the meeting with your doubts, your murmurings, your disputings, you bring evil angels into the camp and carry darkness wherever you go. {Testimonies Volume 5, Pg.163-165}

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