

#20 "What motivates your actions, Christ or self?"

1 This morning we will continue with our study of Br. Branham's sermon "The Spoken Word is the Original Seed", and we will read from paragraph 15.

2 15 I remember one time a man named Moses. Those people constantly (we would call it in our southern expression) aggravated him, just constantly kept him on the move. Everything was a murmur, or complaint and so forth. But Moses, when it come to the showdown, when God said, "Separate yourself from them, 'cause I'm going to take you and start a nation," Moses threw himself in the path of God's wrath, said, "Take me, and not the people," that he'd called rebels (rebellion against God and against him) yet, he loved them so much till he said, "Take me and save them." That was Christ in Moses. And if a man, no matter how much some other one would disagree with him, if he doesn't feel that way then there's a lacking of Christ I believe, if from his heart, not his lips, but his heart, if he don't feel that way towards humanity...

3 Can I hear an Amen from everyone here this morning? My, my, what condition the Church of the living God is in this morning. I only wish I could honestly say from my heart that I loved everyone in that way, that when they fussed and complained about me, that I could honestly say that I love them anyway. I say this as a confession, because God does know my heart and He knows that I have tried to love even those who have spited me.

4 Now, that does not say that I was successful in showing them this kind of Love, and I do not believe that Brother Branham and even Moses were altogether successful in showing this kind of Love all the time as well. I mean, Moses got so angry with the people that instead of speaking to the rock he struck it twice and yelled at it, and God was not happy with his antics. But that is the human side. I am sure his intent from his heart was right and pure, but his human side just got tired of the lack of maturity in the people, who are so now focused that they miss the principals that God is trying to show them through his testing. But, human side or not, God was so disappointed in what Moses did that he forbade him to enter into the promise land at that time. He allowed him to see it from afar, but forbade him to enter in.

5 Exodus 17:1 And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? 3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? 4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. 5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

6 So you see, God told him to take his rod and strike the rock once and it will give water. Yet we see in chapter 20 that this time God tells Moses to simply just speak to the Rock and it will produce the water, but Moses had become so angry with the people for their constant fussing that he struck the rock not just once but twice, and in

so doing disobeyed the Words of God to simply just speak to it.

7 Numbers 20:1 Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there. Notice, Miriam the prophetess, died there for her attitude she had showed against Moses. And thus she was not allowed to enter into the promise land. Let me say this with Godly respect and Godly fear, "you had better watch your attitudes towards what God is doing in this hour, because things are going to get tough and if you do not look to him for your help you are not going to make it. God is not a respecter of people, and if Miriam did not make it, why do you think you are in any better shape than her? Now, as we read, I want you to notice the situation that God placed them in. No water. Famine and now no water...

8 2 And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. I want you to notice how finicky the people are. When things are going good, "Oh, man, Moses is the man". But when things got tough, and I'm telling you, things are going to get tough. You think you are having a tough time now, just wait after a while and the problems you think you have now will be nothing compared to what is coming down the pike. You think God is going to take a people in that have no character?

9 Character is not a gift, character is a victory. That's what brother Branham said in the Church Age Book.

10 Church Age Book Chapter 4 - The Smyrnaean Church Age P:14 Conditions of the Age Revelation 2:9, "I know thy works and thy tribulation, and poverty, and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

11 15 The key to this age is most evidently tribulation. If there was tribulation in the first age, there is now predicted an intensified tribulation throughout the second age. There is no doubt but what the following words of Paul applied to the mass of Christians wherever they were in the world and in every age.

12 Hebrews 10:32-38, "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He That shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

13 16 The mere association of kindhearted people with the true believer might well bring death in return for their kindness.

14 17 Now the Lord God Almighty says, "I Know." There He is walking in the midst of His people. There He is, the Chief Shepherd of the flock. But does He hold back the persecution? Does He stem the tribulation? No, He does not. He simply says, "I KNOW your tribulation, I am not at all unmindful of your suffering." What a stumbling block this is to so many people. Like Israel they wonder if God really loves them. How can God be just and loving if He stands by and watches His people suffer?

15 That is what they asked in Malachi 1:1-3, "The burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet we say, Where-in hast Thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."

16 You see, they could not figure out God's love. They thought that love meant no suffering. They thought that love meant a baby with parental care. But God said that His love was "elective" love. The proof of His love is Election, that no matter what happened, His love was proven truly by the fact they were chosen unto salvation ("because God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"). He may commit you to death as He did Paul. He may commit you to suffering as He did Job. That is His prerogative. He is sovereign. But it is all with a purpose. If He did not have a purpose, then He would be the author of frustration and not of peace. His purpose is "that after we have suffered awhile we would be made perfect, be established, strengthened and settled."

17 As Job said, "He puts strength in us." (Job 23:6b) You see He, Himself, suffered. "He learned obedience by the things that He suffered." He was actually made perfect by the things that He suffered. Hebrews 5:8-9, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." In plain language, the very character of Jesus was perfected by suffering. And according to Paul He has left His church a measure of suffering that they, too, by their faith in God while suffering for Him, would come to a place of perfection. Why did He want this? James 1:2-4, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

18 Why does He stand by? The reason is in Romans 8:17-18, "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

19 Unless we suffer with Him we cannot reign with Him. You have to suffer to reign. The reason for this is that character simply is never made without suffering. Character is a VICTORY, not a gift. A man without character can't reign because power apart from character is Satanic. But power with character is fit to rule. And since He wants us to share even His throne on the same basis that He overcame and is set down in His Father's throne, then we have to overcome to sit with Him. And the little temporary suffering we go through now is not worthy to be compared to the tremendous glory that will be revealed in us when He comes. Oh, what treasures are laid up for those who are willing to enter into His kingdom through much tribulation.

20 "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials that are to try you." That is what Peter said. Is it strange that God wants us to develop a Christ-like character that comes through suffering? No sir. And we all have trials. We are all tried and chastened as sons. Not one but goes through that. The church that is not suffering, and is not being tried, hasn't got it isn't of God. Heb. 12:6, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

21 Now this special condition in Smyrna must be applied to every age. There is no age free from it. There is no true believer free from it. This is of God. This is the will of God. It is needful. We need the Lord to teach us the truth that we are to suffer and be Christ-like in doing it. "Love suffereth long and is kind." Matthew 5:11-12, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

22 The cloudy skies and storms of life are no signs of God's disapproval. Neither are bright skies and still waters signs of His love and approval. His approval of any of us is only IN THE BELOVED. His love is elective which He had for us before the foundation of the world. Does He love us? Ah yes. But how shall we know? We shall know because He SAID SO, and manifested that He did love us for He brought us to Himself and gave us of

His Spirit, placing us as sons. And how shall I prove my love to Him? By believing what He said, and by conducting myself with joy amidst the trials that He in His wisdom allows to come to pass.

23 22 "I know thy poverty (but thou are rich)." There it is again. See Him walking up and down in the midst of His Church. Like a father He is looking down upon His family. He is the Head of His household. He is the provider. He is the protector. Yet He looks on at their poverty. Oh, how the untutored believer stumbles at this. How can God bear to look upon His own in a time of need and not just stop it all, just give in and lavish everything material upon them?

24 23 Here is where you have to believe again in the love, and goodness and wisdom of God. This, too, is needful. Remember He admonished, "Take no thought for the morrow, what ye shall eat or what ye shall put on. Your Father knoweth the things ye have need of. He Who clothes the lily and feeds the sparrow shall do much more for you. These physical things are not the true basic necessities of your life, for a man's life consisteth not of the things he possesses. But rather seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all material necessities will be added unto you."

25 The people of God are not material minded. They are Christ-minded. They do not seek the treasures that are below; they seek those above. It is absolutely true, the majority of Christians are NOT wealthy. Rather they are on the poor side. It was so in Jesus' day. It was true in Paul's day and it should be true today. Oh, it is not too true today for the Laodicean Age is one of vast wealth where often the criterion of spirituality is an abundance of earthly goods. My, how rich the church is in goods. But how poor in Spirit. "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is NOT meat and drink." It is not material. It is WITHIN us. A rich man is rich in God, not in worldly things.

26 24 "Oh," cries the Spirit, "I see your poverty. I see your need. You haven't very much, if anything, to boast of. What you did have has been taken from you. You gladly gave up your possessions in exchange for eternal ones. You are laughed at. You are scorned. You don't have material resources to fall back on. But you are rich in spite of it all. Your security lies in Him Who is your shield and exceeding great reward. Your kingdom is yet to come. But it will come. And it will be an everlasting one. Yes, I am mindful of your trials and woes. I know how hard it is to get along. But I will remember all this when I return to claim you as My own, and then I will reward you."

27 25 Now this is nothing against rich people because God can save a rich man. Some of God's children are rich. But money can be such a snare, not only to those who have it but to those who don't have it. Way back there in the first age, James cried out to those who were putting stock in wealthy people, "Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons." The poor there were trying to butter up the rich in order to get help, rather than trusting in God. "Don't do it," says James. "Don't do it. Money isn't everything. Money isn't the answer." And today it is not the answer either. We have more wealth than we have ever had and yet less is being accomplished Spiritually. It is not with money that God works. He moves by His Spirit. And that moving of the Spirit comes only to a life consecrated to the Word.

28 Now, in getting back to Numbers 20: we will pick up at paragraph 3 And the people chode with Moses, (that means they complained and chided with Moses) and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

29 Look at there attitude towards Moses and God. They were angry. They had no patience to see what God was doing. And I see more and more of this attitude in this Message all the time. People absolutely have no patience anymore to wait on God for an answer. They say, I am tired of praying, I want an answer right now. Oh! Oh!!, You had just better shut up before you die in this wilderness journey like they did back there.)

30 Psalm 106:6 We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. 7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea. 8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. 9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. 10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. 11 And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. 12 Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. 13 They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: 14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. 15 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul. 16 They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD. 17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. 18 And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked. 19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. 20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. 21 They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; 22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea. 23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them. 24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word: 25 But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD. 26 Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness: 27 To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands. 28 They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. 29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them. 30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. 31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore. 32 They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: 33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. 34 They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: 35 But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. 36 And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. 37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, 38 And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. 39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. 40 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. 41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. 42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. 43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. 44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: 45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies. 46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives. 47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise. 48 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

31 Look brothers and sisters, Hebrews 6: 10 tells us, For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shown toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

32 Don't ever think it is was not worth all the suffering and shame to minister to the people of God, because not one little cup of water given out in His name will be forgotten. The problem is that too many people are storing up treasure here in this world where rust corrupts and the moth destroys. What good dare your material things going to do on that day you depart from this earth. You can't take one of them with you.

33 Now, in getting back to Number 20: and picking up at verse 4. Notice the evil thoughts being expressed by these so called "called out children of God" as they speak against Moses and against God."And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? 5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. 6 And Moses and Aaron went from the

presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

34 Now, I like this what Moses and Aaron did here. They did not stay to argue with the people. They got away from all that unbelief and got into the Presence of God right quick. And that is the biggest problem we have in our homes today. When strife hits our home, instead of getting upset and angry we should get away from those who are complaining and get into the presence of God where our refuge is. And the you will hear from God. But as long as you fight back, then there certainly is no peace, and God will not fight your battles for you if you think you have to do the fighting. I don't think we are cognizant enough of the presence of the lord. Certainly these people that were fussing with Moses were not so aware of the presence of God, but Moses was.

35 7And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 8Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. 9And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. 10And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? 11And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

36 Now, look, Moses had gotten so angry that he did not do it by the Word the way that God had told him to do it, and look at the results. Not only he and Aaron missed going in, but all the people that were over 20 as well. And let me say this in words that might hit home to you, We are coming upon a time in this world that the Bible warned would one day come. And woe unto you if you open your mouth in complaint against God. IN Josephs day the Famine came because God called for it. You think the famine the world is beginning to feel is just circumstantial? No way. God declared it in the Book of Amos.)

37 Amos 8:11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

38 So who is sending the famine? God is. He said in Deuteronomy 28 that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you and destroy you because you did not pay attention to the Voice of the Lord your God. That's what he said, and that is what is happening today, and people are so dulled in their senses that they do not see God in this that is happening. And that is what took place in Moses day, they soon forgot, and we soon forget too.

39 Numbers 20:12And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

40 So Moses missed going in just like all Israel because of what took place at the waters of Strife. Now, that does not mean that Moses will never see it, for we know that during the tribulation time he will come back with Elijah and will enter the Land of Jerusalem and minister again to the people of God. So God has reasons for doing what he does.

41 But what I am saying is that we must be conscious of our reactions, because God looks at our reactions to every action. He measures our state by our reactions to the actions around us. Now, our status is that we are sons, but our state is where we are at in our maturity into becoming obedient sons, and God will test every son so be ready for it. So we must be aware of this or we will never have victory in the Love Divine.

42 Now, last week we saw what Paul said in Romans 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. In other words,

Love must be Sincere. He said, Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. And then he said, Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; The NIV translation says, devoted to one another in brotherly Love. Honor one another above yourselves.

43 Let us pray,

44 Dear Gracious Father, we know that you are the Sovereign God over the entire creation, and we know that you have a desire to see us mature into obedient sons with only Your will as our daily bread. Help us Father to never react again with a spirit of doubt, but rather help us to believe that all things are working together for our good. Help us then to check our motives with everything we do, for You promised us, that if we be any otherwise minded you would reveal it unto us, so help us to be sensitive to Your Holy Spirit within us to hear from you when we get out of line, and help us to consider anything in this world so dear that it would get between You and Your desires to see us come to our role as Obedient sons. In this we ask in Jesus Christ's name. Amen!

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