

Two Runners.

- 2Sa 18:19** Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.
- 2Sa 18:20** And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.
- 2Sa 18:21** Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.
- 2Sa 18:22** Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cush. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?
- 2Sa 18:23** But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cush.
- 2Sa 18:24** And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.
- 2Sa 18:25** And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.
- 2Sa 18:26** And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.
- 2Sa 18:27** And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings.
- 2Sa 18:28** And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.
- 2Sa 18:29** And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*.
- 2Sa 18:30** And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.
- 2Sa 18:31** And, behold, Cush came; and Cush said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.
- 2Sa 18:32** And the king said unto Cush, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cush answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.
- 2Sa 18:33** And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Here we have a tale of two runners or messengers. One was used for good reports, a type of the gift ministry of evangelist.

The other was used to give bad reports, a type of the gift ministry of prophet.

The evangelist was not given responsibility for any message on the occasion recounted in the above excerpt.

The prophet was given the task of delivering an un-welcome report to the anointed king.

There are times and circumstances when an evangelist is appropriate, if they are sent by the Holy Spirit with good news.

There are other times when the Holy Spirit has a bad report which He wishes to be made known to the sons of God. Prophets are seldom popular, and their reports are not always well received.

I would love to be an evangelist, a spreader of the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus the Christ. I imagine evangelists may be a lot more popular among the saints than prophets and teachers.

I may well be proven wrong on that point!

However it behoves us all to attend to that which is given to us to perform, not what we would like to do.

There are times for waiting on the Lord Jesus, the Head of the assembly He is building.

There are times for going and doing the task we are assigned, no matter how un-palatable it may be.

Where the local assembly that the Lord Jesus Christ is building, is 'broken', divided, distracted from faith in the name of Jesus and the person of Jesus in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit; we should not be surprised if someone is sent to bring the problem to our attention.

Rather, we should welcome with open arms and gratitude to the One sending the faithful servant to inform us of this crucial information. David was on tenterhooks waiting to hear any report from the battlefield. If we earnestly desire God's report on how things are proceeding we will be better placed to receive whatever report is sent.

In the above extract David was emotionally involved in the un-folding drama. The protagonist and source of the trouble was his own son Absalom. He was being un-realistic about the chances of the rebel being kept alive, even though understandably he wished for this with all his heart.

Our historical, personal and emotional affinities with people, situations, dogmas and practices may well make us reluctant to hear the Holy Spirit authored report concerning the things He wishes to address.

Sometimes only a prophet will do. To those who desire to do the will of the Father in heaven, the veracity of any prophecy or teaching will be made known by the Spirit.

Sound doctrine does not come by study, but by listening to the voice of Jesus, as He speaks to us through the indwelling Holy Spirit – the anointing Who teaches us all things. In the universal assembly which is the body of Christ, men and women who are prophet or teacher gifts may be used to convey the current heavenly report on situations which merit them.

One Example in scripture is Paul confronting Peter and Barnabus at Antioch;

Gal 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

Gal 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

Gal 2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

This was not a matter of opinions, but a battle for the truth of the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we see that none of us are immune from being turned to 'another gospel' by human influence and teaching. Fortunately we can all be corrected if we will receive the truth from whoever the Spirit uses to deliver the verdict. Similarities can be drawn between this episode and David's encounter with the prophet Nathan – you are that man!

The branches abiding in the vine which is Jesus, which bear fruit, are pruned by the Father, that they might be more fruitful than they would otherwise be. He will use prophets and teachers to do this still today.

Prophets and Teachers within the local assembly.

In the assembly of the disciples of Jesus Christ at Antioch we are told there were prophets and teachers, among them Saul and Barnabus. We may have a distorted appreciation of their important roles there.

A prophet in the assembly is not a fortune teller. They will not be dispensers of unfounded optimism. Nor yes-men to the status-quo. He or she is the Spirit's pruning shear. He is the corrector of error. Not by education, but by inspiration and Holy Spirit given revelation. And of course, this is to the immense benefit/health of both individuals concerned and the whole assembly.

Follow after love and desire the gifts of the Spirit, especially that you may prophecy.

1Co 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort (Advice).

1Co 14:4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

1Co 14:5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Sadly, generally here in the West, local assemblies of the disciples of Jesus Christ are not in as healthy a state as this assembly was in Corinth when Paul wrote the above to them, even with the problems they had! The assemblies are generally utterly broken up, with individual disciples scattered amongst various religious organisations. Not surprisingly then, the condition of many is dire. 'Saved but as through fire' comes to mind.

Many have started in the Spirit but have quickly gone on to continue in the flesh. Perhaps oblivious to how far they have fallen. Many have almost lost hope that things will ever get back to 'normal' as portrayed in the New Testament accounts.

Jesus is still Head of His assembly, His body, His bride.

The Holy Spirit still operates through ordinary folks like us in powerful gifts.

The race *is* not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill.

If we will ask the Father earnestly in the name of Jesus Christ for the gifts of Prophets and Teachers to be operating in the assembly of Jesus Christ, we can be confident that He will send them.

Amo 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

Gal 1:11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Gal 1:12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Gal 1:13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

Gal 1:14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

Gal 1:16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Gal 1:17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

We are living in a time when the very good news of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ has been adulterated, truncated, divided, watered down and generally become 'another gospel'. This may be because the usual forms of the 'gospel' we hear have been through many men's hands, heads, hearts and thoughts.

We need a revelation of the good news received from Jesus Christ, the Head, rather than a version received from men.

We need the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ proclaimed by those evangelists, teachers, prophets and apostles sent by Jesus Christ, in the authority of being sent in His name, with signs and wonders accompanying.

Who will pray?

Colin Thompson. Gateshead. England. (Nobody important.)

Comments welcome by email to colin@followingjesuschrist.co.uk

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