

DESTINATION

BY: BRAD CULLEN – APRIL 25, 2003

THE DESTINATION...

If you're there, you're there... If you're not, you're not...

There are many landmarks that indicate where we happen to be anywhere along the road... If I become aware that there are no landmarks that I can recognize – and that I have still not arrived at the place where I want to be... I have several choices available to me.

I can continue to drive down the same road... until I see something I recognize that indicates to me that I am making progress.

I can stop and ask someone if this particular road leads to my intended destination.

I can stop and consult a road map.

I can turn around to go back where I first got on this road... and take another route.

All the foregoing might make a modicum of sense... but only if I know where it is I want to end up. I can say that I have faith in where I am going... and go and go and go. Only to find out that I am on a road that leads me nowhere. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is nothing."

I awakened with a start. I turned on the light and squinted to focus on my watch. Shortly after One a.m. I was scheduled to speak to an association of Christian building contractors at a breakfast meeting in five hours. I couldn't get back to sleep. So I finally shuffled into my office and closed the door. I got onto the floor, face down with my head under my desk and started hitting the floor with my hands. "Okay, what do You want me to say to these guys?"

Nothing came. I continued to hit the floor. "Father, I want to say only what you want me to say..." TAP, TAP, TAP. "Father, Jesus promised that if I demanded to get your own Spirit for any particular situation... and I kept on demanding and knocking – I'd get the answer. I spent almost an hour. Finally I "heard" – "Twenty-nine thirteen."

"What does that mean?" I asked with a start. Tap, tap, tap, tap... then I "heard," --"Jeremiah."

I got to my feet and took a Bible down off a shelf and sat on my chair at the desk... I read, "You will search for me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."

"Wow, that's exciting," I muttered half aloud, but now fully awake. "What do I do with that?" Immediately I had a picture in my mind of sharing the incident while sitting down at a table with all of these men (about fifty of them) and asking them what they thought it meant to them.

At 6:00 a.m. I was introduced as the speaker for that morning. We were in a hotel banquet room with several tables set for breakfast. It was explained to me that the way they usually had these once-a-week meetings was, whenever the speaker felt like starting, either now, or during breakfast or even after breakfast – I was to just tap a knife on a glass for attention (he demonstrated by tapping "clink, clink" on a water glass) and I could begin. We would all be served the same food... and the table servers would come and go with extra water, juice and so on... and the man that introduced me finished his explanation, "I hope this won't be too distracting for you."

I stood and said, "Well, this is actually perfect." I shared what had happened to me earlier that morning while asking God to give me a word for this group. And since everyone had a Bible with them... I said, "Let's just take a look at this verse while we're eating and, as the Spirit of God leads... any that feels led to share just say what's on your heart... and let's have a discussion. So forget that I am the designated speaker." With that I sat down.

The most amazing discussion ensued. One builder started by saying, "This is exactly what I needed to hear. I'm tired of just going through religious motions. I almost didn't come this morning... because I didn't want to listen to one more dried up bunch of words that mean nothing from somebody that can't relate to our business anyway. But, I sensed this was going to be special. You came highly recommended and I thought I'd give it one more chance. Well, who needs you or anyone else to speak to us? God gave you the perfect blueprint for all of us."

I laughed... and said, "Yep, who needs me anyway." I fell silent. The Spirit of God flowed through these men that morning... each speaking forcefully and personally about what this passage meant to him. One after the other for about thirty minutes the flow continued.

A man stood. He was gray haired and distinguished looking. I knew him only slightly. He was the pastor of a church the Association President (that had invited me) attended. "Men," he began, "what you are playing around with here is dangerous."

Dangerous? I couldn't believe my ears! The Spirit of God was clearly dealing with and through each of these men in a profound way that was ministering to each of us. This was like a wet blanket – for the first time in my experience I had a clear realization what, "quenching the Spirit," meant in actuality. The man spoke for several moments more.

"Excuse me sir." This from the man that had started the discussion... by saying, "Who needs you or anyone else to speak to us?"

"You are out of order." He said very quietly yet forcefully. "We have a designated speaker this morning and you are not it. That speaker has yielded his time to God... and God has been speaking to us and through us. I do not mean to be rude... but I do want to say that what you have just said is exactly the kind of thing I've been hearing for months and almost decided not to come this morning because of it. I am sorry, but I have said what I was supposed to say."

He arose... looked around the room and said, "Gentlemen, this has been one of the greatest meetings I have ever attended. I have to leave now." He stopped by the table where I was seated and handed me his card... "please call me if you get a chance," he whispered as he walked on by... and then out the door.

There was embarrassed silence. "What now?" I asked silently. I immediately knew the answer. Nothing more would or could happen in that gathering that morning. Because a man unwittingly governed by a spirit of control had stopped the flow of God's own Spirit.

How could this be? I pondered the question all morning... then I understood.

I remembered the business card. I called Stan. He was on his mobile phone and asked if I would meet him for lunch. We agreed on a place.

Stan started in without preamble... "What you shared this morning was amazing."

"Yes," I agreed. "What was even more amazing was how the passage touched almost everyone there. I had a definite feeling that God had much more to show us this morning."

"Well, yes and no." He replied deliberately. "I realized something this morning. God is the destination. Nothing more -- nothing less. We can get off on our experiences... we can study the Bible and go to church or have meetings... but those are all poor substitutes."

He looked away for a moment... then turned back to me. "I'm never going back to any of it. I found God in a totally new way this morning. I realize that He is approachable. But I have to seek after Him – and if you hadn't had the guts to tell that story of what happened to you on the floor... I would have missed it. Do you realize that I have been slapping the steering wheel of my pickup all morning? I've been telling God that I want His answers for everything in my life and my business. Here's the deal... nothing has happened yet... and yet it has. This is really hard to explain. This morning you opened the door... but now it's up to me to walk through it. Not listen to you... sure I can get ideas from anybody. But the destination is God – not somebody or something in between."

"Amen," was all that I could say.

"Are we there yet?" Any parent knows what it's like to hear that question from the back seat of the car. Nobody can say for anyone else. But you'll know when you know... and if you don't know, don't pay attention to anyone but God... and He gave us the formula for getting there... searching with all our heart... when? NOW!

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