

LEADERSHIP AND UNBELIEF

BY: BRAD CULLEN – JANUARY 28, 2004

Why do some people make the choice not to believe? We really do choose what we believe and by so doing make that our “truth.” (See “**Choices**” October 23rd). Anyone can do what I do – I do not share what I am able to do to puff myself up or draw any attention to myself. I mean this truthfully and sincerely. I write these things to instill the possibility of receiving results - getting faith in those that have an ear to hear. As the above referenced article states, “I” don’t do anything anyway, the Father in me does. Not everyone *wants* to enter the discipline that allows him or her to be in the position to have the Father operate through him or her and that’s their choice.

About twenty years ago I stumbled onto a statement made by Jesus that I had neither seen nor heard in all my prior twenty-five year Christian experience. The statement in the original language means simply that anyone can perform the very same (and even greater than the) miracles that Jesus performed. It doesn’t take human “goodness” to get to the point of being able to do these things either. I have said repeatedly that I am “a chief of sinners.” Being able to do what Jesus was able to do has nothing to do with human goodness. Some religious folks fail to remember Jesus’ words, “why call me good? Only one is good, God.”

Jesus clearly said that he didn’t perform any miracles, but that the Father in him did. Therefore, if we are to be and do what Jesus said we would be and do, we likewise will not perform any miracles – the Father in us will do the “works.” I am purposely being repetitive here because I am trying to break down the wall of resistance that comes from religious tradition.

A colleague rebuked me several days ago. “C’mon,” he said with quite a bit of frustration in his voice, “I’ve seen you with just a few words restore the vision of a woman who was completely blind and, which her doctors had said was totally irreversible and that she would never see again, period. I saw this with my own eyes,” he said as he urged me on. “This is simple, he finished, “tell these critters to get out of our way and let’s move on,” he said emphatically.

I pointed out to him that it hadn’t taken just a few words and that it had actually taken place over a period of about two hours for the woman he was talking about to exclaim with amazement that she could see (perfectly I might add). “Well, okay,” he insisted, “but let’s get this accomplished, NOW.” I reminded him that he had the same faith and authority that I have. He argued back that he had brought me here to help him and this was more important than anything else I could do. I reminded him of the story of Jesus touching a blind man and when he asked him if he could see, the man replied that he could see a little, but men looked like “trees walking.” In that story, Jesus had to touch the man a second time before he had his sight.

Yes, I have spoken just a few words and blindness in a person was gone in an instant. One such time the words were simply, “Okay, you can see” and that’s all it took. I just remembered another instance of immediacy, a man that had been totally deaf for many years and even a hearing aid no longer helped. He had seen some other “miracles” and came to me with a great deal of faith. I spent a couple of minutes in silence and saw what to do. He was very good at lip reading and I looked at him and told him to shout the words “I can hear” at the top of his lungs. He didn’t hesitate – he shouted and had the most amazed look on his face – he heard what he was yelling and it shocked him. I laughed and this time he shouted “I can hear” again with a huge grin on his face.

What we often refer to as “miracles” sometimes is a process and doesn’t happen instantly. Going back to Jesus as our model, we need to remember that it took twenty-four hours for the effects of his curse directed at a fig tree to come into fulfillment. Then there was a district in which he could literally do nothing of any magnitude because of the unbelief of the people there. Their unbelief astonished him. I am likewise astonished at the “district” in which I can do nothing. The “district” is the organized church. The people there call themselves “Christians” and some of them are often more resistant to what Jesus taught than any other group of people I have encountered.

People who tell me they don’t believe in Jesus Christ are relatively easy to “fix” physically – and some of them also quickly become “believers.” The dynamics behind why so few people “inside” the church believe they cannot do what Jesus said they could do is somewhat complex, but in the main it has to do with the human leadership that is (ignorantly) disobedient and powerless. I mean no criticism here – just pointing out one of the obvious reasons for unbelief.

People can go no farther than the human being they have chosen to lead them. A historical case in point was Moses’ brother, Aaron. While Moses was away, on the top of Mt. Sinai visiting with the Lord, the children of Israel figuring Moses had disappeared for good, “rose up to play” and called Aaron to be their leader. Aaron’s “leadership” was an interesting parallel to church “leaders” today. He pandered to their desires and told them what they wanted to hear and did what they wanted him to do, which was to lead them in religious debauchery. I have referred to that incident as the first “pulpit

committee” – for the uninitiated, a “pulpit committee,” in some churches, is the committee that looks for a pastor that will come and lead them to “play church” the way they want to play.

My urgent call to people is to follow the specific and clear instructions of Jesus to allow no human being to lead them, but to make the One Jesus introduced in the original language as, “Daddy or Papa” (actually a correct translation that could just as easily and validly come out “Mommy” as well), be their sole leader. It is an amazing and wonderful thing to witness when a human leader does see the truth and gets out of the way and turns “his” or “her” people loose to be *with* them in equality in the presence and power of God’s own Spirit.

When people do make God, by whatever other name, their sole leader they almost always immediately come into the understanding that all men and women are their brothers and their sisters who deserve their respect as equals and thus are open to mutual ministry in equality. This is a call to a rebellion of an entirely different order and magnitude. The weapon of choice in this rebellion is LOVE. Note: In the website referenced in the opening paragraph, scroll down to March 24, 03 to see, “REBELLION (against Whom?).”

Sometimes love is expressed in harsh sounding words. Tradition has it that Jesus loves everyone. If this is true, he used some rather harsh words for the religious leaders of his time with which to demonstrate his love for them: He called them “blind leaders of the blind,” “snakes,” “hypocrites” and even called them “painted-over grave markers of the dead!” Imagine being a spiritual leader that is actually stifling his or her followers to the point of spiritual “death.” This is the essence of what Jesus was saying. Can you imagine anyone wanting to risk judgment in “that day” for such a thing?”

I remember the time that a preacher came to me at a conference at which I was a speaker. He told me he’d like to invite me to speak at his church, but *his* people weren’t ready for what I had to say. I’ve heard a variation on this theme many times. In this particular case I replied that they’d never be ready as long as he referred to them as *his* people. He expressed curiosity as to my meaning and we had a long conversation. He saw the truth and when he went back home he gathered the people together and they actually dismantled their “independent Bible church” in favor of what has become a thriving, spreading house church ministry with no acknowledged human leadership. Unfortunately, many do not hear the truth or they walk sadly away from it.

I have also had the experience of watching leaders come to the realization of the truth and going back to their congregations to announce that they are no longer to refer to anyone, but “The Christ” as their leader – only to have the congregation fire them! Amazing, what?

Can you make an argument from the Bible that God ordains and supports human leadership? Absolutely! Is there leadership anointed by God? Absolutely! It is certainly not my place to judge, which leadership is anointed and which is not. In the context in which I am raising the issue my mind goes back again to Moses. Aaron and Joshua came and reported to him that they had discovered some of the men were prophesying and speaking in different languages and that they (Aaron and Joshua) had made them stop.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Moses said, “You stopped them? I would that all the children of Israel would engage in prophesying and speaking in other languages!”

Do we see the difference here? Powerless leadership begets powerlessness. Ordination of and by men does not equate to anointing. Moses wasn’t threatened by prophecy by anyone because he knew he was anointed for his own task. He wanted the people to manifest the things of I AM, a mark of anointed leadership.

Let those that have ears hear.

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