

GUARD EACH OTHERS' ANOINTED FREEDOM IN CHRIST!

I John 2: 27 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson
Sunday School Lesson – July 28, 2013

“But the anointing that you received from Him abides in you,
and you have no need that anyone should teach you.
But as His anointing teaches you about everything, and is true,
and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in Him.”

Recently, as your pastor and IWD Superintendent, I have spent multiplied hours and days of travel to attempt to guard both pastor's and people's anointed freedom in Christ, even in the midst of difficulties, discrepancies of thought, and even despair in finding unity in the face of differences that arise in the local church. With that caveat, this lesson today is about how we must guard the leadings of the Lord individually and corporately. Here are some lessons we need to learn as we guard the anointed freedom we have in Christ.

NEVER FORGET THE LEADINGS OF THE LORD ARE SACRED AND TO BE HONORED.

(I.) Nevertheless, when the leading of the Lord is the issue and God is said to have led or anointed a direction or path to go, there are two possibilities that must be known. A leading of the Lord can be a learning tool or it can be that a perceived leading of the Lord that is a deceptive tool of the enemy.

When learning is the anointed leading of the Holy Spirit, God is more than able to get through to the heart of each one of us.

See our text in I John 2: 27 above. The Greek word for teach in this text is **didasko**. It means to give instruction or to effect learning. This ability of the Holy Spirit to teach each of us one on one is a blessing beyond compare, but it does not negate or abrogate the truth that we need teachers as well. Ephesians 4: 11-13 is clear that “God gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds/pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the fullness of Christ.” So never forget, though each of us has a special anointing from the Holy Spirit, congregations need pastors. Nevertheless, the balance of the truth is that each of us individually is to learn from the Holy Spirit alone. We each are to be Bereans. Acts 17: 10,11 tells us this story, saying, “The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” Notice the balance of their examining the Word received for themselves, individually, but yet

receiving that preached or taught Word of God with eagerness, not skeptically or critically, but joyfully. The Word of God also speaks of women who desire to learn, to be willing to be instructed at home by their husbands. Speaking to women in I Corinthians 14: 35, Paul instructs, “If there is anything they (wives) desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home...” Yet, husbands, guard the anointed freedom of your wives to be learners alone from the Holy Spirit who teaches men and women equally. And be certain that God’s first method of getting through to each of us as men and women is first of all, by His Spirit through His holy Word.

When deception is a possible factor in a proposed leading of the Holy Spirit, God is able to get through to us individually, to us as couples, and to us as His church.

Turn with me to I John 2: 18-27. “Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He made to us—eternal life. I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. But the anointing that you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in Him.” The Lord wants us all to know that in discerning the leadings of the Lord, we have an enemy and false teachers and false witnesses with false leadings not of God will claim to come in Jesus’ Name with words not from the Lord.

God wants us to avoid deception. Cultic leaders and cults use this matter of God’s leading as one of their trump cards to trip up the naïve. In so doing, they push their authority. Even we as husbands can push our God-given authority. Husbands, listen! It does no good for us or for God to seek to make our wives obey us. We are not commanded in the Word of God to make our wives obey us. We are rather commanded to love our wives. In Ephesians 5: 25, our command is clear, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” God does command wives to submit to their husbands. In Ephesians 5: 22, we read, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” It is a cultic thing for husbands to demand the obedience and submission of their wives. Such a

demand fails to guard the anointed freedom a wife has in Jesus. God allows a wife to disobey her husband, even as He commands wives to obey their husbands. It is wrong for a wife to disobey her husband when her husband's request or direction is inside the limits of the Word of God. Yet, God the Holy Spirit must be the compeller, not us. I Peter 3: 7 is clear that we are to live with our wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel. The exact words are: "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." Men, when we force our way, we give the Holy Spirit a vote of "no confidence." Ladies, when you disobey your husbands, refusing to follow them when they are not outside the Word of God, you are dishonoring your covering which includes Christ, who gave to you, your husband. This is clear in I Corinthians 11: 3, where we read, "But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." Thus, to disobey a godly husband, wives, on a matter not prohibited in the Bible, is a vote of no confidence in your husband or in Christ.

This same principle carries over in the realm of children in the home. When a child disobeys his parents, and they are not telling him to sin, it dishonors both the parents and God. Ephesians 6: 1 is undeniably clear: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Only when a parent's command goes against the Word of God clearly, ie., "My son, go and steal some groceries for us," only then is a son or daughter within God's anointed freedom to say, "Dad, or Mom, I must obey God first as the apostles declared in Acts 5: 29. "We must obey God rather than men."

When loving is an issue in the proposed leading of the Lord, God wants us to guard the individual freedom of one another, wives, husbands, children, and parents. We must not run rough shod over the wishes of others. Children are commanded to obey their parents and parents are commanded to enforce loving obedience with loving discipline as needed. This is the instruction of Hebrews 12: 5-11, but such loving discipline is always to be administered within the context of respecting the personal freedoms of our children and their tender spirits. We are to train our children to mind us as their parents, but as they mature, we do well to find ways to involve them in the whole issue of rules and loving discipline. This doesn't mean that we let down the bars or change our rules or the consequences of disobedience. It only means that we realize that we are dealing with the most sacred commodity in the world in our children—their precious human spirits. Our constant prayer must be to see what we are teaching our children become within them the very fabric of their individual lives as our sons and daughters. God has no grandchildren. Our children cannot live off of our faith. It must come to reside in

them. How it used to rejoice my heart when I saw my children making decisions I would have personally made for them. Yet the Holy Spirit led them to do these right things on their own. Bless the Lord! III John 4 has been my experience as I hope it has been yours. “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

As children mature during adolescence, giving them some decision making privileges guards their anointed freedom in their spirits. Decisions about what to wear to school, within reason—not allowing immodesty, such freedoms allowed guard the human spirit and God’s working within them that we need to admire and rejoice in as we bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Family discussions, listening to each other and respecting the individual leadings of the Lord in the lives of our children is the frosting on the cake in child rearing. I am so thankful that though my dad wanted me to wear bib overalls to high school, he never made me do it. Rather, he watched me wear Levis with one slight turn up at the bottom, sometimes ironed in. Wearing Levis rather than overalls was not outside the Word of God. That freedom given to me was very wise. Secondly,

NEVER FORGET THE LEADINGS OF THE LORD HAVE LIABILITIES WE MUST NOT FORGET. (II.) What are the liabilities?

Not one of us has a corner on all the truth. Turn with me to I Corinthians 14: 29-33. “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.” Wow! Although we may not want to know it, we all must remember that God can and He does speak to and through any of us. He has no hierarchy He must go through to speak. Remember, God used little Samuel to speak to the priest Eli. God gave to Eli a word from the Lord through the little boy Samuel. Why? One reason is because Eli had grown deaf to the voice of God.

“Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!” and ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. And the LORD called again, “Samuel!” and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie

down again.” Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if He calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” Then the LORD said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.” Wow! Anyone, including a little child can hear a word from the Lord.

All who speak who are led of the Lord are subject to the examination of the Word of God. “The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.” (I Corinthians 14: 32) Examining a word of the Lord is not the same as debating it, opposing it, refusing it, putting the leading of the Lord down, dismissing it for prejudicial or cultural reasons, as worthless, arguing over it, or negating it from logical reasoning. Examination means that we pass judgment using the Holy Spirit’s tool, His holy Word as our guide to study the leading of the Lord together. I Corinthians 14: 29 means a mutual study of the Word that allows all sides in a leading to consider the matter together and use only the Word of God ultimately to support or deny the leading. If the Word of God clearly denies the leading as being from God, we should humbly, but firmly show our biblical reasons for refusing to follow or to allow that leading to be taught or followed among us. If the Word of God is silent on a leading of the Spirit, that neither denies or confirms that word. It means we must hold our peace and proceed with caution, knowing this leading may well be from God, even as He even asked Ezekiel to eat dung, but the practice is not a normative teaching all must follow, nor should it be emphasized or taught as a principle or command to follow. That doesn’t mean such a leading is out for us, or for another. It doesn’t mean the leading of the Lord is not precious or not in need of being followed. It simply means that we should not push our leading upon other believers. A leading of God does not have to be normative for the church to be from the Lord, but unless it is taught clearly in the Word, we must not teach this individual leading as God’s way for all to follow, nor should we prohibit or stop anyone from following this leading of the Holy Spirit in their life. A very debated example of this is the phenomena of folks claiming that they have been “slain in the Spirit.” I refuse to encourage it or prohibit it. The Word does not speak about it

or negate it. If we refuse to prohibit it or stress it being done, we allow God to do as He wills. May God forgive us from making something God has used in our own lives or wants to use in our lives, though not taught in the Word of God, a teaching we teach as normative, or press it or enforce it being followed.

When our leading by the Holy Spirit involves others whom we believe God is calling to follow us, lead us or participate with us, then each of us must give opportunity for them to come to the truth God has brought to us, themselves, on their own, without our coercion.

We must honor sacred reticence, slowness, the methodical processing of a matter which may take years, or the rejection of what we know to be true. That is guarding the anointed freedom God gives to each of us. This is vital in church matters, in family matters, and in marital matters when we as people, parents, children, husbands and wives can differ. II Corinthians 2: 6 speaks of the majority ruling, but remember, the majority is a group of individual decisions all added up together. "For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough." Do you remember the words of Ruth to Naomi in Ruth 1: 16-18 when Naomi urged her two widowed daughters in law to return home to be married to Moabite husbands in their own land. Ruth saw the perceived wisdom of Naomi, but she would have none of it. She had seen God in Naomi's life and she refused to leave Naomi or her God. Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you, or to return from following you. For where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you. And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her; she said no more." What is beautiful here is Ruth's uncoerced spirit. Deep down inside, Naomi may have longed for Ruth to follow her, but she felt that would have been selfish to ask. So she gave both Orpah and Ruth the direction of turning back from her, also a widowed woman, to go back home so they could bear a family with new husbands. Reluctant following of a leading of the Lord is not truly following Him. Until God the Holy Spirit can break that reluctance or reticence, desist from going there. As pastors, we may see members of our flock going astray. We ought to warn them, but we cannot make them obey our warning. Sacredly allowing others the freedom to fail and disobey God is part of godly leadership. Knowing a couple ought not to divorce does not give me license to try to make them remain together. I weep over marriages that disregard God's intent that they remain together. I cannot force them to remain together. One of my best elders in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois refused to participate in anointing with oil and praying over the sick for healing. I respected his convictions and refused to force him to change. I loved him as he stayed home and promised to pray for the rest of us as we prayed over the sick. That is guarding each other's freedom in Jesus. Obey Jesus! Yet guard each other's anointed freedom in Christ.