

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

January 6, 2015

Issue No. 178 Mark Aites, Editor

The Individual

"Every individual has a place to fill in the world, and is important in some respect, whether he chooses to be so or not." – Nathaniel Hawthorne

"The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined efforts of each individual." – Vince Lombardi

"Each human being is a more complex structure than any social system to which he belongs." – Alfred North Whitehead

"God enters by a private door into every individual." – Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays, First Series, "Intellect"*

"All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual." – Albert Einstein

It is true, there is an emphasis given in Scripture to what can be done as a collective group. There is Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, "...that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21). Or there is Paul's desire for the church, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). But there is an application for the individual also.

"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned'" (Mark 16:15-16). The emphasis was to be upon "the creature," the one intended as the recipient of the Gospel. It is an obvious reference to a man (in a generic sense). Man or woman would be the only ones to whom the message would be preached. And it was to elicit an individual response.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter and the apostles preached to the Jews present at Jerusalem. Once again, the response was down to the individual. "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38). We key in on the phrase, "and let every one of you...."

When Paul wrote the troubled church in Corinth, he made mention of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor. 3:16-17 he addressed the temple or church in general. But later in 1 Cor. 6:19-20 he made reference to it in light of the individual. "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Every single individual is important not only to God, but also to the church.