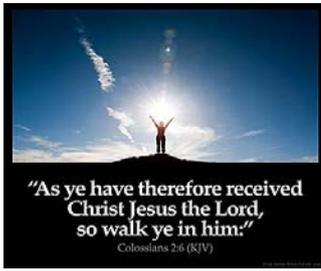


Australind Vineyard Christian Fellowship

from the Pastor's heart  The Sword of the Spirit the Word of God

The 3 Rs' of our faith in the word



Receive



Retain



Release

James 1:21-22 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive (receive) with meekness the implanted word, (retain) which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, (release) and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Jesus said to the disciples in Luke 24.49 to go and wait in Jerusalem for power from on high. They received that word and retained it (believed it) in their prayer life as they waited on Him in the Upper Room. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them and released the word in their lives as manifest power of the Holy Spirit which went into the entire world from them and is still doing the same today.

When one does not receive the word, satan comes and takes it away. I see many Christians have thrown away the word sent to them in preaching and prophecy or in some other way because they have not been paying attention or are just lazy to receive it and even unbelieving of what the word says. Others receive the word but are easily offended by the word because of hard hearts (shallow & stony ground) and hence do not retain it. Finally, there are those who even retain the word but fail to release it because the cares of this world and fears encompass them like a thorny bush around a tender plant.

When a person has an opportunity in life to receive the word of God that person is a blessed person because not everyone in this world gets that opportunity. There are many unreached places in the world where the gospel has not been preached yet and the people of that region have died without this knowledge. In developed nations, many have not received the word preached to them because of blindness perpetrated by the devil. It is incumbent (current) on us to keep receiving the word preached no matter how many times we have heard it. In spite of the New Testament having been preached for over 2000 years, it keeps giving fresh revelation. It is an inexhaustible word. The reason some of us do not receive this word when we read it or when preached is that there is no foundation for retention. One cannot build on loose sand. There must be a foundation. When there is a foundation, the word becomes the building block, which is placed as precept (principle) upon precept and line upon line to form the habitation of the Spirit. It is in this manner that the temple of the Lord in our heart is builded.

Many have tried to retain the word only to find that it fails them when needed. That is because they have not asked the Holy Spirit to write it upon their hearts when reading or listening to the word. It must be an engrafted (written) word on our hearts; otherwise, we will let it slip like leaking vessels. *Heb 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. (translated as leaking vessels) Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

The Apostle James exhorts us to be doers of the word. In my early walk with God, I used to wonder how to work the word in the doing of it. Though it was simple, it was hard to understand for me at first. I thought I could go on in my merry little way without allowing the word to first change me as a person before expounding the gospel to others and expecting them to live it while I did not. I could clearly see how the word was to be lived in the lives of others but failed to see how I should live it. When I began to understand that it must be outworked in my life first, I attempted to live the word as a doer of the word in character and works. This proved more difficult than ever. There was much confusion, fumbling, mistakes, and attacks of the enemy. I realized that the doing of the word based on foundational truths and on truths learnt and retained along life's journey. It was then that I saw the working of love, patience, faith, and truth together, which released character in my life. As a result, I became effective

with signs and wonders following the word as the rivers of living water flowed from my belly. ***Power will not be accepted in heaven without character***

If a Christian is to last the distance, there must come constant activation of the three Rs' in one's life. If you only receive and do not retain, you will soon lose what you received. If you do not retain what you received, you will soon find your faith to be very difficult. Finally, if you do not release what you have received and retained, you will find that there will be no replenishment and you become stale. A Christian becomes powerful as he listens to the word and receives it as fresh manna from heaven. There must be daily devotion to God that brings this about. There must also be a change of character that is evidenced by receiving and retaining the word. Then when the word is released, it becomes evident that it had first changed the person before it went out to change others.

Sometimes, releasing a word too quickly is also a problem. When you are expected to retain or contain a word in your heart that you so desperately want to release, you must bite your tongue so to speak because the Holy Spirit has not authorised you to release it. It will be like a fire in your soul but you must retain it until the appropriate time. Secondly, one must have discernment about where to release what. Many may not be able to take what is released and the word will be lost or snatched away by the devil. The Holy Spirit is our guide in all matters of receiving, retaining and releasing. Too many Christians blindly open their mouths to feed on words by others without waiting on God and digesting only what the Holy Spirit reveals as the truth and which is relevant to that individual in their state of maturity. If you put new wine in old skins, you will lose both. Prophecy is one such area that one would be well advised to watch what is said, when it is said and to whom and it is said. More importantly, how one says it is also a matter of discretion and discernment. I have seen so much damage done through prophecy that it is not funny. On the other hand, many come up for prophecy but never receive it and do not even know that what was spoken over their lives was a prophecy.

In the matters of ministry, one must step out in faith at all times. The fact is; we what we have in the three Rs' backs us. If we are empty vessels, we cannot give what we do not have. Therefore, receiving the person of the Holy Spirit in our lives confirms the ongoing power of the word in us and releases us to be the vessels He has chosen us to be. The gifts begin to operate as we receive them, retain them by practice, and release them by faith. The fruit of the Holy Spirit takes shape in our lives as we outlive the word of God through the guiding of the Holy Spirit by revelation and conviction of who we are and what we should be. ***Those who are brave face up to themselves first.*** The mirror of the word becomes critical in this instance. The gifts do not approve a person's character. Only character approves character.

The time has come for the Church worldwide to shape up or find out that they are on a collision course with finding themselves short changed on what they actually know and what they are doing. In the letters to the 7 Churches in the book of Revelation, Jesus made it clear to them that they were not complete. Many a person including myself have found out that what we thought was a good foundation upon which we were standing was not at all sound. When Christ decided to test the building with fire, it did not stand the test. Many Christians are finding out that they are in strife because they have failed the three Rs' in their lives. Others are not growing because they are not employing the three R's properly.

We live in a society that wants things done instantly. The danger is, allowing the world to shape us instead of the word. When we mix the world and the word we get nothing. The Jews had the gospel preached to them but did not mix it with faith even though they had many miracles and manifestations of God in the wilderness. It is not that they did not know who God is but they did not want to receive or retain what God was saying and doing in their lives. As a result, they released all the wrong ideas and practices in their lives, which they had picked up from the world only to find themselves dead on the desert floor. Paul admonishes us that the Jews are an example to us. Pride and stubbornness are two character faults that is so wide in the Church today that the earthquake of God's judgement will easily split the Church apart as judgement begins in the house of the Lord first. If you are being tested, it is a good thing. You will last the test only by what you have in the three Rs'.

The times we live in require us to stand in the Church un-offended by correction, changes that come our way, the word or personalities. We must learn to love and release love without condition. It is not an easy thing to do. Added to this are the challenges of sin, diseases, sicknesses and sorrow and depression. The worst scenario is the indulgence by many in open sin and unwillingness to repent. We must stand against all evil and win and go onto conquer. So, listen to the Holy Spirit just as Jesus wrote to the seven Churches. We must listen and be ready in season and out of season.

I have found that as I grow in Christ, my foundational understanding is often challenged by new revelations. This has made me reconsider many such previous truths I seemed to have treasured. The three Rs' are a constant challenge in a changing world and an ever-enlarging God who surprises us constantly. The only sure foundation is Jesus the word of God and the Holy

Spirit who is in us helping us with the three Rs'. If we trust them, we will make it every step of the way even in slippery times. It is an awesome thing. **Let His grace guide you.**

With love

Pastor Noble