

Acts 12:24-25

September 7, 1976

I was thinking today about some of our research and teaching ministry, and I was thinking that I'd like to see this Corps really master the book Receiving The Holy Spirit Today, Are the Dead Alive Now, and Jesus Christ is not God. I really feel in my heart that those are three of the great pieces of research and teaching that are available to our people today.

I said tonight when I opened that these are times that try men's souls. These are times that'll find out whether you really believe God's Word, and whether you really stand, or whether you blow with every wind of doctrine; slight and cunning craftiness whereby men lie in wait to deceive.

I know you have great goals in your life. Many of you have put forth a lot of effort to be in the Corps this year. Well, if I felt it important enough to get into the Corps, I think I'd feel important enough to see it through and to really get the great understanding in available. These are literally times that'll try your souls. There's a tremendous amount of criticism that is rising against our ministry. Some of our people are Corps grads who have turned against the ministry. But every man has to make up his own mind. You can feel sorry for people but that doesn't help them any. They can feel sorry for you and that doesn't help you either. I just know that some of us have been at this ministry and this Word for a few years and we're still standing on what we believe is the greatness of God's Word.

About the only way I know of teaching is the way I do teach, and that is just to make my life a part of your life, which is very treacherous, but at the same time it's the only way I know of teaching. And that first Corps objective is that we develop within ourselves a real innate ability of the spiritual depth and awareness, the spiritual awareness of the greatness of God and His Word.

I was thinking today, as I was getting ready for tonight, about the very people who object to our ministry and think were handling the Word of God deceitfully. If they could just sit with us and work this Word, when we work it and when we show them why this Word fits this way, they too could gain a very great in-depth spiritual awareness of God's Word.

This spiritual awareness is not just a mental ability, because there are certainly a lot of men in the world who have much higher I.Q.s than I have; much greater mental ability. But, somehow or other I do have a feel for the Word. I have a spiritual awareness and I can work that Word and it just seems like I see things there that a lot of times by-pass others. That's the kind of thing we want to develop in the Corps. This is not something you develop by tomorrow afternoon at three o'clock. It's just something you develop as you stay faithful, day after day and week after week, and just keep growing. Don't expect to learn everything tomorrow or tonight. Just stay faithful, and just keep growing. And for God's sake don't complain, because even one day on the greatness of God's Word is a million times bigger than a lifetime that most people spend outside of God's Word. And to have the greatness of that Word to live in your life is just fantastic.

I want to begin tonight in Acts chapter 12. Barnabas and Saul had been to Jerusalem. They'd carried out the Word of the Lord. In spite of the opposition to God and His Word, it says:

Acts 12:24

"But the word of God grew and multiplied." And I thought, how fantastically providential that we, on this September 7, 1976, could open this year's Corps with those great words. "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

“word” – *logos* - This really struck me again as I worked this; this inherent accuracy and spiritual awareness of the greatness of the Word. The people who object to our ministry by saying that we do not believe Jesus Christ is God, which is true, who say that we erroneously handle the Gospel of **John 1:1** - “In the beginning was the word, and the word...”, because they say that was Christ. Here you’ve got the word *logos*, the same word that’s used in **John 1:1**, but the *logos*, the Word of God, cannot mean Christ. It cannot mean God. It means the Word, the Word, the *logos*; the revelation that God gave to Peter, to Barnabas, to Saul, as they preached it, as they taught it. That’s the word; the Word of God, not the trinity.

You see, that’s what every day and every week, as we work the Word, we see more and more, the greatness of that work called Jesus Christ Is Not God. How we could have all been taken in with that teaching, that Jesus Christ is God, is today, of course, almost unbelievable to us. And yet, I believed that too at one time. But, when I work the word, like here, the word, “but the word.” the *logos*, that’s the same Greek word that’s used in the Gospel of John. It can’t refer to Christ, it can’t refer to God. It has to refer to that spoken Word that Saul or Paul, Peter, Barnabas, and the rest of them spoke. It was that Word of God that grew. The Word of God grew. How? How did it grow? Because people did what? Spoke it. People taught it. You teach the Word to one and it begins to what? When all of us begin to teach the Word, people hear the Word, people believe the Word, then it what? It grows.

“grew” – increased - And the Word of God, the Word of God increased. The Word of God increased. Boy oh Boy! Not Jesus Christ, not God. but the Word, the *Logos*, that preached Word, that taught Word increased, because Saul taught it, Paul taught it, Barnabas taught it, Peter taught it, more and more men and women taught it. That’s how it what? Increased. And if we’re going to see an increase of God’s Word in our day and time, people, you and I are going to have to do what? Teach it. We’re going to have to teach the Word, teach the Word, as it says, in season and out of season, which means all the time. (**II Timothy 4:2**) You teach nothing but the Word. You hold nothing forth but the Word. The Word of God grew; it increased.

“and multiplied” - Then it bothered me why they added “and multiplied.” Well, naturally if something increases it multiplies. If you have one child in the family, and your family increases, you have at least two. That’s multiplying; four, twins, triplets. Everybody knows what it means to grow in the family. But it not only is to grow in God’s Word, the Word says, and it multiplied. And that sent me to what I call that spiritual awareness, that in-depth perception of the Word. Look, that thing’s empty. Now the water begins to grow. The Word of God grew. And it multiplied and the multiplying is the overflow; it didn’t just grow to where it was blossoming up, but it grew to where it overflowed.

“multiplied” - The word, “multiplied” is the word *plēthunō*. The Word of God grew and increased to overflowing. Boy, isn’t that tremendous? That’s the in-depth spiritual awareness that we talk about. That’s the first Corps objective. What’s the first Corps objective? The Corps responds, “To acquire an in-depth spiritual perception and awareness.” Look at the greatness of that; the Word of God grew! That’s fantastic. That in itself is absolutely beautiful. But it did more than that; it multi-plied, it multiplied and the word “multiplied” is that word “overflowing.” It not only grew, but it multiplied. It grew to the extent that it increased to overflowing.

That’s the greatness of that verse. Imagine opening the Corps this year on the Word of God growing and multiplying. Growing, so that you’re plumb full of the stuff, to the end that you can’t retain it; you just give it out; that’s the overflowing. You get so filled with God’s Word and the greatness of God’s Word that every time you talk, you just bubble of God’s Word; you just overflow it.

The Word of God grew and it multiplied, multiplied; increased to overflowing. That's the literal, according to usage, of that verse. The *logos* of God grew; it increased, and multiplied to overflowing.

Acts 12:25

when they had fulfilled *their* ministry” – or – “after they had fulfilled their ministry” - You know what their ministry was to Jerusalem; to administer, or minister, the contribution that they had collected from the believers and brought to Jerusalem. So part of the ministry of service is to share with fellow brothers and sisters. Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry. The ministry was ministering the contributions that they had brought from the believers to Jerusalem. So part of ministering in our walks is to minister material things that God supplies to God's people. Do you understand it? See that?

You know in **Acts 11:29**, they talked about that famine. This happened sometime around 44 A.D. after the death of Herod. It could have started previous to the death of Herod (the great famine), but it continued afterwards.

Acts 11:29:

Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief [for ministering] unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, where the famine was very severe, where they really needed help. The other believers in the more blessed areas had sent relief, or material things, to the brethren in Jerusalem. Barnabas and Saul hand delivered it. That was the fulfilling of their ministry; ministering the contributions that they had brought from the fellow believers.

“ministry” – *diakonia* - when you are of service to your fellowman, on a horizontal plain. You can talk to me until you're blue in the face about your spiritual ability, but if I as your brother, have a physical need, a material need, and you as a brother or sister have the ability to share and you don't share, you're wet in the head; you're off. If I have the ability to share, and I have a brother or sister in need and I'm not willing to share, I can talk about my spiritual ability and all the great knowledge I have of God and how many hours I spend in prayer and everything else; it's just a bunch of hot air, because the proof is in the pudding. If you really love God, you'll love your brothers, and then if they have a need, you will do what? Share! That's why that word ministry is the word *diakonia*: on a horizontal level; ministering on a horizontal level; helping your brothers and sisters in the household.

They returned from Jerusalem, after they had fulfilled their administering the contributions that had been sent.

“John whose surname was Mark” - **Acts 12:12** says:

And when he [Peter] had considered *the thing* [realized what had really happened] he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together [and] praying.

Mary was the mother of John Mark. And here in **Acts 12:25** they took with them John whose surname was Mark: it's that John Mark.

Acts 15:36-38:

And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, “Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word [*logos*] of the Lord, *and see* how they do.”

And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who [John Mark had] departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

Acts 13:13:

Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos [on their first missionary journey], they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

He went home to mama. He couldn't stand the Corps training or something and he split. That's why Paul and Barnabas, when they wanted to go out on another journey, Paul didn't want to take John with him, because John had split out and ran home to mama.

Acts 15:39-40:

And the contention was so sharp between them [Barnabas and Saul], that they departed asunder one from the other [they split company]: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

That's quite something, isn't it? Yet, in **Acts 12:25**, Barnabas and Saul took with them John, whose surname was Mark. If you'll work **chapter 12** very carefully, this Mary was a wonderful woman who held the believers meeting in her home; she held the twig in her home. And she had a young son named John, and John was a likable kind of a fellow, but he had not had very much experience in the depth of the Word; staying put on the integrity, and accuracy of God's Word. He still had 'itchy feet'; he had 'runny feet'. When the pressure really got tough he couldn't stand it, because he had not been brought up enough in the Word. But, because of the great love that was in the heart of Mary, Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark. That's how Mark was brought into it.

“took with them” - *sumparalambanō* - This is the only place in the Bible that the word *sumparalambanō* is translated “took with them.” The word *sum* means “take along with.” *Para* means “one near with”, or “one close to.” It means “to take along with, one who has touched your heart; one close to you.”

Peter had just had that fantastic deliverance experience in **Acts 12**, and John Mark was the son of Mary, in whose house the believers had been meeting. John Mark got real close to the hearts of Barnabas and Saul. So, after they had finished administering the contributions in Jerusalem, and because this fellow was a nice guy, close to their hearts and had a wonderful mother, they brought him along and his name was John Mark.

Literally, according to usage, you could translate **Acts 12:25b**:

...when they had fulfilled ministering the contributions they had brought, they brought back [or they brought along] with them, one near to them [or close to them], John whose surname was Mark.

“took with them” – means – “they brought along”, “they brought back with them”, one who was near or close to their heart, and that was John Mark.

When we talk about the spiritual in-depth awareness and perception, these are the kind of things that we want you to see in God's Word; the inherent depth of it. For most people it's just words, but not for us; it is life! It is the difference between truth and error. It is the difference between that Word which He magnified above all His name, or just words. It's that type of spiritual perception and awareness that we like to build in the Corps. Well, that's all I'm going to teach tonight. But I thought it was really wonderful, that we could open this Corps tonight with this 24th verse; "But the *logos* of God grew and multiplied."

Barnabas and Saul, they were just like you are. They got touched in the heart by people, and sometimes people touch us in the heart, when spiritually we know it's not the best to bring them. But, they brought them anyway, because Saul, or Paul, and Barnabas were just human beings, like we are. Yet, that Word of God grew and it multiplied. That's the important thing. Sure, maybe Barnabas and Paul made a mistake, but so what? In spite of their mistakes, the Word still grew and multiplied, because as long as that Word is held forth it's going to multiply. The biggest thing in your life and mine, in the Corps, is that the Word may grow and multiply. But, it can't multiply until it first grows. You and I can't be agreed upon something until we're first agreeing with something. We are agreed with God and His wonderful Son Jesus Christ; we're agreed with what he did for us. Because we are agreed with him, we are therefore able to agree among ourselves on the outreach of the greatness of God's Word.

That's why you're in the Corps. Welcome!