

***Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.***  
**2 Tim. 4:1 – 4**

## ARE WE LISTENING ONLY TO REASSURING WORDS?

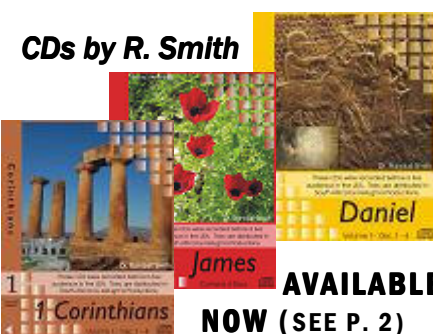
-MARINA LE ROUX

In the March 2007 issue of the newsletter of The Voice of the Martyrs one of the couriers recounts a conversation he had with a Chinese Christian about the church in China. The man told him that he attended the official Three-Self church which is supported by the communist government. He used to sit there feeling good about the church until the day that he discovered the underground house-church. It was led by one of the Christian leaders who refused to join the Three-Self church because he believed that only Jesus Christ could be the head of the church and not a communist government. As a result of that he was martyred in Chinese jails and labour camps for almost 22 years.

The Chinese Christian himself said that he attended the Three-Self church as well as the house church for almost two years. Only then did he see the difference. "While I sat under the ministry of the house-church, I realized that the Three-self church made me feel reassured. It made me feel better: beautiful hymns, beautiful voices, beautiful words, reassuring words. At the house church however, it was as it happened with Peter's sermon in Acts 2. The hearers were cut to the heart and asked: 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' (Acts 2: 37). Under the preaching of the house-church the security I experienced in the Three-Self church, vanished. At the house church the Word of God cut deep into my heart. That is the difference between the Three-Self church and the preaching of the house church. The atmosphere of

the Three-Self church makes me feel comfortable, but the preaching of the house-church expects an answer: "What should I do?"

It is not only the Christians in China



who are facing this choice. Every Christian through-out the world has to make this choice. We can fit into an easy pattern where our Christianity exists of reading the Bible, praying superficially and listening to sermons that do not convict our consciences. Or we can seriously allow ourselves to be exposed by the Word of God so that our deepest, sinful motives and thoughts can be brought to light and be confessed.

In the section quoted above, Paul explains to Timothy that he should teach the Word in and out of season and that he should reprimand and warn his congregation members. Why does Paul sound so passionate about this issue? Why should it be such a necessity to emphasize the preaching of the Word?

The reason for this is found in 2 Timothy 3:17. The Scriptures have been given by God with the aim of fully equipping believers for their service

and work. Thus there is an equipping necessary for the Christian. Without it, he or she will simply not be able to do that which God has called them to do. It is for this reason that we as children of God not only need to know God's Word, but also be able to put it into practice. God has set certain standards for his children according to which they must live. He never lowers His standards. He just promises that He will enable us to live according to His standards. In 2 Timothy 4:17 Paul witnessed that everyone left him during a very difficult time in his life. Yet the Lord supported him and gave him strength "so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear."

Paul never complained that it was too difficult to do God's will. He just trusted more in God's ability to provide everything necessary to ensure that His will was done exactly as He wanted it to be.

If we do not take it seriously, that God's will has to be done exactly as He wants it done, Christianity becomes nothing more than a pattern of a culture. It becomes nothing more than a few good habits. That was not God's plan. He is only interested that we live in a personal relationship with Him. For us to be able to do that, we need to know Him as He is. His preferences should also be our preferences and His plans our priorities. Unfortunately we have been born with an innate resistance to His will, so that even after our conversion we are still inclined to do our own will.

## REASSURING WORDS

It is thus very important for the child of God to set his heart to searching for and doing the will of God every day of his life. Sometimes we think it is just too hard and too much to ask for; but our Father knows what we are going through and He is always willing to carry us through. We must only trust Him and be willing to do His will in spite of the fact that it is difficult.

David was a man after God's heart. Why? In Acts 13:22 we are told that God chose him because He knew that David would do His

will. As a young boy David was faithful as a shepherd. When lion and bear tried to catch his father's sheep, he trusted God to help him. He did not try to save his own life by fleeing the danger, and leaving the sheep to be slaughtered. When facing the giant Goliath, David did not fear. Why? Because he had experienced God's faithfulness.

Afterwards he won battles time and time again. He was able to trust God based upon his previous experiences of God's faithfulness.

So many times God wants to teach us things, but because we do not trust Him enough to do His will; He needs to put us through similar ex-

periences so that we will learn those lessons. He cannot use us against a 'Goliath' or 'army of Philistines' because we, quite simply, are not faithful in the smaller things.

When He speaks, do we listen? Or do we hide where we can hear reassuring words? Let us start by being obedient to the command of the Good Shepherd to his sheep: "Beware of false prophets..." They may wear soft woolen suits and speak reassuring words, but what are they inwardly? Jesus calls them ravenous wolves (*Matt. 7:15*). Do we listen to their reassuring words or do we follow the Lord Jesus?

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For everyone who prayed for us during the past study tour to Israel, thank you very much. It was indeed a very successful tour. Please pray still for the editing of all the DVDs.

## A CALL FROM ZAMBIA

This is how a letter starts that we received recently:

*I have in the past recent months from Oct into March distributed over 200 videos from your ministry which were donated to me by missionary Robert Zins. They finished like hot cakes and many Christians, bookshops and churches have contacted me if I could provide them with DVDs instead.*

In October last year we had the opportunity of sending a couple of

videos with a missionary who was going to visit Zambia in a van. He gave part of it to a local Christian, Joas Chihangu, who is the writer of this letter. Now we have received this inquiry for DVDs. We know that Joas does not have adequate funds to order any DVDs, but several people who know him well have confirmed that he distributes that which is given to him very effectively.

Joas assured us of the great need for teachings which expose the deception in the churches, as well as teachings that can cast Scriptural light upon what is happening currently in the world. We also know that wherever children of God know and understand

the Word well, they are more able to see where misleading spirits are at work.

Thus we want to grant Joas' request and send him as many DVDs as possible.

Therefore we want to ask you with confidence that if any of you sense the Lord leading you, you would help us to send the necessary DVDs to Joas. A lot can be done to equip pastors to proclaim the Word of God.

*(Our banking details can be found on the attached price list)*