

Some of you are still in bondage because you are convinced that Hobart Freeman had scriptural support for his "unique" teaching. However, if you apply basic principles of interpretation to many of the passages he used, you find that he got those particular scriptures twisted. Toward the end of his life he did very little real expository teaching. I remember listening to one book series after another, expecting to learn more about those parts of scripture, only to feel empty when it was done because he railed on denominations, doctors and this and that with little exposition of the passage.

Taking scriptures in context goes a long way. Never read just one verse, except in some Proverbs. Verse numbers are not a part of the original Bible, the way that the Lord spoke it out. They were added in the middle ages to help people find passages quicker and memorize them more easily. The chapters and verses can be helpful, but we should never read scripture as just a bunch of verses put together. Each passage is part of a unified whole. Let's look at 5 of them that have been misinterpreted.

I. "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit." Proverbs 18:21

The only context for a proverb is itself, and in this case the second part of the proverb explains the first. If you love to use your tongue, you will reap what you sow. If you say things to people that bring life to them or yourself, they or you will feel the effects of those life-giving words of encouragement. If you say things that destroy and bring death, they or you will feel the effects of those words. The passage does not say that you have power to magically make things happen by "speaking them into existence". Build people up instead of tearing them down, because people will benefit from that just like they benefit from eating the fruit of a tree.

II. "Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies; for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost ('as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he' is the old King James way of translating it). "Eat and drink", he says to you, but his heart is not with you. You will have vomited up the little you have eaten and will have wasted your compliments." (Proverbs 23:6-8)

Many people in the broad spectrum of American Christianity have slaughtered this passage to say that it is talking about positive thinking. Hobart Freeman was one of them. However, when you look at the context of the "man thinks in his heart so is he" passage, you see that he is simply saying that a stingy person is not what he appears to be on the outside, but on the inside. He might say that he wants to offer you food, but what he thinks in his heart about the situation determines that he is not really generous, but stingy. It has nothing to do with psyching yourself out about healing or building your self-esteem. There is place for having good self-esteem in Christ, but this passage does not teach anything about "positive thinking". Take the passage in

context.

III. "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we are saved." (Romans 8:18-24a)

What a wonderful passage! Conversely, what distortion was taught about it! Paul is not referring to some elite group of super spiritual "manifested sons". He is talking about all Christians, all those who are saved. All those who are children of God (vs. 21). I remember a woman who was extremely critical of her children and husband once said to me, "I just want to confess to you, Jae, that I am an overcomer (and one of the manifested sons)." My response-- stop trying to be super Christian and focus on being simply a Christian, a follower of Jesus. Following Him is tough enough without trying to add some elite believer status to it.

IV. "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come..." (1 Corinthians 15:20-24)

Awesome passage! Clearly from the context we can see that Christ himself is the firstfruits, not some elite group of Christians. It is nearly heresy to call the "firstfruits rapture" some pre-rapture event in which a group of super Christians goes to be with the Lord before the rest of them, because Christ is the firstfruits, and we could never take His place. Don't be thrown off by those who point out that there is no punctuation in koine Greek, and therefore therefore the verse should read like a list of the order of events. There is nothing that forces us to believe that it should read like that. On the other hand, the context forces us to believe that the firstfruits is Christ himself. No firstfruits rapture. Just the rapture of all believers.

V. "...for by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith that God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. --Romans 12:3-5

I can remember as a teenager commenting to someone that maybe certain persons were not given the faith to believe God for a certain healing. He quoted this passage to assert that "God has given to everyone a measure of faith", meaning that there was no excuse for this loser who

wasn't healed (that was the attitude). However, this passage is talking about the fact that God gives us faith to function in various capacities in the church, and we all need each other. One part of the body is not more important than another. It has nothing to do with the meaning that HF and that guy attributed to it.

More scriptures to discuss in the future.

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