

The Deborah Report

A Partner Update from Deborah Ministries International

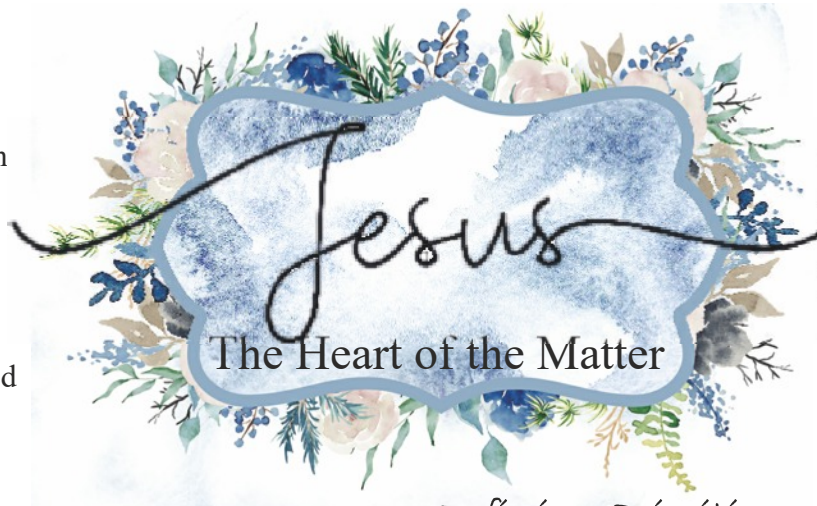
February 2021

In a conversation I was having with my husband recently, I said, *“I think weird is the new normal!”* I was not joking; I was trying to express how strange everything in our world—or maybe I should say our culture—has become. That doesn’t mean that I think we should accept all the weirdness! I just meant that it is almost like the world is foaming with agitation, and we are constantly being bombarded with things that grieve us because they grieve the Holy Spirit that is within us!

Yet, at the same time, there is a clarifying that is taking place. It is, I believe, because God has ordained a divine reset. He is using the pandemic, the political unrest and the various side effects caused by the governmental restrictions and mandates to clarify things. Certainly, God did not instigate any of these things, but I do believe He is bringing His purposes through it all. I think it’s safe to say that, for most of us, there is very little that is truly what we thought it was. Things that we could never have imagined just a few years ago are now reality—restaurants and churches being told by the government how many people can be allowed in, the general population wearing masks to protect themselves from others who are wearing masks to protect themselves from the other masked ones, just to name a couple of the new twists in our new normal. These things set my teeth on edge, and I’m forced to admit that I would not have believed it possible, were I not living it. And that’s where the clarifying comes in. Whether you embrace it or passionately chafe under it, we are all forced to see “what condition our condition is in” to bring back a phrase from an old First Edition song from 1968.

While things seem to be getting more and more complicated, life is being forced into a “back to the basics” kind of simplicity. At this point most Americans are focused on their personal health and safety, how to get

their children educated, finding a rhythm between working from home and on-site, how to get along and live happily together while at home, and their faith or their lack of a need for church. In that sense, the things that used to be front and center and seemed all important have now been dialed way back to “maybe next year.” Conversely, things we used to take for granted and give minimal thought to have now taken their place in our focus—front and center.



Defining Priorities

In that clarifying, our core values become more defined. There seems to be less blurred lines and more definition of needs and wants, not only in what we see around us, but within ourselves as well. That is a good thing, because it is really important that we know what really matters. One of the things that has come out of this clarifying is the realization that we, as Americans, are pretty divided on what we hold as core values. Surprisingly, this reaches into the churches also. Somewhere along the line the word “Christian” ceased to be a defining label for core values. Prior to this divine reset, as I have labeled the 2020-2021 months, I think many people assumed that we all, Americans and church-going Americans, had similar core values. This was largely because there was so much gray area and so many distractions to keep us from actually focusing on those gray areas. Suddenly, with life being forced into a back-to-the-basics mode, the gray areas are receding and the truth about what each of us hold highest in value comes to the forefront to be lived out—demonstrated in higher definition. No longer can we assume that the person who lives next door has pretty much the same set of values we do. As startling as this is, it is necessary for us to see this. If we refuse to see what these clarifying times are revealing, we are living in a false reality—a make believe existence that is not grounded in reality. With that comes a dangerous vulnerability—a vulnerability that would allow us to be swept along in a cultural current from which we

eventually emerge with a feeling of “what happened and how did everything get so terribly screwed up?”

At the very foundation of your core values is the question of Jesus. Who or what is he really, to you? In a country founded on Christian-Judeo foundations, there have been a large variety of loosely held assumptions about him. However, we must understand that he is at the very core of what defines us and what determines what really matters to us.

Why is there so much division?

This is what Jesus meant when he said, ***“Perhaps you think I’ve come to spread peace and calm over the earth—but my coming will bring conflict and division, not peace. Because of me, A son will turn against his father, a daughter her mother and against her mother-in-law.”*** *Matthew 10:34-35, The Passion Translation*

Just like his coming divided history between the dates of B.C. and A.D., before and after Jesus, his coming will ultimately divide everyone between ‘with Jesus’ and ‘without Jesus.’ The bottom line of what Jesus meant is that ***he is such a radical difference maker*** that there inevitably will be a line of division between those who claim and are claimed by him and those who do not. My point is: ***He is the bottom line.*** The person of Jesus Christ and whether or not you claim him as your Lord, your Savior, will be the defining factor in shaping your core values and what matters most to you.

Let me be as clear as possible in what I mean. I am not talking about his teachings, neither am I talking about a variety of loosely held general beliefs about his relevancy to our collective conscience. I am talking about whether or not you believe him to be exactly who he declared himself to be in the Bible—the Son of God, sent to pay the price for your sin and mine so that all who believe in him as Lord and Savior will be brought into salvation—a right relationship with God. There are many, many people who are in church in every known denomination who simply do not understand, nor believe this. So, the division that Jesus spoke of runs through families, churches and communities. The division that shows itself stems from the difference in those who are defined by their relationship with him and those who aren’t.

“Well, I thought Jesus came to bring peace and wants us all to live in unity!” you might say. The peace that the angels proclaimed at his birth specifically heralds the peace between God and those who would accept Jesus (‘good will toward men’). The unity that the Lord calls us to is a unity found in a common adherence to truth—to Him, because He said, ***“I am the way, the truth and the***

life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” John 14:6 KJV. Unity at the expense of truth is not real unity at all.

I suspect, however, that it is not those who are defined by a relationship with Jesus who find others’ beliefs and perspectives intolerable. Those who choose not to come under the lordship of Jesus are usually the ones to find those on the other side of the line to be ‘too narrow and rigid. Why? Because our loyalty to Jesus makes us immovable. Again, our core values either reflect or don’t reflect the lordship of Jesus. Since core values are what determine lifestyle choices, our lifestyles will be different. Core values are also what determine ambitions, dreams and life aspirations. Therefore, people will be divided in how they view life in general.

I Can See Clearly Now...

Perhaps during this clarifying time, you have been surprised to learn that some of the people who have been in your circle of influence don’t agree with you about the things that are making the headlines and top news stories. This can be distressing to a degree, but it is important to come to know what really matters to us and to those around us. Not only is this a clarifying time, it is a dividing time. It is time to be divided from the blurry, ‘one size fits all’ mishmash of opinions that has often formed an umbrella over us as Americans. It’s time to actually assess who Jesus really is to you. If you come to the realization that you can’t define exactly what he means to you or who you believe him to be, then you have come to the most important moment of your life. The radical changes that have reformed our culture over the last year clearly show that we cannot simply assume that life will always go on as it has in the past. God desires for you to know absolutely that you have chosen the life that he offers, now and for all eternity. But in order for you to choose that, you have to know it’s necessary to intentionally choose Jesus, as opposed to simply going to church. God is just and loving and merciful. Never will anyone ever be able to say, “but I just didn’t realize...” Please, during this time of clarifying and dividing, see that you know beyond any doubt where you stand on the Jesus issue. It is the issue from which all other issues find their place.

Love,
Deborah

Deborah



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