

Cutting the Coal

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Norbert Bohnert—May 19, 2012

Brethren, I'm going to take you into a little bit of history here before I get into the meat of the sermon, but it's to lead up to what I'm trying to convey to you.

It goes back to the Second World War and Winston Churchill, of whom you've probably all heard, who was a very well respected and admired man, was going up throughout the country during the war trying to marshal the morale of the people to withstand the assault of the enemy. He visited the troops in the factories. One day someone came to him and suggested to him that he needs to go and see the coal miners under the ground for they were lacking a lot of morale. They were feeling down and they really would have greatly appreciated having Winston Churchill come and speak to them.

They felt that they were doing nothing for the efforts of the war and they didn't get their pictures in the paper as everyone else was. They never seemed to get any credit for the work that they were actually doing. So, one day Winston Churchill did decide to go down to the coal mines and he gazed at the greasy faces that were amongst them as they gathered and they were all shocked to see him there, of course, and actually took the time to visit them.

One October day he had given them a little bit of a speech standing before them and said, 'We will be victorious. We will preserve our freedom and years from now when our freedom is secure and years from now when the peace reigns, your children and your children's children will come on to say to you, "What did you do to win the freedom of World War II?"' One will say, 'I marched for the 8th Army.' The other one will say proudly that he manned the submarine and another will say that he guided the ships that moved the troops and moved the supplies.

"Still another would say, 'I doctored the wounds.'" He passed through the crowd as they were intently listening, waiting for him to further continue. He said, "They will come to you and they will say with equal right and you will say with equal pride, 'I cut the coal. I cut the coal that fueled the ships. I cut the coal that moved the supplies. That's what I did. *I cut the coal.*'"

I'm going to entitle this sermon, *Cutting the Coal*. It's an analogy, but it very much applies to us brethren today.

- What was Winston Churchill trying to do, or try to encourage these coal miners by what he said?

- What was his main objective in addressing the coal miners in such a way?
- Was he trying to get these individuals to understand or to comprehend?

Winston Churchill wanted these rugged dirty coal miners to understand that their efforts did matter and had purpose. He was giving the miners a vision. He was painting a vivid picture as to the valuable asset that they were to the British war effort of WWII.

You see, Winston Churchill knew that the people need to participate in activities that will give them a sense of some type of purpose. Most individuals are hungry for something that is larger than themselves. Winston Churchill was painting a vivid picture showing these coal miners that they, each one of them, was an integral part of the overall scheme of the overall battle of Great Britain at that time. He was encouraging them to believe that there was a great purpose for their cutting of the coal.

We, too, brethren, each one of us sitting here, and all our brethren throughout the world, have an opportunity to cut that coal, so to speak. Not to cut the coal literally, but from a spiritual perspective we have an opportunity to cut the coal. God has called each one of us—you and myself sitting here—to help support an effort to prepare the bride of Christ, to help support the wife that is making herself ready.

Turn with me to Revelation 19:7, this is what we are being called to do. "'Let us be glad and shout with joy; and let us give glory to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.' And it was granted to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, pure and bright; for the fine linen is **the righteousness of the saints**'" (vs 7-8).

Think about that statement as we continue to move through this message. God has opened our minds in these end-times to support one another. We all must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. It's a one-on-one relationship with God and we must stay focused on that fact. We are one body, brethren, *one body!* We are going to address that more as I go along.

Verse 9: "And he said to me, 'Write: Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are the true words of God.'" Brethren, that's what we have to look forward to. We have been called through baptism and given the Holy Spirit to help support growth within that body. *It is vitally important to*

understand that our calling is to help support the growth within the spiritual body of Christ.

Let's turn to Ephesians 4:11: "And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers For the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ; until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness... [which we all know so well] ...with a view to the systematizing of the error; But holding the truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ from Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies, according to its inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love" (vs 11-16).

From the inception of the New Testament Church Christ has given us apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, pastors. He's also given in addition to these offices to each and every one of us a position to participate within that body. We may know that we may not be at the front lines at times of the battle or at the front line of a corporate organization, if you so call it, but yet, brethren, each and every one of us sitting here are representatives of the spiritual body of Christ.

We are to be active representatives of that body and we may not as individuals be teaching or preaching to the masses of humanity, yet every one of us is a teacher in our own way. Each and every one is a preacher—if you want to call us that. You may ask how is that the case? Simple stated:

- by the examples that we show
 - by how we live our lives
 - by how we conduct ourselves amongst people outside the world
- and of course—
- among ourselves, the brethren

The humility that we show to each other and of course, with that humility comes service. How do we serve one another? We may not be the front lines, brethren, but those on the front lines are dependent on all of you or the actions just as the coal miners for a very importance to what they were doing for the efforts of the war at that time.

Our activities behind the front lines are an integral part of the body of Christ. Just as London survived the Battle of Britain and ultimately WWII itself by thousands upon thousands of individuals,

literally cutting the coal, we within the spiritual body of Christ can survive the onslaught of Satan that is around us if we simply cut the coal from the spiritual aspect. With that cutting of the coal, do it in a humble attitude. Each one of us needs to allow the Spirit of God that's working within us to cut that coal.

Additional examples along the same lines as the hardworking coal miners of Britain during WWII of course are the examples of the hardworking people of Canada and the United States. I'm not talking about the country so much today, but I'm talking about the greatness of these two countries from the late 1700s into the mid 1900s.

Do we fully comprehend and fully understand what made these two nations great outside of the divine interventions and the prophetic hand of God, which we know so well? Who made them great? Let's begin with the Native Americans. If we were to study the history of colonization of the North American continent, one finds that the Native Americans were extremely supportive of the original colonists. They were very supportive of the French moving into Canada. Native Americans were also very supportive of the journey of Lewis and Clark, supportive of the many immigrants of the Oregon Trail, of the Mormon Trail, and the California Trail.

Who else made these countries great as they were? It was the average pioneer, the farmers, the truck drivers, the waitresses, the schoolteachers, the retail clerk, janitors, gardeners—and on and on we could go—including the American coal miners. Who built these countries were the moms and pops who had visions, brethren, they had a vision. Mom and pop who cared about their particular future, who had a vision of the future, that knew the opportunities that were out there before them.

What built these countries outside of God's intervention was *the power of the common people*, not the CEO's, not the corporate executives, not the senators or congressmen, but it was the common people who built the nations.

Abraham Lincoln once said, 'God must love the common people, because He made so many of them.' Long before Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin also knew of the resource and power of the common people. As stated earlier, people need to participate in activities that give them a sense of purpose. They need that.

Benjamin Franklin knew it. Abraham Lincoln knew it and Winston Churchill knew it as well. The common people, for the most part, descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, individuals who were driven with purpose, our families before us who cut the coal, these are the ones that made these nations what they are today. At the pinnacle of

their greatness, what they were at the height of their glory.

Unfortunately, that glory is dissipating because we have forgotten God. That is the unfortunate part. That's where we come in, brethren. You and I sitting today listening to this message, we can consider ourselves common people. We are called coal miners, if you will, of the spiritual body of Christ. *Spiritual coal miners!* Yet, but very special to Jesus Christ. What more would you want?

We may be the common folk, but we are very special people, brethren, sitting here at the height of our glory. We must realize this. Why are we so special to Christ? *Because of God's purpose in each and every one of us and the life that we lead!*

What was Winston Churchill driving home to the coal miners of WWII? *The vision of the purpose for their existence!* What has driven the common people of North America to sweat and toil as these countries grew great? *Vision and an understanding of their purpose!* That's the important part: *the vision and understanding that we can have and we possess.* Each one of us from a spiritual perspective must come to understand our purpose. What is our purpose?

Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." God has design and purpose. What is His purpose? Let's find the answer.

Ephesians 1:9: "Having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself; That in *the divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will." (vs 9-11).

Brethren, it all comes down to what the purpose is. What's God's purpose is for us and what our purpose is here today in today's society.

Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him" (vs 14-17).

What we need to keep foremost in all of our minds is vision! With that vision and understanding for our purpose in this trek through our physical lives today we need to understand that we must cut the coal spiritually in order to inherit the Kingdom of God. That's what we're all striving to do is to inherit the Kingdom of God. We have to come to that understanding, brethren.

Let's take a look at a memory Scripture, Proverbs 29:18: "Where *there is* no vision, the people perish; but happy is he who keeps the law." Brethren, that's us. Happy are we who keep the Law of God. Happy is he who is righteous in God's eyes, who keeps His commandments, who cuts the coal so to speak, spiritually, of course. "Where *there is* no vision, the people [would] perish."

Both vision and purpose must have strong foundations. The foundation, of course, is God's Word, the Bible that we use, in front of us now. Vision that is not based on proper foundations is not a vision, but blindness. Purpose without a strong foundation, that of Truth, purpose without understanding or the wisdom is misguided and misdirected purpose. If our purpose in life and our vision of that purpose is to be built on Truth, which it is, then where do we find that Truth? The answer might surprise us. Truth is found in two sources, one is obvious, of course. Let's look at this a little closer.

Turn with me to John 17:17: "Sanctify them in Your truth; **Your Word is the Truth.**" Your Word—God's Word—is the Truth. Make them Holy, set them aside by Your Truth. With this in mind, let's turn over to 2-Timothy 3:16.

Here it states: "**All Scriptures is God-breathed** and is profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." *All Scripture is God-breathed*, it states and is valuable for teaching the Truth.

- It's valuable for teaching the Truth amongst us.
- It's valuable for teaching the Truth to others.

It's so important.

- It also is valuable, other than for teaching the Truth, for convicting sin.
- To directing our faults and training in right living and that applies to us all.

Psalm 119:142: "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and **Your Law is the Truth.**" God's Word, the Scriptures you have before you, is the source of one form of Truth. The spiritual laws and principles found in the Bible from Gen. 1:1 to Rev. 22:21 is inspired by God and is the Truth, and it is the *absolute Truth*.

Since ‘all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and for instructions in righteousness,’ then here this Bible is the proof source to establish our purpose. Here’s the one resource that the spiritual coal miner can turn to for the Truth.

Proverbs 23:23: “Buy the Truth, and sell it not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” It says purchase the Truth and sell it not. In the words of Solomon, also continue as I would call it, an extended warranty if you might, in that you should also *purchase wisdom and instruction and understanding!*

You’re mature enough, brethren, to know that the Word of God holds the plain Truth, right here is where we find the foundation of knowledge. Our purpose of life and this is how we go about spiritually to cut the coal. Truth has many aspects and many elements to it.

Ephesians 4:25: “Therefore, let each one put away lies *and* speak the truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another.” We are all members of the spiritual body of Christ. We are members of one another. We are admonished to speak the Truth.

John 4:23: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner.” That should be you and us all here sitting here in this room today. We are admonished to worship God in Truth.

1-Timothy 4:1 is another aspect or element regarding Truth: “Now the Spirit tells *us* explicitly that in *the* latter times some shall apostatize from the faith... [Which we know has occurred and is still occurring.] *...and* shall follow deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons; Speaking lies in hypocrisy, their consciences having been cauterized *with a hot iron*; forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, even *by* those who know the Truth.”

We are admonished, brethren, to believe and to know the Truth. The only way we’re going to know the Truth is get our noses into the Bible where we have the opportunity to study God’s Word; with God’s Word we have that Truth. Implement God’s Holy Spirit that is working within us and ask for that inspiration to understand that Truth.

1-Peter 1:22: “Having purified your lives by obedience to the Truth unto unfeigned brotherly love through *the* Spirit, **love one another fervently with a pure heart.**” We’re told obedience to the Truth

and love one another in a humble and with a sincere heart.

3-John 3: “For I rejoiced exceedingly at the coming of *the* brethren *who* testified of you in the truth, even how you are walking in Truth.” We are admonished to ***walk in the Truth, live the Truth.***

Brethren, are we living today in Truth? If we are to speak, worship, believe, obey, and live the Truth, we must come to understand God’s Word and understand that God’s Word is Truth; that one source is the Bible. But there’s also a second source, brethren, and that source is just as important.

1-Timothy 3:14: “These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you shortly; But if I should delay, *you have these things in writing*, so that you may know how one is obligated to conduct oneself in *the* house of God, which is *the* church of the living God, *the* pillar and foundation of the Truth.”

The Church—*the spiritual body of Christ*—not a corporation, but you and I, brethren, sitting here today, we are the pillars of the Truth. The Truth is found foremost, absolutely right here in the pages of God’s inspired Word. But the Truth should also be found in you and I. We are to be the pillar, the foundation, the bulwark, the persons

- *living* in Truth
- *speaking* the Truth
- *teaching* Truth

The foundations are so important. I’m a structural engineer. Without a foundation, a building would not stand. It’s so critical; ***there has to be a sound foundation for us to stand!***

As mentioned earlier, Winston Churchill had the ability to show *vision*. Along with vision he had the ability to show *purpose*. The common people of Great Britain, including the coal miners of WWII, came to understand the need for that vision. They came to understand the purpose in life. As well as the people of North America in the 17 and 1800s. they understood vision and they were driven by purpose.

These people may have the basic understanding of God’s Word and its basic Truth, but the majority of them did not have God’s Holy Spirit working within them and helping them understand the entire picture and the plan of salvation that God had in mind for mankind. They read their Bibles and they understood the basic principles, but they did not understand the overall plan of God. They were God-fearing people, maybe misdirected to a certain degree as their minds had not been opened to the entire plan of salvation, but they understood the basic principles. They cut the coal in various ways and we cut the coal also in

various ways. Cutting the coal spiritually has numerous aspects.

Ephesians 1:17: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him. *And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling, and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (vs 17-18).

The cutting of the coal, brethren, can mean that we must share the suffering of Christ if we are to share in His glory. Cutting the coal can mean that we suffer at the present time. The trials and tribulations that come before us, that goal in coming between God and ourselves cannot be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us in the future.

For another aspect of cutting the coal spiritually, let’s turn to 2-Corinthians 12:7: “But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelation, *there* was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted.” An aspect of cutting the coal spiritually is gaining strength from weaknesses and trials that come before us and the tribulations that we must face. Cutting the coal spiritually can mean enduring the thorns in the flesh physically, brethren,

2-Timothy 2:3: “You, therefore, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” The coal miners of Britain in WWII may not have been frontline soldiers, but they were soldiers nonetheless. We, too, cut the coal spiritually, but by being soldiers of Jesus Christ we cut the coal for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

So, brethren, I hope you got the drift and for the final set of Scriptures, let’s turn to Ecclesiastes 3:1: “To everything *there is* a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens.... [v 17]: ...I said in my heart, ‘God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work”

Everything that is done there is a season for, a time for every purpose that’s out there. *Our season is now. Judgment is upon the house of God!* Our time is now! Our purpose is to teach the Truth, to edify and to serve humbly and to serve peaceably in love.

It doesn’t matter what title we carry or what is written on our business card. It doesn’t matter what the signs that we wear about us; we are the common people. We are the coal miners, so to speak, special to Christ. We are the common folks and our purpose is to spiritually cut the coal so that one day we can stand before our Savior as full members of the God Family.

We shall say with true humility through the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit that’s working within us, ***we cut the coal.***

- We cut the coal that guided the spiritual ship
- We cut the coal that moved the spiritual troops by the guidance of God’s Truth
- We cut the coal that doctored the spiritual wounds

That’s what we did, brethren, ***we cut the coal!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 19:7-9
- 2) Ephesians 4:11-16
- 3) Romans 8:28
- 4) Ephesians 1:9-11
- 5) Romans 8:14-17
- 6) Proverbs 29:18
- 7) John 17:17
- 8) 2-Timothy 3:16
- 9) Psalm 119:142
- 10) Proverbs 23:23
- 11) Ephesians 4:25
- 12) John 4:23
- 13) 1-Timothy 4:1-3
- 14) 1-Peter 1:22
- 15) 3-John 3
- 16) 1-Timothy 3:14
- 17) Ephesians 1:17-18
- 18) 2-Corinthians 12:7
- 19) 2-Timothy 2:3
- 20) Ecclesiastes 3:1, 17

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