

THE WAY YOU REALLY ARE

- A. Introduction: We must learn to see reality as it truly is or the way things really are and then live and walk in the light of it. Part of that involves learning to see God as He truly is and ourselves as we truly are in relation to Him. We are working on seeing ourselves as we truly are according to God. Let's review.
1. Christianity is not a belief system or a code of ethics--even though there are specific beliefs and behaviors associated with being a Christian. Christianity is supernatural.
    - a. To be a Christian means undergoing a supernatural transformation whereby your nature is changed from child of the devil to son or daughter of God, from unholy and unrighteous to holy and righteous, from sinner to saint.
    - b. When Adam sinned a sin nature was produced in human beings. Through his disobedience: the many were constituted sinners (ABUV); the whole race was rendered sinful (20<sup>th</sup> Cent). Rom 5:19
      1. It showed up immediately in the first generation of humans born through natural processes. Cain, Adam's first born, killed Abel, the second born and then lied about it. Beings made in the image of God were now exhibiting traits of the devil. Gen 4:1-9; John 8:44
      2. Through our first birth all men are by nature (make-up, constitution) deserving of the wrath of God. Eph 2:3--Nature, in the Greek, means disposition, nature, lineal descent.
  2. When a person believes on Jesus God gives him eternal life and he is literally born of God. I John 5:1
    - a. Eternal life is not "live forever life". We already have that through our first birth. Once conceived humans live forever. Eternal life is the life of God, the uncreated life in God Himself.
    - b. When a person believes on Jesus the Holy Spirit unites him to Jesus, to the uncreated, eternal life in Jesus. John 3:16--Believeth in Him, in the Greek, is believeth into Him.
      1. I John 5:11--And this testimony is that God has given us eternal life, and this life is given through union with His Son. (Williams)
      2. The Bible uses three word pictures to describe our relationship to Jesus. All depict union and shared life: Vine and branch (John 15:5); Head and body (Eph 1:22,23); Husband and wife (Eph 5:31, 32). Through the new birth we are united to the uncreated, eternal life in God.
    - c. This union occurs in our spirit. Human nature consists of an inward man made up of spirit and soul (mental and emotional faculties) and an outward man (physical body). II Cor 4:16; I Thess 5:23 Our spirit is capable of union with God. Our spirit was created for union with God.
  3. The entrance of eternal life through union with Christ produces a radical transformation in us, in our innermost being, in our spirit.
    - a. We were dead (cut off from, lacking, the uncreated eternal life of and in God in our spirit). Now we are alive (possessing the life of God in our spirit). Eph 2:1,5
      1. We were by nature an object of God's wrath. Now we are a partaker of His nature. II Pet 1:4 --and become sharers (partakers) of the divine nature (Amp).
      2. God's nature is His life (John 1:4; 5:26). Nature is the same Greek word used in Eph 2:3.
    - b. You are now a partaker of the life in the Vine. Whatever is in that life is in you, in your spirit, because that life is in you.
      1. Your soul (mind, emotions) and body were not directly affected by this transformation. Your mind must be renewed, your emotions purified, and your body brought under control.
      2. However, because your spirit fills your body, the part of you that has changed is bigger than the parts that have not yet been changed. Luke 16:19-31; James 2:26
    - c. When God looks at you He sees His life in you and knows what it can and will do. God wants His life in your spirit to come into your soul and dominate your mind and emotions and He wants His uncreated life to come into your body and produce healing, health, and strength for service.
      1. I John 4:17--So our love for him grows more and more, filling us with complete confidence for the day when he shall judge all men—for we realise that our life in this world is actually his life lived in us. (Phillips)

2. II Cor 5:15--Christ died for us all, so that being alive should no longer mean living with our own life, but with his life who died for us and has risen again. (Knox)
  - d. There's something in us that was not in us before we were born again—eternal life, the life of God. It is a present-tense possession (John 3:36; John 5:24; I John 5:12). We are now supposed to learn to live and walk by and in dependence on His life in us. There are several challenges to this.
    1. It's beyond our comprehension how an Infinite (without limits) Being can indwell finite (with limits) beings. We don't have to understand it. We simply have to believe it.
    2. Words fall short when we talk about this because we can't see or feel it. We hear a lesson like this and it stirs us emotionally. We try to "feel" the life of God in us. Then, if we don't see or feel any different, we conclude we did something wrong or we didn't get what everyone else got. But our evidence that the life of God is in us is the Word of God.
- B. Let's look at a man who learned to live by the life of God in him in a real way, the Apostle Paul. He was given the revelation of union with Christ by Jesus Himself and was commissioned by Him to preach it (Acts 26:16. Gal 1:11,12; Col 1:25-27). Consider how Paul saw himself in relation to Jesus. Gal 2:20
1. Paul said: I am crucified with Christ (the Greek literally says: I was crucified), nevertheless I live. Paul understood substitutionary nature of Jesus' death. Jesus went to the Cross for us as us and was punished in our place for our sins. When Jesus was crucified, in the mind of God, we were crucified (Rom 6:6). Paul understood that Jesus joined us in death to bring us out of death (Heb 2:14,15).
    - a. When the price for sin was fully paid, eternal life was given back to Jesus. Because He was there for us as us, life was given to us (you, me, Paul). Paul wrote all the verses we are citing.
      1. Eph 2:5--Even when we were dead [slain] by [our own] short comings and trespasses, he made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ.—He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him. (Amp)
      2. Eph 2:5--Our sins had made dead men of us, and he, in giving life to Christ, gave life to us, too. (Knox)
    - b. In the resurrection God gave life to our Substitute. When we believe on Jesus that life (eternal life, resurrection life) comes into our spirit. Our dead spirit is regenerated or made alive and we are literally born of God. Titus 3:5
    - c. Yet not I but Christ lives in me. Paul understood that his spirit was alive with the life of God, the uncreated eternal life in Jesus. He knew he was united to the life in Jesus and living by His life.
      1. Paul's own testimony was: I was dead. Now I am alive. Paul knew he had something in him that wasn't in him before. He was alive because the life of God was in him. He was living because of, by, the life of God in him.
      2. Because of the new birth, through union with Christ, just as a branch is alive by virtue of the fact that it is in union with the vine and the life in the vine, partaking of that life, so he was (we are) living by the life of God. Paul didn't have to make it happen. It was happening.
  2. Then he said: The life I am now living I live by faith in the Son of God--by adherence to and reliance on and [complete] trust—in the Son of God (Amp). Paul lived by the faith of, in Jesus. That means a lot of things. But consider this point in the context of what Paul was saying.
    - a. He has just stated that he knows "Christ lives in me". Paul was expressing his trust in Jesus to be to be and do in me all He intends and desires by His life. I expect Him to be my power and ability.
    - b. I believe He is now the life of my spirit and I am alive because He is in me by His life. I believe I can do what I need to do through His life and power in me. This was Paul's view of reality.
      1. Phil 4:13--I am ready for anything through the strength of the one who lives within me. (Phillips)
      2. Rom 8:37--Yet amid all these things we are (I am) more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him who loved us (me). (Amp)
      3. Col 1:29--To this end...I exert all my strength in reliance upon the power of Him who is

mightily at work within me. (Weymouth); By his active energy which is mightily working in me (Williams).

c. In the context of having treasure in earthen vessels Paul said: We're troubled on every side but not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed (II Cor 4:7-9). Then he explains why he has that kind of victory: because the life of God in him was manifested or demonstrated or operative in his flesh.

1. II Cor 4:10,11--In my body I bear about continually the dying of Jesus, that in my body the life also of Jesus might be shown forth. For I, in the midst of life, am daily given over to death for the sake of Jesus, that in my dying flesh the life whereby Jesus conquered death might show forth its power. (Conybeare)

2. Paul faced death due to persecution wherever he went (the same threat Jesus faced). But he expected the life of God (His resurrection power) to be demonstrated in his dying flesh (his mortal body). He was confident that Christ in him as his life (Col 3:4) would be in him what he needed Him to be.

d. We may not face death by persecution, but all of us face death daily in the sense that our bodies are mortal (doomed to die) and subject to sickness and old age. But we can have life manifested in our flesh as Paul did.

1. Rom 8:11--Yea, if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead be dwelling in you, he who raised Christ from the dead shall endow with life also your dying bodies, by His Spirit which dwells within you. (Conybeare)

2. The context in which Paul made this statement is power to deal with the parts of our make up not changed by the new birth (our soul and body). Rom 8:12,13

3. Paul knew he had the uncreated life of God in him through union with Christ. He believed it. He experienced it. If we were to read all of II Cor 4 and the first half of II Cor 5 we would see that Paul stresses awareness of inward ability that shows up outwardly to deal with the hardships of life. It is in this context that Paul made the statement: We walk by faith, not by sight. II Cor 5:7.

a. We struggle because we don't know what we truly are in relation to God (born of Him, alive with the uncreated life in God, in union with Christ) and because we walk by sight instead of by faith.

1. This is how most of us live: I don't feel strong. Therefore I have no strength. I don't feel well. Therefore I am not well. And so forth. All of that is based on what you see and feel.

2. What is faith? According to Paul, it's not sight. If you are basing what you believe on what you see and feel, that's not faith.

b. God says that we are in union with, filled with, life, strength, health, ability, holiness, wisdom, etc. Everything that's in God's life is in us because His life is in us.

1. We aren't simply playing with words. We are acknowledging that there is more to reality than what we see and feel -- the invisible, immaterial realm revealed to us in the Bible.

2. II Cor 4:18--Paul lived by looking at (mentally considering) what he couldn't see. He understood that that realm has the greater reality in that it created all that we see and will outlast and transform what we see.

c. Faith at its most basic level is agreement with God because we believe and trust His Word -- even about things we cannot see or feel. Faith (in the sense in which Paul uses it) is not sincerity or depth of commitment to the Lord.

1. Peter was both. He was sincere and he left all to follow Jesus to the point of dying a martyr's death. Yet when Jesus empowered Peter to do something humans cannot naturally do (walk on water) Peter put more stock in what he could see and feel. Matt 14:24-33

2. Jesus called that doubt and little faith. It stopped God's power in Peter's situation. A man fully capable of walking on water by the power of God was unable to do what God said he could do because he didn't believe it.

4. Paul ended his statement in Gal 2:20 with: God loved me and gave Himself for me. He understood that

love motivated God in human flesh to join us in death to bring us out of death and then indwell us with His life. Love motivated Him to devise a plan to deliver us from sin and death and transform unholy, unrighteous sinners into His holy, righteous sons and daughters through the Cross and the new birth.

a. In Rom 8:35-39 Paul said that no trial that life brought his way could separate him from the love of God demonstrated through Jesus Christ. Paul knew that God, in His love had united Paul to himself and that union made Paul a conqueror.

b. Paul had reached the point where he was not moved by what he could see or feel. He was only moved by what God said. This doesn't mean he always liked what he saw or felt. But he knew it wasn't bigger than God in him.

1. v38--For I have come through a process of persuasion to a settled conclusion that (nothing) can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Wuest)

2. That same life, the same God by His Spirit is in us. We need to become persuaded of it also.

A. From God's point of view you are complete in Christ. Col 2:9,10--For it is in Him that all the fullness of Deity continues to live embodied, and through union with Him you too are filled with it. (Williams)

B. How can I be complete when I see and feel so many deficiencies? Because you are now united to the source of completeness. Become persuaded of it.

C. Conclusion: We have more to say next week. But consider these thoughts as we close. All of us want to experience the power, strength, joy, peace, etc. of God in our lives. Lessons like this inspire us to try to "feel" something in our body or make something happen. Don't do that. Just believe it.

1. Take time to think about what we've discussing. Go over the scriptures. Personalize them: I am alive with the life of God. There's something in me that wasn't in me before. I am in union with the Vine. God, the Greater One, is in me right now to enable and empower me to live and walk in victory.

a. That's how you go through the process of persuasion and become persuaded of things you cannot yet see. Faith comes from the Word of God. God's Word tells us the way things really are, the way we really are, to inspire us to believe.

b. Become aware of how you talk to yourself. Are you talking only about what you see and feel or are you talking about reality as it truly is, as God says it is? Become aware of where you are getting your information about reality: from what you see and feel or from what God says. Then, make appropriate changes.

2. Learn to live with the awareness of God in you--not by seeking to "feel" something or "make something happen" but by thinking about (meditating on) and believing the scriptures.

3. Col 2:6--Since, then, you have received the Christ, even Jesus the Lord, conduct yourselves in the consciousness of union with Him. (Wade)