

FAITH, SIGHT, AND REALITY

- A. Introduction: We are talking about learning to see reality as it truly is or the way things really are according to God so that we can walk in the light of it and demonstrate the will of God in our lives. (That's what renewing the mind is all about—Rom 12:1,2). We want to continue our discussion in this lesson.
1. In previous lessons we've said that we must understand that we were created to become literal, actual sons and daughters of God by receiving the life in God—eternal life. Titus 1:2
 - a. Eternal life is not live forever life. It is the uncreated life of God, the substance and being in God Himself—God's life. ZOE is the Greek word used for eternal life. John 1:4; 5:26
 1. Our spirit (our innermost being) was created to receive and express the life of God. God gives us His life by uniting us with Himself, with the life in Jesus. In John 3:16, "believe in" literally means "believe into" Jesus.
 2. When a person believes on Jesus as Savior and Lord the Holy Spirit unites him to the life in Jesus. Eternal life comes into that person's spirit and he is literally born of God. I John 5:1
 - A. 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)
 - B. The Bible uses three word pictures to describe our relationship to Jesus once we are born again. 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).
 - b. We now partake of the life of the Vine. Whatever is in that life is in us because that life is in our spirit. I Cor 6:17--But the man who is in union with the Lord is spiritually one with Him (Williams).
 - c. The entrance of this life into our spirit produces a tremendous transformation. We were dead (cut off from, lacking the uncreated, eternal life of God in our spirit). Now we are alive (possessing the life of God in our spirit). Eph 2:1,5
 1. We were unholy, unrighteous children of the devil through our first birth. Now we are holy, righteous sons and daughters of God through the new birth. I John 4:10; II Cor 5:21; I Cor 1:30; I Cor 6:9-11
 2. We were by nature objects of God's wrath. Now we are partakers of His nature. God's nature is life. II Pet 1:4; John 1:4; 5:26
 - d. This life will ultimately transform every part of our being, making us like Jesus in character and power, holiness and love. Rom 8:29; Phil 3:20,21; I John 3:2
 1. God works from the inside out. In this present life, it is God's plan that His life in your spirit affect you outwardly—or produce fruit. Fruit is outward evidence of the life within.
 2. God desires that His life to come into your soul and dominate your mind and emotions with peace, patience and joy. He wants His uncreated life to come into your body and produce healing, health, and strength for service.
 2. We struggle with this because we try to "feel" the life of God in us or "feel" its effects. Or we try to make something happen, make that life flow out of us or into us. But that's not how it works.
 - a. If you are born again there's something in you that was not there before—the uncreated, eternal life of God. It is a present tense possession. John 3:36; John 5:24; I John 5:12
 1. You (your spirit) are alive with it. You were dead. Now you are alive because of the life of God in your spirit. You don't have to do anything.
 2. Because you are born again you are living by or alive because you have the life of God in you. You are living by, because of, the life in you -- as much as a branch is alive because of its union with the vine. That's why you are now Heaven bound.
 - b. We are living by the life of God. To experience outwardly this inward reality, we need to know it (get accurate information from the Bible) and believe it.
 3. Last week we looked at Paul, a man who learned to live in dependence on the life in him through union

with Christ. That life made him more than a conqueror, ready for anything through the strength of God in him by His life. Rom 8:37; Phil 4:13

- a. Gal 2:20--Paul knew he died with Christ and was raised up together with Him. He knew that when Jesus was given resurrection life he was too. And that life became his possession through the new birth. Paul knew he was alive with, because of the life of God in him.
 1. He lived with the awareness of his union with Christ and he lived expecting God in him to be his power and ability, to be and do in and through him all he needed him to be.
 2. He lived by faith in the Vine, Jesus, to supply him, the branch, with all he needed to bear fruit through that union, through that life.
- b. This agrees with what John, the one who wrote that Jesus came to give us life, said (John 10:10). John recorded that all who are born of God overcome the world through faith. I John 5:4
 1. All who are born of God are overcomers. I John 5:4--Because all that is begotten of God (Alford); all that receives new life from God (20th Cent); takes its origin from God (Knox).
 2. Overcometh is the same word Paul used in Rom 8:37 for conquerors. It means to subdue and is translated conquer, prevail, get the victory. (John added a preposition HUPER, meaning over, above, beyond).
 3. Every born again Christians is a world overcomer, fully able to overcome in and over the challenges life brings our way. Yet many are defeated, overcome by those challenges.
4. The difficulty is that most of us live and walk by sight rather than faith. We pointed out last week that, in the context of expecting what was on the inside of him to show up outwardly, Paul wrote: We walk by faith and not by sight. II Cor 5:7
 - a. Faith that accesses the provision and power of God is not sincerity or depth of commitment to the Lord. It is believing what God says over and above what you see and feel, despite what you see.
 - b. God has chosen to work in our lives by grace through faith. That's how our initial salvation comes to us and that's how all the provisions of salvation become operative in our lives.
 1. You can have something from God but if you don't believe it, it will be as though you don't have it. Last week we discussed Peter, a man empowered by God to walk on water who almost drowned because he doubted it. Matt 14:24-33
 2. Faith is not sight. Faith is agreement with God. It has nothing to do with what we see or feel.
 - c. Most of us walk by sight and don't realize it. To walk by sight means you base what you believe and how you act on what you see and feel.
 1. Example: I feel weak therefore I must be weak. I don't feel well therefore I am not well. But, in every situation, there are always two sources of information available: what we see and feel and what God says. Sometimes they agree. But often they don't. If we will learn to side in with what God says, what we see and feel will changed.
 2. My evidence that I have strength, patience, joy, health, wisdom (whatever is in eternal life in me is the Word of God. The Bible is my evidence that the life of God is in me and that I am living by the life of God.
5. The night before Jesus went to the Cross He said that we can be of good cheer (have courage) because He has overcome the world (John 16:33). Overcome is the same word used by both Paul and John,
 - a. Jesus is God became a man without ceasing to be God. While on earth He did not live as God. He lived as a man in union with and dependent upon the uncreated, eternal life of His Father in His human spirit. John 5:26; 6:57; 14:10; etc.
 1. Jesus demonstrated what a man in union with God, living by the life of God in His spirit, looks like. And He said that following His resurrection we could have the same kind of relationship with the Father that He has—union with the life in God. John 14:20
 2. The next day Jesus went to the Cross and opened the way for the new birth by paying for and removing our sins. When we believe on Jesus our sins are remitted (wiped out) and God fills us with, unites us to, His life through Jesus.

- b. By conquering sin and death through His death and resurrection and uniting us to the life in Him, Jesus made it possible for us to become what He was in His earth walk—conquerors.
1. John 16:33--And now my words are finished. I have spoken them that, in all the life which you live in communion with me, you may have peace—a constant stay for your hearts amid the tribulation of the world. In the world you will have tribulation through the antagonism of men and the trials of suffering, but be of good courage. I have overcome the world. Its temptations and hostilities have not once gained the upper hand over me. In my strength you, too, shall overcome and in all the struggle have my peace. Be of good courage. (Riggs Paraphrase).
 2. We are overcomers because we now partake of the same life (ability, strength) by which Jesus, as a man, was empowered to overcome everything that came His way in His earth walk, the same life that reanimated the dead body of Jesus and brought Him out of the grave.
 - c. Jesus in me has already overcome everything life can bring my way. He'll now do it in me and through me to enable me to overcome.
 1. We try to feel it. We try to make it happen. Just believe it. Walk in agreement with God.
 2. Get your information about reality (the way things really are) from the Bible and believe it.
- B. Many of the accounts in the Old Testament were recorded so that we don't make the same mistakes some of them made, specifically people whom God delivered from bondage in Egypt. I Cor 10:6;11
1. What God did for them is called redemption. God brought them out of slavery in Egypt to bring them into Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey (meaning full provision).
 - a. It's real people and real events that really happened. But it also pictures the ultimate redemption Jesus provided for us. God brought us out of death to bring us into life.
 1. That first generation of Hebrew people never entered into, never experienced what God provided for them through redemption because of unbelief. Heb 3:19: 4:2
 2. They are an example of people for whom God made full provision, but it didn't come to pass in their lives because they walked by sight and not by faith.
 - b. God brought them out of Egypt and, under the leadership of Moses, led them to Canaan. At the border, twelve spies were sent in to check out the land. They came back with a report that it was a beautiful land with formidable obstacles: walled cities, war-like tribes and giant warriors. Num 13:26-33; Num 14:6-9
 1. All the spies saw the same thing. Two of them concluded: We are well able to take this land. Ten concluded: We can't take the land. If we try we'll die. They influenced the entire nation and all refused to enter the land.
 2. Everyone got exactly what they believed about their situation. Joshua and Caleb entered and settled in Canaan. Everyone else died in the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan. 2.
- What Israel did is called unbelief (Heb 3:19). The report of the ten spies is called evil (Num 13:32).
- a. They didn't cuss or blaspheme. They assessed their situation only in terms of what they could see, how they felt, and what they concluded based on what they saw and felt. They didn't bring God's Word into the discussion. Here was God's Word to them.
 1. Gen 15:5-7; 13-14--God had made a covenant with Abraham (their ancestor) that he and his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan.
 - A. Inherit in the Hebrew means: to occupy by **DRIVING OUT PREVIOUS TENANTS** and possessing in their place; to take possession through conquering.
 - B. God said Abraham's descendants would temporarily dwell in a foreign land under afflictive conditions but that He would **BRING THEM BACK** (v16). This information was passed down from father to son, down to the generation that ended up in Egypt.
 2. When God commissioned Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt His first words were: I've come to deliver you out of this condition and **BRING YOU BACK** into your land Ex 3:7,8; 6:6-8

A. God clearly demonstrated His power, protection and provision for His people during the ten plagues through which Pharaoh was persuaded to let them go. Ex 8:22,23; 9:4-6; etc.

B. The night before they left Egypt God instructed them to reenact the Passover yearly as a remembrance of their deliverance once they **WERE SETTLED** in the land. Ex 13:3-16

- b. But in spite of all this, the ten spies said: We look like grasshoppers to ourselves and to our enemies. Nothing could have been further from the truth. God with them was bigger than any enemy they would encounter and their enemies were very afraid of them. Josh 2:9-11
 - c. Joshua and Caleb assessed their situation in terms of God's Word about reality as it truly is: God is with us to bring us into the land just as He promised. Fear not. Num 13:30; 14:6-9
3. We see clearly that the faith that accesses God's power to produce tangible results is not simply being committed to the Lord. Israel was committed. They had followed the cloud and the pillar of fire all the way to the border of Canaan. Yet they walked totally by sight and not by faith.
- a. After Israel came through the Red Sea they had a celebration and sang a song of victory declaring that God had delivered them just as He said. Fear will take hold of our enemies in the land because the Mighty Lord is with us. We will enter the land by your power. Ex 15:11-15
 - 1. When they were able to see and feel the Lord's power and help they believed in it. When what they saw and felt contradicted what God said they didn't believe it.
 - 2. They didn't look or feel like conquerors, but they were because God was with them as their ability and power.
 - b. What if, on the way to Canaan, they had continued to sing this song, continued to proclaim God's Word, and build their confidence in what He had promised them?
 - 1. They would have "come a process of persuasion to the settled conclusion" (Rom 8:38, Wuest) that by God's power they were well able to do what God told them to do.
 - 2. They would not have been moved by what they saw and felt. They would have believed what God said and experienced all that He intended them to have.
- C. Conclusion: We must see ourselves in terms of reality as it truly is. God, by His life, is in us as our ability and power. We simply need to believe it. That's how we walk in dependence on this life in us.
- 1. Learn to live with the consciousness that God, by His life, is in you. The Greater One is in you to work in and through you. Become God-inside minded. I John 4:4
 - 2. Col 2:6--Since, then, you have received the Christ, even Jesus the Lord, conduct yourselves in the consciousness of union with Him. (Wade)
 - 3. More next week!