

BELIEVE WHAT IS IN YOU

- A. Introduction: For a number of months we have been talking about learning to see reality as it truly is. Reality is the way things really are according to God. Our goal is to learn to walk in the light of the way things really are and then demonstrate the will of God in our lives. Rom 12:2
1. Part of seeing reality as it truly is involves seeing God as He truly is and ourselves as we truly are in relation to Him so we can live in a way that brings glory to Him and victory to us.
 - a. This is reality: If Jesus is your Lord and Savior you are born of God, a partaker of His life. There is something in you (in your spirit) that was not there before you believed on Jesus -- eternal life.
 1. Eternal life is not "live forever" life. Eternal life is the uncreated life of God, the life in God, the being and substance of God. John 1:4
 2. When a person believes on Jesus, the Holy Spirit unites him (his spirit) to the life in God. John 3:16--The word "believe in" in the Greek is literally "believe into".
 - b. 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)
 1. Three word pictures are used in scripture to describe the believer's relationship to Christ. 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). Whatever is in that life is in us because that life is in us.
 2. This life is a present tense possession: He who has the Son HAS life. He who believes HAS eternal life in (union with) Jesus. I John 5:12; John 3:36; John 6:47
 - c. God created men and women with the capacity to receive God's life into their spirit, their innermost being. That's what the new birth is all about, being born of God by receiving His life.
 1. Jesus came to bring us an abundance of God's life (John 10:10). He Himself said that men must be born again (literally: from above) to see and enter God's kingdom (John 3:3,5).
 2. In this conversation with Nicodemus Jesus made it clear that this is not a natural birth, but a supernatural event accomplished by the Spirit of God.
 - A. Christianity is not a belief system or a code of ethics. We aren't denying that there are specific tenants we must adhere to and certain behaviors we must practice as Christians.
 - B. But Christianity is first and foremost supernatural. It is a living, organic union between God and man through Jesus.
 - d. As Christians we get more than forgiveness of sins. We get a new nature. The entrance of eternal life produces a tremendous transformation in our spirit. We were dead (cut off from, lacking eternal life 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 by our first birth. Now we are righteous, holy sons and daughters of God through new birth. I John 3:10; II Cor 5:21; I Cor 1:30; etc.
 2. We were by nature objects of God's wrath. Now we are partakers of God's nature. God's nature is life. II Pet 1:4; John 1:4; John 5:26; John 14:6
 2. Eternal life in our spirits will enable us to walk as Jesus walked when He was on this earth (I John 2:6). We must learn to walk or conduct ourselves in the light of the life of God in us so that we can have outward demonstration of the life within. In this lesson we want to talk more about how that happens.
- B. Recently, we have referred to Paul who was given the revelation of union with Christ and commissioned by Jesus to preach it (Gal 1:11,12; Col 1:25-27). Paul had outward demonstration of the life within. From him we learn that we need to know and believe what we have in us because of the new birth.
1. Gal 2:20--Paul knew he was in union with, a partaker of, the life of God. He said that he lived by faith in the Son of God. He expected Jesus to be in and through him all that He has promised and provided.
 - a. Paul knew he had the life of God in him through union with Christ, he believed it and he experienced it.

1. In the context of having a treasure in earthen vessels (II Cor 4:7), Paul said of the many trials he faced that, in all of them, the life of God was demonstrated in him and through him.
2. In II Cor 4 and 5 Paul stressed awareness of inward ability that shows up outwardly to empower us to deal with life's hardships. It is in that context that Paul made the statement: We walk by faith and not by sight. II Cor 5:7
 - b. Paul said that we received Jesus and His life by faith. Now we walk in the light of it by faith. Col 2:6--Since, then, you have received the Christ, even Jesus the Lord, conduct yourselves in the consciousness of union with Him. (Wade)
2. To experience the indwelling ability and power of God outwardly we have to know and believe that God by His life is in us. It's easy to believe when you feel good. But that's not Bible faith.
 - a. Bible faith is not sight. But most of us live and 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 am weak. There are two sources of information available to us: what we see with our eyes and what God says about the invisible realm. II Cor 4:18
 2. There is more to reality than what we see and feel. If we will learn to side in with what God says about the way things really are, what we see and feel will change.
 - b. You may feel weak. But the basis of your identity is not how you feel. The condition of your spirit (which is alive with the life of God) is the basis of your identity.
 1. We don't deny that we feel weak or that we are weak in and of ourselves to deal with what is at hand. Faith recognizes that there is more to reality than sight and feeling. That greater reality can and will change what we feel.
 2. Paul felt weak but he knew he had inward strength and he depended on God to be in and through him what he needed. Phil 4:13--I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me—I am ready for and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me. (Amp)
 - c. Sadly, we say: He's my strength. Then, when we don't feel any different, we conclude: it's not working or I must have done something wrong.
 1. But that's all sense knowledge. You know you are weak because of how you feel. You know you are strong because you feel strong.
 2. The Bible is our evidence that the life of God is in us and that we are living by the life of God. Our evidence that we are and have righteousness, strength, patience, joy, health (whatever is in eternal life in us) is the Word of God.
 - d. Last week we discussed Israel at the border of Canaan. They did not experience the will of God for them because of unbelief (no faith). Heb 3:19; 4:2; Num 13,14
 1. They assessed themselves and their situation only in terms of what they could see and feel: We can't do what God said we can do (take the land). We look like grasshoppers in our enemies sight and in our own.
 2. Two of them, Joshua and Caleb, entered the land. They didn't deny the formidable obstacles in the land. They saw beyond it to reality as it truly is through God's Word: God with them and for them making them conquerors. What they saw was changed by that greater reality.
3. I'm not telling you this to give you a gimmick or a formula to make something happen: Just say the right words the right number of times, etc. That's all a waste of time.
 - a. I am trying to change your perception of reality through the Word of God so that you live in agreement with the way things really are.
 - b. The condition of your spirit is the basis of your identity. You, the man on the inside, are alive with the uncreated life of God, filled with the substance and being of God.
 - c. The life of God is the life of your spirit. Your spirit fills your body (Luke 16:19-31; James 2:26). You are bigger on the inside than on the outside. And God the Greater One is in you by His life and Spirit (I John 4 :4).

- C. You must understand that it's not up to us to make something happen or to produce the experience of Christ as our life ourselves. It's up to us to know and believe.
1. Jesus used the example of Vine and branch to describe our relationship to Him--union and shared life. (These various analogies of our union with Christ--head, body; vine, branch, etc.--fall short because we are talking about an Infinite God who unites Himself to finite beings. But we do get helpful insight.)
 - a. Fruit is outward evidence of the life within. A branch doesn't have to make fruit grow. It just has to be united to the vine. The life in the vine will do what it is supposed to do and produce fruit.
 - b. You and I have to exercise our will to agree with God and act in obedience with His Word. A tomato doesn't have to do that. But here's the point.
 1. Jesus said: I am in you as the life of your spirit to produce, to demonstrate, through our union.
 2. John 15:5--I am the vine itself, you are the branches. It is the man who shares my life and whose life I share who proves fruitful. (Phillips)
 - c. God's life in us because of that union will do what it is supposed to do if we will believe.
 2. The context in which Jesus spoke these words makes His meaning clear. The scene was the Last Supper the night before He went to the Cross. Much of what Jesus said was to prepare His followers for the fact that He was leaving them, but to assure them that what was ahead was good.
 - a. He told them: Because of what I am going to do (bear your sins at the Cross, die for you and rise from the dead) you will be able to have union relationship with Me just as I have with My Father.
 - b. John 14:20--At that time you will know that I am in union with my Father and you are in union with me and I am in union with you. (Williams)
 1. Jesus had just told them that the Father demonstrated Himself through Him, through their living, organic union. John 14:10--But the Father who always remains in union with me is doing these things Himself. (Williams); the Father, who ever dwells in me (Montgomery) carries out his work through me. (Phillips)
 - A. Jesus is God become a man without ceasing to be God. At the Incarnation Jesus took on a full human nature (spirit, soul, body). While on earth He did not live as God He lived as a man with the life of God in His human spirit. John 5:26; John 6:57
 - B. He lived by the life of the Father in Him as an example to us of how sons of God are to live. I John 2:6
 2. Jesus, as a man, did the works (exercised His will) but His Father in Him provided the ability. Jesus knew it, believed it, expected it. John 11:41,42
 - c. In His example of vine and branch Jesus used the same word to describe both His relationship with His Father and His union relationship with us. John 15:4
 1. Abide in me and I in you. Abide is the same word translated dwelleth in John 14:10. It means to stay. It is used of the relationship in which one person or thing stands with another.
 2. Jesus says: We are united to each other. I am in you and you are in Me just as My Father and I have been and are. I will be and do in you all you need me to be just as My Father has done for Me.
 3. Note, this is the context in which Jesus said those who believe on Him will do the works that He did and greater works. John 14:12
 3. God, by His life, is in all true Christians. He now wants to work in us and through us to show Himself to the world around us.
 - a. II Cor 6:14-16--This passage is often used to say that Christians shouldn't date unbelievers. I wouldn't argue that point. But it's a very limited understanding of what is conveyed here. From this passage we see what we were before the entrance of eternal life and what we are now because we are alive with the life of God.
 1. As unbelievers we were: unrighteousness, darkness, Belial (children of, in union with the devil), infidels, the dwelling place of idols (false god, the devil).

2. As believers were are: righteousness, light, Christ (His body through union with Him), believers, the dwelling place of God.

b. Note v16--For, as for us, we are an inner sanctuary of the living God, even as God said, I will dwell in them in fellowship with them as in a home and I will live my life in and through them (Wuest); I will live in them and walk in them (Williams).

1. The word dwell means to inhabit. It is the same word used in Rom 8:11 speaking of God in us by His Spirit to give life to our bodies.

2. Walk means to go or walk about in. It comes from a word that means to walk at large, especially as proof of ability.

c. God wants to show Himself strong in and through us by His life. Our part is to know and believe.

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. Conclusion: We have not said all that we need to say, but consider these points as we close.

1. Through the new birth we receive the life of God, the life Jesus lived by when He was on this earth.

a. We are alive with, living by, the life of God in our spirit. Whatever is in that life is in us because that life is in us. The condition of our spirit is the basis of our identity.

b. For most of us, if we see and feel something, it is so. We live begging God to be, hoping He will be our life. Our evidence that He is or isn't is how we feel. It must become: God says it so it's so.

1. We need to recognize that there is more to reality than what we see and feel. There are always two sources of information available to us: what we see and feel and what God says about the way things really are.

2. You must become persuaded that God is in you by His life to be and do all you need to walk as Jesus walked. Your view of reality must change. Take time to think about all this. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see clearly the way things really are according to God.

2. Walking in victory as a Christian doesn't mean we'll never feel bad or weak or defeated. In this world we will have tribulation which stimulates all of those emotions (John 16:33). That's one reason we need ability beyond natural human ability. God is in us by His life to be strength, health, peace, patience, and joy to us no matter what we face. More next week.