

REALITY AND TRANSFORMATION

- A. Introduction: For a number of months we've been talking about learning to see the way things really are or reality as it truly is. Reality is everything as God (who knows everything) sees it. Why is this important?
1. God works according to what we believe. What we believe is based on our perception of reality. If our perspective is inaccurate then what we believe will be inaccurate, limiting God's power in our lives
 - a. In Rom 12:2 we are told to renew our minds so that we can demonstrate the will of God. A renewed mind sees reality as it truly is according to God and is able to demonstrate God's will.
 - b. Renewing the mind is about changing your perception of reality, or the way you see things, so that you see them as God does. God has given us the Bible to show us the way things really are.
 2. If you lived in a room which you never once left—no matter how smart or perceptive you are or how well you know that room—your view of reality would be skewed because it is limited. There is more to reality than just your room. But you know nothing about life outside the room.
 - a. Our perception of reality is like that. We are not omniscient (all-knowing) as God is. And we are limited to the information we can gather through our five physical senses.
 - b. Just as there is a world beyond the room mentioned in our example above, there is a whole realm outside of and beyond the perceptive abilities of our physical senses, the invisible dimension—the realm of God and His kingdom of full power and provision.
 1. God who is invisible, spoke His invisible Word and created the physical, material world in which we live. I Tim 1:17; Col 1:16; Heb 11:3
 2. The invisible has the greater reality in that it preceded and created the visible, will outlast, can change and will ultimately transform all that we see. II Cor 4:18
 3. There is more to us (our make-up as human beings) than what we see and feel. We have a physical, visible part, but we also have an immaterial invisible part. II Cor 4:16
 - c. The only reliable source of information about this unseen dimension is God's written Word. We get knowledge from the Bible and let it shape our view of reality.
 3. For a number of weeks we specifically focused on dealing with our emotions by learning to see reality as it truly is. We still have more to say about that. But because we've had a break in the series due to a guest speaker, I want to review and re-lay a foundation of information before we continue to talk about dealing with our emotions.
 - a. Most people approach the Bible this way: How do I get my most pressing crisis solved? Then they listen to sermons to get that answer, to find the technique that will remedy their problem.
 - b. But it doesn't work like that. God gives us "the big picture" in the Bible and we learn to specifically apply it.
 1. If you learn to understand "the big picture"—what salvation is all about and what God is working toward in your life—you'll be more effective at cooperating with God for help on individual challenges and situations in your life.
 2. In this lesson we want to reset the context in which we need to consider how to deal with fear, worry, sorrow, regret, anger, and all our other emotions.
- B. Christianity is not a belief system or a code of ethics and behavior. We aren't denying that there are specific beliefs, ethics and behavior associated with being a Christian. Christianity is about union with God through Jesus Christ.
1. In eternity past God conceived a plan to have a family. He created earth to be the home for His family. Then He created human beings in His image and likeness with the intention that they would choose to become His sons and daughters. Eph 1:4,5; Isa 45:18; Gen 1:26
 - a. The first man Adam chose independence from God through sin. As head of the human race and the first caretaker of earth, his actions had a catastrophic effect on God's creation.
 1. Death entered the entire creation. A sin nature was produced in the race resident in Adam

making men sinners by birth. Rom 5:12; Rom 5:19; etc.

2. The earth itself was corrupted, resulting in killer storms, earthquakes, disease, famine, etc. Thorns and thistles began to grow. Gen 3:17-19; Rom 8:20; etc.

b. None of this took God by surprise. He already had a plan in mind to undo the damage done by man's sin and rebellion and carry out His original purpose-- to have sons and daughters in His image who reflect His glory in perfect world. Rev 13:8; Gen 3:15; II Pet 3:13; etc.

1. God's plan is called redemption. It provides salvation from sin and all its effects. Under this plan, God Himself would take on flesh and be born into this world. He'd go to the Cross be punished in our place for our sin so it could be wiped out—its power, its penalty, its memory.

2. For all who accept His sacrifice, their sins are wiped out and God can then treat them as though they never sinned. God can make them His sons and daughters. Rom 8:29,30; etc.

c. The purpose (goal, end game) of redemption which provides salvation from sin is transformation: to turn unrighteous sinners into holy, righteous sons and daughters of God who express His glory.

2. God accomplishes this process of transformation by giving us eternal life when we acknowledge Jesus as Savior and Lord.

a. Eternal life is not "live forever life". Every human being has "live forever life" from the moment of conception in their mother's womb. The only issue is their eternal home -- Heaven or Hell.

b. Eternal life is the life of God, the uncreated life in God Himself. When a person believes on Jesus eternal life comes into him, into the immaterial part (his spirit).

1. His spirit is regenerated and he is literally born of God. His old sin nature (spiritual death) is driven out and replaced by the life and nature of God. I John 5:1; Titus 3:5; II Pet 1:4

3. We are (our spirit) united to the life in God. We are united to the life in Jesus as truly as a branch is joined to a vine. I John 5:11,12; John 15:5; I Cor 6:17; etc.

c. Eternal life is a present tense reality. We now partake of and are to learn to live by that life. Our natural human life and make-up is created in such a way that it is the perfect vehicle for receiving and then expressing eternal life.

1. This new birth takes place in your spirit. It does not directly affect your mental or emotional faculties (your soul) or your body.

2. But the eternal life in our spirits will ultimately transform every part of our being (spirit, soul, and body) so that we accurately express God and are fully glorifying to Him.

3. Christianity is not about being good and trying hard. It's union with Christ. We're united to the uncreated life of God through the new birth and then transformed by that life in every part of our being.

a. Christianity is supernatural. Webster's Dictionary defines supernatural as: Of or relating to an order of existence beyond the visible, observable universe, especially of or relating to God. It is a departing from what is usual or normal so as to appear to transcend the laws of nature.

b. Jesus died on the Cross to make it possible for us to become literally sons and daughters of God through new birth. Prior to the Cross Jesus showed us what God's sons and daughters look like.

1. Jesus is God become a man without ceasing to be God. While on earth He did not live as God. He put aside His rights and privileges as God and lived as a man in union with and dependence on the life of His Father in Him. John 5:26; 10:32,38; 14:10; etc.

2. When Jesus healed people, raised people from the dead, multiplied food -- it was all supernatural -- a man expressing the life and power of God, the invisible affecting and changing the visible.

c. Jesus is the pattern for God's family. He showed us what a son of God looks like. We are now to live by the life of God in us through union with Christ. I John 2:6

C. This is reality. This is the way things really are. If Jesus is your Lord and Savior you have eternal life, the uncreated life in God Himself, as a present-tense possession. It's in you, in your spirit. It's in you to flow out of you and transform you and effect the world around you.

1. John 10:10--Jesus came to bring us eternal life (ZOE, the life of God, in the Greek) in abundance. This verse does not refer to making us prosperous in this life. It refers to something supernatural.
 - a. Abundantly means over and above, beyond, super abundant in quantity. This is the adjective form of the word. The verb form means to overflow--“have it in abundance—to the full, till it overflows.” (Amp)
 - b. It is the same word translated exceeding abundantly in Eph 3:20. Notice, the overflow comes from the power that is in us. God, by His life, is in us. We branches partake of the life of the Vine.
 - c. Jesus came to give us overflowing eternal life. Out of our recreated spirit that has been made alive with the uncreated life in God Himself comes what we need to live this life in victory: health, strength, joy, peace, wisdom—or an overflow of eternal life.
2. The great Apostle Paul, who was personally taught the gospel He preached by Jesus Himself and was given the privilege of writing two-thirds of the New Testament, said that he was commissioned to proclaim union with Christ.
 - a. Col 1:27--Christ in you the hope of your glorification (Williams). To be glorified means to be made alive with the life of God in every part of our being--spirit, soul, and body.
 - b. Note what Paul went on to say. Col 1:28,29--We are proclaiming Him, warning everyone and teaching everyone with ample wisdom, in order to present to God everyone mature through union with Christ. For this I am toiling and struggling by His active energy which is mightily working in me. (Williams)
 1. Paul was unconquerable despite the many hardships he faced because he learned to live in dependence on the life of God in him. He learned to live supernaturally.
 2. Paul wrote 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)
3. God works in our lives from the inside out. Paul wrote to Christians: Phil 2:12--Work out your own salvation. That word work means to work fully or accomplish; to finish. —cultivate, carry out to the goal and fully complete (Amp).
 - a. Remember the point of salvation: Complete transformation of every part of our being so that we are free from every trace of corruption and death and accurately express the glory of God as did Jesus, the perfect Son. Note that Paul connects the accomplishment of this with God in us.
 1. Phil 2:13--Remember it is God Who, in his kindness, is at work within you, enabling you both to will and to work. (20th Cent)
 2. [Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you—energizing and creating in you the power and the desire—both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight. (Amp)
 - b. This was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by a man who a little later in this same letter wrote: Phil 4:13--I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me—I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me, [that is, I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency]. (Amp)
4. How do we learn to live by the life of God in us? How do we cooperate with Him as He transforms us? There is more to the answer than we can cover here. But consider these points.
 - a. The Apostle John wrote much about the life we have received from God. In the context of having life through Jesus, John said he wrote what he wrote so that his readers would know that they have eternal life. I John 5:13
 1. You have to get your picture of reality from the Word of God. Take time to feed on and think about what the scripture says regarding our union with Christ.
 2. Choose to believe what God says over and above what you see and feel or what your experience is or isn't.
 - b. Col 2:6--Paul said: As you have received Jesus, so walk in Him. We received Jesus by faith. What is faith? It's not sight or feeling (II Cor 5:7). You believe something you cannot see or feel

because someone reliable has told you about it.

1. This is where your perception of reality must come in line with the way things really are. You must come to see from the Word of God that there is more to you than what you see or feel.

You must become persuaded of the inward change and union that has taken place in you.

2. Then you walk (or live) with awareness of and in agreement with reality as it truly is.

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

B. Col 2:6--As you have therefore received the Christ, [even] Jesus the Lord, [so] walk — regulate your lives and conduct yourselves—in union with and conformity to Him. (Amp)

- c. As we read through Paul's epistles we can note how many times he spoke of his union with Christ and the power and life that was in him because of that union. It wasn't a gimmick or a technique to try to get his problems solved. It was his view of reality. And it made him a conqueror in every situation he faced.

D. Conclusion: We have a lot to cover over the next several months. Consider these points as we close.

1. Christ-likeness is the end game, the goal of salvation. It's more important than where you live or work or go to school. It's more important than your ministry or career.
 - a. But all those things will be easier to discern, as well as more effective, the more Christ-like you become.
 - b. We need to learn to live with the awareness that we have eternal life in us. That must become our view of reality. That way we can cooperate with God as He works in and through us to accomplish His purposes in the earth.
2. This brings us back to the place of emotions. Learning to deal with our emotions is part of the process of transformation that God is working to accomplish in each of us.
 - a. Our mind, emotions and body were not directly affected by the new birth. But we now have power in us to effect change and transformation in our mind, emotions and body as we know and believe what God has provided for us through giving us eternal life.
 - b. But those are lessons for another day.