

Being A Real Christian; What That Truly Means Part-II

S405R 0305 25W

A previous message reminded us (as Jesus explained), there will be very few real Christians in the closing days of the Gospel Age. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." (Luke 17:26), when there were only eight persons saved (ready to believe God and be saved at the time of the flood).

Their faith to believe on an unseen God, enabled their 'act of obedience' to God, all that He required for their protection from death by drowning (along with all other people in the world) (Hebr.11:7) "Through faith, Noah, being divinely taught about things as yet unseen "reverently gave heed to God and became an heir of the righteousness which depends on faith." (That leaves us no room for any excuse to not believe God's Word is true, and to be counted as 'faith righteous').

All that it took on their part was a complete surrender and final decision to heed God's Word to make a sincere commitment to follow His plan for them, and not turn back on their decision to heed and follow God for the saving of their life here (and their soul for Eternity.)

After their decision and surrender of 'self-will', God could then work in their heart and life. Indeed, Noah's family experienced a 'new birth', being born again of the 'Spirit' (as Jesus explained and meant when He said), "do not be astonished at my telling you, 'You must all be born anew.'" (That means that the self-life that we were all born with, must be gotten rid of. (That is the new birth).

It was explained that conditions for being born anew are given us (1 John 1:9) "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us

our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (From all the results of a 'life of self'.)

A sincere confession will always bring that new birth in Christ, so when we truly confess and forsake our sins, we are then to believe on the authority of God's Word that we are pardoned and cleansed.

In the same way, we must make an absolute surrender to obey God's Word in our life. It is our responsibility, and if we only obey God in things that we see and what it suits us to obey, then we will surely disobey His Word in unseen and other things. Satan will always be there to provide as many excuses as it takes, for us to try to justify our disobedience, wrong decisions, and actions. As long as we allow ourselves a privilege of not meeting people and circumstances right, we will never meet them right (and if not careful, will take us to the Lake of Fire forever, because we had not experienced that 'new birth' that Jesus said we must have).

When a person has fully surrendered to God's will, they would rejoice in time of trial, also when not being treated just right. A person with a surrendered heart would not be offended by a careless remark or being treated unfairly.

The example of a 'new birth in Christ' was shown by His apostles as an example for us, when they were called before the authorities, beaten, and commanded that they should never again 'speak in the Name of Jesus Christ'. But they had that 'new birth' by faith (and were born again of the Spirit), so they were inspired and enabled by God's Spirit to rejoice and praise God for the privilege of suffering for the Name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 5:40-41) "And when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and they let them go. So, they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name.

That 'new birth in Christ' is a very valuable thing; because it is the only foundation of ever living a victorious 'overcoming life of faith', and of being sanctified through that faith and made righteous and prepared to meet Jesus Christ on His return. Thus, the 'new birth' is the 'first step' (or condition) toward our 'getting to Heaven, with the 'second step' being 'absolute surrender' of our life and our will to God (as we are instructed Rom.12:1-2) "I plead with you therefore, brethren, by the compassions (mer-

cies) of God, to present all your faculties (body) to Him as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to Him. This with you will be an act of reasonable worship. And do not follow the customs of the present age but be transformed by the entire renewal of your minds, so that you may learn by experience what God's will is — that will which is good, beautiful, and perfect.”

When we are fully surrendered to God, we will not murmur, complain, nor be offended by mistreatments, instead, we should say, “praise God, He has given me an opportunity to ‘meet things right’, and take me to greater, more wonderful blessings for me, from God. The Holy Spirit will take possession to enable us to meet things right (as He did for Christians in Bible times). He will enable us to realize that there is ‘spiritual blessing’ in each circumstance ‘met right’, and more importantly, that God is preparing us for Eternal Life. That is the definition of a ‘real Christian’.

Many people allow their old church life and experience to influence them, (and that can follow us far into the real Christian life), while Satan continues to use that to make people tolerate rebellion and voluntary disobedience of God's plan for our new life of faith on Him (our unseen God in Heaven). The more we allow rebellion and disobedience, the worse the circumstances to meet will become for us. Therefore, we cannot tolerate it, nor can we allow ourselves a single excuse for not meeting things in God's way. We must know and believe that when we put God's will and plan ahead of our self-will, that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.” (Rom. 8:28).

When we come to know that we will be happy to meet and overcome our difficulties in a Scriptural way, and when we do that, we will see those trials disappear very quickly. So, regardless of how mean we have been treated or set aside by others, the moment that we meet those things in a Scriptural way that trouble will disappear. People will treat us wonderfully instead of meanly.

Once we take that Scriptural position to meet circumstances at the workshop, at home, or wherever it is, we will then consider the opportunity to meet trials Scripturally, as being fruitful ‘lessons from God’,... as well as a privi-

lege to get straightened out and get rid of the old ‘ways of self’ in seeing and doing things. Instead, we will start to have the full ‘life of Christ’ manifested in our life, and so, enjoy His rich blessings of every kind.

We all need to be willing to allow God to deal with us, and to search our hearts now, rather than when it is too late when Jesus comes to claim His true people and take real Christians with Him. What our ‘surrender’ really means is to be willing to be Scriptural and to follow God's plan in every situation. That is a main step unto full victory through Christ.

When anything comes up in our life, where we need to know what to do, we must find out what the Bible says about that matter. And would that not save many people from a thousand snares? (the late Pastor queried). And would there not be fewer people in the Lake of Fire today, crying for a drop of water to cool their tongue?

That surrender of our life to God to be filled with the Holy Spirit, is a second step toward becoming a real Christian in an obedient life of faith and trust, (and so, then being enabled by God to be a witness, and to know what that means for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 5:32) “And so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to those that obey Him.”

Then we can make our claim for the ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’, without waiting to see or feel any evidence whatever. In that way by faith, we will get an infilling of the genuine Holy Spirit, and so, be in a position to obey God in the true Bible way.

The third and most important next step is the one on which our ‘hope of Heaven’ depends (as well as our inheritance here in this life of righteousness, peace, health, protection and every other blessing), ... and that is to meet each detail of our everyday life according to the Bible way. It would seem (the late Pastor said), that a person with ordinary intelligence would sooner or later come to the place where they would realize how many times they allowed themselves to get upset, and then to also see how little they got out of not meeting things right, and how unhappy it had made them. [When we meet things and circumstances via fleshly or self-efforts, we are really that much

worse off, and besides that it will make us worse off for eternity.]

Everything we meet in God's way and plan, however, will make us stronger; we will come out better in the end, and our blessings and happiness will become complete. That is our inheritance! We need to realize that God wants to bring us to a place of perfect happiness here, without a burden, ache, pain, poverty, or trouble of any kind. It can only be found via meeting things in the Bible way.

The reasons for every mean thing that is said and done to us by Satan and his agents, or any hard circumstance that comes our way (or a financial battle), they are all allowed for one purpose, and that is to get us into the center of God's will on that matter. It is to perfect our faith in God and clear away every human way and plan and thing and get us into God's will and into His divine power to receive divine blessings.

That is why difficulties are permitted to come our way, and if we meet them right, it will correct the trouble; but, if we do not meet it right it will add to the wrong attitudes that are already within us, ..which will have effect on our eternity, as well as in this life. Self-will of not meeting things right, must be revealed in us, because it is of absolute importance to meet every circumstance of life in God's way, whether it be in the home or elsewhere.

We know how many times we might think one has the right to resent something that a spouse may say or do that may not suit the other one. And most people will act natural in their home, but we all have a Scriptural responsibility to meet situations according to God's Word.

It seems that people are born with four personalities (the late Pastor remarked). The first one 'what the world thinks of them'; so, they are usually on a 'dress parade' as they want other people to think highly of them. The second is what the 'folks at home' think of them, (and they usually see a different kind of person than what the world sees). The third is what they 'think of themselves', which is usually another personality, (but that is not the true person).

However, it is not what the world or the folks at home think, (even though they may come pretty close to it). Nor is it what the person thinks of himself or herself, which is usually far

away from the truth, for most people think that they are pretty good.

However, the real person is that 'fourth personality', which is what they really are, and it is what God sees and knows about each person. That old person of 'self' that is born in a person is what God sees, and that 'old self' must be cleansed out of them (so the Holy Spirit can come in to take place). Then they become an altogether 'different person' through that sanctifying work of the Spirit (those 'being sanctified through faith in Christ") (Acts 26:18).

A spouse may think that they have a right to act as they please toward the other, or toward the children. The real truth is, that they have no more Scriptural right to act to suit themselves toward each other or their children, than they have a right to lie, cheat, or steal. God has a plan for parents, and He has a plan for children, and no one is given a privilege to act outside, or aside from God's plan.

For instance, if we do not trust God for our marriage, the devil can spoil any woman or man who ever lived, if we do not trust God, but follow the notions and attitudes of the self-life' (which is according to human ways). When efforts of 'self' are in control, and God is not given an opportunity to be present in a home (or family), we can be sure that Satan will make trouble in that home. Again, that 'old life of self' must be cleansed and taken out, or spouses will react wrongly when things do not go to suit them, and they will spat, argue, downgrade each other, and openly criticize. That is just as opposite to the will of God as could be.

It does not matter 'how wrong of a spouse' one is married to, God can make an angel out of them, if one or the other will meet things right, according to God's will and plan. One needs to put husband or wife in God's hands and ask Him to make them treat us right (as He intended for a husband or wife to be treated) and then ask God to remake them for us. God Word tells us that if any man (or woman) is 'in Christ Jesus', that he is a new creation. (2 Cor.5:17-18) "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation."

Therefore, God can make the spouse to do just to suit us according to His declared will, when we take our hands and tongue of the life of self, off the other person, and place them in God's hands and leave them there. Then God will completely change that person.

It is the same with every other trial or temptation whether it be spiritual, physical, or bad treatment from others at home or in the workshop, business, or anywhere. We are never to change our attitude in the least way, toward anyone who has wronged us.

As an analogy, "what would we think of someone who got hit on the head with a snowball, and they turned around and blamed the snowball instead of the person who threw it? We would probably think that they were nuts." (the Pastor said).

Well, that is the way we act at times in divine things. Satan gets some person (with neither sense nor religion) to say or do some mean thing to us. And instead of putting the blame where it belongs, (on Satan), we blame the person that Satan uses, and, if we are not careful, we will change our attitude toward them. It is Satan who is behind every mean thing that is said or done to us.

(The Pastor said) he had an experience like that many years ago, after he helped a young man get a job in the store where he worked. "I thought that it was Christlike for me to speak for him, so I did, and he got the job. But, after he got settled in, he tried to make things as bad for me as he could and would do mean things behind my back."

"The devil then made me think, 'look how he appreciates the good thing that you did for him, and how he is returning evil for good. Now what are you going to do about it?' What the devil meant was, you ought to do back to him, as he is doing to you."

"Those thoughts had hardly gone through my mind, before I remembered 'if you do not from the heart, forgive every man their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you.' Or 'if ye forgive not man their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' (Matt.6:15).

"I realized then, 'this is a splendid chance for me to obey the Scriptures', and I said, 'I will forgive him, forget it, and act as if it had not

happened.' I was trying to believe the Lord had possession of me, and from that moment I knew He had possession, and that the Lord was 'one with me', and I 'one with Him'."

"Afterward, that cranky person became one of my best friends, and could not do enough for me when asked. That whole circumstance had come about just to see if I would meet it in the true Bible way or not. It was a wonderful privilege even though it came in a bad package and turned into a wonderful blessing after all" (especially to have realized that if a person did not forgive everyone their sins, from the heart, their own sins would not be forgiven).

In summary, it pays even in this life to forgive people their trespasses, and it means much more than that for Eternity. Whenever we meet a person right, and forgive them from the heart, they will become our valuable friend. And the 'Spiritual value' that comes with it cannot even be estimated, either in this life or in the Life to come!

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SOME MAIN POINTS:

1... Jesus warned us there would be very few real Christians

in the closing days of the Gospel Age, so it is of all-importance to us, to understand what He meant by that warning.

2... A surrender of self on our part enables a 'new birth' of the Spirit in our life, which will enable us to meet circumstances and people right. That is an integral part of God's New Testament plan, and the example set for us by the apostles of Christ when they were beaten and persecuted, enables us to realize how we should praise God when we may be persecuted for bearing the Name of Christ our Savior.

3... The importance of us forgiving everyone from our heart (so that we may be forgiven by God), is very much emphasized, for it is indeed an Eternal Life issue for every 'real Christian'.

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