The Realities of Christian Living
Scripture: Ephesians 4:17 – 24 and Acts 9:1 – 19

2/6/22

It is becoming quite clear in the USA today that we need to surrender to the grace of God. It is becoming imperative that today’s Christian must seek guidance from Jesus Christ. Christ’s main teaching was all about love and compassion to all God’s people. We need to possess this teaching and make it a real possession for each one of us through faith.

As Jesus did, we need to go to the mountain top to pray and sort things out. That is our mission and calling. And once we go there, we then need to live out that mission and calling.

The Apostle Paul offers us some real advice for Christian living. It comes down to a matter of simply swallowing our false and foolish pride and flushing out the ill feelings and petty hates that have built up and have been allowed to block out God and His plan for us. Paul is truly talking to us!

We have largely neglected what it means to be Disciples of Christ. We need to change and put Jesus first in our hearts and minds. We need to get rid of all our racism and prejudice and fight the good fight for equity and justice for all.
In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, Paul meticulously documented his doctrine for Christian living. Paul calls us to shed our old lives and begin a new life in Jesus Christ. Paul intended that all of humankind pay heed! We need to surrender to the grace of God in Jesus Christ so that we may establish a life relationship with the Almighty. And if we do this, God’s grace will become a real possession of our Christian faith. The personality of every believer will turn towards Christ and we will look and act like him.

So, what has gone wrong with this plan? What has happen to this initiative? Where has the real zeal which marked the founders of the early church gone?

This zeal I am talking about is our heritage. But our character does not seem to reflect it now, WHY? Those early leaders of the church had a vision and we must do everything possible to recapture that vision in order that we may see the limitless nature of God’s love. We need to recapture God’s caring and his concern for us.

There is a need for every Christian to reflect on the meaning of Faith in Jesus Christ. A faith in Jesus Christ implies that we surrender, we grow, and we love God, and love ourselves and others. A Faith in Jesus Christ implies a dependence on the Holy Spirit. The faith I speak about is found in the Gospel of John 15:5. Jesus said - I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. But apart from me, you can do nothing.
For some time now, I feel we have lost our way. We have started to worship the loudest voices we hear. We have started to hate our neighbor and despise those of a different color, race, or political party. We no longer say that we are one country under God but that we are one country if you believe the way I do.

We are feed lies and hatred and we dissolve into a broken society. As an individual, as a family, and as a congregation; we must know and understand the love of Jesus Christ. We must remember that we have both purpose and mission.

We are challenged to seriously set aside time for individual, family, and congregational reflection, study, and exploration of our faith in Jesus Christ. For us, it is a time of wilderness. As Jesus did, we must go to the mountaintop to pray and sort out what our calling is and we need to get on living that calling.

The Christian philosophy that Paul speaks of is like his journey down the road to Damascus. Our second scripture reading from the book of Acts deals with this conversion. Paul was called Saul and he has been persecuting Christians. He is on his way to Damascus, when a light appears to him and he fell to the ground and a voice said to him – ‘Why are you persecuting me?’ Saul asked the voice – ‘Who are you, Lord? The voice responded – I am Jesus whom you are persecuting!’ The voice told Saul to continue on to Damascus and when Saul got up from the ground, scales were upon his eyes. Saul was made blind for three days. Saul was led by hand and brought to Damascus. It was in Damascus that Saul met a disciple of Christ named Ananias who was called by the Lord to go and find Saul. Ananias does seek Saul out and he removes the scales from Saul’s eyes. Saul is then filled with the Holy Spirit and his name is changed to Paul and he is transformed into the greatest evangelist for Christ.
The reality of Christian living is this – at the top of every ambition ought to be the figure of Jesus Christ. High above all else and attracting more attention than anything else should be our devotion to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Paul truly offers us some real advice about Christian living. It comes down to a matter of simply swallowing our false and foolish pride, and flushing out our ill feelings and petty hates that have built up over time and that have been allowed to block out God and his plans for us.

Are you ready to swallow your pride? Are you ready to flush out evil things in your life? Are you ready to unclog that blockage that keeps you from God and his plan for you?

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Some of us do NOT like to be told that we need to change even if the words come from Jesus himself! We are a rebellious lot!

Think about it – have not we been opposing God since the sixth day of creation? We are so caught up in sin and rejecting God’s will for our lives. We are lost!

Let’s face the facts because it will not be long before we will meet the final arbitrator. The only way to clean up our act, is to place our faith in the perfect Christ. We need to see how hopeless we are apart from the Savior. We need a faith to save and an active ministry to seal that faith. And let us thank God that we have found all we need in Jesus Christ.
Christians have largely neglected what it means to be a disciple of Christ. If we were truly willing to become Disciples of Christ, the church would be transformed and our impact upon society would be staggering.

In the first century, a tiny handful of inexperienced and timid disciples initiated with the help of the Holy Spirit, the greatest spiritual revolution that world has ever known. Within three centuries, even the mighty Roman Empire yielded to the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are believers in the message of Christ, but are we willing to sacrifice everything for Christ? I wonder if we are not willing to soil our hands.

Jesus is our personal Lord. We personally offend Him by clinging to what we are and have been. We seem to resist the change needed to serve Christ better. We seem to not want to conform to Christ’s teaching. Let’s be honest – we need to change!

Paul said it best, Jesus said it first, and I hope we say it within our hearts – Jesus is the vine, we are the branches. If Jesus abides in us, and us in him, we will bear much fruit. But apart from Jesus, we can do nothing.