

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

August 10, 2018

That Christ be Magnified

Almost thirty years ago a lady and her teenage son began attending the church I was pastoring. She had been deeply stirred by the messages about the cross and the blood she was hearing through our local television broadcasts. In each service we could see her increasingly stirred by the message of the cross and the blood as God anointed us to preach it to the people.

A young man in the church whom I had known since childhood and I planned a one day trip to take our wives and go tubing down a river in the Texas hill country. This was something we did on numerous occasions as teenagers and we thought it would be a good relaxing time. My sister and her family were invited to join us, then another family, then yet another, until I lost count. Not to leave the new lady and her son out, they were invited also. I have to say I began to feel "checked" in my spirit over this trip. It had started out to be with a couple childhood friends, but now it had grown into a church event. Even though I was checked in spirit and wanted to cancel, I decided the best thing to do was not offend anyone and go ahead as planned. We would of course make sure that everything was decent and in order.

As our entire group took to the rafts and tubes to float down the river, the teenage boy in me kicked in. Someone challenged me in good fun

and I began to show everyone that I was king of the river. I began to toss people out of the rafts and tubes into the cold water. Some of the other young men tried to throw me out of a raft, but I would not be conquered. Their efforts were in vain. The only one I could not throw into the river was my older sister who had securely lodged herself under the cross section of a rubber raft. I pulled and tugged on her, but she would not be moved. Everyone was laughing and I was having the time of my life.

In the midst of this I happened to glance at the lady who had joined us with her son. Everyone else was laughing at my antics, but in her face I could see only shock and dismay. It seemed I could look into her thoughts and I knew instantly the meaning of what I saw. In her eyes the man of God to whom she was looking to bring her the light of Christ was exposed to be nothing more than an immature rambunctious fool. My heart sank because I knew she was right! My antics ended in that moment. I knew this lady was lost to our ministry and nothing I could say would change that. She was in one more service and I never saw her or her son again.

Why did I not listen to the check of the Holy Spirit in my heart? How did I not understand that to her I represented Christ? Many people do not understand why this should be, but I have grieved over her loss even unto this day. I can handle people being offended over the gospel I preach, but to lose a single person because of my foolishness is more than I can bear. I can only pray that God directed her to a faithful pastor who was more worthy than myself.

The apostle Paul tells us that everything God did for our redemption, he did *“That we should be to the praise of his glory...”* Ephesians 1:12. Can you see that God purposed from the beginning to have a people whose very existence would bring glory to Him? Before the world began, God chose a people *“in Christ”* who would *“...be holy and without blame before him in love.”* Ephesians 1:4. They would be his children Ephesians 1:5 and they would be redeemed from sin. Ephesians 1:7. Just as God *“...crowned Adam with glory and honor”* Hebrews 2:7, he crowns his children with the glory of his presence. He did all this in order that *“we should be to the praise of his glory.”*

People corrupt their walk with God when they order their actions based solely upon “is this sin or not.” If it is sin, a child of God will have nothing to do with it. Sin is washed from their heart by the blood of Jesus Christ and it is repulsive to those who know Christ. Yet many began to embrace worldliness because they can justify to themselves that their actions are NOT sin. If it leads others into darkness is it “NOT sin?” If it destroys a soul is it “NOT sin?” So often there is no concern at all if one’s actions bring glory or shame to the name of Jesus Christ. For a child of God, perhaps that is the greatest sin of all!

“ACCORDING TO MY EARNEST EXPECTATION AND MY HOPE, THAT IN NOTHING I SHALL BE ASHAMED, BUT THAT WITH ALL BOLDNESS, AS ALWAYS, SO NOW ALSO CHRIST SHALL BE MAGNIFIED IN MY BODY, WHETHER IT BE BY LIFE, OR BY DEATH.” Philipians 1:20