

VOICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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WHAT DO YOU THINK JESUS WAS REALLY LIKE?

A couple of years ago I was given a picture of Jesus laughing. As I shared it with others, I received a mixed reaction to the man-made image. Some were elated while others seemed offended. Jesus would never smile said some, while others said that's the way I imagine Him. Anthropomorphism is a theological term for man describing God from man's perspective. We view God's actions and thoughts based on our own but nothing could be farther from the truth. Jesus is not some skinny, pale faced weakling. Religious art proves our conception of Him. On the contrary, He is what man aspires to be both spiritually and physically. We think that we can make God what our minds think Him to be but that is not true. Many people see Jesus as sitting in heaven weeping over the human race. I personally think He is excited about His Bride, "the CHURCH." I think that He rejoices when His people praise Him with their commitment and love. Joy is in His heart over the thought of returning to earth to claim His believers. Jesus is in love with you and me. We are the "APPLE OF HIS EYE." How you picture Jesus in your mind greatly affects the way you walk with Him. Study His walk on earth and you will see a man filled with love and compassion and the greatest concern for people. I hope you can smile at the picture of Jesus

ANNOUNCEMENT

Sunday, November 4th, 2007, we will have our annual "Thanksgiving Dinner on the Ground" in the fellowship hall. This year we will honor our missionary, Bess Graham, with a non-traditional meal, a fish fry with all the trimmings. She will speak and share her past experiences on the mission field, and what lies ahead.

GATEWAY PEOPLE ARE UNDER AN OPEN HEAVEN "No Longer Citizens of This World"

The Word of God makes it plain that as "born again" believers we are no longer of this world, that you are now citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven living in this world. Big difference! What does this mean to us? Simply put, we are never to think or act like "mere men" again. For us to say, "I'm only a mere man", is to say, "I am satanic". Wow! Before you jump all over me, listen and consider. First, fallen humanity without Jesus Christ has at its center a satanic nature. Why? Because the "sin nature" exists in all unsaved men, and the "sin nature" makes us a slave to either "good or evil". Second, when you've been given the Spirit of God, you lose the privilege of claiming, "I'm only human." You are a new creation reality. Paul firmly rebuked the church at Corinth for behaving like "mere men". Yes, I agree, sometimes we allow ourselves to act like "mere men" but we are not. We sometimes allow our minds to become "gateways" of wrong thinking that is based in hell. The evidence is made conclusive concerning the location of the "gate of hell" by Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: **"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, V5, Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."** Simply put, the gate of hell is in our minds when we establish it by agreeing with the enemy. Plus, I empower the enemy any time I agree with a man-centered perspective or natural wisdom that does not know or understand God's wisdom. This natural wisdom which operates by a man-centered perspective is called "earth's reality." Also, something we Christians seldom if ever think about is the fact that we can empower evil demonic forces when we release them through our thoughts and voice. This can be so powerful that we can actually give them authority to attack people and use their power to kill, steal and destroy. This destruction can be brought to bear in our own lives as well as in the lives of other people.

"CHRISTIANS ARE GATEWAY PEOPLE"

A Christian's goal should be to agree with their new home kingdom, The Kingdom of Heaven. How? By letting our minds be a "gateway to Heaven" and not a "gateway to hell" (earth's reality). When Christians center on the "gateway to heaven" their minds are centered on God's will (on earth as in heaven). When this happens, angels ascend and descend freely on assignments from God. It's not that they literally flow through our minds, they actually are released through our agreement. The New American Standard Bible in Matthew 6:19 says it this way, **"Whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."** Jesus' focus in ministry was simple yet profound; whatever we bind has already been bound. Our task is to see what is bound up there, and then bind it down here. Whatever is free to function in the heavenly realm needs to be released to function here. We are to be a gateway people for the full flow of "heaven's reality" into this earth. Pastor Bill Johnson in his book, "The Supernatural Power of a Transformed Mind" tells about a woman who came for prayer during one of their services. Her baby had died in the womb, but the person praying for her said, "The baby is not dead." The woman replied, "Excuse me, I've already been to the doctor, they've taken the test, and they will remove the child next week." The person praying under the power of the Spirit answered, "The child is not dead. The Lord speaks to me, and He says the child is alive." This woman went back to her doctor and they were dumbfounded because the child that had been dead was alive. The person praying had functioned under an "open heaven." He had become a "gateway to Heaven", so that what was spoken by the Father in His throne room was carried out without hindrance by angels on assignment on earth.

HAVE A BLESSED DAY

Gene R. Brown, Associate Pastor

TEACHER

Ephesians 4:11, “**And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.**” (KJV)

There has been much discussion about the phrase “pastors and teachers”; some say they are the same office, that a pastor must necessarily be teacher. In our previous

study we learned that Jesus gave to one the affirmation of Apostle, to another the affirmation of Prophet, etcetera; then we see “and teachers” added to pastors. The word is not only a conjunction adding teaching to the office of a Pastor, it also causes Teacher to stand alone with the rest of the offices. Simply put, Teacher stands alone as an office just as the rest of the ministry offices while also denoting the possibility of being added to each of the previously mentioned offices.

A Teacher is a person whose occupation is to educate students. The Five-Fold Ministry office of a Teacher is a person who teaches (educates and gives instruction concerning) the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A Teacher sets a foundation and builds on that foundation line upon line and precept upon precept. Because of this the Teacher will be assigned to a local body; although, any of the other offices can and should operate in the anointing of a teacher.

Isaiah 28:10, “**For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.**” (KJV)

Precepts are commandments, the spiritual laws we live by, a line can be a measuring cord (a rule or ruler for measuring), and a cord is used for binding things together such as the commandments. Teachers build on the foundations laid by Apostles and Prophets to bind the spiritual laws to us so that we will be able to operate in the true commandments and principles of Christ.

Teachers will teach by divine inspiration, they will have the desire to study God’s Word and will have knowledge of God’s Word. They will receive revelations from the Spirit of God concerning the knowledge they have and how to present it to God’s children. A Teacher will get as much satisfaction from study and revelation as they do from presenting the teaching.

Teachers will have an anointing to teach. People will come to hear them and will learn from them and enjoy the teaching. They will have a fresh word from the Word, even when presenting a much used scripture or topic.

Teachers will be teachable. They will not be haughty or proud; they will listen to what others have to say even when they do not agree with them. They feel they may be able to glean some truth from what others have to say. Teachers will not argue about doctrine or beliefs, they will state their belief and why they believe that way based on scripture. They will have settled the belief in their heart and know that arguing will not change either persons belief.

Teachers do not present themselves as knowing everything there is to know about the Word of God or any given subject from the Word. They are not “know it alls.”

Teachers can be rovers when mixed with the office of Apostle, Prophet or Evangelist. A Teacher can and usually will be assigned to a local body of believers. He is placed in the local body to build mature believers; this is hard to accomplish when traveling from place to place.

The Apostle Paul was a Teacher. 2 Timothy 1:11, “**Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.**” (KJV)

We can see the Teacher working in Paul in that many times he stayed in an area for an extended period of time teaching; as an Apostle he know the body had to be set in order, as a Teacher he knew a foundation had to be laid before the order could be set or maintained.

Acts 13:1, “**Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought us with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.**” (KJV)

In this scripture prophets and teachers means prophets who were also teachers. The word “and” means the two joined together as one as it is used in this verse.

We see the Apostle Paul in the office of a Teacher and we see the Prophets at Antioch in the office of a Teacher. Any of the Five-Fold Ministries can operate in the office of a Teacher.

The church world today has basically reduced the office of a Teacher to a Sunday School teacher. This takes away much of the importance of the office as Jesus gave it to the Church.

The Teacher is given to aid and assist the Pastor in the building of the local body. This is why in Ephesians 4:11 “Pastors and Teachers” are joined together instead of Apostles and Teachers, or Prophets and Teachers, or Evangelists and Teachers.

This can be a Pastor operating in the office of a Teacher or it can be a Pastor and a Teacher working together to build and lead the local body of believers. This is where we see a Pastor teaching and a Teacher with a Pastor’s heart.

A Pastor-teacher is required to grow a body of believers; any other combination is out of order. Short term one or more of the other gifts may be required to lead a body back on course. A Pastor-evangelist is great at starting, growing and building a church, but only a Pastor-Teacher can maintain a local body of believers; this is why we see new churches start off with an explosive growth but after the new wears off it becomes a burden to keep the church on track. When someone other than a Pastor-Teacher starts a work there will need to be a change in leadership for the work to continue on course; otherwise you will see a continuous barrage of new programs and too many times pastoral condemnation in an attempt to keep the work from failing.

A prophetic ministry draws prophetic people, an apostolic ministry draws apostles and an evangelistic ministry draws evangelistic people. Each of these is good in their place; but the local church should be a mixture of these. A Pastor-Teacher is the only one that can draw all of them and keep them together.

Order:

A Teacher **sets the Word of God in order**. He will teach and re-teach until his point is understood. He delights in seeing his students take what has been taught and use it in their lives to overcome their problems and situations. A Teacher is not afraid to teach the truth; the anointing will allow him to teach the truth in such a manner so as to get his point across without offending those seeking the truth. A Teacher will speak the truth in love, but it will be the truth.

Your Brother in Christ, Ray Jennings

DEAR CHURCH, Some time ago at work cleaning a bathroom, God spoke to me. He said, "You are a house cleaner, not a house keeper." I said, "OK Lord, what does that mean?" He said, "You clean it up, but you do not keep it clean. The person who owns the house must keep it clean or they will have to pay you to clean it again." I meditated a bit but then forgot about it.

Recently, the Lord brought this back to my remembrance. He uses my work to make points. My Father has taught me how to be His servant using my work. My sister and I have a cleaning service. We clean houses just about every day. Some we clean every week, some every other week, and some twice a week. We have a reputation in Vicksburg for doing very thorough cleaning, being dependable and trustworthy, and we are not cheap. Our cleaning service has grown by word of mouth advertisement from our customers.

When we go to a house the first time, we ask the owners what they would like us to do. Do you want us to detail it first and then begin a regular cleaning routine or do you want us to just do normal cleaning? Normal cleaning consists of dusting, cleaning the bathrooms, vacuuming, mopping, and cleaning the kitchen (washing dishes and wiping the counters). Detailing is cleaning from the ceiling to the floor, every nook and cranny. We charge by the hour for detailing and it is expensive. On normal cleaning, we give a set price on how much it will cost according to how big the house is and how long it takes.

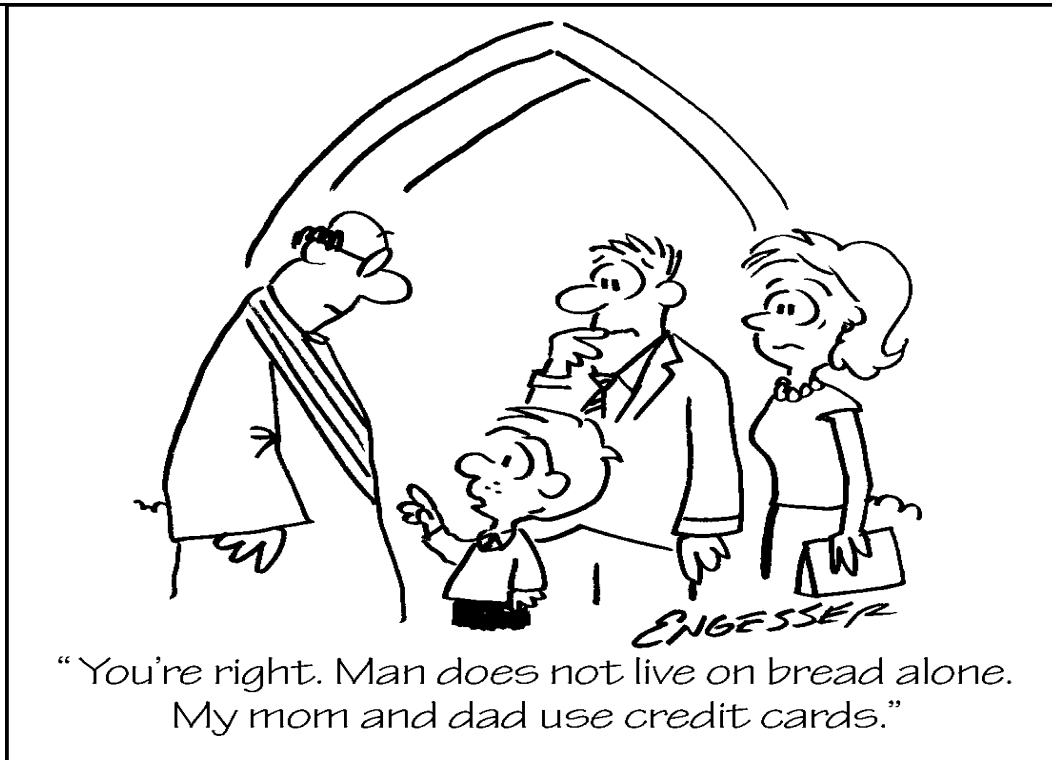
Most people want us to detail their house and then do normal cleaning on a set schedule. Then there are some who want the detailing done and do not want to pay the price. They are always trying to get us to clean base boards, clean cabinets, clean the stove, for the price of normal cleaning. They want the full meal deal for the price of the burger. Then there are others who just do not care, as long as the outer surfaces look good and smells good, the inside, the part that the untrained eye does not see, does not matter. They just want to make a good impression on first sight. But you know, sooner or later the dirt gets so evident that anyone can see it. When it gets this dirty, it takes longer to clean it and costs more.

I am sure you are wondering where this is going. God used this to make a point about our house, our body, the place where He dwells. He gave each of us our body, with our own will. He does not make us do anything. He teaches us and dwells in us, but we must decide what we will do. He, the Holy Spirit, will come in and clean us up. We have to pay the price. What does it cost us? As Christians we are to be like Jesus. In John 6:38, Jesus said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me." The price is to realize that your life is not your own when you accept Jesus as your Savior. You become a part of the body of Christ, made in His likeness. We are to show His characteristics, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and self-control. These are the things that are seen in a clean house, one that has been detailed. Every nook and cranny has been revealed and cleaned with the Holy Spirit. This house shines with the Son's light radiating from it. It smells clean and looks clean all of the time, not just when it is in the church or in front of someone important. It knows that the Father is dwelling in it at all times and desires to please God and is content being in His perfect will and not being a people pleaser. This house does not bite and devour others, but loves and lifts up. It is not jealous and envious of others because it is content doing what the Father called it to do. This house pays the price for detailing every day by fellowshipping with your Father as your first priority, looking into the mirror of truth to remove any particles of dirt that keep you in the flesh. You know Him as the center of life. He is truly your reason for living. You desire to be used by Him so that others can see and know how real He is.

Jesus came to fulfill the law because He knew we could not keep it in ourselves. He gave us an easy way, to do it through Him. When we accept Him as Lord of our life, His Spirit comes to dwell in us that moment and we are different. We feel clean. Our hearts desire is to be like Him, to know Him. As time goes on, contaminants of this world get on us and we must be detailed again. The sooner we are detailed, looking into the mirror of truth, seeing where we are, in the Spirit doing God's will or in the flesh doing it our way, the cheaper the price for detailing. The longer you let the dirt build up, the harder it is to clean it off. When you keep it clean regularly, it does not take a long time and it doesn't cost so much.

We as the Church, the body of Christ, are to be different. We are to be detailed, cleaned from the ceiling to the floor (our hearts right before our Father), at all times. We are not to be just cleaned on the outside, looking good and smelling good for just a little while to impress people, and when the cleaning supplies wear off we go back to stinking because we were never really clean to start with. This is the kind of clean a lot of the church is, just normal clean, the outside looks pretty good but the detailing has not been done. They want to have the detailing done but do not want to pay the price. Then they judge and criticize the ones who have paid the price. God wants a church, a Bride that is spotless and without blemish, one that is willing to pay the price for the detailing. In Proverbs 23:7, "**For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.**" Luke 6:45, "**A good man, out of the goodness of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.**" If you want to know if you are detailed, listen to what comes out of your mouth, what kind of thoughts do you have?

Church, do not be condemned if you have some dirty corners in your house or a dirty closet. Clean them out with the washing of the Word of God and fellowshipping in His presence, loving Him and being loved by Him. Ask for forgiveness, and He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse of ALL unrighteousness. Do not refuse to change and stay in the pain, but decide to change, push thru the pain, and receive the gain. GLORY!!! Let's walk in detailed houses, those cleaned from the inside out radiating a sweet smelling savor to our Lord at all times, not a cover up smell to hide hidden dirt. Let's be about our Father's business. What is that? Be a Light carrier, one that goes into the darkness to show those there the way out! Love Him as He loves you.



CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
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MAY GRACE AND PEACE
BE YOURS IN ABUNDANCE.

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