

REFLECTIONS

A couple of weeks ago, I was driving a school van, picking up students. After picking up one, an approaching car would not dim its lights. The student told me to blind that driver with my bright lights. And you know my pet-peeve—it is people who are so uncaring, that they will not dim their lights. Now, everything inside me wanted to put that driver's eyeballs to the cack of their skull, but instead of hitting the dimmer switch, I said, "What would Jesus do?" I didn't realize I had said that very loud, but the student said, "Jesus would blind em" I proceeded to tell that student that Jesus would never blind anyone and gave her several examples of Jesus' love for people and though I had successfully explained my position on Jesus and His compassion on people and that He would cause nobody harm in anyway. Then she said, "I thought He threw mud in people's eyes." I couldn't argue with that. Out of the mouths of babes.

Church, I know there are many aspects of living a Christian life. Among those are witnessing to the lost, praying for the sick, being in constant communication with our Father in Heaven through prayer, reading His Word, doing good works, and loving people. That is not at an exhaustive list of aspects of living

a Christian life, but this morning, I want to reflect a bit about our Christian walk—walking where we have attained, so to speak. For our brothers and sisters in other denominations, they are walking where they have attained and we are not to judge them by the name of their preference in denominations. It is so easy to become judgmental in these matters. It is always easier to gossip about matters that God doesn't want us to pay a bit of attention to. In other words, God is not so concerned about the way they live for God as He is concerned about the way we love them. Now, don't misunderstand me. There are denomination out there I call cults and we need to steer clear of their teachings and doctrines. For instance, Jehovah's Witnesses—Mormans—Muslem—Christian Science to mention a few. However, God is not so concerned about once saved always saved as He is about getting saved! His Holy Spirit is designed and created by God, himself, to teach us in all righteousness and holiness. Jesus told us that God's Word is our judge. So why do we waste valuable time—time that we could be witnessing to the lost, praying for the sick, doing Godly works such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving drink to the thirsty—why do we waste valuable time gossiping about the church down the street. In every denomination, there are those playing church, not really saved, but playing like they are and there are those who are dedicated Christians, walking in the walk they have attained through

their time spent with the Father. So, when I am teaching about doctrine—the true doctrine outlined in the Word of God, when I am teaching about the love we are to have for people, when I am teaching about the way we should be living, communicating with the Father, worshiping His Son, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us in every direction, spiritually, financially, morally, physically, when I am teaching about this righteous doctrine, I am not slamming our brothers and sisters in other denominations. I am praying that somehow, somewhere, they will hear about a doctrine that allows us to go as deep as we want to in God, the Father. In other words, to walk where we have attained, but striving to attain to the next level all the time! I heard a wise ole preacher say, “You will be shocked at who you meet in heaven—in fact, they will probably be more shocked that you made it.” We are not to judge our brothers and sisters. If we judge others about the simple things about doctrine, The Word says we will be judged according to the way we judge. I don’t know about you, but I do not want to be judged by Jesus about the way I judged my Baptist, Church of Christ, Methodist, Church of God, Nazarene, Pentecostal Holiness, Assembly of God, and others –the way I judged them, my brothers and sisters in Christ, then like I said, according to the Word, I am going to be judged on how I did not live up to the true doctrine I am trying to preach and teach. Paul said, do you who teach not to steal, do you steal? You teach and

preach against the very things you do. We see many examples of this in recent history. Ted Haggard preached and taught against same sex relationships, but was judged by his own fleshly lustly desires of homosexuality. Jimmy Swaggart preached and taught against adultery, but was judged by his own fleshly lustly desires of having affairs with prostitutes. Now, I believe that these men have repented and have actually been successful in their ministries after the fact, but if these great men of God fell down that path, what makes us think we can keep from falling in the very mire and mud we preach and teach against. Turn to Romans, chapter 13. I want us to really look at verse 14, but in order to keep this scripture in context, we will back up to verse 8--⁸ *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.* ⁹ *For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness,"^[a] "You shall not covet,"^[b] and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."^[c]* ¹⁰ *Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.* ¹¹ *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* ¹² *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.* ¹³ *Let us walk properly,*

as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Again, verse 14--

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What is this saying—make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts? Let me tell you what I believe the Holy Spirit is saying to us this morning—I believe, and I think if you will be honest with yourself, examining yourself as is often taught in the Scriptures. All of us have had to deal with pre-meditated sin. All of us have an element in us that we do not want in us, let alone do it and we know it is wrong when we do, think, say, or entertain it in our thoughts. The difference here in temptation and sin is if we justify doing the sin because we know that we can ask forgiveness later is what I refer to as pre-meditated sin. Pre-mediated sin is going beyond the temptation, which by the way is not sin, but yielding to that sin because we want our flesh to have its desires and we know that if we commit this sin, whatever it is, we can go to the Father and ask forgiveness. What is wrong with us. How many times will God forgive us for committing that same sin over and over and we go to Him asking forgiveness?

I am trying to make a distinction between pre-meditated sin and sin committed by not making a provision for the flesh. Smoking for me was something that I tried to stop because I knew it hurt my testimony and my ministry. However, I don't believe that I ever lit up a cigarette thinking to myself, my flesh is going to enjoy this, but right afterwards, I am going to get on my knees and repent. Now, there could be things in our lives that may not seem to be a big sin or even a little one, but we know it doesn't please God and we do it anyway, because we know that when we do, we can ask forgiveness. Is that not using God to fulfill the lust of the flesh. How wrong do you think that is? Whether it is gossiping or telling little white lies and try to justify it by "Oh, I know this is wrong, but. . . BUT WHAT? The very words, I know this is wrong, but ...should clue you in on what But, that you can do it because you are going to ask forgiveness. Until we can get past pre-meditated sin, God is not going to use us to what we can fully be used in His Kingdom, because we still have the capacity to hurt those He has instructed us to love.

In His Service,

Pastor C