

ONE THING IS NEEDFUL

By Rev. C.J. Rosenau



“That we may grow up into Him in all things” Eph. 4:14

There is nothing more precious than a newborn child! I recently became a first-time Grandparent and I am, of course rejoicing in the wonder, innocence and joy of my new Grandson!

Likewise, there is something very special about newborn babes in Christ! One characteristic of both physical and spiritual newborns is the insatiable hunger they

possess! Additionally, newborn babies *and* newborn Christians are prone to making messes and crying a lot! All who are familiar with both kinds of newborns have come to accept this conduct as normal and common and therefore, loving patience is extended towards these sometimes exacerbating behaviors! Over time, however, it is expected that these “babes” will grow out their childish ways and behaviors!

In the natural world, society places expectations upon the parents of babies and youngsters to train and educate their children so that they might one day become responsible and honorable adults. Without exception, an adult who lives for self, carelessly and irresponsibly, will be regarded by society as a child in an adult body!

Similarly, and sadly, in the Body of Christ, there are many such individuals who have never grown up into Christ.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: -1 Peter 2:2

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God: and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. -Heb. 5:12

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, those who by reason of use have exercised their senses to discern both good and evil. -Heb 5:14

Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them (of His household) meat in due season? -Matt 24:45

One does not have to look under a microscope to see that the church today, by in large, is greatly lacking those who are of “full age” or those who are spiritually maturity. The result is that we have become “day-care center churches”, full of spiritual babes. Perhaps our PC (politically correct) and people pleasing (user-friendly) ways have driven the Holy Spirit and His miraculous powers from our midst as we have placed the desires of man above the desires of God. In the days of Ezekiel, the Spirit of God slowly removed His glory from the temple and the people of Israel. So longsuffering and patient was the Lord with His rebellious people that He removed His presence from their midst progressively and gradually, waiting for them to notice that something had changed. Incredibly, the people of that day neither noticed a change or the progressive removal and eventual absolute absence of His presence. Likewise, there are numerous congregations and individuals today who once claimed the power of Holy Spirit but today are void of His presence and transforming power. *“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 2 Tim. 3:15*

There are many reasons for our spiritually anorexic state. It is always easy to blame someone else for our loss but the truth is found in the scriptures: “And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And him that heareth say, come. And him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. -Rev. 22:17. Our Spiritual growth and maturity is a matter of personal choice.

A LIFE OF DEVOTION

Recently I was reading a very old book by a man of God, Seeley Kinne, author of Divine Fundamentals. In this book Kinne wrote about the lost apostolic powers and demonstrations of the Spirit within the Body of Christ and gave, as a reason for this loss a profound lack of devotion to Christ. Here are some of his thoughts on devotion;

“Devotion is the blending of intense, passionate zeal, with love, abandonment, worship and adoration (of Christ). This level of devotion to Christ is so rare....It is the sum of repentance, consecration, yieldedness and self-sacrifice; the renunciation of natural ambition, plans, hopes and personal activities not originating in God. It calls for the presenting of all our faculties to God as a living sacrifice, and becoming His bond slave. Abdication of personal self-control in so full a degree has been discovered or attained only by a few.” -S. Kinne

“This level of devotion to Christ is so rare...”

To many believers the idea of devotion to Christ means attending Church, dutifully reading scriptures, offering prayers or perhaps even serving Him in some capacity of ministry. While this level of dedication and devotion to Christ is important there are yet greater levels or realms of devotion to Christ that excel in conditions and resulting rewards. “To Him who overcomes I will grant...”. In order to be granted a reward, I must overcome that which challenges my progress. “Many shall be purified and made white and tried;” These greater levels of devotion to Christ may be viewed as classes or grades that we must attend and pass through, like students passing from one class to another in order to procure a diploma or a level of spiritual growth.

Our continued spiritual growth is a matter of choice.

“That we may grow up into Him in all things” Eph. 4:14

“The marriage of the Lamb is come,

And his wife hath made herself ready.” - Rev. 19:7

All students begin their class in Kindergarten and if one chooses to persevere, advancements in elementary levels through higher levels of schooling will continue. Likewise, all believers who come to Christ are spiritual babes at first (1 Peter 2:2). God desires that each believer grow from a baby into children and eventually on to adulthood or that we be placed as sons, having grown into full maturity.

“But as many as received Him to them gave He Power to become the sons of God” -John 1:12

It is true that all who receive Christ are initially identical in the Lord, yet, the progressive growth of Christ and His nature within the believer is dependant on our choices. Our Salvation experience is a free gift (Eph. 2:8-9), as is the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) but the attaining of maturity, the coming forth as “pure gold”, or entering into the Bride/Son realm is a result of a life of devotion to Christ.

And being found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3: 9-14

The goal of education is for mastery, or that those things which have been learned might become a part of the students' inner being. Those graduating through higher levels of learning or skill, and having commenced into their vocation or calling may be asked, “What is your profession?” It would be unusual for their answer to be, “I do teaching” or “I do doctoring” but rather, a more typical response to this question would be, “I *am* a Teacher or I *am* a Doctor”. The difference is between *doing* and *becoming*. Those who possess this higher training are generally accepted as experts or masters, having become the embodiment of the wisdom and experience they were trained in, and for that reason, they became and have qualified to say, “I am Doctor” or “I am an Engineer”. This is due to the fact that they have progressed beyond merely performing what they have been trained to do and emanate an almost perfect oneness with their skills and training. Unfortunately, not all who possess higher levels of education, such as a Masters or Doctoral degree are qualified to say, “I am a...” This, for example, is evidenced by a doctor's poor bed-side manner or a teacher whose words seem to irritate and cause deafness, rather than impart a greater hunger to learn.

In the same manner, believers progressing through the “school of the Spirit” are exercised and trained in the ways and purposes of the Lord. The goal is transformation; to become one with God

(John 17:21). This training is frequently in conflict with our own will and ways and therefore, our understanding must be renewed through the mind of Christ. Also, our unwillingness to exchange our ways for His ways necessitates a strict code of discipline and correction.

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” –Heb 12:6

We are seldom willing to exchange our own thoughts, desires and ways for the Lords. And thus, the Lord must allow circumstances of fire to purge our hearts of double-mindedness. The obstacles that we need to overcome, if we would progress in spiritual advancements, are within our natural or carnal man.

“For the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God”. “Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death! Rom. 7: 24. “But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” I Cor. 15:57

God is seeking individuals who are willing to become the embodiment or substance of His wisdom and knowledge and having been sufficiently trained by His Spirit have become the *“testimony of Jesus”*. All who have received Christ have been granted the ability or power to become sons of God or this testimony of Jesus. A better way of saying that would be this; that all who have received Christ as their Savior and received the Holy Spirit who then have submitted to chastening and training of the Holy Spirit, will become the witness of who Christ really is and become qualified to govern in their Father’s stead.

“Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter into the joy (quality of the Kingdom realm) of thy lord.” –Matt. 25:23. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. – Rev 3:21.

Often, when we are young in the Lord we offer “elementary” levels of sacrifice to the Him that may be initiated by requirement or duty. Through the tutelage of the Holy Spirit we are brought into the knowledge that a special time should be set aside for the Lord each day and is required if we are to grow in Christ. This special time or “devotional life” is one that requires discipline, consecration and

rigorous habit. A few believers have faithfully and dutifully followed the Lord into this level of devotion but fewer still have entered into a deeper realm where there has been a renunciation of their own ambitions or personal activity; where they have become a life devoted to Christ. There is a vital necessity for a devotional life, but developing out of this discipline should be a life of devotion-where our heart is continually poised before God in passionate adoration and where the totality of our being is offered to Him. *A devotional life is what we do and a life devoted is what we have become.*

Seeley Kinne further states; "Consecration may be cold and legalistic (forced). Abandonment may come through (circumstantial) pressure. Yieldedness may follow severe chastening. But heart devotion is joyous, *delighting in the will of God, be it pain or pleasure, humbling or exalting. It is the wealth of heart love poured out at the Master's feet.*"

Mary and Martha of Bethany emulated this truth.

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he (Jesus) entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. Luke 10:38-42

Martha was cumbered about with duty and responsibilities. In fact, she was so busy serving the Lord, so busy in her sacrifice to Him, that she neglected her *heart relationship* to Jesus. It wasn't long before Martha began to complain to the Lord about Mary's lack of "activity". I'm sure Martha wondered why her sister Mary couldn't find a better use of her time, and why she continued to carelessly waste her life lingering in such a place of abasement (at the feet of Jesus). It was as if Martha was saying, "get up off the floor and do something with your life!".

However, Jesus told Martha that because she was inundated with service, she had become "anxious and troubled about many things". And indeed she was, for Martha was functioning out of her natural or carnal understanding, trying to accomplish things for God through her own resources and abilities.

On the other hand, Mary, who was found sitting at the feet of Jesus, was experiencing the empowering, transforming Presence of Christ that alone would enable her to serve Christ. As Mary continued to sit at His feet, a transformation was taking place; an exchange of wills was transpiring. His desire would become hers and now through His understanding, His resources and His abilities she would be enabled to serve Him through and by the Spirit. Indeed, Mary was found in the “school of the Spirit and as she abode there she heard HIS words. Jesus did address and speak to Martha in her service to Him, but the words he spoke were corrective rather than creative. Martha’s outward and self- initiated service postured her to become arrogant and condemning of her sister, but as Mary humbled herself at the feet of Jesus, she postured herself in humility, enabling and qualifying her to hear the Lord’s voice, personally or prophetically. When we begin to hear the creative, quickened or prophetic voice of the Lord we will be changed by its life-giving power and ability to divide between our soul and spirit, causing us to know the difference between our will and God’s will. This level of hearing is necessary if we are to become the testimony of Jesus or those whose lives witness of (demonstrate) who Christ truly is.

But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. –Luke 10:42

Jesus told Martha that her sister Mary had chosen the good part. Martha had “received him into her house” and had entered into a level of service and devotion to the Lord, but Mary pressed in for that “good part” and had discovered the “one thing that was needful”; she invited Christ into her heart. To invite Christ into our house may be likened to receiving Him as our *Savior* but to invite Christ into our hearts (the very center of our being) is to make Him Lord over our entire lives! For Christ to be Lord over our hearts and lives means that there has been a renouncing and dethroning of our own will, desires, passions and selfish hopes or dreams. When Christ is truly Lord of our lives, we find great delight in doing His will alone! When we sit at the feet of Jesus and spend time in intimate communion with Him He begins to change those things in us that are contrary to Him. It is here, in the secret place, that Christ becomes Lord and Master over our lives and we are made willing to become a “living sacrifice” unto God.

In the Scriptures there is another profound example of other individuals who were also serving Christ out of self-generated duty rather than that service being an outflow of an intimate relationship with Jesus. This is found when Jesus spoke of those who would come to Him saying, Lord, Lord, have we not done many miracles in your name and did many great works in your name?

*“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink (a tangible substance); but righteousness and peace, and joy (spiritual qualities) in the Holy Ghost”
Romans 14:17*

“Neither shall they say, Lo here! Or, lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” -Luke 17:21

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven (realm of spiritual abundance and victory); but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity. -Mat 7: 20-23

Jesus answered them saying, go away from me you that minister unrighteous acts, for I never absolutely and intimately knew you. Jesus was telling those who worked their own works and spoke their own words to go away from Him; they were not allowed to come close to Him! The Greek meaning of the word “Knew” (ginōskō) is the same word used to describe the act of consummation; or intimacy, as when Joseph “knew” (ginōskō) Mary. –Matt. 1:25. This kind of knowing goes beyond a casual knowing or even a knowing about or having facts about an individual. Jesus stated that the reason they did not know Him was that they did not do the will of the Father. In other words, even though they were performing great miracles and wonderful works, all in the name of Jesus, they never considered asking the Father if what they were doing was His will; they just assumed it was. During the lifetime of Jesus he had the authority and power necessary to perform any and every sign and wonder conceivable, but He chose rather to submit Himself to the will of the Father. Jesus NEVER performed one miracle, never cast out one demon and never spoke one word unless He had received instruction and direction from His Father to do so! *The testimony of Jesus* was this; the words that I speak are not my own, but I only speak that which I hear my Father saying. The works that I do are not my own (they were not his idea) but I only do that which I see my Father doing (or showing me to do). *The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. –John 14:10*

In order for us to hear and thus know the will of the Father, we must spend personal, intimate time with Him. We too, as believers, have been given authority to cast out demons, heal the sick, preach the Word, etc, but this authority does not give us the right to exercise our gifts without first hearing from the Father that we should do so.

We must be careful to know the origin of our service to God. Does our service to God originate from our natural and carnal minds or is it an outflow or a result of spending “knowing” or intimate time at the feet of Jesus, listening to and hearing his voice in order that we might know and work cooperatively within the boundaries of His will? Mary had discovered the one thing that was NEEDFUL. Jesus said it was needful because He knew that only out of a knowing, devoted relationship with Him would we be able to bring forth fruit that would remain!

Lastly, Kinne says, “So touched is the heart of the Infinite by such zealous devotion, scarcely anything could be withheld *from those who demonstrate such adoration*. Intervention (apostolic powers and demonstrations-with signs following) over a devoted life is the very Delight of God. His nature is intensely responsive to devoted creatures.”

That is the sum of a life of devotion; to bring delight and pleasure to the heart of God. Only in doing God’s will can we become the delight of His heart and only as we spend time with Him can we come to know and understand His will. The key is “sitting at His feet” that we might become.

The return of the apostolic is urgently needed in today's church, which is “neither hot nor cold” in the pursuit of devotion to the Lord. The true apostolic will help to facilitate realignment within the church as to its intended purpose, providing avenues of repentance, eye salve, and vision, which will cover our naked and miserable state.

The Lord desires to restore this Apostolic ministry to the church but waits for a people who are *willing* to be changed in the “school of the Spirit”, becoming those whose lives are devoted to Christ. This is a matter of our choice.

“Let us rejoice, and give honour to him:
for the marriage of the Lamb is come,
And his wife hath made herself ready.
And to her was granted

That she should be arrayed in fine linen, Clean and white:
for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

And he saith unto me, Write Blessed are they which are called
unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

And I fell at his feet to worship him.

And he said unto me, See thou do it not:

I am thy fellowservant,

and of they brethren that have

the testimony of Jesus:

worship God:

for the testimony of Jesus is

the spirit of prophecy.

”Rev. 19: 8-10