Drawn More to the Beauty of Darkness

Every person has two offers set before them: the beauty of the character of Christ and of the Kingdom of God, which means crucifying the flesh, and the beauty of the kingdom of darkness, with the fleeting pleasures of sin.

When most people are shown **how the real Jesus lived,** or rather, when they are shown the beauty of the traits of His heart, they are not drawn to these "modest traits" and reject them as something contemptible. They have no interest in stamping onto their own character this modest, humbling and unnoticed character. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them… 1 Corinthians 2:14)

The State of Humanity

Most people stop at a form of godliness, at what the Lord did on the cross for them. The Lord Jesus calls everyone to live as He lived, but people despise the traits of His heart and no one pays them any attention. It is easier to choose the fleeting pleasures of sin and to believe what is preached today, that these sins have been fully forgiven at the cross.

Let us not deceive ourselves, for great will be our disappointment on the day of judgment, the day of God's wrath. (For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Romans 1:18)

If, for example, we live in the sin of anger, if anger is still a way of life for us after decades of "repentance," let us understand that we have never truly admired one of the most beautiful traits of His heart: the meekness and long-suffering of the Lord Jesus.

The Need to Be Born Again

Being born again is the beginning of the work of being made perfect in patience. If we do not love this trait of the Lord's character with all our heart and all our strength, God's work of perfecting us has not begun; we have not yet been accepted as disciples in the school where the patience Christ had is learned.

All things must be made new; the old things must pass away. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17)

Likewise, if our life is still unchanged when it comes to righteousness, if we do not admire and love this beautiful trait of the Lord Jesus' character, if we do not hunger and thirst to live in righteousness as He lived, God's work of perfecting us has not begun.

The word of Scripture speaks to us very clearly: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of

God." (1 John 3:9-10)

An Example of Obedience

If we disregard the authorities that are from God, if we drive at illegal speeds… without caring about traffic laws, if we speak evil both of officials and of others… if we live in the lusts of the flesh, it means we are still in the old state, where sin is a way of life, and we have not yet been born of God. (Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Jude 1:8)

The word of Scripture is very clear on this: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." (Romans 13:1-2); "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:16)

Examination

It is good for each of us to search ourselves in the light of the Word and ask what kind of new birth we have had. Are we drawn to the beauty of the Lord Jesus' traits? Are we working deliberately to be changed into the image of Christ? Can the fruit of the Spirit's work be seen in our lives?

Do we seek the Kingdom of righteousness, peace and love as a treasure? Are we among those who have left behind the things of the world?

We urge you to be honest with yourself and to check where you stand right now. Your eternity depends on it!

Check yourself: Have you made a real covenant of discipleship, of complete obedience to Christ? Do you live in righteousness, and is your goal to reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ? Are you subject to the authorities God has ordained? Do you avoid paying taxes? Do you love the things of the world?

Has God truly placed you in the Body of Christ, which is fitly joined together and compacted, where every member does its part? Are you subject to the leaders of the church? Or are you in a congregation run on religious programmes, where everyone does as they please?

If you have not yet sought righteousness as a treasure, start now. If you have understood what the traits of the Lord's character are, long to have them too. Begin to live in righteousness as He lived; learn patience, meekness, love… from the Lord Jesus, and you will find rest for your soul.

If you speak in tongues, ask yourself where that comes from. From the Holy Spirit, or from another spirit? Did you receive this gift to use it for the growth and perfecting of others, or is it only for you, to reassure you that you are saved? Examine yourself very carefully, for your eternity is at stake!

The Church is the Body of Christ; it is a school made up only of disciples of Christ. In this school, everyone, from the least to the greatest, has the goal of becoming perfect like their Teacher.

God designed it for the growth and perfecting of the saints; that is its purpose. (And he gave some… pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints… till we all come… unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13)

If you are in an organisation whose aim is not real discipleship that makes us more like Christ, look for a pure congregation, where the brothers and sisters care for one another and whose goal is the growth and perfecting of the saints, so that you can grow healthily towards perfection and reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ! (But follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22)

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