

You Cannot Become What You Already Are!

Come take a walk with me. You see, we do this quite often. Nestled in a quiet valley several miles north of the busy clamor of Reno, is a little house that we call home. The front door opens onto an expanse of mountains, valleys and many acres where we walk the dogs, contemplate the goodness of God and talk of life. It is a good place, where the horizon opens onto views of the majestic High Sierra mountain range, with snow topped peaks and secluded valleys of pine and aspen.

Come along and walk for a mile or two, or more if you will and let us talk. We shall not talk of problems, nor wrestle with relational strife. We shall let discussion of politics and economic wait for another day. Instead, we shall talk about you, without criticism or judgment. We shall talk of your creation in the hands of the Mighty Creator God and of His purpose and plan for your life. We shall talk and we shall listen. For in the still quiet of the peaceful valley we inhabit, you just might hear the voice of God, speaking of His love, revealing His wondrous grace and purpose for your life. Perhaps we will see in the wonders of creation around us, the beauty of all things God has made - including you!

So come, and let us walk on and see what lies ahead...

I've been delighted to watch my grandchildren grow and develop. Each takes on certain behaviors and roles that betray the genetics of our family, yet I know that there is much experience that goes into the developing of those traits and the shaping of the end personality.

Our youngest grandson lives just a few parcels away from us, so we get to see him regularly. Yesterday I watched him see a stray piece of paper next to the trash can, and he started to walk away, then topped, came back and picked it up, making sure it got into the container. I laughed, for I see that in his parents and I recognize it in myself.

From an early age, I just could not stand to see something out of place and particularly, near the trash can but not in it. He is but five years old now, but I can already see what the man will be in large part. The genetic structures that make up his body and brain are already working their way into his personality and will ultimately determine what he will be like in large part. He will go through many struggles, trials and challenges while maturing, but given the chance to complete the process, what he becomes is already there in potential.

Spiritual genetics works the same way. The concept of new birth and becoming a new creation in Christ is of the same theory. Paul writes, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Look at this verse for a minute. The cause is – being in Christ. The result is – being a new creation. Simple. Profound! It flies in the face of religious fervor which proposes that becoming a new person in Christ is determined by our effort and by our sinless perfection. So much of what Christianity has become is tainted with the overshadowing demands of human effort, self-produced holiness and frantic effort to measure up and fit in and to become good enough. The simple truth is that our creature personality is determined by our spiritual genetics.

Frantic effort is never a good substitute for confident action. It is, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3:5. And again in 2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy

calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

Somewhere in the history of the church we have elevated human effort and in the course of doing so have devalued humankind. Yes, by making our behavior the issue for our faith, we have found a way down not a way up. The premise is simple: We cannot save ourselves, justify ourselves or do anything to elevate our humanity. If we could, then certainly we do not need God. The whole modern sense of man without God stems from this historic shift from dependency on the creator to a self-sufficient arrogance that presumes that we can know best what we need.

As long as we are predisposed to attempt to fix our lives and our societies, we are doomed, for the effort in and of itself ends in the frustration of frantic effort, wasted energy and more frustration. Until we come to peace with the creator, we are doomed to wander in restless agitated human energy.

There is a place in which we understand that the creator God is also the sustainer God and that all of the provision for our human need and condition are in Christ. Here, is a place in which confidence replaces fear, grace overwhelms the frantic effort of human flesh and hope becomes the driving force behind our faith. The sacrifice of Calvary is not just a historical event, depicting the social condition of the day. It is a spiritual climax to all of history, wrapped into one single moment in which past, present and future are addressed and humanity is freed from the sting of our sin and failure. The provision of Christ is profound in that His beauty, glory and perfection become ours as our sin and failure become His. The great exchange is that we ARE the righteousness of Christ, we ARE perfected in Him, we ARE clean, forgiven and blessed. All of the provisions of the creator God, the power and resources of the universe, which were given totally to Christ, are given by Him to us and there is nothing we can do about it. We can do nothing to alter the position He has given to us. We cannot become righteous, forgiven, cleansed, blessed, accepted, seated with Him in heavenly places, and so on. We cannot become what we already are!

The act of conveying His position and all of His benefits to us is called Grace! It is by His grace that we have been given everything that pertains to Him without reservation. The ramifications of that thought are enormous! We tend to live so far beneath our privileges, begging, pleading, wandering about in fear and seeking significance for ourselves. If we could only realize that He's got us covered. The work is finished. It is not something that might happen, should have good results, maybe would be a good idea. It is as certain as creation itself, and it is finished.

How we think about ourselves determines our actions and our profile in life. If we see ourselves as failures, we will tend to act that out. If we think poverty, we will live it out. But if we understand who we are and what we have, we will consequently also live that out. Frantic effort or confident action: The difference is in the perception.

What is your reality? Can you grasp the provisions already made for you? Is the work of Christ complete and finished? What part of your human situation was left out?

Did it provide for your past, your present and your future? Ah, most people serve a very small God, limited by the elements of that which He created. But that kind of reality is an illusion and a terrible bondage. Freedom is found in simply changing your mind set and walking free from those earthly

limitations. That is how Satan works, not with armies and weapons but with the subtle accusations of limitation.

Walk free! Be who you already are! Have what you already have. You do God no disservice by accepting His freely given grace.