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The Necessity of Christ Being Revealed pt. 3

I want to continue our study today on the necessity of Christ being revealed. This is the third message in this series. I'm hoping in doing this to settle this issue in our hearts of the absolute necessity of Christ being revealed in us for us to grow up in Him. For us to grow up at all. And I'm also hoping that, from this day forward, anybody wondering why I speak so often (in whatever topic I may be talking about) about the revealing of Christ can be pointed back to this series as a necessary building block.

So again, it is absolutely essential that Christ be revealed in those in whom He dwells. As we have said – nothing of Christ's will is accomplished apart from Christ's mind working in His body. And as His mind begins to work in His body, through the revealing of Christ, it is not as though that mind just gives commands to body parts. That mind not only brings its will into view, but also works that will through that body part by the exertion of its own Life. In other words – Phil. 2:13 “For it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure”. In other words, as His mind begins to work in you it is not as though you just get better at hearing what He wants you to do. Its not that at all. Its that you actually become an expression of who He is and what He's doing.

Remember last time I was telling you about my friend Chris from college. Chris had cerebral palsy and had arms that he could not control. He had arms that did not move with the impulses of life and will from his mind. If somebody laid hands on my friend Chris and healed his arms, what would it look like? Would his arm suddenly sit up straight and say “Chris, what would you like me to accomplish today?”. “Now that I can hear your voice, I'll do what you say!”. No, that's not how body parts work. They don't do your will by getting good at hearing your voice. They do your will by manifesting your life.

The reason I make this distinction is because there is this notion in the body of Christ today that in order to do God's will you must be trained in hearing His voice. Well, if by hearing his voice you mean commands and instructions through prophetic experiences, words of knowledge, commands, etc....that is not true. My friend Chris' will is accomplished not through body parts that try to listen to his voice and figure out what he means. His will is accomplished by body parts that move according to the life that flows within them. And I brought that analogy back just to make the point that the mind of Christ working in you is not another set of instructions or commands. No. Salvation is the receiving of His life. Transformation is revealing of that life, that your soul may become a body part that expresses it.

So today I wanted to talk a little more about the “why’s” and “how’s” of the revealing of Christ in you. I was talking to somebody this week and they were asking me about how to die to themselves. I have found that this particular question is a very big stumbling block to many Christians. They have read something in the Scripture about dying to self, or carrying the cross, but they don’t comprehend how that actually works in them. And that’s not a dumb question, it’s a really good question. And the answer has to do with the revealing of Christ.

As this person was asking me this question, an analogy popped into my head. As I was listening to their questions my mind went back to my time in Kansas City when Jessie and I worked with a lot of homeless people. We came across a few that had multiple personality disorder. I’m sure most of you have heard of that. MPD they call it for short. Actually, I have heard the name is now called DID – Disassociation Identity Disorder. Either way it’s the same thing.

And, as I understand it, what happens with multiple personality disorder is that a person’s life in younger years is so painful or traumatic that their personality actually splinters and they actually escape reality by developing an entirely different personality that is safer from the pain of reality. It’s a survival mechanism of the soul. Reality is too terrible, so a false identity, personality is established as a coping mechanism.

So lets just say that a man named Joe had a terrible childhood and he developed multiple personality disorder. He had long ago escaped into a false personality that he called Frank. Frank was a safer life to live for Joe when he was a child, and so Joe had become accustomed to living as Frank.

Now I don’t know if what I’m about to say represents how psychiatrists actually try to deal with this disorder, but it works for my analogy. In our analogy, Frank was not the reality of who this person was. Joe was. The truth of identity was in Joe. Frank was a creation of the mind. Frank was not really true. Frank was really a lie.

So here is the question. How do you get Frank to go away? Or maybe you would say, how do you get Frank to die so that Joe could live. See that is our question with regards to Christ. How do I get Jason to go away? How do I get Christ to live, if He is actually the life that is in me? And that is what popped into my head in this conversation.

Well, if you’ve ever dealt with these people you know that its not an easy thing to fix. You don’t just tell Frank that he’s not real and then POOF! Joe’s back. Its not like that. The reality is that telling Frank that he is not real does absolutely nothing. Making Frank recite a creed about belief in Joe as the truth accomplishes nothing. Trying to beat Frank back with verbal or physical abuse doesn’t get rid of him.

It seems to me that the only way that this individual will live as Joe and not Frank is if Joe is revealed in Him. You can’t make Frank leave except by crowding him out with the reality of Joe. When this individual comes to see and realize and recognize and walk in the reality of Joe, then comes the decrease of Frank. In a clear view of reality, Frank

turns out to be a creation of the mind, a failure to see the truth. But you can't make Joe increase by decreasing Frank. **You must decrease Frank by increasing your view of Joe.**

And this is how it works in Christ. Obviously this analogy has its shortcomings. But it is accurate in that once you are born again, you are no longer who you have thought yourself to be. You were "born again". Born of an entirely new Seed. You have received the fullness of new life in Christ. And yet that life works in you according to your knowing of it. Frank had the fullness of Joe all of the time, and yet Joe worked in Him only when He was revealed to be the truth.

And that is really how it is. Your soul has known only the old man, the old creation, and the old covenant. And yet at new birth you have received a New Man, become a New Creation, and come to a New Covenant. How do you get rid of the first? By the revealing of the second. How do you get rid of the darkness in your understanding? Through the coming of light. How do you get rid of the old man? Ephesians 4:22 "putting off the old man through the renewing of the spirit of your mind and putting on the new".

Why does the renewing of the mind, the revealing of Christ, bring transformation? Because you already have Christ, you need only to share His mind to become an expression of His life. You already have Joe, you need only to see Him as the truth and the lie gives way.

You see, Frank was a lie. He wasn't just a liar, he was a lie. Why? Because Joe was the truth. And that makes Frank a lie...even the best of Frank. And so when you know the truth, you are set free from the lie. "If you abide in my word you will know the truth and the truth will make you free".

But nothing that you are going to do to Frank is going to make him more dead. The only way for Frank to die off, is to reveal Joe. Nothing you do to your natural life through discipline or neglect or training is going to remove your Frank-man. The only way for the old to die off is to reveal the new. The way to have the first die off is to reveal the second. Kill the lie by revealing the truth.

We have to understand that truth is what transforms our soul. A lot of people say that, but I'm not talking about true doctrines, true theology, or true creeds. I'm talking about the Truth Himself as our life revealed as such by His Spirit. It is a spiritual knowing, a work of the Spirit. The true knowledge of God. Knowing the truth, the Truth revealed, dispels all lies. Adam is a lie for those who are in Christ. Adam, that seed, that kind, that nature, is a lie for those who are a new creation. Adam is truly removed by the cross. But Adam must be removed from our unrenewed heart by the revealing of Christ or he will remain there as the reality of who and what we know ourselves to be. And we will live out whatever we know ourselves to be because you are an expression of whatever view of truth is working in your soul.

If only the church at large could see that behavior change is not the goal. The goal is not to teach Frank how to act more like Joe. The goal is a transition out from one man to another, from a lie to the truth. And indeed that changes your behavior, but only through changing your nature. T Austin-Sparks has a great book called “The Great Transition From One Humanity to Another”. I recommend it.

Let me tell you something about the human soul. The human soul responds to and expresses that which it knows to be truth. You can't listen to an 85 pound anorexic woman talking about how overweight she is and still believe that the soul doesn't respond to and express what it believes to be the truth. And that is true in the natural and that is also true in the spiritual.

Imagine that you are in a room that is crawling with black widow spiders. I mean thousands of them, but you are entirely unaware. You are calm and at peace. You don't know the truth of where you are. Suddenly a light shines in the room and you see thousands of these spiders all over the place. The moment you are awakened to where you are, the body automatically moves in response. You don't have to stop and have a meeting about it. You don't even have to think about it. It is simply the natural response to where you understand yourself to be. What you understand to be real and true of your situation. Nothing really changed outwardly. You were calm, then you were terrified and running through the door. The only thing that changed was your awareness of where you were.

Well that is a weak analogy because it is entirely outward and natural. But now think of all that is involved in the soul waking up to what is real and true in Christ. Think about light shining in the heart to give you the spiritual comprehension of where you have been placed. You don't have to stop and have a prayer meeting to ask God what He would do in your situation. You don't have to wait for a command. You simply exhibit the life that is in you. Your soul becomes the exhibition of the One in whom you have been placed. You actually become the instrument of His life. You line up with His reality. You bear His image. You are moved in and by His life.

Now this is progressive, but this is true transformation. It is true change. But if you can hear what I mean by this...it is not really the change **of you**. But the change **FROM you**. Somebody said it the other week – He's not really going to change your heart, but He'll give you His. You see, there is nothing in you to change. Frank can't change into something other than Frank. Maybe a better version of Frank, but its still Frank. The change must be FROM Frank to somebody else. Joe. You must be changed from you to the expression of somebody altogether different than you.

My Lord, I wish we would stop telling Christians that they need to find some inner strength to change themselves into something that looks more like Jesus. That is so unfair, and unkind...to send people on that wild goose chase. That only leads to pride or condemnation. No, it is not you changing into a better you. It is a change FROM you unto Somebody else. And for those visiting, I'm not talking about you turning into Jesus. I'm talking about you becoming the vessel of His nature, character, life.

Now this is progressive, but what is happening in this change? The soul is beginning to take its sense of reality, its awareness of reality and life and truth no longer from the outside natural, material reality. Not even from itself. But has all of reality and identity and defined from the inside by Christ our life. Colossians 3 “whenever Christ, your life, is revealed, then you are revealed”.

Ok...Hopefully you've been convinced of the reality and necessity of Christ being revealed. I want to take the remainder of the time and just speak briefly about how that actually works in us. What does it look like and how does it work. And again, I am going to use some analogies. I find pictures to be extremely helpful in communicating truth. And when it comes to teachings that are recorded, word-pictures work better than drawings.

I have had some people say to me certain things that make me realize that I need to say something about how the revealing of Christ works in you. For those of you that come from a charismatic or Pentecostal background, you can be quite accustomed to thinking of revelation as something having to do with visions, dreams, words of knowledge, prophecies, etc. And that is not at all what I'm talking about. As a matter of fact, those things, to whatever extent they come from God, cannot even be properly understood apart from a true inward revealing and comprehension of Christ.

So no...I'm not talking about dreams and visions here. I am not talking about something where you just sit around your room and wait for “it” to happen. This revealing we're talking about isn't an “it”. Its not really an event, although there can be real breakthrough moments, days or weeks. I have had more than one person say to me “I went home and asked God for this “revealing of Christ” and “it” didn't happen. So I gave up”.

Well, its not like that. And you don't have to have a single spiritual gift for this revealing to work mightily in you. You can have zero experience or understanding of spiritual gifts and still have this unveiling working in you. It is not for so-called “spiritual people”. It is what God desires to work in everyone who is born again.

Well, what is it? What is it like? It is simply an ongoing unveiling by His Spirit of the truth and reality of what salvation is. **It is like a dimmer switch being slowly turned up in a room that you are already in. The light shows you what is already there.** Its not really an event that happens one day at 4pm. It may **begin** one day at 4pm when suddenly something of the cross breaks in on your heart with striking clarity.

I don't want to make it sound like it's not a big deal. It's a huge deal, but I want to demystify it. Its not a mystical event. Its like an awakening out of a dream. Its like a light going on in your heart and showing you where you are. Both of those are good analogies that I have used in times past.

Its like you are outside somewhere but you don't know where you are because its dark. You've heard where you are described by those who have seen it. You have a book

under your arm that you have read that describes where you are. But you've never really seen it. You have memorized parts of the book that describe the place where you are. You've done workshops and studies and gone to conferences that talk about it. You're aware that it is real, but you've never really seen it.

And then suddenly a crash of thunder and then the whole sky lights up. And then in an instant...there's a tree, and a field, and a stream, and a cabin...or whatever. You've read about it, but now you've seen it. Now you've caught a glimpse of it. Not a glimpse of where you were going one day when you died. No, a glimpse of where you are right now in Christ.

But just like lightening to the natural world, the whole creation is lit up for a moment, but then darkness again. Its not like you've left the place where you are, but maybe you can't see it that clearly. That's how it begins. Flashes of light in the soul. The light of His life. The light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It flashes as your heart turns to him. Its not a knowing with the intellect, it's the seeing with the eyes of the heart. And suddenly you can understand what Paul meant when he said "I pray that the Lord open the eyes of the heart". "I pray that you have the spirit of wisdom and revelation". "I pray that you have a comprehension that surpasses the mind".

Now here's a free tip. Don't just draw a sketch of what you've seen in the light and turn it into your ministry. You know...walking around and describing what you saw in a single flash of lightening. No, stay there and keep looking. Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of that light. Turn your heart to know Him like a little child, not presuming you know anything at all. Ask His Spirit to "guide to you into all truth", to "show you the things that have been freely given to you by God". Ask Him to unveil the place where you now stand.

And then..."BOOM"... another flash of light. Another lightening flash. And your view increases. You're not just stumbling around trying to remember what you once saw that one day. No, you're seeing more. Your view is increasing. Don't turn back. Don't turn back from Him. Fix your gaze on Him. Fix your heart on things above. Looking unto Jesus. And then "BOOM"...another flash of light.

And the heart that stays towards him like a child will see more and more as you allow him to show you. And the light shines greater and greater until the dawn. Its like the lightening flashes no longer come and go, but they stay. Light increases, at least in one area of your heart...there the light remains. And you abide in the light. You walk in the light as He is in the light, and your fellowship is with the Father and the Son. The light, the truth, that's what you see. The Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. And because it is already where you are, what you are, you can simply abide there and manifest it. Paul says "formerly you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light".

Why does it change you? Because its already where you are. Its already what is true of you. You are simply coming to know as you are already known. You change from Frank

to Joe because in reality you are Joe. You change from the nature of Adam to Christ, because by His cross Adam is dead. **When can you walk in the reality of where you are? When light comes.** Look at it in the natural. You go out into the woods and its pitch black. When can you walk and live and move where you are? When light comes. It is like that. **You cannot live out from where you are apart from the seeing of where you are.** Thus, the necessity of Christ being revealed.

Where you understand yourself to be changes the very inner-working and outwork of your soul. You are conformed to the image of Christ, your life. Its like waking up from a dream. You've all had a dream that was terrifying but so real. Its so real that you have to sit there in bed and think for a minute what is really real. Was the dream real?... or is lying in this bed real? And even though you begin to wake up out of that which is not real unto that which is real, it takes some of seeing, observing, awakening to the light of day before your nerves actually calm down.

You know experiences like this. You've been awake for 10 minutes and your still on edge, still sweating, still depressed or angry because of something that happened in a dream. It wasn't even real, and yet it was defining your soul. It was having its expression in and through you. Well, what needs to happen? What needs to happen is that the reality of truth, the reality of day, the reality of waking up needs to break in upon your soul as reality over against the dream, over against the lie. Frank needs to wake up and see Joe.

Frank beholding in a true mirror the reality of Joe, he is being changed from the one to the other. Putting off the frank, by the renewing of the spirit of his mind, and putting on the Joe. **Your soul becomes the expression of whatever view of spiritual reality is currently working in it. And what I'm telling you once again is that unless the Spirit of God awakens you and I who are in Christ out of an Adamic illusion, that bad dream will remain the only reality we know.** That bad dream is going to feel real for the rest of our lives. What is the solution. Paul says it perfectly – “wake up o sleeper, and Christ will give you light!”

Praise God, that is the light of life. That is the light of truth. That is the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.