

Ryan McMaster
Market Street Fellowship
01-18-2016

Don't Feed the Flesh

There is such an intense pull by the carnal man (the nature that is inside me, the one opposed to the Light) to fill itself up with something—anything—other than Christ.

Lately it has been very obvious to me that this battle for our souls, the “spiritual war” that happens in us, is no joke. This is something that isn't a philosophical or theological debate—there is a real battle going on between Kingdoms. The fact is the Lord has conquered the darkness—and put all things under His feet. The fact *in me*, however, is that God has given us all the choice to receive the one (Christ) who begins that work in the darkness. The small Seed of life is planted, and when given our hearts attention and desire, it begins to expand like leaven in our soul, and by His work and our “investment” inwardly (I mean, our desire and seeking, our selling everything for the pearl), Christ's nature becomes our nature and we are able to walk and abide in the Light, becoming sons of God through Christ Jesus.

This is a work. This is a work of God. This is His desire, that all men come to Him in this way. We must follow Christ out of one man and all that he seeks and desires, and begin to finally and fully live in Christ. What I'm realizing is that this means much more than I thought before. Christianity was, for most of my life, an agreement that there was a God and that His Son died for my sins. Because I believed that, I was saved and secure. Then, a few years ago, the Lord opened my eyes to the reality of the cross and what it really did. My ideas about “me being saved” and just simply agreeing with a belief were shattered when I saw that I couldn't JUST believe, but I had to see (by His Spirit showing me) that the cross completely killed the old man that was at work in me, and that I must receive Christ as a new life. It was no longer I who live...etc. But now, the continuing revelation of the work of God is showing me that the way is very narrow indeed. The way is so narrow, in fact, that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Why? Because the rich man's heart is attached to the world, and that attachment means that he is not only loving the things of the world and satisfying his flesh—it is worse than that—he is actually rejecting and crucifying Christ in his heart.

That is what we do if we don't pick up our cross daily and follow Him. Picking up our cross is not a mental assent. Picking up our cross is not a physical thing we do. It does not mean we read our Bible every morning or attend theology classes at church at night. It is losing our life. It is losing the life that

is in the world and of the world. The cross is final and huge. It destroys the man of sin and makes a way for a new man, a new seed and life to begin to grow up in the soul. This is God's way. His way is difficult, but if we are willing to lose our life, we will find His life and all the wonder and peace and rest that is found with it.

I am discovering that the entire world is set up to counteract this pursuit and desire to know Christ as my life. Every single thing that is set up to please and "satisfy" the flesh is a way to grab the heart's attention. Just like Esau, every day we give up our inheritance for a quick, satisfying, fleshly desire. We do it multiple times a day—in fact, we can do it every waking and sleeping second of every day for our 80 years on earth, all the while proclaiming the name of Christ and "worshipping" in our own understanding.

The world rejected Christ, and the world will hate you too—if you are His disciple. Ask yourself the question: Does the world hate you? Or does the world accept you and fold you into its system.

I'm not saying that I know how this is all done or how this is supposed to look. I am just saying that I'm seeing the fact that what the darkness has done to man is convince him that he knows God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. We think we know. Paul says that those who think they know do not yet know as they should. That is because we are knowing by our understanding, listening to men and to the world. But the Spirit of God is the teacher. He teaches life, and His life leads to a love for one another. Not acceptance of man and man's wickedness and darkness, but love and union with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Love that never ceases because it is love from a pure heart that is cleansed by the eternal light of Jesus Christ.

This knowing of Christ inwardly is eternal life. This eternal and pure life is only known as we reject the life of the first and pick up the cross... which includes our own death and the death of everything we once loved and called life. We can only love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind if we are emptied of our love for everything that is opposing Him—all the things that the rich man loves and seeks after, the things of the world.

We can't fool ourselves into thinking that we know the Light—the Light is present, it is real, it is walked in and abided in. The warmth and understanding brought by the Light is something that is known "now in Christ", not yesterday in Christ, or not in a flash of light. Abiding in the light is truly an abiding—a reality that we are being shown now, and now, and now, and now. There is a diligence of our hearts that is required, a picking up of the sword to follow the Captain of our salvation while He lays stone after stone in our heart to build His temple—the place of His dwelling—IN YOU and IN ME!

That was just on my heart tonight as I've just sat here for the last few hours, thinking of how much pull

there is on the flesh, always. But Christ prays that we are kept from the evil one, so that what is real in Heaven is real on earth, in us. Follow the Light, reject the darkness and don't pursue the lusts of the flesh that are born in the darkness. Don't pursue any of them. Don't let your fleshly desires become your daily bread—feed on Christ and as we do we are able to feed one another. "Do you love me? ... then feed my sheep".