

HAVE YOU FOUND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF?

DO YOU TELL YOURSELF THE TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF?

Have You Come To The Truth About Yourself?

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:” Ps. 42:1-2.

By Pastor Del Wray

The Psalmist sings: “My God, as the deer longs for brooks abundant with water, so does my soul thirst for you.” Come then, my friends, catch my enthusiasm, share with me my longing. Let us love, let us be infected with this thirst, and let both of us run to the well of understanding that is God. Let us long for it as the deer craves the refreshing waters of the brook. God is a fountain that shall never be dried up. Let us run to this fountain that is our God with the swiftness of the deer. In the Light that is God is a light that never shall be darkened. But to see this light the “inner self” must be prepared. To drink of this fountain an inner thirst must first be kindled. We should follow the example of the deer which will destroy serpents that hinder its progress. After it kills these poisonous obstacles, its thirst for the refreshing brook-waters becomes even more intense. The serpent is our SIN, our self and our vices. If we overcome the evil viper of self, then we will long even more for the Fountain of Truth. When we are giving into our vices, indulging these appetites, there is no desire to run to the divine fountain. How can we thirst for its waters when we are still filled with the venom of our iniquity? Not understanding the enemy of our soul is to declare war against God.

The "Original Sin" whereby humans freely chose to separate themselves from God has resulted in three "illnesses" which make the journey to discovery of self and God difficult if not impossible. The first of these is the sickness of pride. It is a disease of the brain whereby we develop the insane conviction that we are gods that we are in charge of the universe, that we are in control of our lives, that certainly we are nobler than the rest of the human race. This poisonous perception of reality causes us to look at the bed we have created for ourselves in this life and say, “My bed is my kingdom! There is nothing better in the universe!”

Pride is a difficult disease to overcome because we don't even know that we are sick and are deaf to any suggestion that we are. We pay no attention to the opinion of friends because we don't think they have any worthwhile knowledge to communicate. We pay no attention to divine warnings because we are firmly convinced that we are God or at least as good as God. We are trapped in our own self-created imaginary heaven. We are not aware of being on a restless journey because we think we have arrived. We have no unsettled urge to move on. Indeed, even

if we knew of God's kingdom in the distance, we could never get there because we are too swollen with our own importance to get through the narrow gate.

The second illness is a form of heart failure. It is a despair that makes us give up on ourselves and on the grace of God. We are tempted to stay in the bed made for us by earthly fate, not because it is particularly satisfying but because we have no hope that we can ever get up. Why try to move if there is no hope for us in this life or in the next?

The antidote for such despair is a careful listening to the words of the loving Jesus and the encouraging presence of happy, hopeful friends. Of course, the grace of God is the necessary and sufficient remedy for this apathy of spirit, but the workings of internal grace can be strengthened by the external grace of having others who are willing to listen to our sorrows and who try to move us to a happier frame of mind. One of the great gifts in human community, especially the intimate community of family and friends, is the presence of those who take a bright view of life, who do not always look for the down side of every day, who are not always negative about the human race, who, when surrounded by the debris of this world's stables look happily for the hidden pony rather than complaining about the lack of maintenance. Surrounded by happy people it is easier to be happy ourselves, or at least to wonder why we are still unhappy. Blessed indeed are those who do not live in the midst of "prophets of doom" because it is hard to see light when surrounded by the darkness of others.

The third illness that stands in the way of discovery of self and God is the cancer of malignant earthiness. Its symptom is an overpowering attachment to the people and things of this world. It causes a lassitude which makes us lye comfortably in the bed we have made for ourselves in this life. We have no wish to ever move. We have no desire to experience anything beyond the peace that we can snatch from our here and now. Unfortunately for our comfort, such earthiness carries with it the root of its own destruction. Sleeping in this earthly bed too long inevitably leads to sores. The things we value in this life rust wither away or simply become boring. This world is too limited to prevent the colorless "sameness" of even our most precious toy from eventually dimming its pleasure. We may not tire of the people we love but we are destined someday to lose them. Despite all our efforts to hold still the flow of time, there is the chance that we will end up alone in the little space and span that is ours. Too attached to the passing tide of people and things in our lives, we shift uneasily in our precious earthy bed, twisting and turning, looking for something more. We cry out with Augustine:

How mixed up I get, Jesus! And how sad my poor soul becomes when you are not here in my room. My soul still seems convinced that it can be happy without you, and in its solitary room it turns this way and that on its chosen bed, first on its back and then on its side and then on its stomach, only to feel more and more uncomfortable. Come Lord Jesus! And bring me peace!

Pride, Despair, and Worldly Attachments: it is no wonder that our lives are upset. The dictionary describes "overturned" as a condition when the top is down and the bottom is up. It is a state of utter disorder and confusion and this is precisely the effect of these three illnesses. When we are proud we put ourselves "on top of" God, convinced that we are more important than anything else and better than everyone. When we despair we put ourselves "under" all creation, convinced that we are less than nothing and worth nothing at all. When we are too attached to earthly things

we subordinate eternity to time, spirit to matter. We become upside down through our ambition, our curiosity, our stupid desire for more and more material goods and physical comfort.

Lust of the flesh turns the individual upside down internally. That power, the spirit that should be in charge becomes the slave to any and all desires for the “good” things of earth. That power which should be on the top within the self now becomes the bottom. Augustine asks:

How many evils are caused by the desire for pleasures of the flesh? Such uncontrolled desire results in adultery, fornication, drunkenness, and everything that unlawfully satisfies sensual needs. It invades the mind, leaving it enslaved by the flesh. It topples the ruler from its throne and subjects the master to the servant. How can humans act externally in an upright fashion when they have been turned upside down internally?

Lust of the eyes is disorienting in a different way, consuming us with an unhealthy curiosity about the unusual. We peer into the lives of others hoping to find something strange or untoward, seeking pleasure in the excesses of others, excesses which of course we would never indulge ourselves but which give us proxy pleasure when observed in others. Through uncontrolled lust of the eyes we lose ourselves in the vicious games of others. Through our interest we identify with them. We lose ourselves in the frivolity of those around us and become in our imagination those whom we observe pursuing strange lives and performing strange actions.

Pride of life subordinates eternity to time, seeking immortality through earthly career and accomplishments. In seeking to gain more and more earthly goods, more and more earthly honors, more and more power over other others here on earth the individual loses interest in anything beyond this place and this time. Human nature has as its goal eternal happiness beyond death, but the misdirected ambition of those infected with the “pride of life” is to be happy on earth with all the power and wealth and honor that they are able to achieve. They live in confused lives because they have made their heaven on earth.

Pride and despair are the major obstacles to the discovery of the truth about the real you and the discovery of God but an inordinate attachment to the things of this earth prevents us from even beginning the search. There is great wisdom in the advice, “To thine own self be true” but to do this we must first wipe our eyes clear of those earthy things that may block our vision.

“THE STRUGGLE WITHIN”

Do you tell yourself the truth about yourself? Underestimating the power of the enemy is a sure way to defeat. There is a war going on within all of us and it will be with us as long as we live in these fallen bodies. It is winnable, not perfectly or permanently, but consistently. But we can't be half-hearted. If we fully engage the battle using God's resources, we can consistently win! Have you come to the truth about yourself? For without coming to that truth there can be no winning or seeing a lost soul saved. Not until a man understands his lost condition can he be saved. Not until a man understands the sinfulness of his own heart does he have a chance of being born again. The lost condition of man and that of his fallen nature is keeping him in the chains of sin. The natural man is unaware as to the danger, depravity and to the gravity of the estate to which

his sinful nature has befallen him. The natural estate of man is that of having been born in sin and the depth of depravity to which his nature has taken him is “deceitful above all things” and it is “desperately wicked” also seen as “filthy rags” and for that reason it is very rare in today’s society to find a soul that has come to the place of genuine truth about himself. So many so-called conversions to Christianity remain shallow because biblical self-realization is such a deadly blow to the ego and our carefully constructed world of vanities and delusions. We are so apt to see the fault of another than we are to recognize the self-deception in our own lives. For instance, take Job, it took him a longtime, forty-two Chapters to come to the truth about himself.

“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!” Job 42:6.

Solomon, the womanizer of his day, spent years trying to make sense out of his life, and he was the wealthiest and wisest man who ever lived outside of Jesus Christ Himself. Millions today are in false religions, therapy, twelve-step programs, fraternal lodges, and community organizations of all kinds trying to fill the void and vacuum that comes with being lost, without Christ and without hope **“in the world”** Eph. 2:12. Hell must be continually enlarging itself to make room for the souls that die in their delusions. Its walls must be constantly expanding themselves to make room for the fools that die in their conceitedness. Man’s greatest inner secret must well become his ultimate discovery for a new birth to be realized. When man discovers the truth about himself he comes to a crossroads in his life and will have to make a CHOICE. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon!” Standing at the crossroads will you find Christ there to guide you?

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, **and few there be that find it**” Matt. 7:13-14.

For the few that are getting truly saved in America today, there had to be a place in their life where they came face to face with this dreadful realization “the truth of their own selves.” Real repentance flows from the truthful admission: “I am nothing but an unclean thing and a bunch of dirty old rags” Isa. 64:6. What joy there is to be found standing before God in His Holiness utterly naked of the filthy, dirty rags of self-righteousness, where we have thrown off all the vain delusions that we have so painstakingly dressed ourselves in since reaching the age of accountability? How fearful and yet peaceful it is to stand before the God of this Universe clothed in the garments of salvation and robed in the Righteousness of Jesus Christ.

“...for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness...” Isa. 61:10.

How can anyone be saved if he does not agree with what Jesus says about his nature? Not to agree with God’s assessment of us is to call Him a liar and to refuse His provisions for our salvation. **The only good thing dwelling inside a believer is the Holy Spirit.** Sin is your constant companion until death or the rapture. Sin not paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s own blood damns you no matter how godly you were in life.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” Acts 20:28.

Man is evil. He is filthy. He is apart from Christ, a dog licking his vomit or a pig wallowing in her mud 2 Pet. 2:22. To live all your life and not recognize what God says about you is true is to choose death and not life. Self-discovery is painful when it exposes the truth about us. But self-discovery can also lead to belief and then to mercy and to life everlasting. Just ask that repentant thief on the cross. Having been saved then opens the door to war within every believer.

The war within also known as the believers “INNER STRUGGLE” goes on for a lifetime. The Bible calls it the “works of the flesh.” For example, in the fifth chapter of the Book of Galatians, you have that familiar verse,

“The works of the flesh are manifest. They are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like” Galatians 5:19-21.

There is a whole list of the sins that we fall into that are due to our fleshly fallen nature. They are not evidence of the attack of demons, of evil spirits. We're just sinful people. We are born that way, the Bible says. We were conceived that way, the Scriptures says, Psalm 51:5. And our fallen nature is evident in every area of our lives. My mind is fallen; I don't think precious thoughts all the time, neither do you. My heart is fallen; I don't desire what is beautiful and holy all the time. My will is fallen; I don't volitionally choose what is right all the time. I am a fallen creature, and the sins of the flesh are manifest in our lives. It is not due to an attack of demons. It is because we are fleshly, fallen, sinful people. It has been said that ninety-eight percent of our sin is the cause of the flesh and only two percent is the devil's doing.

The Inner Struggle Within! Every person, no matter how “good” or “pious,” does things he or she knows are not right. Often, these things even are done defiantly, in the face of certain adverse consequences or penalties. We all, without exception, have a sin-contaminated human nature which causes us to be in basic rebellion against God and His Will. But, because He always has our well-being in mind, our actions are self-defeating when we fight against God. Sin is an instinct it's innate in all of us we carry it around with us everywhere we go. It is impossible to rid ourselves of this sinful nature in this life. It is here to stay until “us do part.”

Our spirits are defiled. Our defiled spirits exist adjoining our corrupted souls, yes, the soul has been corrupted by the fall and inside of our perishable bodies the soul and spirit exist, the whole man is depraved by sin. This is why we have natural, fleshly, human lusts and desires. Whether we like to acknowledge it or not, evil spiritual forces constantly are encouraging these tendencies within us, such as envy, lust, pride, and rebellion against God, the latter marked by disobedience of His laws and commands, to surface, as well as attempting to influence our spirit-minds to give the “okay” to go ahead and manifest them. And when the Holy Spirit speaks to or urges our inner beings, letting us know the right things to do, we often ignore or refuse the advice, because we stubbornly choose to remain under the control of our sin nature.

Paul, the Apostle and greatest preacher to walk on this earth outside of Jesus Christ, recognized that he had a daily struggle with these spiritual forces. He wrote to us to warn us, he said,

I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin "...but I am carnal, sold under sin." I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." As it is, it is no longer I myself who does it, but it is sin living in me. "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out! For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. That's my version; here is Paul's (KJV),

"For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin Rom. 7:18-25.

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner spirit, inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Saul, who became Paul the Apostle, was once a Pharisee came to know the truth about himself:

"...For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:" Rom. 7:18.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief 1 Tim. 1:15.

Isn't it strange in our world today to hear the confession of Paul and hardly ever do you hear the acknowledgement of sin coming from a believers lips today? Repentance has disappeared from our pulpits today. Godly sorrow has all but vanished. It's sorrowful to see a professing Bible believing pastor floating down the river on his new pontoon boat with a big proud smile on his face while sinners are dying and going to hell. Preachers are forsaking the souls of men for the fish of the sea. It's a strange world we live in today.

Isaiah came to the truth about him-self and cried out:

"Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." Isa. 6:5.

Again, Job said, “Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!” Job 42:6.

Why are not we? Could it be that we have not seen God?

Carved in the bark of every tree in the garden of God are the words, “If it dies it bears much fruit,” John 12:24. Three words are branded into the flesh of every Christian: "YOU ... HAVE ... DIED" Colossians 3:3. And the heartfelt confession of every believer is, “I have been crucified with Christ” Galatians 2:20.

But what does this mean? Who died when I became a Christian? Answer: my “flesh” died.

“And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” Galatians 5:24.

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified THE FLESH”

But what does “flesh” mean? Not my skin. Not my body. That can be an instrument of righteousness Romans 6:13. The “works of the flesh” are things like idolatry and strife, and anger and envy Galatians 5:20, attitudes, not just the immoral acts of the body that one does.

The closest thing to a biblical definition of the flesh is Romans 8:7-8, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

So the flesh is the old "me" who used to rebel against God. In the flesh I was hostile and insubordinate. I hated the thought of admitting I was sick with sin. I defied the idea that my greatest need was a Good Physician to make me well. In the flesh I trusted my wisdom not God's. So nothing I did in the flesh could please God, because “without faith it is impossible to please God” Hebrews 11:6. And the flesh does nothing from faith.

So “the flesh” is the old self-reliant, faithless me. This is what died when God saved me. God clamped the arteries on my old unbelieving heart of stone. And when it died He took it out and gave me a new heart Ezekiel 36:26.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” Gal. 2:20.

What's the difference between this new heart that lives and the old one that died? The answer is given in Galatians 2:20 above. It says,

“I have been crucified with Christ . . . and the life I now live, I LIVE BY FAITH in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” So the old heart that died trusted in itself; the new heart trust only in Christ Jesus every day.

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