

SHOE LEATHER CHRISTIANITY

“GOD IN SHOE LEATHER WALKING WITH MAN”

“The night I realized God was walking with me.”

*“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that **Jesus Christ is in you**, except ye be reprobates?” 2 Cor. 13:5*

*“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*

By Pastor Del Wray

Many fundamental Bible believing Baptist preachers will scoff at what I am about to write here and will shut me out, their minds will draw a blank and their hearts will be stirred. Like most Christians, to them, the Bible is a smorgasbord, they pick and choose. Preachers are no different; they only believe what they want to believe. These types will never experience the fullness of the Spirit, walking in the heavenly or having Christ’s Spirit testify to their spirit. No, they won’t! Listen, people! I’ve got no corner on God and He has no favorites. If you’re truly born again, you have as much Jesus in you as I have in this old body. The only difference is I know it and you don’t because you won’t believe Him.

*“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for **‘He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you’**” John 14:7.*

Perhaps, this poem may illustrate my point:

“One night I dreamed a dream; As I was walking along the beach with my Lord. Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that at many times along the path of my life, especially at the very lowest and saddest times, there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it. “Lord, you said once I decided to follow you, You'd walk with me all the way. But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life, there was only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed, you the most, you would leave me.”

He whispered, “My precious child, I love you and will never leave you, never, ever, during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”

People, that's exactly the point, this might not be real to you but it is to me and God has shown this old preacher that He not only will walk in my shoe-leather but glory He carries me at times too.

God in shoe-leather walking with a man! The night I realized Jesus was walking with me. For this old preacher, the lessons in life seem to keep on coming. But there is one in particular that stands out above them all and it has been the greatest lesson of all. And it is that Jesus will walk in our "shoe-leather" with us if we only will allow Him. I have always wondered how men like T. C. Studd could give their entire lives in China on the mission field. Hudson Taylor, who spent 50 years in China as a missionary, translator, and physician? David Cook, fifteen years in India, lost his wife and two fifteen-year-old boys to disease and buried them there on the field and returned home. Where we met and became the closest of friends. I found out why and how and it's because God walked in shoe-leather with them. And the key is a complete and total surrender to the Christ of Calvary.

Submit to Him! Surrender to Him! He requires total submission and total surrender. God has taught this poor old preacher well! He only teaches those who are willing to learn and then there's no better instructor. I was only twenty-three; when He brought this message home to me. The message, plain and simple, Jesus Christ is the Preacher, not some man filling a pulpit! I'm less than the least and unable to fathom why God the Creator of this universe would use a sinful man like me. Did you hear what I said, Jesus Christ is the Preacher, not some pulpiteer! For a long time now I've wanted to set down and write how I learned to live on the highest plane with God. How I learned to walk in the heavenly with Jesus Christ and how the Spirit of God reigns supreme in the believer's life. You see, He is real and lives within you and me if we're believers. You see, I believed, and He has been testifying to my spirit now for over fifty-seven years and what a walk I've enjoyed in shoe-leather with Him and still do I have the benefit of companionship with Him. You see Jesus came down and has been walking in my shoe-leather with me, with this old preacher. And the only difference between the majority of Christians and this old preacher is I know it and they don't. He truly is Creator and Creations Fiend. Here now is how God taught me that I am nothing and He is everything, He is the preacher!

For most Christians, they'll go through life and never know the presence of Jesus Christ in their life and it is His very presence, so real, Jesus in His people that make the Christian life beyond imagination's appeal. To tell it the majority of Christians will think I've gone mad and it is they that are mad. Truly, the Christian life is Jesus Christ in you and me and if He is in you and me, He is Christian. Jesus Christ is the Christian and we are nothing.

Let me begin by saying that God is a Spirit, God the Father is the Spirit, "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*" John 4:24. Further, let me declare that I am a "spirit" and you are a "spirit" wrapped in human flesh. We are all spiritual beings, trichotomies we might say: spirit, soul, and body. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit make up the Holy Trinity of One God. We are spirits wrapped up in human flesh. The real you and the real me is a spirit, unseen by the naked eye. You can't see me with the physical eye all you see is the body I live in. No one has ever seen Del Wray, ever; you've just seen my body. Not very pretty either, this old body awaits the grave where the worms and maggots will have a hay-day. But my spirit and your spirit wait the day that we will be released from these sinful frames. Either through death or the rapture, glory to God. When our spirits leave our bodies, they will not be leaving alone. Right then, God's Spirit, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit will take our spirits, our hand and as the birds fly heavenward, so do we with Jesus Christ. Did you hear me? We don't die alone, He's right there with us and at death, He escorts us to God the Father. Not some angel, Jesus Himself! All the work is His, He died to save us and He doesn't need our help when we take our final flight home. He takes us Home. Wrap your head around that people. He takes us home. God the Father draws the unregenerate soul to Jesus. God the Holy Spirit takes our prayers Heavenward to the Father and you "ain't" going to Heaven alone, Jesus takes you. Get a hold of that! Think on that! Get your heads out of the world, and for once believe God and let this truth sink in! Now, what is the human spirit?

It is through the corporal body that man comes into contact with the material world. Hence we may label the body as that part which gives us world-consciousness. The soul comprises the intellect, which aids us in the present state of existence, and the emotions, which proceed from the senses. Since the soul belongs to man's own self and reveals his personality, it is termed the part of self-consciousness. The spirit is that part of you by which we commune with God and by which alone we are able to apprehend and worship Him. Because it tells us of our relationship with God, the spirit is called the element of God-consciousness. God dwells in the spirit, self-dwells in the soul, while senses dwell in the body.

Of these three elements, the spirit is the noblest for it joins with God.

The body is the lowest for it contacts with matter. The soul lying between them joins the two together and also takes their character to be its own.

The soul makes it possible for the spirit and the body to communicate and to cooperate.

“Do you not know,” writes the Apostle Paul “that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?” 1 Cor. 3:16.

Paul the Apostle received revelation in likening man to the temple. As God formerly dwelt in the temple, so the Holy Spirit indwells man today. By comparing him to the temple we can see how the tripartite elements of man are distinctly manifested.

This trinity of spirit, soul, and body may be partially illustrated by a light bulb. Within the bulb, which can represent the total man, there are electricity, light, and wire. The spirit is like the electricity, the soul the light, and body the wire. Electricity is the cause of the light while light is the effect of electricity. The wire is the material substance for carrying the electricity as well as for manifesting the light. The combination of spirit and body produces soul, that which is unique to man. As electricity, carried by the wire, is expressed in light, so spirit acts upon the soul and the soul, in turn, expresses itself through the body.

Don't let me confuse you but the spirit of man is like electricity. It's that spark of life, the real life in our bodies. Let me put it this way; your fleshly heart is but matters if you will, and it cannot beat, cannot function without the spirit, the spirit “electric” is what causes the heart to beat. So it is with the brain, the brain is only fleshly matter and has to have the spirit to continually do its job. The spirit of man is the real man and the real you and that spirit combined with our soul has a bodily shape, it is made up of the five faculties; sight, hearing etc. and when a man dies, the “spirit” leaves the body, in a bodily shape with its five faculties. With the human spirit and the Spirit of God together, both at death, take a flight to heaven. So you see the real you is not your body that goes under the ground. Your fleshly body is made up of 128 minerals and elements and all 128 are found in the dirt of the ground. It's your spirit, that no one can see, that makes up the real person. Boy, this is getting deep, it may be but it's the truth and it is good! We've got a fantastic future in store for all of us, the children of God do.

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” John 4:18. Elsewhere, Jesus said, “Jesus saith unto them, *“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, shew us the Father?”* John 14:9.

No, there is no contradiction here, if you look at it as a tri-partite. If I were in front of you right now you still could not see me because I'm inside my body. I'm speaking about my “spirit” now, that's in me. That's the real me! And I hazard to say if you could see the real me you wouldn't like what you see. The

real person is the “spirit.” Throughout the Bible, God uses the word “heart” for the human spirit that’s inside this body. The heart and human spirits are one and the same. And God says the heart and the human spirit are “desperately wicked” “deceitful above all things.” Get what I mean jelly bean? No, I’m not losing it. It gets better! Why am I telling you all this? Because, I want you to know your real self, and when you see the word “flesh” mentioned in the Bible, that’s talking about the real you and I. Flesh, drop the letter “h” and backward it spells “self” the human spirit, the heart. You’ll get the whole picture as I go on.

Just remember you are a spirit living in that fleshly body. One day they’ll put that body of yours in the ground if the rapture does not take place first. And that spirit of yours will have already taken flight like a bird and right along beside you, you’ll enjoy the presence of Jesus Christ’s “Spirit” taking you to Heaven.

Don’t let me get ahead of myself but this is exciting. When you got saved God planted His “Spirit” that of Jesus Christ in that bodily temple of yours with your human spirit. And He’s there for the work of sanctifying you if you’ll let Him. He will not force is way on anyone. Our part is to let Him, surrender, submit. *“...Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his”* Rom. 8:9.

The human spirit is the intangible part of man, disembodied part of man. The Bible says that the human spirit is the very breath of Almighty God and was breathed into man at the beginning of God’s creation:

“Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul” Genesis 2:7.

It is the human spirit that gives us a consciousness of self and other remarkable, though limited, “God-like” qualities. The human spirit includes our intellect, emotions, fears, passions, and creativity. It is this spirit that provides us the unique ability to comprehend and understand Job 32:8, 18. The spirit is the real person, not his body and it is that which sin has affected, the Holy Ghost is the real Jesus, the real God. Get a hold of that folks! I had to say all of the above so that I could show you what God has testified to my spirit at the age of twenty-three. I’m not crazy! This stuff is real, it’s fact and very much, or should be, the way we Christian’s should be living, living in the heavenly, walking on the highest plane with Jesus our Saviour.

Now, having said all of that the majority of pastors, preachers, evangelists, teachers and Christians across this country wouldn’t even have the slightest idea what it is that I’m talking about here. They have been blind, deceived, living in an illusion or already having Ichabod written over the doors of their churches or even worse the curse of God has been leveled at them. They still think people like me are mad. Their entire ministries will be unraveled one day at the Bema bar of God.

Brethren, we’re not the Preacher, Jesus is and anything short of it is high treason against the Throne of God. You see when a man get’s born-again, a new life enters, the “Spirit of God,” who is the new creature and He demands full control. Why? So He can continue His ministry to lost souls that He began at His first coming to earth. It’s His ministry, not ours, we’re just a “body” a tool, a temple He works through. Get a hold of that, it’s deep I know, wrap your head around that pastor. It’s His not yours! The success or failure in your ministry, His ministry, is not dependent on you but on Him. There will be many a pastor who will find themselves at the bar of God thinking their ministry was a failure and will find out that it really wasn’t theirs in the first place and because it was His, their ministry together was very successful.

God’s salvation’s plan is so immeasurable, so immense, so enormous that He knew that we could not live up to His standard, we could not live up to His measure of life so He chose to send back His Holy Spirit, “Christ in me” to live out His life through each of His children. I can’t live it! Impossible! He lives it through me. If ever anything is done for God in this sin-cursed world it is Jesus Christ that’s doing it! We

ought to be running the isles about now! What we're doing is because Jesus Christ is living in us, living His life anew through you and me as He promised He would. He is the soul winner and only He can change a man. Only Jesus! If this world could only see Jesus Christ again living through His people? I'm not going to try and kid myself. I've seen in my own journey through life how God supernaturally changes a man. Kid, you not! When God picks a drunkard up out of the street and turns him into a mighty instrument He uses to win over two hundred and fifty people to Christ in a two year period you can talk to me about the kind of God I serve. It's not you, it's Jesus! I saw it with my own eyes. God saved a drunk, a medical doctor who had ruined his life and practice with alcohol and became a drunkard on the streets of downtown Honolulu until one night he was literally picked up out of the gutter and changed in a moment. I know, I was there I had the great privilege to baptize all two-hundred and fifty of those souls in the late 1960's. When we get down and really see how wicked and wretched we are, maybe then, God can use us to see many saved, those around us. We serve an Almighty, Universe creating God! Let me share with you how God saved a drunkard and turned him into a mighty vessel for the glory God. And that night, God spoke to my spirit to let me know He was walking in shoe-leather with me.

It was around 7:00 PM in the evening, I had just met three deacons in our church who agreed to go pass out tracts with me, so I met them at the corner of Hotel and Broad Street which led to a small overpass that went down onto Hotel Street, the part of town known as skid row. It was called "Devil's Alley" by the local folks, twenty blocks of bars, dance clubs, pool halls and the joints where the queers hang out. We had a brief prayer and started over the bridge as we reached the summit of the overpass we looked down onto the alley, one of the men hesitantly said he decided not to go and then the other two deacons backed out and left me standing atop of that bridge by myself. I began to get a little afraid myself because it was the first time I had witnessed in the area skid row area. With others, I was comfortable now that I was by myself. It wasn't so appealing, I was afraid and started to leave myself when suddenly I was overcome with emotions, I realized I wasn't alone, someone was present with me. I saw no one, heard no audible voice, the presence about me was so real, as real as those three deacons that were there with me and left. I mean, Jesus, God's presence was so real that I had to contain myself. Words will never explain the emotion that captivated me in those moments and the thrilling experience. It was as if He were saying to me, "come on, let's go, I'll go with you." I heard no one's voice, it may have been that soft quiet inward voice, I cannot say but I was being told to go. When I took that first step, I thought I was walking in the clouds, on the clouds, as I hurried my pace, I couldn't tell if I were actually walking or not, I felt as if I was being carried, joy was overflowing my entire body. I said to myself if this is what walking in the spirit was like, I wanted it.

The Lord took me right down Hotel Street, where I found myself only having gone two blocks when I saw ahead of me laying in the gutter was a man, stoned drunk. It had started misting rain by then and the poor fella was soaking wet lying with part of his body in the street and the other part up on the curb. He was out of it, smashed, slobbering all over himself, choking, helpless no one stopping to help him. I did something then, I thought I would never do, reaching down to him, I helped him up out of the street and wound up taking him to my place, where I lived which was only three miles away. He voluntarily stayed in my place for three days where I was able to feed him and give him plenty of coffee, the whole time having him read Scriptures to me. He was taking it all in like a hungry man, Scripture and all. His face was lit up and glowing, he wasn't the man I had met three days before, with tears rolling down his face he asked me if he could get saved? We got down on our knees right there before the kitchen table and he asked Christ to come into his life. I showed him by believing God's Word he knew he was saved. Within fifteen minutes of accepting Christ as his Saviour, he left me and disappeared. I said to myself "I'll never see him again." That was on a Monday, Thursday afternoon we got a call at the church and it was this guy's wife calling, she asked for me and I took the phone from the church secretary wondering who it was and I could tell she had been crying and she told me who she was. She told me "he had been gone for two months and she hadn't heard from him." She said, "There was a knock at the door and when I answered, he was on his knees at the door in tears, begging me to forgive him." She told me, how he told her the

whole story and he had gotten saved and he wanted to make it all up to her. He told me, she said, “that Jesus picked me up out of the street and carried me to some stranger’s house and for three days fed and read the Bible with me.” She said; “They were together now enjoying their lives as they should have been.” Then she told me she was Chinese and had gotten saved back in China before they closed the doors to American missionaries and when they did, she fled and came to the United States seeking asylum and met and married her husband. She invited me over for dinner that evening and I accepted. On arrival at the address, she had given me, I was astounded, I said to myself “this was no derelicts place,” It was a large beautiful home. I expected a dilapidated run down place in a poor neighborhood and it was just the opposite. Not sure, I was at the right address or not, I went up and rang the doorbell. This Chinese lady came to the door and I told her who I was. She grabbed and hugged me with tears. She began to tell me all about herself how her husband and she had met and married. How he earned his doctor's degree and how they moved to Hawaii to live. Then he walked up behind her and told her to slow down and he reached out and shook my hand and hugged me, inviting me in and they showed me to the living room where we sat down and I found out then the history behind his turning to alcohol and how God used his wife to prepare his heart, his spirit for the reception of Jesus into his life.

This man, Albert, was only a drunk to me and approximately five days later, come to find out, he was a physician a wealthy one at that. We sat in the living room as his wife told me how much she loved her husband and how after they were married she, in her own way, would witness to him, knowing he wasn’t saved. She would leave little love notes on his desk, sharing a scripture verse or two and this went on daily for years. Every day he got a love note on his desk with scripture, she never failed. His attitude at the time was uncaring and rebellious and he refused to respond. One day he drank a beer in rebellion, and then two and lastly, he drank regularly, all to spite his wife. He found himself unable to stop so he drank more and it began to affect his work and later he started going to the bars in town and leaving home overnight. He starting ridiculing His wife in total rebellion for some months it went on until the night “Jesus picked me up out of the street of downtown, Honolulu. He told me “when you reached down to pick me up I saw Jesus reaching down for me,” he said, “I was cursing you under my breath, but when I saw Jesus reaching down for me I remembered how my wife had told me about Him and every day she spoke to me about Jesus. It all was flashing through my mind” he said, and “I just gave up and asked Him to help me.” He told me “it was if Christ had picked me up and carried me to your home.” After our talk, we had a wonderful dinner and we sat back down and talked for hours.

That Sunday I had the blessing to baptize him and his wife and admit them into membership of the church. We witnessed his personal testimony as just described and baptism. His medical practice grew and so did our church. But I personally baptized over two-hundred and fifty people he had brought to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I dare say that our church grew from over one hundred to over five-hundred people in a two-year period. That’s another story, but our church’s young people played a major role as God walked in shoe-leather with us at the International Baptist Church, there in Honolulu, Hawaii in the late 1960’s.

Don’t tell me Jesus doesn’t live in these mortal frames, walk a while in my shoe-leather and you’ll think differently. He is not only the Founder of the first Baptist church made up of 120 people back in the First Century, He is the “Leader” of the Church, He is the “Pastor” of all truly Bible-believing Baptist churches in existence today. He authored our final authority the King James Bible, AV, 1611, and we all are indebted to Him and Him only. Be careful, when you hear someone say, “We use the King James Bible.” No, we don’t, the KJB uses us, it lives in God’s people, it breathes, and it, He, is walking with me, with all believers. It is He, who is our very life. We cannot separate the Living Word from the Written Word they are one and the same.

“There are many professors of faith, but far fewer actual possessors of faith.”

As the children of God, we have an obligation to present ourselves pleasing unto the Lord every day and in every circumstance. We may fail to realize or choose to deny it, but the world around us is watching our lives. They have heard many who profess Christ, only to see their actions betray their words. The world is looking for those who are real. We have the privilege and obligation to present our faith to the world.

“WE ARE A WALKING, LIVING, BREATHING TESTIMONY OF THE GRACE OF GOD.”

It is He who is walking in our shoe leather, living in our bodies, and breathing out His own testimony of the grace of God through His Church. If you think it is you living the Christian life then you have well been deceived. We cannot live the Christian life it is He who lives that life through His people. Christ is the Christian! If you think you are the preacher then you have well been deceived. Except, it is Christ doing the preaching through His preachers then your preaching is in vain. Jesus is the soul-winner, not you. Any good that is done in any of our lives is because it is Jesus doing it through you and me. Without Him we are nothing. There is none good.

What I learned on the mission field is that Christ walks through an in our lives and that is shoe leather faith. Anything else is robbing God of His authority.

DO YOU HAVE SHOE LEATHER FAITH?