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26 March 2013

A Renewed Mind

As a youth, I spent a couple of years on a wrestling team. Two groups of wrestlers with which we competed were from the School for the Deaf and the Blind. Hearing specialists have told me that when the hearing is lost, the brain ceases to understand words. So, if hearing were restored, the brain would have to be taught the sound of words, much like a little child. Additionally, having worked at blind camps several times, I noticed how difficult common tasks become without sight. What physical blessings we take for granted every day! Now, what if a person did not know they were spiritually deaf and blind? Yet, many professed Christians today do not have spiritual ears and eyes. When I look back, I was unknowingly just such a Christian. It is a condition that takes time to overcome because a spiritual temple (2Cor 6:16) is built one stone at a time beginning with the foundation. The night before His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples, *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now* (Jn 16:12). Now I realize what He meant. There had to be a literal cross in order to set up an understanding of the types and allegories from which we learn. Then there has to be a spiritual sacrifice take place in the heart of a person before they begin to develop spiritual ears and eyes.

Romans 6:3-5: 3. *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?* Is Paul talking about physical or spiritual baptism? He is talking about spiritual immersion into the understanding of the cross. Continue reading: 4. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* The new life is also called “eternal and everlasting” life. Does eternal life begin at physical baptism? I believed that it did. In reality it does not, but it is ok to believe it. If a person is sincere and continues to grow in spiritual understanding, they will eventually understand it. 5. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:* The Greek word translated planted together, carries the meaning of closely united. These verses indicate that we can be closely united to Christ’s way of thinking by understanding the cross correctly, as applied to the heart - but how?

John 5:24: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on him (the Father) that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* To hear Jesus’ word does not mean to just hear someone read or for you to read the words of Jesus written in the Bible. To hear Jesus is to feel His impressions in your heart WHEN someone reads or we read the Bible. He will confirm the correct understanding, or bring a spiritual thought to your mind. **1 John 2:25-27:** 25. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* 26. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.* 27. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abides in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* John wrote to those who already had this understanding because he could see the “falling away,” spoken of by Paul (2Thes 2:2-3), and which was already beginning.

Many read these and other verses thinking that because they accept that Christ physically died on the cross 2000 years ago, and that they are physically baptized, then their old man is dead and they are resurrected in Christ. However, the old man is the old way of thinking (Eph 4:22-24) about God, and which takes time, even years to change. **Romans 6:6-7:** 6. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of [the] sin*

(nature) might be [inactivated], that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7. For he that is dead is freed from sin. When are closely united to Christ's way of understanding, we become dead to self and free from our sins. [actual Greek meaning] (added explanation)

Colossians 3:5-10: 5. Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6. For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7. In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: The old man is that old way of thinking which leads to the deeds, or works, described in verses 5 and 8. The new man is the mind of a person renewed in Christ's knowledge (Isa 53:11), referred to as faith (Gal 2:16 KJV). As Christians, we have been taught man's way of thinking, to the point that many will never come out of the darkness.

One day at Blind Camp I was overtaking a man using his cane to keep him on the paved road leading to his cabin. A day or two before a heavy rain had washed gravel across the pavement. When the blind man reached the spot, he detected the gravel, and thinking it was the edge of the road, he turned in the wrong direction. In the Bible, a rock is a symbol for a spiritual concept (cp 1Cor 10:4 & Mt 16:16-18). Imagine yourself being on the narrow path and you encounter many spiritual concepts (rocks in the path). How do you separate truth from error? Most tell me that we search the scriptures. Well, the Jews did that and most rejected the Messiah. **John 5:39-40:** 39. You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life (RSV). To come to Jesus means to seek His understanding as opposed to man's. Jesus often sends people who have a knowledge of the truth to help us, but ultimately it is the Spirit of Christ that confirms the truth in our hearts. **Luke 6:39:** And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? Most of the Jewish leaders were too proud to accept the teaching of someone they considered a nobody. Yet God often uses the common person because they have ears to hear and eyes to see, and they seek to know what spiritual lessons are in the written word.

Paul's instruction to the Ephesian Church is still valid for us today: **Ephesians 4:14-18:** 14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. 17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Leaders are not to dictate truth, as in organized religion. They are to be servants who impart truth. Our responsibility is to study for ourselves and seek the Lord for His understanding so that we can discern truth from error in what is being imparted.

Psalms 24:3-6: 3. Who shall ascend into the hill (Mt. Zion) of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? 4. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. 5. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Amen.