

No Longer I Who Live, But Christ

Gal. 2:20

Introduction:

1. Children, they are a wonderful group. Sweet smiles. Quiet little waves. A hug around the neck.
2. But they are one of the most self-centered groups on the earth.
 - a. When they get hungry they demand that someone else feed them. They put forth no effort toward providing the food or preparing it. They sit on their special high chair like royalty and demand that someone else put the food in their mouth. Some cry and whimper if you don't put it in fast enough. Then they spit it out, throw it on the floor and smear it on faces without so much as a "thank you."
 - b. They demand that you get up in the middle of the night, just because they woke up.
 - c. They get older and you try to teach them to tie their shoes. They slap your slap your hand and say, "I'll do it."
 - d. They get older and they want a car. They have no money to pay the insurance let alone buy a car. But you buy the insurance and provide them with transportation and pray that the accident you know is going to happen doesn't result in injury.
3. They are fed, clothed, bathed, washed and ironed, educated, transported, recreated and entertained and they have almost no thought and little comprehension of the sacrifices their parents have made.
4. We may even ask them in a time of frustration, "Do you think the whole world revolves around you?"
5. Why do we do it? We love them.
6. In many ways we are like children. We breathe God's air, eat his food, drink his water. We take advantage of the intelligence he has given us, buy things with the wealth he has blessed us with, enjoy the children he has given and we are so busy occupying ourselves with his blessings that we hardly look up to say "thank you." How can we be so arrogant? We really ought to grow up.
7. One of the most grown up statements that I know of is made by the apostle Paul in Gal. 2:20. It expresses a humility that diminishes self, exalts Christ and highlights the magnificence of his love. How can I diminish my self and reach the level of maturity evidenced in Paul's statement here?

Discussion:

- I. It is natural for the young to be self-centered.
 - A. Adam and Eve had been created by God and placed in a paradise setting.
 1. Obviously God loved them. Created everything for their benefit.
 2. Provided for them in every way.
 3. Eve was tempted on the basis of her self-centeredness (Gen. 3:5-6).

- a. To be like God.
 - b. To have appetite for food satisfied.
 - c. To have appetite for delight to the eyes satisfied.
 - d. To have her appetite for wisdom satisfied.
- B. Moses seems to have been self-centered at age 40. At 80 he seems less so.
- 1. Raised in Pharaoh's house (Acts 7:22-27). Riches. Education. Status.
 - 2. Presented himself as their deliverer. Rejected.
 - 3. After 40 years herding sheep in Midian a different attitude is seen as God commissioned him to go down and bring Israel out of bondage.
- C. I think this attitude may also have been present in Paul before he met the Lord on the Damascus road.
- 1. Probably being groomed for a place on the Sanhedrin.
 - 2. Phil. 3:5-6.
 - 3. Paul "grew-down" a lot on that Damascus road.
- D. We need to "grow-down" in order to grow-up.
- 1. The person who is not a Christian thinks himself better than God, better than those silly dependent people who create crutches rather than depend upon themselves. Confident in themselves.
 - 2. Many Christians are not much better. I am powerful to my own salvation. If I do good. If I am morally upstanding. If I help others. If I convert others then I commend myself to God. We do not see ourselves as "all that bad."

II. The message of the gospel attacks self-centeredness.

- A. The message of the gospel says, "You may think you can, but you can't."
- 1. You may think you are zealous enough, but you are not.
 - 2. You may think you are righteous enough, but you are not.
 - 3. Phil. 3:5-6
- B. Paul must have come face to face with this on the Damascus road.
- 1. Thinking that he was doing the right thing, zealously he was persecuting Christians.
 - 2. He was stopped cold in his tracks when the Lord asked him, "Why are you persecuting Me?"
- C. Paul learned crucifixion of self (Gal. 2:20).
- 1. Seeking to be justified by law-keeping is insufficient.
 - 2. Live by faith (dependence) upon the Son of God.
 - 3. He delivered himself up for me.
 - 4. I can't make it without Him.
- D. Such crushing of the self by the awesomeness of Christ leads to self-sacrificial service (2 Cor. 12:9-10; 11:23-33).

III. Increased comprehension of the love God has for you continues to conquer self-centeredness and intensifies sacrificial service.

- A. Paul prayed that his hearers might comprehend the magnificence of what God

had done (Eph. 1:18-20).

- B. Such knowledge leads to our walking in a manner worthy of the Lord (Col. 1 9-10) and a life of strength and thanksgiving (vs. 11-12).
- C. Failure to increase our faith through acquaintance with what God has done leads to unbelief and disobedience (Heb. 11:12-19).
- D. Increased acquaintance comes from attention given to the word of God (Rom. 10:17).
 - 1. Genuine obedience is not something forced upon us. Parents cannot be forced to do for their children. No amount of rules and regulations can make parents sacrifice for their children.
 - 2. Parents make the sacrifices because they love their children.
 - 3. We love the Lord because he first loved us. We are motivated to obey him by the love he has created within our hearts. The more we know about it. The more we comprehend it. The more awesome it is to us the more excited we will be to tell others about it.

Conclusion:

- 1. God has placed you in the high chair.
- 2. Have you recognized what he has done?
- 3. Grow down from the high chair.