

THE PURSUIT of GOD

Surrender Part 2

Big Idea: Getting in on what God is doing in the world has more to do with a decision to surrender, than a will to try.

CONTENT: (No questions supplied, read and discuss)

Within every one of us is a gigantic cavity that seems to be continually declaring to us that we are “incomplete,” and that we cannot be “complete” while the cavity remains unfilled!

We seek all manner of things to fill up this longing including risk/excitement seeking, or pleasure seeking, or image enhancers such as diet and exercise. Young women conceive and marry. Young men kill each other and abuse themselves and others. We are always going to solicit something on which we can center our lives in an attempt fill this void. Since we live in such a self-centered age, these always end up catering to our selfish urges. Today these involve one addiction or another. These are the idols in our lives. Plainfield Correctional Facility is full of men who have given their lives over to one idol or another.

The problem with every one of these substitutes for the Real Thing is **they never satisfy completely**. We are always left seeking a higher high. We want more, bigger, better, higher, fuller, etc. What we really want/desire/need is to be loved; and none of these substitutes love us, they only use us, and waste us, and destroy us. Whether we make them with our hands from materials available or we conjure them out of our experiences, they are horribly inadequate.

*The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands. ([In our age, men's contriving] JVC)
They have mouths, but they do not speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;
They have ears, but they do not hear;
Nor is there any breath in their mouths.
Those who make them are like them;
So is everyone who trusts in them. (Psalm 135:15-18)*

*Those who regard worthless idols
Forsake their own Mercy. (Jonah 2:8)*

Occasionally, sadly rarely, we encounter Jesus, and too often we recognize Someone different, but since we are so often seeking to satisfy ourselves and He expects something else, we miss Him experientially.

When we are fortunate enough to hear His call and pursue Him, we discover that He desires our decision for total absolute surrender, actually a totally new start. He specifies turning our backs on ourselves, whatever has been important to us, whatever we have centered our lives upon in the past, and becoming a new person. No other experience requires this. Before our new life, we could go from alcohol to cocaine, from sexual freedom to experimentation with all sorts of deviation. But the new life I seek requires surrender.

*He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father,
and followed Him. (Matt. 4:21-22)*

*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.
And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of
Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not
worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses
his life for My sake will find it. (Matt. 10:37-39)*

*There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the
Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi,
we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do
these signs that You do unless God is with him."*

*Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you,
unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

*Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old?
Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*

*Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born
of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That
which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the
Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born
again.' (John 3:1-7)*

There is no reputable scholar in Christendom who does not believe Jesus is

here speaking of Baptism. The spiritual picture of dying and being born a new person, and Jesus says, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” In Paul’s letter to the Romans, after a lengthy discussion of sin and death, Paul tells us that through baptism we were buried with Christ and just as we came up out of the water in our baptism, Christ was raised from the dead, and as a result of this action, we should “walk in newness of life.”

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3-4

And continues to emphasize,

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise, you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:5-14)

Paul writing to the Colossians also mentioned this new life after dying in the act of baptism, as well as our resulting presence with Him in glory:

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. . . having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:12-14)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

Idolatry is ***the*** issue of our hearts and lives. Our natural selves are directly opposed to the will of God. Getting in on what God is doing in the world has to do with a decision to surrender. That kind of life of surrender begins with Baptism and new life. Baptism is a physical and spiritual gift to the believer that will enable the Holy Spirit's prompting in your life and following His lead. Then, that other sacrament, Communion, where-in you are reminded again of the shedding of Christ's blood for you, will be a constant reminder that your sins have been washed away in His blood, and God has set and will empower your new life on a course of surrender. **And He promises we will be filled and never thirst again!**

Jesus replied that people soon became thirsty again after drinking this water. "But the water I give them," he said, "becomes a perpetual spring within them, watering them forever with eternal life."

"Please, sir," the woman said, "give me some of that water! Then I'll never be thirsty again . . . (John 4:13-15)