

FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

Galatians 4:19

October 22, 2006 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. When you look in the mirror, who do you see?
 - 1. Your mother? Your father? Your aunt Ethel?
 - 2. Gay said a few weeks ago I had an expression on my face just like my dad, who has been gone now 27 years.
 - 3. However, she's always said that my legs look just like my mothers. Oh great!
- B. Did you know that Christians are supposed to look just like their father, their heavenly father, just like Jesus-Galatians 4:19.
 - 1. How much do you look like Jesus?
 - 2. John Ortberg, in "The Life You've Always Wanted", writes of himself,
"I'm disappointed with myself"
"I have a nagging sense that all is not as it should be"
"I'm disappointed that I still love God so little and sin so much"
- C. Are you ever dissatisfied with yourself? Is there anything you can do about it?
 - 1. Do we have to become our parents?
 - 2. Can we morph into Jesus instead?
 - 3. The Bible says we can
Gal. 4:19; Romans 8:29; Romans 12:2
 - a. "Transformed" is the Greek word from which we get the English word "metamorphosis".
 - b. Caterpillars morph into beautiful butterflies.
 - c. Christians are to morph into Jesus.
 - 4. Salvation isn't just about forgiveness of sins. Its newness of life.
 - 5. How?

I. FIRST, BY TRAINING INSTEAD OF TRYING.

- A. There is an immense difference between "training" and "trying" to do something.
 - 1. All of us have tried to be better Christians and have discovered just how hard that is. We've tried to be more consistent in our church attendance, start a quiet time, become more patient and less judgmental, etc. All with little or no success.
 - 2. Spiritual transformation, though, is not a matter of trying harder, but training more wisely-I Timothy 4:7.
- B. What is the focus of our training?
 - 1. The answer is to do the things Jesus did? And the things Jesus did are called "Spiritual Disciplines."
 - 2. Spiritual disciplines include such practices as silence, solitude, fasting, meditation, study of God's word, prayer, etc.
 - 3. Our first reaction to spiritual disciplines might go something like this....
"Great! I already feel guilty about not reading the Bible and praying enough. The last thing I want are ten other things to feel guilty about not doing."
 - 4. The purpose of these disciplines are not to make you feel guilty. Their purpose is to help us morph or be transformed into Jesus.
- C. We need to understand a few things these disciplines are not designed to do.
 - 1. First, they are not intended as a gauge of our spirituality. The real gauge is what Jesus said in Matthew 22:37-39. If we can do this without the disciplines then we don't need them.
 - 2. Second, they are not unpleasant. We don't like the word "discipline". It smacks of depriving ourselves of something. But spiritual disciplines don't take anything away from us, but instead give us a greater awareness of who Jesus is.

3. Third, they are not a way of earning favor with God. But remember this, although grace is opposed to “earning”, its not opposed to effort.

II. WHICH DISCIPLINES SHOULD BE PUT INTO PRACTICE?

- A. Anything that can help us gain power to live life as Jesus taught and modeled is a spiritual discipline.
- B. Although some disciplines are basic, like solitude, meditation, prayer, etc, almost anything can become a training exercise. Men, however, shouldn't try to convince their wives that golf, fishing, football and four wheeling are your spiritual disciplines.
- C. In essence, a discipline is something we can do by our own effort that can help us do something else we cannot do by our effort.
- D. Alcoholics Anonymous is a good example of this.
 1. Staying sober isn't something a person can do on their own. In fact that's the first thing that must be confessed as an alcoholic-“I cannot stop drinking by willpower alone.”
 2. There are some things an alcoholic can do, though, that can help them stay sober. Things like taking a moral inventory or confessing their faults to someone else.
 3. Doing these things gives you the power to do the thing you cannot do on your own, stay sober.
 4. In the same way, spiritual disciplines are things we can do ourselves that can give us the power to do what effort alone can't, be like Jesus.

CONCLUSION

- A. Can you identify with John Ortberg's dissatisfaction with himself?
 1. Are you tired of trying to be different, but can't?
 2. Its time to do something about it.
- B. Someone has said, “You are as close to God as you want to be.”
 1. This means its up to us.
 2. There are no short cuts. There is no “Cliff Note” version to spiritual maturity.
 3. For the next few weeks we shall examine a few of these spiritual disciplines.
 4. Soren Kierkegaard once said, “ Now with God's help, I shall become myself”.
 5. Its time to start morphing into Jesus!