

Heart Knowledge Versus Head Knowledge

By Pastor Mike Taylor
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"The United States was founded upon Christian principles". I have heard that said many times in my 60+ years on this earth and have to agree in part. It is true that we were founded on principles of Judeo-Christian traditions found in our bibles. But in the past 200 plus years of this nation's existence and rise to be the lone super-power in the world, can we still say that? I recall our "usurper in chief" proclaiming that we are no longer a Christian nation, but a mixture of all religions, with Islam a major contributor? OH, Really?? I looked up what percentage of the American people identify with the Christian religion, or claim to believe in a higher power than ourselves.

When I did an online search of Christianity in America, I find these results via Wikipedia:

"Religion in the United States is characterized by both a wide diversity in religious beliefs and practices, and by a high adherence level. According to recent surveys, 83 percent of Americans claim to belong to a religious denomination, 40 percent claim to attend services nearly every week or more, and 58 percent claim to pray at least weekly. A majority of Americans report that religion plays a "very important" role in their lives, a proportion unusual among developed nations."

That's impressive on the surface, but I would like to dissect what it means to be a Christian. Are we still a Christian country, or has that changed? By the statistics, it appears that many attend a local church, some regularly, but does that identify what a Christian is? Many belong to that church, but does that identify who is Christian and who is not? What about tithing, or prayer, and how about reading the Words of God found in their bibles? How many put into practice what the words found in your bible say into their daily lives? Do these same folks put in an hour on Sunday because it's fashionable and then depart to do whatever it is they wish to be doing for the rest of the week? In other words, they give an obligatory hour of being present before God, once a week. What do they do the other 6 twenty four hour periods, or for that matter, the rest of the day on Sunday?

FALSELY BELIEVING IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHURCH

Many people feel that if they attend services on Sunday, (some rarely, if ever) except on Easter or Christmas, or give a few bucks into the offering plate, or be a good person, then they are right with God, or their definition of God. But during the time that they are in front of the rest of the world, they exhibit none of the fruits of the Spirit. Paul speaks of this in Romans 6:21-22 shows fruit as a product in both a bad and good sense:

What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness and the end, everlasting life.

What is that fruit Paul speaks of? Galatians:

5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

As a plum tree produces plums and not some other crop like hedge apples, these are the fruits that come from the true Christian that believes in their heart. Those that are playing the Christian role in name only, they produce maybe the aforementioned hedge apples, not of plums and the fruits of the spirit, but instead the fruits of the flesh. Then all the while they are professing a different Jesus Christ, not the One of the bible. They believe they are saved. Are they? Galatians,

5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

As a people, on either side of this equation of good and bad fruit, do we battle these? If you live in this world, you bet you do. But the glory of the Christian who has faith and relies on the Holy Spirit for strength and comfort, they are the ones who persevere and in the end, will win. For the truly called out Christian, plunged beneath the blood of Calvary is "BORN TO WIN" for the glory of God the Father.

Some would have you believe that being a Christian is an emotional experience. You are told about Jesus Christ and express elation that you understand that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. You get excited, express joy and forget about it all in a few days. Is that all there is to being a Christian? I get pretty excited when the the Missouri Tigers win an invitation to the SEC championships to play against Auburn, and it truly is emotional and exciting, but that knowledge does not save me. Head knowledge of Jesus Christ or the Missouri Tigers at Columbia being a good football team will last only a short while in 2013. Let me explain.

There is a difference between believing with your head, (your brain) and believing with your heart, (internalizing His sacrifice on the cross). And how do we internalize that we have believed in the Only Begotten Son of God? A brother of mine, proposed on our forum, "Christian Disciples", what do you say to the young child who accepts Jesus in their mind, by repeating the sinner's prayer and then fall back into the worldly living of an adult. Are they still saved? What do you say to someone who has made a profession of believing Jesus is God, but lives an ungodly life, thereafter? James said it best in James chapter 2:

2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

2:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

GRACE VS. WORKS

Let me make one thing perfectly clear to all who have read thus far. Works by themselves will not save you. This is not one thing you can do in this life by keeping every aspect of the Law of God, although imperfectly, and think you are saved. Let's look at Ephesians chapter 2:

2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

A lot of Christians, and I hope you're not one of them, stop right there and say, see, all you need is Jesus. Truer words were ever spoken, but what do the next verses say?

2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

In Old Testament times, there was a wall separating the Jews from the Gentiles in the Temple courtyard, but now Jesus has broken down that wall that all may come to Him. We are His workmanship and we have been bought with a price, namely His blood and broken body. As anyone that comes into an exclusive club will tell you, there are certain requirements of entering into that club. This is an exclusive organism, called the Kingdom of God and has its requirements of entering in. But in coming to Him, He has a high expectation of what you are in this life, and what you will become. And what is that?

OUR INHERITANCE

When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, he asked the same questions that I ask you. How can a person be born again?

John

3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

What was Jesus saying here? It appears almost in conflict until you understand the message that Jesus was conveying here. There is an old saying in Christian circles that you must be “born again.” So true it is. Being born of the water and of the Spirit, there are different interpretations, but what does this mean? In the first part, Jesus speaks of water. He is speaking of baptismal waters as He was also baptized. The act of being immersed into the water is a symbol of the grave. By doing so, in our hearts we are to understand that. We are buried with Jesus Christ and raised to newness of life, hence the term “born again” is applicable here, but it goes much further in it’s description that Jesus told Nicodemus. Romans chapter 6, Paul explains this concept:

6:4 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.

6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

6:7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

We who have been immersed in baptismal waters, solely out of obedience to the command of Jesus Christ, is an act of total understanding and surrender to the power of God and leaving this sinful life we had behind us, as humanly possible. We follow a new Master, a new Teacher who showed us how to live a sinless life.

What about the second part of what Jesus said in John 3? Born of the Spirit? As you are reading this message from scripture, can you walk into the Kingdom of God as you are, as a mortal? He says flesh cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. What is Jesus saying here? Let me let Paul explain it to you, as he is a better teacher than I. Again, let’s go to Ephesians chapter one:

1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

1:14 Which is the earnest (translated deposit) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

We, as believers in Jesus Christ were given a deposit of that future inheritance. As a example, I envision it as a seed of God delivered to the womb of a mother, which grows into a fully developed baby ready to BE BORN. We are now, as children of God growing in the womb of God's Heavenly Jerusalem that awaits our full adoption upon our birth into the Kingdom of God. When will this happen? When Jesus calls us out of our graves, or changes us in the twinkling of an eye, then we will be changed into spiritual beings that come and go, much as the wind does in the trees. Reread Jesus explanation to Nicodemus. Ponder that for a moment and turn with me to 1 John 3:2:

3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Jesus gave us the perfect example of what it is to be called a Christian. What example was that? His life was the example. From explaining what it meant His Sermon on the Mount of the intent of the Law He wrote with His own finger on Mt. Sinai, to the acts of love and mercy to all His fellow men, to teachings of righteous living based on His own life and the intent of His commandments in their spiritual application. Jesus kept the Law that He wrote perfectly all of His years on earth, but God in His infinite wisdom knew that man could not. So God became a man born of woman, fully man, and fully God to do what man could not....save himself. God in the form of Jesus Christ made the ultimate sacrifice of His death on a cross and the emptying of the blood from His body on the altar of sacrifice. John chapter 3:

3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

But remember what I said in the beginning of this message?. Head knowledge must be heart knowledge. This is where the seed is planted. The Spirit of God mingles with your own. It is not implanted in your head that a person forgets in a few days and the excitement wears off. No, reader it begins in your spiritual heart. It's the first day of the rest of your eternal life and you become a new creature. II Corinthians chapter 5:

5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Then if reconciled to God, we have a job to do, out of sheer obedience as Paul speaks of in Ephesians chapter 4:

4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

4:27 Neither give place to the devil.

4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

NOW BACK TO AMERICA

Now that we have given a summary of what a Christian is, what we should be doing, and what the future is in store for those truly "born again", let's return to the 83% of American citizens that call themselves "Christians." Look around this nation. Does the landscape look like we are a Christian nation? Is the "old time religion" still reigning in our land, namely Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Do the principles that made this country great still exist? Nobody wants to take responsibility for what is going on in this country and in the majority, it may well be so. You can make a difference in your own life and reach out to others to help them find out what a Christian really is. Ask yourself these further questions, do you fit the definition of the negative side of this equation, of what is a Christian in name only? Do you stand in the light of a true Christian, washed in the blood of the Lamb working hard to be obedient to the One who gave you eternal life?

Don't be fooled into thinking that the trappings of organized religion will do anything for your spiritual condition, just by belonging to organized religion or the latest emotional false prophet or pied piper who leads away men and women to their destruction by following their false doctrines. You can't buy your way into heaven, you can't be good enough, and you can't rely on anyone, but yourself and the answering the conviction given by the Holy Spirit. John chapter 6:

6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

6:45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Paul said in Philippians chapter two:

2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

You just might be part of that skewed statistic that tells you, hey, I'm alright. I said the "sinner's prayer" and all will be well. Just because I live in America and "Hey, this is a godly nation". Really?

Many are beginning to believe that it is just not so and the nation that became the superpower in this world is destined, in my humble opinion, for a very hard fall. Many are beginning to worry about revolution in this country, as they look at Obamacare, NSA wiretappings, predator drones, and laws designed to take away your God given rights of free speech, assembly, and to bear arms. Can you see this nation becoming so caught up in it's anger at our former way of life and capitalism that made this country grow beyond our wildest dreams and wish to pitch it out the window, because of evil bankers and wall street lobbyist? OH, I know I can...I'll bet you can, too. I've even read comments of how the beginning of the Russian revolution started, and worse, the bloody French Revolution that spared almost no one. Heaven help us, but the winds of unrest are brewing. All it will take is for evil to be unfettered by the removal of the good in this country. Only thing that is keeping a lid on this brewing pot of sinful lust are true Christians (I quantify that by meaning true, born again, washed in the blood Christians) still present on this earth. What will be the result when even that hindrance is removed? II Thessalonians chapter two:

2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

When He, (speaking of the Holy Spirit), that letteth will let, until HE be taken out of the way, is the only thing that is keeping the lid on the brewing kettle of sin and debauchery being God Himself and the presence of His Spirit in His people. When that hindrance is removed, it won't be the 83% that professes their recipe of being a "luke-warm Christian" in name only, that will be taken. No, my friend, I fear that number will be much, much smaller. I fear it will be but a remnant of those who truly profess Jesus Christ and believe in their hearts and live like He's coming today or tomorrow. If Jesus would come on any Sunday morning, I envision half of the congregation being left behind, as they have only been warming a pew for most of their lives.

Will you be caught in the snare of an evil generation that lives only for pleasure? Will you delude yourself to think that the statistics listed in the first part of this message makes you ready to meet Almighty God? Will you be deluded to think that you once said the "sinner's prayer" as a child and all is good, even though you live like the devil? Only the things of God will stand. Everything else will be burned up by fire. There is a time coming when Satan will cover this earth with his forces of demon spirits to unleash his anger for he has been thrown from the halls of heaven. In other words, the devil has come down to Georgia, and the devil must be paid. He wants your life, he wants your soul, and he wants you to spend eternity with him.....in torment. Revelation chapter 12:

12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

12:8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitors of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Whoever belonged to Jesus Christ will be with Him for all eternity and the hordes of demons commanded by Satan will destroy all who remain if allowed. If you are of the number who rely on your church, your priest, your shaman, or God forbid yourself, or anything else besides a true relationship with Jesus Christ and cannot wholeheartedly embrace the description of a believer, A TRUE BELIEVER, in Jesus Christ, then get ready for a sudden thrust into an environment that beckons to the fires of Hell on earth. Because my friend, in all honesty, it ain't head knowledge that will save you, but heart knowledge.

Prepare to meet thy God.

This is Pastor Mike Taylor praying for your salvation and God's mercy on your life. If there is anything I can pray with you about, counsel you on, or share scripture of God's plan for man, then drop me a line at realteam1999@sbcglobal.net, for more biblical instructions to prepare you for the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

God bless you, till we meet at Jesus Feet.