

Privatised faith inhibits Evangelism

As much as people resist the imperatives of one another accountability clearly explained to us in the Scriptures, is to the same degree that their faith is about themselves, and not about living for and serving the purpose of the whole body of Christ. This insular private religion is not conducive to denying ourselves and laying down our life for others as Jesus commanded in many places.

If evangelism is ever going to be a natural part of the daily life, this attitude of me-ness, that was not in Christ, needs to be eradicated from within the body of Christ and all those who claim His life.

“Me”, wants to be part of the body of Christ, and at the same time, stubbornly resists the spiritual input of other members of Christ, who are chosen and gifted by Him to build up each other with His life of service and determined self-forgetfulness.

For many private Christians, evangelism is a duty to be performed, not an inner compulsion from the love of Christ that is willing to die daily so others can live. Faith is not a private matter, it is the work of God convicting sinners, which brings about repentance, so that an obedient relationship with God in Christ is possible in conjunction with His body the church.

Faith comes from God, for the glory of God. Faith is about God giving us the belief that unites us to the living Christ, to serve Him only. So, faith is never to be about "me". Faith requires the death of "me". Faith is communal, it is never singular, because faith is the glue that binds all believers to one life in the living Saviour Jesus Christ.

Those who have received saving faith from God are cemented into His family, which, in love and divine intimacy, exceeds even the most loving and supportive family of man. Unless the attitude of self-denial that was in Christ is in us, we won't live for those who God has chosen to be given to Christ, who still live in the world, and who have not as yet heard the gospel in the depth of their heart and repented.

Unless the me of the natural man dies in us, we will not know the experience that Paul who wrote about: *'For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded*

this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf.' 2 Cor 5:14-15

Much of what passes for Christianity today is about "me", and it is idolatry. Real followers of Christ have died to "me" daily by denying themselves and taking up their cross. And they have undertaken to pluck out of the mind all inclinations of selfish influence that remain from the natural man.

Unless privatised faith is put to death by ourselves under the governance of the Spirit, we will not see evangelism as a natural part of living as we should do, always considering that we walk moment by moment in the presence of God. Until evangelism for discipleship is as natural as breathing, and the primary task of the church; the responsibility of every member of the body to make disciples will be neglected.

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Matt 28:19

Evangelism is not a one hit wonder; it's about making disciples long term. The first word in Matthew 28:19 is the word "GO." It's a passive participle. Jesus did not use this word as a verbal command ("Go) This is a passive participle, which is vastly different from an imperative command to Go.

A participle indicates an ongoing or completed action or state in the passive voice. Jesus wasn't giving a command ("Go and do this"). He was describing something that was ongoing. Simply translating into an English should be, *"Going therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.* Passive verbs mean the action is done to the subject. Jesus was telling His disciples someone else would make them go. The Holy Spirit.

To fail to make disciples is to fail to obey the Lord Jesus. Jesus wasn't telling us to get people saved, He was telling us to make disciples who we would teach to be like Him. For many, the lifestyle of a follower of Christ has been substituted for a program, so self can be satisfied. If there is no compulsion of the Spirit to obey Christ by making disciples, it would appear that there is no obedience in relationship with Christ.

Evangelism in discipleship is a daily experience that happens as naturally as eating when we walk by the Spirit. It is not a program, it is not an occasional duty to be performed, and not something added to the externals; but an inner all compelling necessity, for without the compelling power of the Spirit we are dead; so that the love of Christ is not compelling us to die to self so we can do what He commanded we do daily.

'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.' Gal 2:20

The controlling “me” died with Christ. The Christ of God who is now our Lord and Saviour lives in His people to fulfil His salvation plan, His way. *“I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances.”* (Ezek 36:27) *“the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”* Rom 8:4

Self-denial is central to obedience and life with the presence of Christ. *'And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”* (Luke 9:23) The cross is our assigned instrument of death, and we must choose to sacrifice ourselves. Rom 12:1-2

And the crucified believer lives for the good of others. *'Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility, consider one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.'* Phil 2:3-8

The devoted believer is yoked to Christ and enslaved into His plan and purpose. *'The one who was called as free, is Christ's slave.'* 1 Cor 7:22

If we have a privatised faith, we are not slaves who only live for Christ, and we don't serve Christ for the good of others. If we are not living as slaves for the

purpose of working for His redemption for sinners, we are only giving lip service. No, No. *'Not by way of eye service, as people pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.'* Eph 6:6

If we are in Christ, His Spirit is in us to will and to do for His good pleasure. *'Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought for a price: therefore glorify God in your body.'* 1 Cor 6:19-20

The default setting of our thinking from the old man of sin is about “me”, what I want, how I feel, what I enjoy, and my plans for happiness, all this in exclusion from the presence of God. Therefore, faith is not about us as separate individuals, our belief, our worship, our plans, our privacy. *'But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.'* 1 Cor 6:17

'For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body..... For the body is not one part, but many.' (1 Cor 12:12-14) Faith works the will of God. *'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.'* Eph 2:10

Faith demands dying to self in relation to the flesh of the natural man, and dying isn't easy. Yet death to self is continually compelled in us by the love of Christ in order for us to love our neighbour and do good works in His name. Putting self to death is only possible when we follow the leading of the Spirit of God in humble obedience to live according to His will. *'For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons and daughters of God.'* Rom 8:14

Evangelism for discipleship is the natural outworking of the redeemed life of faith from God. Scriptural knowledge without dying to self is what satan enjoys. If we have died with Christ, we will live for Christ. Therefore, making disciples demands our utmost in self-denial, as demonstrated by Christ. And making disciples deserves our complete diligence in following His example. It means putting to death all that pertains to self, and the things of the world, in order to love Him and live for Him. If we truly love Christ, we will find His love all compelling.