

Sunday February 18th, 2007

'Nothing in Me....' – Part Three

1). Joh 14:28 ¶ *"You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. 29 "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. 30 "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. 31 "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.*

a). Again as we have seen in the last two weeks, the original ruler of this world is coming, in anticipation of Christ's crucifixion, and he has nothing in time space or relationship with Christ.

b). Christ of course is the 'seed of the woman' promised in Genesis 3:15, and as such – as the sin nature is passed through the male line – He is completely apart from sin - 2Co 5:21 *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

c). Christ, if you will, as the seed of the woman and the seed of Abraham is a pure seed.

d). And although we also are the seed of Abraham through faith, we are a grain that needs some work. The wheat that will be gathered into His barn at the JSOC will be a pure seed. But we are not born that way. We have work to do.

e). Do you remember Ruth? Ru 2:17 ¶ *So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.*

f). It would seem it is time to get earnestly into the beating out process – and this for each of us will be different yet the same, and for each of us individually it will present its challenges.

g). And now, coming to this point, we have reached another one of those Orpah moments – the choice to go on or turn back. And I pray that there is no one here yearning for the cucumbers of the past.

h). Please notice this from - Ac 2:42 ¶ *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.....46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and*

simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

(Teach this)

i). Despite what we see here in Acts as the Church begins, we know from the evidence of church history that all this changed leading to the multifaceted mess that we call Christendom today. Somewhere they lost their simplicity of heart exchanging it for the duplicity and mendacity of the world.

j). Let us never lose the simplicity and the innocence that we have in Christ. Let us not be conformed to this world.

k). And if our simplicity and innocence were to be lost, do we realize that it wouldn't just happen, it would have to start in our hearts.

i/ The good news is of course that this is not inevitable – to be such would deny the power of Christ in us and take from us the free will God has given us. It remains as always – a choice.

l). However, having now been an organized and formalized body of believers for two years now we have reached a time when our warts and our wrinkles and our peculiarities and our annoying habits, our weaknesses, our shortcomings and our failings begin to be more visible to each other. In consequence it is now, maybe more than ever that we need to confront those things the ruler of the world has in us.

m). This presents us with a unique opportunity for spiritual maturity

n). Or it could open a door leading to self destruction.

2). As we have noted in the last two weeks we still have a sin nature – our 'old man' connected with our first birth, that which was born of the flesh, in harmony with this world and the ruler of this world.

a). Satan does therefore have something in us but as we also noted last week, we do not have to choose to side with him - Ro 6:6 *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.*

This is good news, but now read on into the next verse-

7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore

do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 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.

a). To be free from the slavery of sin is not automatic– it comes only through dying to self – using our members as instruments of righteousness rather than of unrighteousness.

b). And last week we had dealt with one particular member – our tongue. In other words, what we speak.

c). We will remember - Pr 18:21 ¶ *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.*

d). Death and life in relation to the age to come can be determined by what comes out of our mouth now - Mt 15:11 *"Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."*

e). We need to use our member, our tongue, for righteousness. Speaking things leading to life, things that are in line with scripture, agreeing with the things of God, rather than agreeing with the things of men which are in opposition to scripture.

3). Our freedom from using our tongue unrighteously we found in what scripture calls ‘the royal law’ - Jas 2:8 ¶ *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;*

a). Have you ever wondered about that phrase – ‘the royal law’.

b). Royal = Greek word – *basilikos* = belonging to (or befitting) the sovereign.

c). We can see this two ways, both of which go hand in hand. Firstly this is a law that comes directly from the Sovereign of the universe and is given to His servants to keep.

i/ And secondly, those servants who keep this law, will find themselves exalted to positions of sovereignty in the age to come.

4). Let’s track this back a little into - Mr 12:28 ¶ *Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" 29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. 31 "And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no*

*other commandment greater than these."*³² *So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. 33 "And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."*

a). We will note that what we read about here are commandments and not suggestions. This is not something we can choose to opt into or opt out of. This is something the servants of God must do. And because God commands us, this is possible to do. We would never be commanded to do something that was impossible.

b). We will also note that the second commandment is like the first, is comparable with it

5). In fact these two must go hand in hand, because you cannot obey the first apart from obeying the second.

a). Let's follow this through.

b). We already know that the word says - Joh 14:21 *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

c). And again - Joh 14:24 *"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."*

d). This seems to be pretty unambiguous.

e). Now we are commanded to love our neighbor as our self – why?

f). Watch this - 1Jo 4:20 *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

g). And - 1Jo 3:15 *Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal [age lasting] life abiding in him.*

h). Please note that neighbor and brother would be interchangeable, both would refer to a fellow or companion – from our perspective another Christian.

i). So then, the manifestation of our love for God is expressed through the love we have for each other.

j). It is not expressed in the multiplicity of our prayers, nor the frequency of our fasting, nor by professing the words, 'Lord I love you'. Or in how many hours we read the Bible.

k). No, our love for God is demonstrated in action, by the way we relate to one another according to the scriptures. Do not be deceived my beloved brethren.

l). Joh 13:35 *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

6). So exactly what does it look like to love our neighbor in the same way we love our self?

a). Well think of it this way – (Use the name calling example)

b). You see - 1Pe 4:8 *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

We extend grace and mercy to ourselves

c). Ro 13:8 *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. 11 ¶ And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

(Teach this)

d). Ga 5:14 *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!*

7). Let's remember, according to scripture how this love we will have for one another works - 1Co 13:1 ¶ *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 ¶ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 ¶ Love never fails.*

a). The one that really knocks my socks off in this is ‘thinks no evil’ – love does not even think anything that would make another appear worthless in comparison to us – irrespective of what that person has done.

8). And to remember my Shakespeare – ‘Herein lies the rub’

a). The love we are to have for our brother or our sister is not conditioned upon how they treat us – it is determined by faithful obedience to God’s command.

b). This is exactly the same as we have seen with regards to the respect a wife is to have for her husband and the love a husband is to have for his wife. And just as we have noted in the marriage relationship, getting to the place where this becomes lifestyle is part of our process. It is beating out the grain. And we may require a good deal of winnowing to get there.

9). Note this - 1Co 13:13 *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

a). Love is the third of the three and therefore the greatest.

b). Three denoting Divine perfection – and note the progression – faith – hope – love.

10). 2Pe 1:1 ¶ *Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, **for if you do these things you will never stumble**; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 12 ¶ For this reason I will not*

be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

(Teach this).

a). If we do these things – the things in v5-7 then we will never stumble, never be tripped up – and the word stumble here could just as readily be translated, ‘be offended’.

b). And if this is the case then an entrance will be supplied to us abundantly whereby we may enter the Kingdom.

c). And this brings us to the flip side of loving our neighbor as our self, so to speak.

d). If we don’t love our neighbor as our self then we are going to take offense over things we hear, things we see and assumptions we make.

11). Now the word offense is the Greek word – *skandalon* = a bait stick used in a trap.

a). We have seen this in past weeks in relation to Christ and Peter

b). Mt 16:23 *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense [skandalon] to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

c). Now clearly Peter did not have the deliberate intention of offering that bait stick to Christ. He had no idea what he was doing in this respect.

d). But the Lord saw the offense, saw the connection in it with the ruler of this world, and refused to take the bait.

e). And here as we would expect is our model – if we hear, see or assume something that is going to cause us to take offense, we must see it for what it is and not take the bait. And this we can only do by obeying the royal law.

f). Visual?

g). Ps 91:2 *I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.*

12). Now the thing about a bait stick is that it holds up a trap – nibble on the bait and the trap will fall - Heb 12:14 *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;*

a). And here is the trap – the root of bitterness.

b). Bitterness will look for revenge
c). Bitterness – Greek word – *pikria* = piercing, stabbing
d). We will want to inflict the same pain we have felt back on the person who has offended us - Mt 18:7 ¶ *"Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!"*

e). Or to put it another way, in doing so we become the oppressor – choosing to have our fellow servant thrown into jail rather than extending mercy - Mt 18:32 *"Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 'And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 'So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."*

f). Mt 5:7 *Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.*

13). And finally, to close with this morning we find a summation of our subject in Psalms - Ps 119:161 ¶ SHIN. *Princes persecute me without a cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your word. 162 ¶ I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure. 163 ¶ I hate and abhor lying, But I love Your law. 164 ¶ Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments. 165 ¶ Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble. [Shall offend them - KJV]*
(Teach this)

14). I understand that the average tenure for most Christians within a formalized church setting is three years. At this point they have normally acquired so much offense and bitterness that they just move on somewhere else and repeat the cycle all over again. We cannot ever be like this.

- a). You know – even if we wanted to we don't have that luxury
- b). Where else are we going to go?
- c). We have only two choices – we are either going to deal with offense by embracing the royal law – or we are going to have to apostasize.
- d). Let me ask you in all seriousness is taking offense worth losing the Kingdom over?
- e). What would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul for the age to come – let alone to lose it just to gain an offense.