

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God
IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Time to Grow Up!

It is a necessity that we, as the Lord's people, come to a complete end of ourselves, meaning an end to our self-life or, better yet, our selfish, self-centered life of "I" and "me." This is not to say we lose our identity and our personality; it simply means that the center of our world moves from ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ as our all in all, as the one who is central, supreme, and preeminent in our lives and everything around us. Our center of gravity, so to speak, moves from man (us) to Jesus (Him); we become Christ-centered and no longer are man-centered, the thing around which humanism is built.

If we are going to have this transformation in our center, something must take place within us that is a death of sorts. This does not take place immediately or fully when Jesus first breaks into our life and reveals Himself to us and gives us His faith based on grace. We must die to our self-center in order to lay hold of our Christ-center. Death must come in like a mighty tsunami and bring everything we hold as value in our self, even our self-worth, into its mighty breaker and dash it on the rocks. Death comes in and we cry out: "I can't go on anymore. It's not working. Everything is failure." At that moment, we come to see that we truly are corruptible and our entire self-life apart from Christ is death; it is corruption.

Is this too extreme? Is this too negative? Many in some Christian circles would rail against such a suggestion. After all: "We are sons of God. God blesses us. He opens the windows of heaven for us. We have every spiritual blessing in the heavens." There is truth in all this, but what is missed is that this is true only as it is seen *in* Christ, and that the blessings, et al, come through Jesus and His life. These things are not independent of God's Son and never will be. They are only found in Him and manifested through Him. As God's children growing up to be mature sons, we are blessed because of God's Son. We cannot nor should we ever separate ourselves from King Jesus, for without Him we are nothing; and worse, without Him we are dead, in every sense of the word.

Our whole existence, our whole being, is now dependent on Him. It is not dependent on our self-worth, our value to God in ourselves, our self-ambition for God, or our ministries to serve God. None of this is of any value to God if its source, its driving power, is from our natural self and for our own glory, our own reputation, legacy, etc.

All of self, all of the old nature must die so that Christ may live in and out from us in fullness. On one level, our self is already dead, ***for one died for all, consequently all died and Christ died for all*** (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). Our natural life, that of the first Adam, as far as God is concerned, died with the Anointed. You are a dead man apart from Him. Unless this becomes revelation to us, we will forever be trying to clean up ourselves to make ourselves presentable to God the Father. It is an impossible task, one that will only lead to defeat, failure, and utter disappointment.

You are a dead man, yet this old life continues on. Don't fool yourself by thinking everything you do is of the Lord and for the Lord. Natural ambition and the soul-life can be dressed up to look like and sound like that which is spiritual. Many things have been done and continue to be done on this basis. Certain types of preaching, music, and worship simply stir up the soul and get people excited. It is form and style over spirit. Even worse, it becomes nothing more than Christian entertainment, a *Soul Train*, for those that recall this show.

If you are on the path of conquering or overcoming through His life, then the day will come when you see yourself for what you truly are apart from Christ and what you truly are in Christ. One is the negative side and the other is the glorious, positive side. We need to see the first in order to really appreciate the second, which is what God has in plan for those who are called and chosen in this age to be in Christ and to be counted worthy of God's age as a son of God, that is, a son of the resurrection. He takes away the first to establish the second, which is the best.

In our old nature, there is no good. We are corrupt and bankrupt. The day must come for all who are conquering to see as Paul did. I count it all (all the past, even the great pedigree) as rubbish! I have no confidence in the flesh. And, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord ... that I might gain Him and be found in Him. This is from a man that many years earlier had everything going for him, that is, everything in regard to the Jewish religious system, to the point he would either persecute or put to death anyone who opposed or threatened his religion. But, when the glorified and enthroned Jesus appeared to Him in blinding light, he gave it all up and became part of the Way he had sought to destroy. The old Saul died and he became Paul who died daily for the ecclesia and the cause of Christ. But take special note that at the end of his life, he was still seeking to gain and to know Christ. He had not gained enough, even after all those years of great revelation and suffering for it.

Have you gotten to this place yet? If not, there is good news. If you are on the path of the conqueror, you will come to the place of death, the place where you are stripped of all self-ambition, self-adulation, self-indulgence, self-exaltation, self-will, and whatever issue of self that stands opposed to the new life in you, the life of Jesus. If you don't believe this, then study the very life of Jesus and you will discover that it was never His will or anything of His self-life. His entire life on earth was connected intimately with His Father in heaven. *Not My will but Your will be done!* You will discover that even what you thought was right and true is all rubbish. It will all be challenged; nothing will be left untouched. Why? It is a necessity to get you out of the way and make room for Christ in you that He might increase and you decrease.

But it is more; it is not only to make room for the Anointed but also to cause His life to grow and mature in you so that He alone lives out from you more and more so that the world sees, smells, and experiences Christ. It is truly the day when you can say without hesitation as Paul did: *It is no longer I but Christ.* Many might recite this verse as good doctrine, but we must know it in the very core of our being. It must come to us and be sealed in us by revelation and tested through experience. It is not something to hold as doctrine. It is something to experience and to know. It cannot be theoretical; it must be revelational and experiential.

Dear brethren, an anointing is coming that is not going to be like anything that has been experienced before. It will be beyond even the Pentecostal experience of the early ecclesia. It will not be a revival, for which many are looking. It will not be for a display of great gifts or of the supernatural that many are seeking after today. It will not be a show of platform or pulpit. It will be a welling up from our inner man where the anointing has resided all along. We will awaken to this anointing that has pretty much remained dormant in us. It will be the manifestation of God's pure love in a loveless, lawless, faithless world!

It is about the Lord's body coming into maturity. It is about a spiritual people that know King Jesus and have gained Him through the trials of life; a people that have come to know and trust the Lord, not through many strange manifestations that have been no more than the flesh or soul-life dressing itself up and calling itself spiritual, but a people that have come to know Him, especially in the times of silence and inactivity. They are a people that have been stripped of all the props of religion and Christian ministries that have exalted men and made many rich. They have been stripped of their self-identity and brought into the fullness of Christ's identity. They are in agreement with Him and living in a loving union with Him. They are a people who make no claim to great ministries, to great theological systems, to being something special in their own right that the world must hear. No! It is about a people that finally look like, smell like, and live like Jesus for they have matured and become His image on earth. They love as He loves! They exude His life and testify to the world through their lives that Jesus has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, and He is coming very soon to establish His kingdom on earth over all the nations. God the Father has installed Him as king, given the nations as His inheritance and the ends of the earth as His possession. Why? *You are My Son!* Jesus is the only begotten by His right of sonship as the firstborn of all creation and the firstborn of the dead. Through His death, resurrection, ascension, glorification, and enthronement, He will bring many sons unto glory, starting with His conquering body. This is what the anointing is all about, but it is not the end; it is simply a means to the end. On the heels of this—as the world continues to be shaken and that which can be shaken is brought to dust—is the resurrection and transfiguration of His conquerors and the presence of the Lord. It is time to grow up, no longer an immature child of God but a fully matured son of God!