

SPIRITUALLY MATURE OR A SPIRITUAL BABY **April 4, 2020**
1 Corinthians 3:1-3

Although I have not personally witnessed it, I have heard stories of adults who still suck their thumbs. In fact, my aunt shared with me that one of her cousins would be nursing her baby while sucking her thumb. Can you imagine that? We would imagine that an adult would have grown out of that childish behavior. We would presume that any adult, who has their own children, would no longer resolve to participate in any form of childlike comportment. It would cause one to ask the question, “Who is the real baby?”

As Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he acknowledged that although he desired to speak to them as if they were spiritually mature Christians, he could not because they were spiritual babies. Paul confessed that he had previously only given them milk because they could not handle solid food, and sadly, even at that time, they still could not handle solid food. Their behavior was not that of spiritually mature Christians, it was that of babies.

Can you imagine going to a meeting convened by Christians with the expectation of collaborating for the cause of Christ, and when you walk into the room you find it full of babies. Immature, Christian babies who are running around, hitting each other, crying, tattling, sucking their thumbs, playing, sleeping, throwing tantrums and only concerned with their own selfish needs? You turn around and walk out of the room because you know that there will be no productive work accomplished for the Kingdom that day.

Where do you fit in that story?

LIGHT REVEALS WHAT REALLY IS **April 5, 2020**
Ephesians 5:12-14

Each summer, we visited our grandparents in rural Mississippi. This was before there was indoor plumbing and electric street lights. As we walked to our grandparent’s house each evening from the revival service at the church, we would see numerous things that would cause our minds to create false realities that subsequently ended with us running in the dark from dangers that we thought existed. The next morning, in the light, we would walk back to that area and discover that what we thought was a present danger was actually and old stump. We learned that light exposes things for what they really are.

The city of Ephesus had a temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana. Many Christians, under the cloak of darkness (both literally and figuratively), participated in the ritual worship of Diana and other pagan deities. Paul shared that the light of Christ would reveal everyone for who they really were. Therefore, Paul called on them to awake from sleep and arise from the dead.

Even today, many Christians feel that they can, under the cloak of darkness (both literally and figuratively), participate in the carnal, secular things of this world. Know that the light of Christ will reveal each one of us for who we really are. We may fool others, however, we cannot fool Christ. Therefore, let us wake up, rise up from the dead and walk in Christ’s light.



TALKING THE TALK IS EASIER THAN **March 30, 2020**
WALKING THE TALK
Luke 6:46

When we were young, we did a lot of talking regarding what we were going to do, where we were going to go and/or what we would have. Whereas, at the time the talk was serious, as we grew older and reality set in, we realized that it was easy to talk the talk and harder, much harder, to walk the talk.

Jesus shared this sentiment with those who would follow Him. In Jesus’ day, there were many that called Jesus “Lord,” however, when it came time for them to prove that He was Lord of their lives, they fell short. Talking the talk was easy for them. However, they found walking the talk much harder.

Likewise, we find it easy to talk the talk. We talk about how much we love Jesus, the extent to which we will serve Jesus, the degree to which we will minister for Jesus and for some, like Peter, our commitment to even die with Jesus. Unfortunately, when it comes time to walk the talk, we also fall short. For Jesus, it is not so much what we say as it is what we do.

Jesus’ desire is that we back up our talk with action. Jesus asked, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” If we call Jesus “Lord,” it should be evidenced by our actions. Do our actions with our families, on our jobs, at our schools, in our communities, at social gatherings and everywhere else reflect that Jesus is our Lord? If not, why not?

CONFESS IT AND RELEASE IT **March 31, 2020**
1 John 1:9

I have a friend who made God a promise regarding a family situation. Although she had the best intentions when she made the promise, unfortunately she did not keep the promise. Afterwards, she was filled with guilt, remorse, shame and a feeling of failure. She spoke with her older mentor

and shared what had occurred and the range of emotions and worthlessness she was feeling. Her mentor listened intently while she shared. After she finished, her mentor leaned forward, looked her in the eyes and said softly, “That’s ok. Just tell God you lied and ask Him to forgive you.” After doing so, she was surprised to discover that the weight of her guilt and shame was relieved by simply confessing her sin.

How many times have we felt overwhelmed by the weight of sin and shame? The devil is good at making us feel guilty regarding what we have done, and exacerbating it by reminding us every day about every wrong thing that we have ever done in the past. By the time the devil is through with us, we feel completely worthless and useless.

First, know that God does not place guilt upon us. If you are feeling overwhelmed by guilt, it is not coming from God. Second, know that God has a remedy for us when we sin. The Holy Spirit will convict us into coming to God for repentance. Once we confess our sins and repent, God faithfully forgives us, cleanses us and releases us from those sins. God will never remind us of those sins nor hold us accountable to those sins. They are gone forever.

It really is that simple. God has given us a simple solution to relieve the pressures and burdens of our sins. When we confess our sins in repentance, God forgives us, cleanses us and releases us from those sins.

SARDIS: THE DEAD CHURCH **Revelation 3:1-6**

April 1, 2020

Commendation: Jesus commended some in the church in Sardis who had not soiled their clothes with evil. In the midst of all the evil that was going on around them, they were able to resist the temptation and remain free from the prevailing tainting and staining of sin that was present in the city.

Condemnation: Although the church had a reputation for being alive, in reality they were dead. Although their outward appearance reflected an abundance of vibrancy and vivacity, Jesus said that they were dead. For Jesus, they were outwardly, physically alive, yet inwardly, spiritually dead.

Recommendation: Jesus recommended that the church **wake up and strengthen the things which remained**. They were dead and the few things that were alive were ready to die. Jesus also encouraged the church to **remember what they had previously received and heard, hold onto it firmly and repent**. There was yet the potential for life to return.

Today: It is not uncommon for us to elevate our outward appearances, our visible successes and our noticeable victories. Whereas others may see them and view us as lively examples of human success, Jesus is looking on the inside and may discover that we are actually spiritually dead. If we are found to be dead, Jesus recommends that we **wake up and strengthen the things which remain** (those things that are ready to die). Jesus is still speaking to the church, **“Remember what you have previously received and heard, hold onto it firmly and repent.”** There is yet the potential for life.

YOU ARE NOT A BABY ANYMORE **Hebrews 5:12-14**

April 2, 2020

You may remember hearing as a child or perhaps saying as a parent, “You are not a baby anymore.” This statement is commonly said to older children who have younger siblings who need their parent’s attention. It is shared to those older children who are mature enough to contribute to the family as much as they receive from the family. The goal of using the statement is not to bring the child down. Rather, it is used to raise the child to a higher level of responsibility for and accountability to the family.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews, having realized the needs of the newer, babes in Christ and having witnessed the lack of responsibility of those previously saved, said to those previously saved, “You are not a baby anymore.” In other words, he wanted them to know that it was time for them to spiritually grow up. It was time for them to take responsibility for and be accountable to the church and the needs of the newer, babes in Christ.

There is much work that needs to be done in our world. There are many in our immediate sphere of influence who need us. To accomplish that work, God needs mature, skilled and committed Christians who are responsible for and accountable to fulfilling their role in the family of God. God is saying to us, “Get up, grow up and get busy. You are not a baby anymore.”

DREAMING NIGHTMARES **OR VISIONING WHAT GOD SEES?** **Romans 13:11-14**

April 3, 2020

During my college years, someone shared with me the phrase, “Oversleeping will never make your dreams come true.” The quote was not shared in a way to negate the necessity of sleep and the value of physical rest. Rather, it was shared in a positive way to affirm the necessity of getting my work done which meant waking up, getting up and getting it done. It was shared to highlight the value of getting up early to be my best, and do my best.

Paul shared with the church in Rome similar encouragement. For the church to fully fulfill its mission in Rome, Paul knew that there was no time for lying around, lounging and chilling. The church needed to wake up, get up and get it done. Paul acknowledged that the night was almost over and the day was almost there – it was time to wake up.

If there ever was a time for the contemporary church to labor for the full fulfillment of its mission, now is that time. Darkness is covering our cities and communities. Right is being considered wrong and wrong is being called right. Many do not know what to do nor where to turn. As our communities are crying out for help, too many of our churches are asleep. Sadly, too many of our churches are dreaming nightmares versus visioning what God sees.

God is calling for the church to wake up, and realize that time is short, night is almost over and the day is fast approaching. We do not have time to lie around dreaming. Wake up, get up and let us get it done.