

Growth and Service in Christ

Nick Bibile

**Eph 3:4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)
 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed
 unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;
 6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his
 promise in Christ by the gospel:
 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by
 the effectual working of his power.
 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach
 among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ**

How do you know that we all have sinned against God? How do you know that we are all under condemnation before God? How do you know that God can forgive the sinner in Christ Jesus and you can have eternal life? If you ask these questions from an average person on the street they do not know how to answer. The answer to all these questions is that the Bible tells me so. You will know the answers only if you read. As I told you before about 90% of the American homes have a Bible or more than one, and many are calling themselves Christians yet the majority never read the Bible.

In the same way apostle Paul tells us in verse 4 when you read you will understand the knowledge the mystery of Christ.

Mt 13:11 He answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

People who have a thirst for God, read his word, and follow him are true Christians his people and to those who are his God gives them the understanding. To the others spiritual things do not matter, their priorities are for the flesh. Their food is their stomach and not the word of God. I heard on news the other day, since 1990 people have put on additional weight that the airlines spend more money on fuel, it cost the airlines millions of dollars per year due to the additional weight of the people.

People are more concern of food than spiritual food. Here in America people eat too much. New statistics reveal that a startling 64.5% of American adults, or more than 120 million people, are overweight or obese. (USA Today 2002)

Once they realize they are getting too fat, they spend money again on losing weight products, diets and lose weight programs.

Jesus said that man cannot live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Ps 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.
 26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Christians are making progress in spiritual attainments as they hunger and thirst after God before all the things of this world. The image of God which is stamped on the Christian's soul, he values more than all what the world can give. We have chosen God as our portion as the riches of the world will fade away and our happiness is found in God alone.

Ps 84:10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness

Verse 5. How the mystery of Christ is being revealed to us by the apostles and the prophets by the Holy Spirit.

Yes, the apostles and the prophets were sent by God to the people so they can tell the truth, the will of God to the people, the mystery of God that God is not the God of the Jews only but also the God of the Gentiles. The question is when you tell the good news of the Bible to an average person, majority of them do not want to hear. When you tell them, God is going to send his wrath to all sinners but there is eternal life in Christ Jesus, many say they do not have time, or no thank you.

If you are a Christian the God the Holy Spirit is in you, Holy Spirit that is in you will not enjoy your worldly fleshly entertainments but convict you of sin and guide you into all truth. It is the Holy Spirit that revealed the mystery of the truth to the apostles and it is the Holy Spirit which gives that truth to us.

Joh 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

However, how sad it is that many are guided by their emotions and flesh or influenced by their worldly friends instead of the Holy Spirit. Because of these we have today the wrong doctrines and the cults. Because of this we have people falling away from the truth and falling in to heresies.

I will tell you the when the Holy Spirit gives you the knowledge of the truth and guide you not into the comforts of this world of the broad road but will take you on the journey where your flesh will not like, which is the narrow road.

Mt 23:34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.

Your emotions and your flesh will always look for the comfort way but the Spirit of God will take you in the road of discipline and growth in the Lord. You can honestly tell which road you are taking if you are growing in Christ you know it.

Verse 6. The mystery of Christ is that not only the Jews but also the Gentiles are brought into the same fellowship of God; they too are partakers of the good news, the gospel.

Isn't it great the grace of God is given to those undeserving sinful Gentiles like us? Eph Eph2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Eph 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

Eph 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Eph 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

Here is a word that is misunderstood, the word minister. Many think that pastor or the reverend is the minister. No, if you are a Christian you are all ministers. Our English word minister comes from the Latin word minister, which stems from minor or less. It distinguishes from the word master. We are all call to minister means to serve our Master the Lord. If you are a Christian the Holy Spirit will use you in the ministry of God. Most people wish to serve God during the sermon but the wish vanishes away when they leave church.

Service is, comprehensively speaking, doing the will of God. He is the object. All is for Him, for His sake, as unto the Lord, not as unto man. The supreme test of service is this: 'For whom am I doing this?' Much that we call service to Christ is not such at all....If we are doing this for Christ, we shall not care for human reward or even recognition. Our work must again be tested by three propositions: Is it work from God, as given us to do from Him; for God and with God, as only a part of His work in which we engage as co-workers with Him."

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Apostle Paul is saying that he is the least of all the saints, he is not the most greatest but the least of all the Christians. This is in total opposition to the worlds view. Paul is an apostle, Jesus spoke to him directly from heaven, one who was taken up to third heaven and seen incredible things, one who met the other apostles. Where is the pomp and glory? Today's motto is be prideful of your self. Pride can lead you to destruction. Because of pride there are quarrels, arguments, fights and killings.

In the summer of 1986, two ships collided in the Black Sea off the coast of Russia. Hundreds of passengers died as they were hurled into the icy waters below. News of the disaster was further darkened when an investigation revealed the cause of the accident. It wasn't a technology problem like radar malfunction--or even thick fog. The cause was human stubbornness. Each captain was aware of the other ship's presence nearby. Both could have steered clear, but according to news reports, neither captain wanted to give way to the other. Each was too proud to yield first. By the time they came to their senses, it was too late.

In Christianity, pride has no room as pride is the greatest enemy and it comes from the devil, who was so prideful that he wanted to become like God.

The disciples asked this question from Jesus.

Mt 18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

See verse 4

Mt 18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

In Christianity the more you grow in God the more you come closer to him the more of you will decrease and God will increase.

When the disciples of John the Baptist began to leave and going to Jesus he said:

Joh 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

I don't care how educated one in Christianity, how much knowledge he has but if there is no humility he is not close to God.

Don't be greedy and always looking to get things from others this makes you selfish this is not true love of Christianity, honor and prefer others more than yourself.

Ro 12:10 Be kindly affection one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;

Have you ever wonder why God is not using you to minister to others, where is my ministry? May be the problem is pride. God cannot use a person with pride. Once God humbles a person he is ready to be used. See the second part of verse 8.

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In Christ Jesus we see infinite glory and lowest humility meeting together as he is both God and man.

We will continue next week but before I close tell me why some who know Christ for a long time but never grow and there are no fruits or service to God?

You can sum up with one word and I have repeated many times and this word is 'sanctification.'

Christians are set apart to a holy use: thus they are sanctified persons who are separated from the world, and set apart for God's service. When you are separated from the worldly trend then you will grow in Christ. Sanctification will take away the love for sin. A hypocrite may leave sin, yet love it; as a serpent casts its coat, but keeps its sting; but a sanctified person can say he not only leaves sin, but hates it.

Then you partake of the divine nature.

2Pe 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

One of the problems is we try to clean our self with our own effort, we cannot cleanse our selves from our sins and worldliness only God can. So pray and ask the Lord to do the cleansing.

'I am the Lord which sanctify you.' Lev 21:8.

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