

*And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. Luke 4:37* At the synagogue in Capernaum Jesus was able to cast a demon out of a man because there we faith among the people, thus His fame went out, many followed Him. We are going to be considering some heady stuff, things that are difficult to comprehend, things that are rooted in having faith in the risen Christ. Faith needs to be spiritually discerned. If we aren't used to looking at things spiritually this might seem difficult and cause us to error in unbelief as the Jews in Nazareth. We can all admit our natural tendency is to look at things carnally, from a fleshly perspective, the way things seem as we reason them out without factoring in the *divine power of God* (2 Peter 1:3). This is to be carnally minded and as believers we are called to learn a new way, to be *spiritually minded. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rom 8:6* Before we are saved this is impossible, the ways of God *sound foolish*. But once we are known by God we need to press on to see things in the Spirit. As believers we are released from bondage to the flesh, we had before being saved but we must learn to walk in newness of life. *Now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? Gal 4:9* Just because we have surrendered our lives to Christ, we are not instantly mature Christians. It does mean that we must begin discerning spiritual things, learn to walk in the Spirit. *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor 2:14*

*But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. 1 Cor 2:14 NLT*

The first step of faith is a matter of identity. Jesus stated, to be a believer, you must be born again, you must enter into newness of life, begin learning to live a Spirit empowered existence. That means while we are still living our earthly lives, our fleshly lives, we must begin evaluating life in a new way, looking at it from a heavenly perspective, from a *This world is not my home, I'm just passing through* view. Paul writes the Romans to *Consider themselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Rom 6:11* A transformation takes place once we put our faith in Christ, the way we go about living life changes. We begin considering storing up eternal rewards rather than just material ones. Paul counted everything in his life expendable for the sake of knowing Christ, living in spiritual nearness to God. We must learn as Paul the apostle to *count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things. Phil 3:8* *I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me. Gal 2:20*

When we become Christians our lives are eternally altered. We begin to see things through eyes of the spirit, everything in our life begins to be *spiritually discerned*. Paul wrote, *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Cor 5:17* We find ourselves in an instant seated with Christ in heavenly places. It is if we have been transported into a new reality and in a very real sense that is what has happened. We have been positionally redeemed, we are justified (right with God, just as if we had never sinned). This is all the result of us coming to the Cross of Christ. John Bunyan, who wrote the allegory Pilgrims Progress, described the character Christian laying down his burden of sin.

*Just as Christian came up to the Cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, fell from off his back, and began to tumble down the hill, and so it continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre. There it fell in, and I saw it no more!*

When we come to Christ, because of Christ's sacrificial death for sin, we are justified, that

means God begins looking at us through the lense of Christ's sacrifice. God sees us as just as if we had never sinned, *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor 5:21* God doesn't judge our sins.

*There is therefore now no condemnation [no guilty verdict, no punishment] to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Rom 8:1*

Once we come to Christ for forgiveness God doesn't hold anything against us, *there is now no condemnation (punishment following condemnation, penal servitude, penalty)*. God doesn't have to punish us, the full weight of our sin rest on Jesus sacrifice for sin. We enter into a new spiritual existence because the sin that separated us from God has been atoned for. Paul writes that God makes believers into spiritual beings by grace when they trust in Christ. In Ephesians 2 Paul tells of this wonderful transformation, *when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph 2:5,6*

Seated with Christ in heavenly places, positionally that is where the believer rests by faith (glorification) once we have accepted Christ's atonement. We believe this to be true by faith. Faith is the evidence of things hoped for, *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb 11:1* Because Paul wrote this and it is part of the Bible and we know the Bible is true, we hold this truth by faith. John confirms this reality that can't be seen while we are in the flesh, God will reveal this truth in time, *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 1 John 3:2*

So we wait for Christ's appearing *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13* But, even though we are in this position of "Not Yet", waiting patiently for all that is prepared for the children of God, *the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. 1 Cor 2:9*. We must recon with the fact that even though we continue in a fleshly existence we are already the spiritual offspring of God, people of faith. Since this is true, we must learn to walk in newness of life, *putting on the newself, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth*. Learning to live thus is what is called sanctification, the daily working out our salvation with fear and trembling. *Phil 2:12* The believer is *alive to God in Christ Jesus* but we are in a process, *it has not appeared as yet what we will be. 1 John 3:2* We must see ourselves justified (now), glorified (now and then) and in the process of being perfected, sanctified. In a way we are like the pauper in *The Prince and Pauper*, we have entered into a relationship with the Prince of Peace. Much of what walking in newness of life we don't yet understand but we know *when He appears, we will be like Him*. Remember Jesus couldn't do many mighty works in Nazareth *because of their unbelief (lack of faith). Mark 6:6* As believers we embrace the walk of faith for *without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb 11:6*

*17So I say this, and affirm in the Lord, that you are to no longer walk just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their minds, 18being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19and they, having become callous, have given themselves up to indecent behavior for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. 20But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22that, in reference to your former way of life, you are to rid yourselves of the oldself, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23and that you are to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24and to put on the newself, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Eph 4:17-23*