

LOOKS LIKE A FISH!

If I presented to you a large thing that looked like a big fish, it smells like a fish, it wiggles like a fish but I said to you, "This is a lamb!", what would you think? You would mostly likely respond, "Yeah, and probably that Clark thinks also he was abducted by aliens!" For sure you would think I am having some problems with my normal reasoning. I want to share how many are reasoning just this way to the hurt of many in the body of Christ and that one of our greatest fields of service to Christ is being ignored or put aside in not dealing with a serious situation that is prevalent amongst many in the Body of Christ.

1 John 3:2 says that when Christ appears to us that we will behold Him in all His beauty for eternity on that great day. Oh, how I look forward to that day as it will be unimaginably beautiful and at times I feel I can't hardly wait! It also says that we will be like Him. Getting out of this flesh will be great and I long for the day I will have this liberty and be with all the brethren whom I love so much. I dream of His presence and being just like Him. There will be no more division, hatred, discord, jealousy, anger, selfishness and envy. Won't it be great?! But guess what? It shouldn't be a reality amongst us anyway! Please let me explain:

Romans 8:29 says that we are to be conformed to Jesus now. It is a daily process as we go forward in our walk with Jesus. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2) This is a process that goes on in the life of all those who desire, daily, more of Jesus. We are to be a walking example of Jesus in our daily lives. We may stumble and fall short at times but that is why we have the principle of the blood covering our sins. There is no need to feel condemned when we fall short. We are to repent and dust ourselves off and renew our walk moving forward in Jesus. The problem is when there are those who feel they can live in the natural man (the flesh) and practice the acts of the flesh on a continual basis and be CONSIDERED A BROTHER.

We do not know what Jesus looked like in the flesh but we see Him filtered through those around us who love Him. Galatians 5:23 explains the character of Jesus and shows those who want to follow His example, how they must be. We should desire to be like Jesus and when we see His attributes in others, it should make us desire to be more like Him. Oh, for that burning desire in our hearts just to see a glimpse of Jesus in someone else so as to be able to rejoice with them. Our soul should long for more and more of what He is, desiring to be like Jesus.

It is the simple principle of the changing power and love of Christ. Love changes us in ways the law cannot. Spiritual formation comes not by following disciplines but by falling in love. This changes us into His image.

We always take time for what we value. Everything in our life finds its place whenever we properly value what it means to be like Christ. When we value the attributes of the flesh or just maybe one of them (Gal. 5:17) we fall from the place Christ desires for us.

When I started dating my wife Sue I met her mother and father. After we were married and had our first child I noticed something that was disturbing to me. She was starting to look like her mother. I mentioned this to her and she said, "Don't you see that all of us girls like like our mother?" I looked distraught at her and said "What!" She looked at me and responded, "You may think it is bad that I am turning out like my mother but I will tell you something worse... you are starting to LOOK AND ACT LIKE YOUR FATHER." I jokingly replied, "But my dad is such a good looking rascal." She then raised her eyebrows in a questioning manner and said, "Oh yeah." Eventually, we reached a loving understanding by realizing that we are condemned by our DNA.

If you see my sons you would immediately see that they are my sons. They look like me and, at times, even act like me Everyone can see they are of the 'Slone' family, This is the way God planned it. We pass on our DNA. We will take on attributes of our family because that is just how it is. In other words, your fiance will most probably look like his or her mother or father someday...like it or not!

Spiritually, we are the same when we are born again. All are to see that we are from the same family, the family of Christ. We are to look like Jesus and carry His attributes for all to see.

At times, there are those who claim to be in the family of Christ but do not carry His attributes. Jesus spoke of those when he rebuked the Pharisees. In John 8:44 He said: "You are as your father the devil." He immediately told them of their family background. Who they acted like and what DNA they were carrying. Why? Because He loved them and wanted them to change. But they had to see they were not acting like God but the devil. He didn't ignore them and act as if they were believers. No, He was direct and to the point as they were a testimony against what Christ is. When someone claims to be of God but acts like the devil it's a testimony against all that is right and gives the world a wrong impression of our wonderful Lord. It goes against all those who are striving to be like the one they love...JESUS. One who practices the flesh is not of God. Read Romans chapter 8.

We have a responsibility as those who are in love with Christ. We are to share with those who are practicing the attributes of the flesh in our midst (Galatians 5). It is a mission field before us. Of course we are to look first into our own life but we are not to ignore those who openly defy what Christ is by their life and actions.

The world is watching us. How many times have we approached someone with the gospel and the response was negative because they knew someone who claimed to know Christ but the person they knew was mean-spirited and hard-hearted? On the other hand, how a heart has been prepared by the knowledge of someone who has demonstrated the true character of Christ to them and they have seen the difference: the difference between the person who has the fruit of the spirit and the one who lives for the desires of the sinful flesh.

The older I get the more I see it's not just the words we speak. I have heard great messages on love and unity. But if the message was coming from the mouth of someone

who had little love or desire for loving the body of Christ in unison and demonstrated this in their life, it would not have the same impact. It is easy to love self and have selfish ambition through empty words. I have heard messages where the emphasis was 'NOT WANTING TO BE LIFTED UP but wanted only to lift up the Name of Jesus', when, in reality, the personality was lifting himself up to the ceiling. Until there is a liberation of such attitudes and those similar, I do not see real changes coming to many lives.

In simple terminology the message is: If we are like Jesus and this comes from the depths of our heart, we are in His family. We have the right DNA and we will enter the promise He has given to His sons and daughters. But if we do not have the attributes of Christ and He is not constantly working in us to make us more like Him, we are not going to enter the Kingdom of God. It doesn't matter the great principles we speak of or the precious doctrines we claim to have and protect. No one, who is not like Christ, will ever see Him.

We may feel it is a Christian attribute to feel, "Oh well, Filippo maybe selfish, unloving and hard to live with, and he's given over to a lot of self and pride, he is divisive and always opinionated but hallelujah, he's saved!" We are saying someone can act like the devil but claim to be of Christ. No, we should, in love and patience, attempt to show the brother or sister how they are not representing the principle of Christ and warn them of the eternal consequences if they do not change.

IF IT LOOKS LIKE A FISH IT IS PROBABLY JUST THAT... 'A FISH'