

FULL STATURE UNTO THE MEASURE OF CHRIST

In the church we find extreme perfectionism and extreme carnality. Neither is God's plan for the church. Both produce rejection from those who seek Bible truth.

1 John 2:12-14 Shows us three measures of growth. Children : Young Men : Fathers. Our vision and conception of God and His purpose determines our consecration. Without vision we will see no need. Just believe! Without consecration we will miss our calling.

The immature will crack under pressure. Another indication of immaturity is a general lack of self discipline in spiritual matters that should be common to normal Christian life.

We have spoken for years about the foundations for Christianity. We have neglected the foundations for maturity. The foundations in Heb. 6:1-3 are beginnings. From here we still must go on to maturity.

Putting all our emphasis on believing in the "finished work of Christ" have led many to believe in the continuous work Christ and the sanctifying work of Holy Spirit. 2tim 2:13 2TH 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning **for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.** 2TH 2:14 And it was **for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Since man did fall he must be redeemed through the sacrifice of Calvary. However, God's eternal purpose didn't change. Calvary became the gateway to salvation unto Go's eternal purpose. Now there is a great race set before us. HEB 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, HEB 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For this we must endure the discipline of God. This is not just escape but fulfillment.

Spiritual stature has to do with fulfillment and living to please God.

Without understanding God's purpose we will see no purpose or appreciate the daily pressures and trials and suffering of daily life. Without vision we cast off restraint.

Our great salvation relates to God's eternal purpose and not just escaping Hell. We must move from earth viewpoint and the temporal to the eternal viewpoint. If our perspective was out from God's throne we would see from a different viewpoint. From God's viewpoint rather that from man's viewpoint.

If we could see from before the beginning into eternity future we would be liberated from the sin center of redemption to fulfillment of God's eternal purpose center. Once we can see from the eternal perspective is much easier to fit the seemingly fragmented parts of scripture together to fit

from beginning to eternity.

Jesus came for much more than provide to die on Calvary as a sacrifice for sin. He certainly did that but He did much more. ROM 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ROM 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath {of God} through Him. ROM 5:10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ROM 5:11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

In Ephesians Paul starts before the foundation and not Gen 3 and the fall of man. Not only is redemption centered in Jesus Christ but God's eternal purpose is also centered in Jesus Christ. Every thing is to be gathered together and summed up in Jesus Christ. We were each predestined to adoption as sons and to an inheritance according to His purpose.

EPH 3:8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, EPH 3:9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; EPH 3:10 in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly {places.} EPH 3:11 {This was} in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, EPH 3:12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

COL 1:19 For it was the {Father's} good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, COL 1:20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, {I say}, whether things on earth or things in heaven. COL 1:21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, {engaged} in evil deeds, COL 1:22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, **in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach--**

God's work "in us" is that which is related to God's unfolding plan and is related to the whole of God's plan.

The message of "the gospel of salvation" focuses upon our sin consciousness and our alienation from God. When we are forgiven we have reached the goal and nothing is left except enjoying God's grace and His provision. There is no reason to press on toward the mark of the high calling of God. No reason to suffer. ACT 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and {saying,} "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." 2TH 1:5 {This is} a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 2PE 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 2PE 1:11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

The problem with redemption consciousness is it only sees the incarnation and Calvary as God's purpose rather than related to God's eternal purpose. We really have no place to stop until we reach God's eternal purpose.

2TI 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with {me} in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 2TI 1:9 who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, 2TI 1:10 but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

God not only saved us but all who are saved are also called according to God's eternal purpose.

God has provided us redemption but He not only redeemed us but we now must be developed to become like Him. Adam was created with a certain perfection but it is clear that Adam wasn't all that he was predestined to become. He still needed to be developed or obtain maturity. The Christian who "is going on" will develop his soul powers through learning doctrines or he will develop his spiritual powers by walking with God and living according to His Life. Both trees are still available and the tree of knowledge still gets the same results.

There is an outward cross that we participate in as the means of escape and deliverance. There is a subjective cross that is our means of our development. If we reject the subjective cross we remain babies. The cross is related to fulfillment. Our cross is our lives poured out 100% to do God's will and to bring joy to His heart.

Those who refuse to move **beyond the cross will remain in their self-centered lives**. God's eternal purpose gives us the opportunity to join with God in the fulfillment.

When we receive questions, many want to know if Lot's wife was saved. This is because they are focused upon deliverance and not fulfillment. They are more concerned about her turning to salt than in the fact that she had no concern about God's purpose in delivering her from Sodom. We look from a man centered viewpoint and we sing songs that are focused on a man centered viewpoint.

For years I have preached on the necessity of full consecration to do the will the whole will of God. I assumed that vision follows consecration. But now I think that seeing God's eternal purpose precedes consecration because consecration before vision produces very little. We have seen some speak the words of consecration and then ask what will I receive now? Will this put me ahead of others? That is not consecration!

Consecration is not for the purpose of "getting something from God". That is still self-centered. Consecration is the beginning of inward and outward adjustments that many times are painful. We must have vision to begin and then God brings us to vision enlargement. Our perspective begins to widen. We begin to see how all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

An example of progressive vision or enlarging vision is seen in Abraham. When he was separated from Lot he saw the land that God had given him. When he lost interest in earthly possessions and trusted God for his provision, he saw that God, Himself was his great reward. When he was willing to be separated from Isaac he saw that he was more than an earthy father of few but a father of multitudes.

Israel's goal was to be delivered from the cruel hand of Pharaoh but never developed a vision of God's purpose for delivering them. God's high calling was to make the whole nation a kingdom of priests. Their vision was focused upon enjoying the blessing of a land flowing with milk and honey. When they failed they blamed Moses because he didn't give it to them. They never recognized their responsibility in fulfilling.

The first generation focused upon getting out of the bondage of Egypt. The deliverance was for them. The next generation was not as concerned about escaping out of Egypt but their goal was to enjoy the land. However, they thought the land was just for their benefit and not related to God's purpose.

Joshua's vision was to possess the land and drive the enemies out. Saul's vision was to use the land for his own benefit. David's vision was to build the temple and establish the Kingdom. He wanted to build a place for God to dwell and a throne for God to rule. We could call this generational vision. Each generation took one step further.

Some who get a vision of the Kingdom develop personal ambitions of a private kingdom and lord it over the flock. The Kingdom of God involves character and all that means. We can see the Kingdom but refuse the adjustment that is necessary to participate. They want to use the Kingdom for their own benefit like Saul. One problem is facing reality of God's requirements. We see certain scriptures that clearly define the requirements for the Kingdom of God but pass over them as for someone else or for some other people. All the time deceiving ourselves.

Without a clear vision of God's eternal destiny we cannot see problems, trials and suffering as God's servant to do an eternal work in us. God's plan is not to provide a easy way but a fruitful way. Whether we are happy or not is irrelevant.

Every truth has a balancing truth. A "NEW TRUTH" will be too far to the extreme but should draw back to balance in a short time. Many today realize that something is not right and the church does not seem to be moving toward full stature. The prophetic ministry feel they have the answer because they are the seers. However, their message does not seem to move the church forward.

It is not that they don't have light but that the light they have is still not focused upon God's purpose or upon God center.

There are some paradoxes in scripture that need to be brought to balance. For example; Christ is both in heaven, seated at the right hand of God and he also dwells in each of us. The scriptures says that we are both in heavenly places with Christ and walking on earth. This is an obvious truth

but is not readily understood. If we emphasize one and not the other we will be unbalanced. Our "truth" then will be out of eternal perspective and can lead mysticism or to carnalism. The enlarged vision from God's perspective in eternity will bring the proper balance.

HEB 12:25 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned {them} on earth, much less {shall} we {escape} who turn away from Him who {warns} from heaven. HEB 12:26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.." HEB 12:27 And this {expression}, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. HEB 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; HEB 12:29 for our God is a consuming fire.

Is everything going to shake until it falls apart or is there a cohesion that will not fall apart. Since there will come a dangerous shaking, we should examine how we can stick together. This is a warning from God for the church. Those who just rejoice in "our salvation but are not careful to live in the unshakable Kingdom. Is it reasonable to take comfort in the fact that we have received Jesus as personal savior. The writer was writing to those who were "saved".

Without a sense of destiny and God's eternal plan these warnings will be confusing. Few in the church seem to have that inner witness of the seriousness of these warnings. What happened to that mechanism that God has put into us in our redemption? It lies dormant and needs to be awakened by an eternal vision. Each inner compass needs to be magnetized toward God's eternal purpose so our guidance is always pointed toward our predestined destiny rather than our beginning experiences. I believe this is why the Christian life becomes monotonous to believers that have no vision working in them. This is why many believers concentrate upon being always busy "for the Lord". Their business changes direction with the wind because they haven't a fixed vision upon an eternal goal. Not just going to heaven when they die, someday. The constant repeating a message that focuses upon the foundations is sure to cause boredom even though they appear to be listening. Then all of a sudden they are gone from our midst. They died from boredom.

Why else would we see such shallow and artificial and meaningless apathy in the churches? There has been "conversion" but no governmental change that establishes the Kingdom in the life. The conversion doesn't turn us from our own lordship to Christ's Lordship. Man can become very busy trying to get God to do what we want Him to do. We get caught up fulfilling our own purpose and try to get God to co-operate and help us satisfy our own goals. They get frustrated and wonder why God doesn't co-operate.

Man has a self centered goal that must be satisfied or boredom sets in we loose interest in even seeking God.

Some insist in gaining a goal without knowing if that is God's goal. Many don't even realize that God will only help us meet His desired goal. Some have no idea that there is even "a goal". Some

are seeking to fulfil a calling without knowing God's goal. Walking toward God's goal will illuminate our calling. God doesn't give a calling when we are without a vision of God's goal. He doesn't give an anointing so we can turn toward our own with power. Praying for power to walk in our own ways is fruitless.

There is a general calling and then there is a special calling to edify the corporate body. Then there is a specific calling to a certain function that only you can do. These are continuous calling toward God's eternal purpose. To use a gift for edifying but have no vision of fulfilling God's eternal purpose is just "a gift". We are not depreciating gifts but everything must be focused upon our eternal destiny.

In the tabernacle there was a necessary and critical offering called "the sin offering". That has been well preached. However, there were several other offerings that were equally important to Israel. The whole burnt offering was also important. That is seldom preached. The thank offering is now well preached. The grain offering is seldom preached.

The harvest are well defined in scripture but we have turned the harvest to our benefit. This is why we have reaped a harvest of self-centered "conversions" where God serves us instead of man serving God. God is preached as the one who satisfies our every desire and lives to make us happy, wealthy, and overlooks all our faults. If we sin He doesn't see us, He only sees Jesus that hides our sins as though they never happened.

We have failed to preach that "conversion" begins with being a bondservant instead of being just a believer. Romans 12:1-2 is not just a "deeper life" experience but just a logical thing to do as a part of our conversion. To give ourselves to fulfill His purpose as a Bondslave is our "general calling" and leads to finding our "special calling".

When we ignore Rom 12:1-2 as our beginning calling will result in boredom because we don't find our specific calling and then cannot find our function. This is the fruit of preaching a watered down gospel of "salvation" instead of "the gospel and demands of the Kingdom". Isaiah prophesied from chapter 1 to chapter 6 then he was given vision and his ministry changed. To seek to escape this inner work and go right into "the ministry" will certainly will result in failure. There are thousands of testimony confirming this fact.

There is then a qualifying before we can fulfill. After Isaiah qualified he immediately said "Here am I, send me". Someone has said that work takes on the vision of one who is digging a ditch for God, or someone who is laying a foundation for God in the ditch or one who has determined to build an eternal temple with God, over the ditch and upon the foundation. Ditch and foundation are necessary but surely not the goal.

Many have confused the place of "children with "sons" and the place of "fathers" and have develop contrary doctrines. Children have been born again. Sons have grown some and fathers have taken a burden for the children and the sons. Little controversy here. However, the problem develops over the destiny of "fathers" and the destiny of "sons" because they only see from one viewpoint. Fathers are those who function on earth but in our relationship with God we are

"SONS". We cannot be a Father in the heavenly realms because up there, there is only one Father who has multitudes of children and fewer "sons". God is seeking for those who will accurately represent Him on earth like Jesus did. When they saw Jesus they were seeing the Father.

Man may fulfill his calling to be fathers in time but in heaven there is only the eternal Father.

God is always pressing us toward the Kingdom so that we cannot stay neutral. The failure of the church is that they don't recognize that they cannot stay neutral. The average church "believer" never makes a Kingdom choice to move off center. Somehow they have assumed that neutrality is the safest place to be. They can "be saved" and still receive a crown of life and not be troubled about change. Those who were released from captivity of Egypt have been held captive again to their own will and their apathetic attitude. Both are bondage. They take no responsibility for their own actions or their apathetic attitude. They say "God knows my name and address and if He wants me to do something He look me up.