

Active Life of the Christian

__prayer__

A few random thoughts on Christianity:

With a nod of appreciation to a mode established by Jeff Foxworthy...

If you love dreaming about what the church could become to our community, you might be a Christian

If you worry about the unsaved people in our community going straight to hell, you might be a Christian

If you love the people of our village as much as the people here in our church, you might be a Christian

If you are trying to find others to join with you in making disciples for Christ, you might be a Christian

If you are flexible with you time so that you can be a part of an active church, you might be a Christian

If the thought of young people hanging out in the basement of our church, drinking coffee, playing games and having good clean fun excites you, you might be a Christian

If you ask people to pray for you to hedge you up as you walk in the will of the Lord, you might be a Christian

If you love Christian music and want to sing Gods praises, you might be a Christian

If you are not afraid to try new things to learn and grow, you might be a Christian

If you like to meet new people and make friendships so that you can share what Christ means to you, you might be a Christian

If you want to show kindness to strangers for no reason except to show Christ's love, you might be a Christian

If you can persevere when all Hell breaks loose, you might be a Christian

If you know the population of the village you live in and see the potential for saving those souls, you might be a Christian

Why might?

Because, you must also have real faith in Jesus...

Faith without works is dead... (James 2:14)

I submit, so are works without faith...

If you are working out your salvation and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ... you are a Christian.

Do you want Salmo to belong to the kingdom of God?

If you do, take note of these characteristics which each one us need to cultivate:

- You need to love God more than yourself
- You need to have the capacity to take ownership of the vision in the church
- You need to have stamina, perseverance and drive to make the vision happen
- You need to encourage others in their giftings
- You need to be able to love the unsaved as well as the saved
- You need to be able to create relationships with people wherein they are comfortable and secure with you
- You need to want your church to grow
- You need to accept new people into your family circle
- You need to know what God is calling you to do
- You need to commit time to your Christianity

- *You need to know that this list is not optional but an expectation of all real Christians who are followers of Jesus*

Turn with me to Philippians 2:5-12

Philippians 2:5-12

New International Version (NIV)

⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling

So Jesus took on the nature of a servant as should we. We are also told not to grumble but to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Why? Because, Jesus is serious about our relationship and he wants us to take our relationships with others seriously too.

People are falling away from God. Churches are drying up and closing because of hypocrites who are more concerned about building their own kingdoms and creating fancy church buildings, than about building the kingdom of God. Churches are drying up and closing because members and adherents want to live out their faith vicariously through the actions of their pastor, the result of which the pastor burns out because of trying to do all the work his or herself and not having enough capacity. The job of the pastor and the church is to equip the church to make disciples, to educate, to love and to mentor.

Money is needed to keep churches going, but paying for a pastor or a pastor and staff is not enough. There is a desperate need for real Christians to tithe their time to the great commission. If that is all that you can give, don't get me wrong, I love to eat too, but hey money is good, but this is God we are talking about and he wants you and your time.

I will not say who this is so don't even ask me when, where or who. Names have been changed to protect the individuals...

I was really busy doing bible school work with an assignment due, my housework tasks - not done and I get a call from a lady who has been referred to me by another person. She says: "I have a relative named Steve at my house who is having an affair with a married woman; he is doing drugs and is totally depressed, probably from his sin. Can you come and talk some sense into him?"

I could easily have gone to the "pass the buck" or the ol' "I'm too busy right now to come" or "I'm sorry but I have an assignment that is due tomorrow" but God placed it on my heart to lay aside what I was doing and go over to see this young man named Steve. When I got there we spoke for a couple of minutes about everyday

things, when I heard God say to me in my head, "he needs me, I have brought him here today, lead him in the sinners prayer." I had just met this person 10 minutes before, so I said to him, "Steve do you want a different life?" Steve broke into tears. I told him about the hope we have and the fresh start with Jesus. He told me that he had been seeking various things but had not found anything real. "I told him that Jesus loves him and is willing to forgive anything he has done and give him a fresh start" I also told him that he would need to walk out the consequences of his actions, but that I would walk that road with him. Right there after 20 minutes the Holy Spirit had drawn that young man to Jesus and we had a new Christian" He is a Christian today and still serving God.

What would have happened if I had come up with a reason to not go?

What would have happened if I had started in with a series of moral pronouncements instead of following the voice of the Lord?

What would I say to Jesus, when he asked me about it?

I didn't have to thump the bible at him, I didn't have to pressure him, I just walked where God wanted me and he did the miracle, not me... It is not difficult to talk to people about the hope we have in Jesus, it just requires obedience.

The difficulty folks; is that we will never know the mind of God until we learn to hear the voice of God. Take Moses for example:

40 years to learn wisdom

40 years to recognize his helplessness

40 years to live in the power of the most high

120 years...

It takes a while to learn to discern the voice, leadings and will of God. It doesn't take 120 years, what it takes is Reading and Prayer.

We have an advantage in that all revelation and illumination was exemplified by Jesus Christ, so that we have an example, that those in the old testament did not. He came to show us the way and to empower us to be sons and daughters of God with power and authority, re-established by his sacrifice to oneness with God the father. God has made us super-natural, he has given us the chance to be born again to be able to walk that path wherein we can see the will of the father.

Churches that try to restrain the working of the Spirit within them will dry up...

Christ has come to set us free, we must allow people to express themselves before the Lord as they seek his face. If we don't we may inadvertently interfere and squelch the Spirit of God. I would much rather allow those like Peter and the Paul to rise up than squelch the Spirit for fear of the Judas' It is far better to clean up a mess than to stop what God wants to do.

If you want a church full of life you must have one in which the Spirit of God is manifested.

Sometimes in a church there are those who don't believe in the worship of God, Paul said all things decently and in order, but there are those who seek to crush all worship out of the church, they want the church to operate on Logic. Yet God has already told us that man's wisdom is Gods foolishness (1 Cor. 3:19)

Turn with me to Romans 16:17-20

¹⁷ I appeal to you, brethren, to be on your guard concerning those who create dissensions and difficulties *and* cause divisions, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught. [I warn you to turn aside from them, to] avoid them.

¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites *and* base desires, and by ingratiating and flattering speech, they beguile the hearts of the unsuspecting *and* simpleminded [people].

¹⁹ For while your loyalty *and* obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I would have you well versed *and* wise as to what is good and innocent *and* guileless as to what is evil.

²⁰ And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) be with you.

Don't let anyone rob you of your time in worship with God.

When we are serving God, devoting our time, reading, praying etc., we will start to hear the voice of the Lord. If you're not hearing it, what aren't you doing? It is not an easy path but it is a simple one...

Many try to get the cart before the horse. If I start hearing Gods voice, I will start to obey. If God heals me then I will serve him. Kind of a North American consumer mentality isn't it?

If we only knew how much he loves and cares for us, how much he watches over us, we would be so excited it would be hard to sleep. It would be like that joy that

a child feels waiting for Christmas morning. He loves us unconditionally and he makes our hearts burn.

Turn with me to Luke 24:22 where Luke tells us how they felt about their time with Jesus.

Luke 24:32

New International Version (NIV)

³²They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Remember I said: *"If you want a church full of life you must have one in which the Spirit of God is manifested."*

This manifestation must be from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person in the Trinity, he is the breath of God; he is the illuminator and magnifier of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. When you are baptised in the Spirit, at times you will feel the presence of God from the top of your head to the soles of your feet. You will want to speak but it will come out all garbled up. You will be speaking directly from your heart in a prayer language called tongues. When you are full of the Spirit it flows out from you.

When this happens there are three forms of tongues:

- 1) Personal prayer language between you and God
- 2) Corporate prayer or prophesy in the church – this form requires interpretation
- 3) Other tongues – Speaking in known languages that have not been previously learned by you.

Including Tongues, what are other ways the Spirit is manifested? (1 Cor. 12:8-10)

- Word of wisdom
- Word of knowledge
- Faith
- Gifts of healings
- Miracles
- Prophecy
- Distinguishing between spirits
- Tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

Ephesians 4:11-12

Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)

¹¹And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ,

The five-fold ministry

- Apostle
- Prophet
- Evangelist
- Pastor
- Teacher

In 1 Corinthians 12:28 we see that there are two additional offices

- Helps
- Administration

Where do you fit? How does this apply to you?

Baptism in the Spirit makes us Ministers of the Gospel as it equips us for ministry. While saved you have the Holy Spirit within you, if you are not exercising any of the gifts we mentioned, seek the Lord diligently for baptism in the Holy Spirit so that you can be empowered for witness.

Baptism in the Spirit is awesome, the authority and power we have been given in Christ Jesus is unfathomable, we need to learn what God wants us to do in obedience to access his gifts. Did you notice that Jesus always walked in the will of the Father. If you go to Kootenay lake and try to part it to walk through on dry ground, Good luck. But if God tells you to do it and you respond in obedience, have a nice dry walk... If what you are doing is honoring God it will be done. Be sure of where you stand. If it is done in bravado or if it is your goal to be somebody, you are not in the will of God and will not have any success in your efforts. Even if you are sincere but it is not the will of God, you will not be successful in your attempt. We do not order God, he directs us. That is why in most healings if we have not been directed, we ask humbly with prayer and supplication that God will grant healing.

God wants his name glorified in all the earth. He wants to bring souls into his kingdom, his word is true and it will not return to him void...

What will you be missing if you don't begin to take the necessary steps to be effective for him?

Live life in the Spirit, Walk through life in the Spirit, Communicate in the Spirit, Seek God this very moment, because we do not know how much time we each have left. Let this stir - an urgency in your heart to take hold of your salvation, your royal priesthood and learn how to touch the magnificence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you surrendered your life to Jesus?

Are you prepared to do what it takes to see Gods kingdom on this earth?

Will you get to know why you're in church or will you slowly die spiritually in complacency?

Luke 9:62

Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)

⁶² But Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

You have accepted Jesus and you are committed. You are called to an active life. There are no spare parts in the body of Christ. What are you called to do for your Lord and Saviour? Don't know? Read and Pray about it, but don't get stuck in analysis paralysis. Do something today! Discover the richness of life that Christ has in store for you.

__Prayer__