

Hebrews 5.14

Living and Growing

What is the difference between someone who is living and someone who is spiritually dead? The writer of Hebrews calls these outward professors of Christ "babes" - but the specific word in the Greek does not denote a connection to parents, as in a small child... rather it speaks of immaturity, lack of expected growth, which might indicate life is absent. This is the heart of his argument. Although they would claim life, life does not claim them. They have nothing in them that speaks of transformation and regeneration. They are not growing but static, and the truth of Scripture is that all who are alive WILL grow and produce fruit in accordance with life and righteousness.

Consider the words of Jesus in the sermon on the Mount –

Matthew 7.15-20

Jesus says plainly that the absence of fruit is the mark of someone who is not alive. And what is more, this

presence or absence of fruit is something that we are commanded to examine and judge.

Either a man is a bad tree born of evil or a good tree born of Christ. And no matter what they SAY, their lives confess the truth that they are alive or that they are dead. We might think we are living a life that God should accept, but God's standards are MUCH different than ours. To attempt to satisfy God with our own works and righteousness is a completely empty endeavor. No one will ever succeed. But conversely, those who are made new and alive in Christ will live lives that bear the fruit which Jesus causes to grow. These Jewish "Christians" were banking on their empty words, confessions made without life, and the writer of Hebrews is seeking to warn them that there will be a reckoning coming. That they have been judged and found wanting but that there is still time for them to repent.

The fact of the matter is that as long as there is life, there is hope. And when someone hears the voice of God calling them to repentance the only safe path is to respond IN repentance. Not to argue that they have

joined a church, said a prayer, taken a public bath or signed a card... these outward things are less than nothing when judgement begins in the house of God. All that matters is the reality of life, born of faith that God imparts, and active in obedience unto repentance, with the perfect object of that faith being the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, slain for the forgiveness of sin and raised because of our justification.

With this is mind I want to consider the simple facts of the gospel to help us understand outward sign we are going to witness today. We are going to give witness to the baptism of 6 individuals who have professed Christ as Lord and whose lives have been proven to show the fruit of that confession. This act of Baptism is NOT saving, it does not impart grace, there is nothing in this water that makes it holy... but what it represents is holy. What it demonstrates is grace made manifest in the life of a sinner who has been born again. And in that transformation of death unto life, they have grown, and grown up.

I. DEATH APART FROM CHRIST

a. Born dead in trespasses and sins

Ephesians 2.1-3

b. Separated from God by nature

Ephesians 4.17-19

c. Guilty of Active sin and rebellion against God

Romans 3.9-20

d. Condemned to die for that guilt

Romans 6.23

II. LIFE OFFERED IN LOVE

a. God loved us while we still hated Him

Romans 5.6-8

b. Christ Came to seek the lost –

Luke 19.10

c. He lived a sinless life in our place, fully satisfying the righteous law of God on our behalf

Hebrews 4.15

Romans 10.4

2 Corinthians 5.21

d. His blood, covering us in faith, removes the guilt and stain of sin and makes us wholly acceptable in the sight and presence of the Father of lights.

Ephesians 1.3-6

III. NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

a. Died and buried with Christ

Romans 6.1-14

b. Made Alive in Him

Ephesians 2.1-3

c. Made into a people, chosen for mercy

1 Peter 2.9-10

d. Given a calling and a purpose

Ephesians 2.8-10

e. Set apart for holiness

1 Thessalonians 4.3-8

2 Corinthians 7.1

Hebrews 12.14-17

IV. OBEDIENCE UNTO BAPTISM

a. Baptism a sign and symbol

Acts 2.38-39

b. Baptism a sign of the covenant promise –

Galatians 3.26-29

c. Baptism an outward demonstration of the work of the Holy Spirit

Romans 6.3-4

d. Baptism a command of Christ

Matthew 28.18-20

e. Baptism a covenant with the body of Christ

Acts 2.40-42