

ENJOYING GOD

The full purpose of our salvation is that we might enjoy the manifest, conscious presence of God, as well as He enjoys our presence. When we are enjoying the conscious presence of God, we are fulfilling the tenets of our salvation. The purpose of our redemption is to bring us into right relationship to God in order that He might bring us into a conscious relationship with Himself.

Man, unlike others of God's creation, is uniquely created to experience God. Not to know God and his intimacy is to deny our fundamental purpose. Back in the Garden of Eden, before man's fall, God did not come down in the cool of the evening to fellowship with the birds and the deer and the flowers. He came down to have fellowship with Adam and Eve.

Once we get a grasp of the basic, fundamental truth of God's Word, then we can begin to understand the rest of what the Bible teaches. One of those basic truths is that God made us for Himself. That we might know Him, live with Him, and enjoy Him forever. In spite of this, the human race has been guilty of revolt.

Men have broken with God, and the Bible teaches that we are all alienated from Him. We, the human race, are strangers to Him. We have ceased to love Him, ceased to trust Him, and ceased to enjoy His presence. Man's revolt has in no way changed the basic truth of God's Word. Man and God are enemies until there has been reconciliation by a sacrifice that satisfies God.

Take Cain and Abel as an illustration of this. It was not that Cain was a bad man and Abel was a good man. In fact, they were both bad men. Abel knew that he was bad, but Cain denied that truth and acted like he was a good man. He would have fit very well into most of the liberal churches today. He had a flippant attitude towards his relationship with God. Abel came in humility, and brought a sacrifice, looked up and said: "Oh God, I'm not worthy".

Paul's message was simply to tell people that they are sinners, they are without hope and without God in the world, and the spirit of disobedience works in them. This is not the message people want to hear today. And yet, until people come to this point of view, they will never enter into God's plan to

meet with them. Until people are converted to Jesus Christ, they remain outside of God's plan for fellowship. They are without hope.

Many are like that today. About the only time they get to church is when a baby is born or when someone gets married or when someone dies. Someone rather cynically pointed out that some people go to church three times in their life. The first time, they throw water on them. The second time they throw rice on them, and the third time they throw dirt on them. This seems to apply to many people these days.

As awful as man's revolt and sin is, so wonderful is the all-sufficient remedy, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God”. “Except he repent, he cannot see the kingdom of God, that holy place”.

This is what the local church ought to be, a place lighted by the light of the Word shed forth by the Holy Spirit. And where we gather to eat of the bread of life, not only on Communion Sunday but all the time, every Sunday.

It is the place where the altar of incense sends up its sweet spirals of fragrant perfume, sweet to God. And the sound of prayer is pleasant to His ear. It is the sight of enlightened people gathered together that is pleasant to His eyes. This is the only kind of church I am interested in.

From my reading of the Holy Scriptures, I find there is nothing in the church that appeals to the world, and nothing in the world that appeals to the true church of Jesus Christ. Every revival in church history has occurred when the church stood in stark contrast to the world around them. Our worship services should be so holy and so filled with the sense of God's presence that unholy men will be very uncomfortable.

People should come to a church worship service not anticipating entertainment but expecting the high and holy manifestation of God's presence. When this begins to take place, several things will happen. First all the carnal and pseudo-Christians we'll let out a yell and head for the nearest exit. Attendance will plummet and the offerings will all but disappear.

Many churches are not willing to pay this price. But then the next thing that happens is the church begins to draw in people with an insatiable hunger and desire for God. Tired of the trite entertainment style of the world they long,

as a deer pants after the water brook, for a real experience with God. God's people are hungry for real spiritual food.

They have had it with artificial light, and art and stale bread and odorless incense. They have had it with cheap imitations imported from the world. They long for the reality of God's presence among them.

We could have the church again, purified and cleansed, so that when we walk in, we are walking in where the light shines. Whether it's bread to eat and whether it's prayer to be made that goes to the ear of God with acceptance. That is the church.

I love the church, for this is what the church is: a company of people committed to this faith, to this kind of belief, enjoying the manifest, conscious presence of God.