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The Judgment pt. 5

We've spent four weeks talking about the judgment between the first and the second. The living and the dead. The old and the new. The judgment that was established on the cross, but is now being established in our hearts.

I don't have time to review what we've said so far about that judgment...only to say that the judgment is a division. Judgment means division. Judgment means a dividing asunder between two things. And in the case of the cross, the judgment divided that which old and new, dead and alive, first and second, shadow and substance, not Christ and of Christ. That was permanently established in the cross, but must be revealed to our darkened understanding or we will never walk in what was established.

It is in us by new birth. But we will never experience what is in us unless light shines in us and we see what is ours by the Spirit. In fact, the Spirit has been given that we might know the things freely given.

And so the judgment that the cross is, is now working in us. Everything that we've brought over into Christ that is not Christ is coming under the light of that judgment. Everything of the old man. Everything of the old creation. Everything of the first that is not found in Christ, but is still found in our hearts, is coming under a judgment as Christ is being revealed. Unto what? What's the goal? "Not I but Christ". "For me to live is Christ". "The love of Christ controls me".

And that's where we were last week. That's where we took this judgment – right into relationships with believers.

Most of you have probably already seen this, but unity is not something that you find in the flesh, no matter how hard you try. In fact it has nothing to do with trying to get along, trying to accept one another, trying to have an interdenominational meeting, etc. It has nothing to do with you trying to do anything. Unity is something that exists in Christ because all that is in Christ is of Christ. All that is in Christ shares one life. It all has one mind being formed.

I was trying to think of an analogy, and here's the best I could come up with. If you had two cubes of sugar and you wanted to make them into one, you can't just press them together. If you try to press them together they might get closer in proximity, but they don't form any real unity. In fact, the reality is that when you try to press them together, they will only splinter off into more pieces and divisions.

If you really want them to be blended together into one, you have to take them both and throw them into one cup of coffee. Then, in the coffee, the two experience one reality together. There is no more division. There is no more relating according to the cube. The relationship, the bond, the unity becomes the coffee itself.

Now, of course...I'm not talking about some new age "drop in the bucket" nonsense. We don't dissolve into Christ. That's heresy. The sugar doesn't turn into coffee. We don't turn into Jesus. But he becomes that which is our bond. He becomes that which is unity.

The coffee was already one single cup. It was already one. It was the sugar cubes that were divided. It wouldn't help to educate the sugar cubes about how they should be one. It wouldn't help to educate the sugar cubes about the coffee. The only place that they will ever not relate to one another according to the cube is in the coffee. When they share something much greater than just physical proximity.

But that's not how we think about it. We just keep trying to relate according to the cube. We keep trying to "find things that we have in common"...but all of that is in the flesh. We keep thinking that if we can just get enough Christians to meet under one roof then we can call that unity. But that's not unity. Unity is in Christ. Unity is in the coffee...not in the accumulation of close sugar cubes.

Can you see that? Unity is sharing one life. Having one life formed in many. Unity is not a bunch of carnal minds agreeing on doctrines. We've tried that for 2000 years and that sugar cube keeps breaking up more and more and more. Now its just a bunch of sugar grains...trying to unite in theology, trying to unite under leaders, trying to unite in a building. But that's not where the uniting is. The uniting is in Christ.

And I promise you that no ecumenical movement is going to establish anything until we're established in His life. Because that is what unity is. Unity is many sugar grains sharing one cup of coffee. Not a council of leaders deciding whether the coffee exists and whether we can all agree it was born of a virgin.

Can you hear what I'm saying. Once again I'm simply saying that we're in Christ, but without judgment. I'm saying that we've brought over into Christ everything imaginable of the flesh and we're trying to find things of the flesh with which to relate to one another.

Lets think about that concept for a minute - "trying to find things we have in common". I don't know if I even want to comment on that. Trying to find things that you have in common in the body of Christ? What does that even mean?! Well, for those who have seen Christ as their life, that no longer means anything.

Listen to me for a minute. What would it mean if my hand was trying to find something it had in common with my shoulder? I just don't know how to relate to this shoulder because we have nothing in common. I have fingernails, and he doesn't. I have several digits, and he's just kind of a round lump. Well, I guess we're a similar color! That's a nice feature that we have in common. Maybe we can talk about that.

What would it mean if my hand spoke that way about my shoulder? It would mean that the hand was completely missing EVERYTHING. It would mean that my hand was entirely ignorant that the same blood, the same cells, , the same tissues, the same the same LIFE! was shared by both. In fact, they were already joined inseparably by that very life that they had in common.

The last thing in the world that would have any significance would be the size, shape, or color of the vessel. All that matters is the CONTENTS OF THE VESSEL.

But do you see that we are all seeking to relate to one another according to the size, shape, and color of the vessel and not the contents. Not that which fills the vessel.

Well, I just can't relate to that brother because he's from a different church background. I just can't relate to that sister because she likes shopping and I like sowing. I just can't relate to that brother because he's black and I'm white, she's yellow and I'm red. I just don't have anything in common with that church because they meet on Saturdays. I can't connect with him because his vessel is grumpy, bashful, dopey, sneezy.

Well that's true as long as we see each other according to the flesh. That's true when we are in Christ without judgment. And that's what we were getting into last week. Lets look at some of these Scriptures again.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17.

14 for the love of the Christ controls us, having judged thus: that if one for all died, then all died,
15 and for all he died, that those living, no more themselves may live, but him who died for them, and was raised again. *(the prepositions "for" or "to" are not found in the original Greek. i.e. it is not live "for themselves, etc)*
16 Therefore we now know no one according to the flesh, and even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him no more in this way;
17 therefore if any one 'is' in Christ -- he is a new creature; the old things did pass away, lo, all things have become new.

Can you see more clearly what he's saying? Yes there's been a judgment. A judgment that is working in my heart. What's that judgment?

Just this – **that one died for all, so all died, and now he is the life of all that live.**

Therefore...what? The next verse: "therefore now we know no one according to the flesh"

What does that mean? Well, Paul might say. "Well I've seen that the old man, the flesh, all of Adam has been crucified with Christ. The old man, the old creation, the first. All of it is without life. All of it was crucified with Christ. And that the body of believers has now become, because of this judgment, the temple of the living God. It has become the branch of His life. We've become like a hand and a shoulder that share one life and have all things **of life** in common.

How is it effecting me? Well, I can no longer, in my thinking, in my feeling, in my thoughts about you, in my values connected with you and all others in Christ, I can no longer base them upon what is dead, upon what you were, upon what is irrelevant, upon what doesn't even exist in Christ. I can no longer relate to you according to whether you have fingernails and five digits. There is something, SOMEONE, that we share, in whom we are one.

And now I cannot relate to you according that which is not even life! A judgment has come in. I don't relate to you according to the flesh.

The place of connection is no longer things we have in common in the flesh. All of that seems meaningless now. The place of connection has become a person – the one who is the life of all that live.

And now I simply cannot try to find relationship with you according to realms and realities that don't even exist in Christ. At one time, perhaps, those were all that we had between us. At one time those things seemed to be a common bond, knowing nothing else. But now those things are being put away from my heart as they have already been put away by the cross. Black, white, Jew, Greek, male, female, age, common interests, ministry goals, etc. Relationship, true fellowship, has nothing to do with these things. They don't even exist in Christ. These things can be enjoyed by those who are in Christ, they don't cease to exist **on earth**...but they are not the place or the reality of connection in Christ.

"One died for all, therefore all died...and now He's the life of all who live". And therefore, because of that judgment, I know you, I relate to you, I perceive you, I enjoy you, entirely according to the Life that we both share. I enjoy you in the coffee that defines us both.

That has become the point of connection. That has become that which we share. That has become the joy of my heart to be with you, to think of you, the joy of our time together. The one that we share. The life that we share.

How do I know you? I know you in Christ. How do I relate to you, truly relate? I relate to you in Christ. Not "I relate to you as a Christian". That doesn't matter. That can just be more things in common in the flesh, except its just got spiritual language. Common vision, common destiny, common purpose. No...none of that means anything unless Christ is the life of it. I relate to you in Christ.

Now here's where we started going with this last week. How do you know Christ according to this judgment? What is knowing Christ. Paul here says something very important.

16 Therefore we now know no one according to the flesh, and even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him no more in this way;

What does that mean? Well, I want to tread lightly here so as not to step on toes. But, in the same way that we do not relate to one another according to the flesh, we don't relate to Christ in that way either.

What does that mean? Well, I think that in the case of this letter, some of the people that Paul is writing to might possibly have known Jesus or knew people who knew Him as a man. But that's not really what its addressing. We can still know Jesus according to the flesh today.

Many of us like to think about Jesus in the 33 years of his humanity on earth. We like the stories of what he did, what he taught, how he wept, how he kept silent

when he was beaten, etc. And I'm not saying that there is anything wrong with that. Those are true and amazing stories.

But what I am saying is that often times we kinda picture him according to how he acted, what we think he was like, what we think it would have been to walk with him, what we think it would have been like to sit around the campfire with him, what he must have done in the carpenter shop as a kid, how he must have been so obedient to his parents. And all of that conjures up warm fuzzies in our hearts for this man – Jesus the Nazarene.

And we love this because that is what we can relate to. We can relate to these kinds of realms and realities. We can relate to carpenter shop. We can relate to trying to obey parents. And we fall in love with these stories. We fall in love with his perfection, his sinlessness, his wisdom, his boldness, his character, etc. It stirs emotions in our hearts, and we become familiar with him according to his sayings, his stories, his amazing life on earth.

And there he is over there – Jesus the Nazarene. And here I am, over here, Jason the Akronite. And boy wasn't it great when he said this. He just amazes me. And wasn't it amazing when he did this. And we relate to Him in his humanity. But always as one separate from ourselves. Always as one whom we admire from afar. Always as one who we'd like to imitate. Always as one that we wish we could talk to. "I'd give anything to talk to Jesus for an hour!"

Let me just say something. I would rather have a small measure of Christ revealed in me, then to sit and talk for an hour with Jesus the Nazarene. Why? Well Jesus Himself said it – its better that I go away to the cross, because its far greater to have me in you than with you. I think sometimes we still don't believe that.

As long as He is outside of me, we can only know Him according to that which we have in common – which is our flesh. But if His Spirit lives in me, and, more than that, is revealed in me, THEN I can know the life of Christ, then I can know the mind of Christ, the affection of Christ, the wisdom of Christ, the righteousness of Christ. **Then I know Him through a participation in His life.** Then I know Him in the resurrection, by partaking of that resurrected life.

Don't you see that they all talked with the Nazarene for 3 ½ years and had no idea about anything until He was living in them. They all watched him with human eyes, loved him with human love, he astounded their mind. But that was not truly knowing Christ. That was talking to the Nazarene. That was observing the Son of Man. That was standing in wonder at the Messiah. But that was not knowing Him. Jesus walked alone to the cross.

They all talked with him, walked with him, sat around the campfire with him for three years. And then, after 3 ½ years of relating to his flesh...not being born of His life...but relating to his body, relating to words, watching miracles...then, on the way to the cross they were arguing about who would get to sit next to his body in an earthly kingdom. Who would be the greatest. Then they were telling him not to go to the cross. Then they were telling him not to wash their feet. Then they were deserting him and thinking it was all over after his crucifixion. Man, I thought He was the Messiah.

They didn't have a clue. They knew him only as flesh connects with flesh. As sugar cubes get close together. They never knew Him as their life. They were not born of His Seed. They truly did not know him until the one they watched for 3 ½ years was living in them.

And that is why Jesus can say to them "truly truly I say to you that nobody knows the Son except the Father". Well, what about us, Jesus? We've been your buddies and followers for years. Nope. Why not? Because to truly know me is to have my life living in you. And you will only know that life through the power of the resurrection – when I become the resurrection and the life in you.

And that is why Paul says "oh, that I might know Him in the power of the resurrection". That does not mean that Paul was hankering to see another miracle. The only way to truly know Christ is in the resurrection. In the life. Sharing His life.

The knowledge of God is not familiarity with his earthly actions, but a participation in His life, a participation in His mind. It is not fondness for the Nazarene, it is sharing the life of the resurrected Son. Unto us a child was born. Yes that's true. That child was born to die...so that the Son could be given as our life. Unto us a child was born, but a Son was given. The child wasn't given in that way. He was born unto us to die...so that the resurrected Son could be given. So that the one Seed could be sown in many. So that the living Son, the Son of the resurrection could become life to us out of death. So that we could know Him who is life.