

## **Substituting Activity for Identity**

Today, we have substituted activity for identity; doing instead of "being"; religious works for Christ in place of a relationship with Christ. We have predicated spirituality on performing rather than abiding. In fact, we equate busyness with spirituality. Job's comforters were severely rebuked for having fashioned their understanding of God on what they did for God rather than receiving the revelation of God. Religious activity has become more important than a growing and deepening relationship with the Person of Christ.

There is only one Christian life. It is the life of Christ. To put it simply and succinctly: **the Christian Life is Christ.**

There is only one Person Who can live the Christian life -Christ!

He gave His life **for** us so that He can now live His life **IN** us and **THROUGH** us.

Have I given myself to:

- ◆ the "Christian way of life" but not to Christ Himself?
- ◆ witnessing, but not to the One Who is the Way?
- ◆ discipleship, but not to the one Who is the Door of the Sheep?
- ◆ missions, but not to the Messiah?
- ◆ saving souls but not to the Savior of souls?
- ◆ music, but not to the Master?
- ◆ Praise and Worship, but not to the Prophet and Priest?
- ◆ the family, but not to the Friend of sinners?
- ◆ informality in the Church, but not to intimacy with Christ?

These can all be good pursuits and even well intentioned but Christ is to be the Initiator and He is to have the preeminence.

Whoever is the initiator is responsible for the results. When we initiate, then we assume we must produce the outcome and achieve success. Hence, the work **for** Christ becomes a **work of the flesh** -human wisdom and human strength. When the Word of God declared, "all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Is. 64:6) the prophet was not just speaking of a person's life before coming to faith in God. He was also addressing the works of the redeemed when begun by the believer and done in the flesh -anything I initiate or accomplish by my own effort is as filthy rags before God!

The Lord Jesus Christ did not initiate anything during His earthly life (John 8:28-29) yet *there has never been One with a "busier" and more demanding "schedule" than Christ!* Christ never operated in His own ability and power. The Scriptures describe His time on earth as One Who **"made Himself of no reputation"** (Phil.2:7).

The phrase literally says "He emptied Himself" implying a giving up or surrendering. Christ, however, did not surrender any of His attributes otherwise His character would have changed and He would have ceased to have been fully God while on this earth.

No, that which **Christ surrendered** was the **independent use of His attributes**, so that He lived a life of total, complete and conscious dependence on the Father - **never** speaking His own words **nor** doing His own works **nor** even initiating anything **for** God the Father! Yet, He could avow at the end of His ministry "*I have finished (completed, accomplished) the work which Thou (God the Father) gavest me to do*". (Jn.17:14) and Believers are exhorted, "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*". (Phil.2:5).

The Christian Life is not what ***I can do for God***, but ***what Christ wants to be in me***. Therefore, when my purpose, goal and aim in life is simply ***to know Christ*** - living a life of intimate, abiding fellowship with Him -then He will initiate and fulfill His good works through me (see Eph.2:10). His good works are the overflow of my daily walk with Him -His life being lived through me -without my even realizing that which He is doing. ...this will bring praise and honor and glory to Christ the Preeminent One, "Christ in you (which is) the hope of glory" (Col.1:27)

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