

Doing and Saying – a Christian Pilgrimage

There's a war going on – Week 31

The Revolution is real.

Day 210: Preparation

So, why doesn't everyone just "get along"? Why can't I just be happy?

As Bishop N.T. Wright wrote,

"... once the revolution was launched on Good Friday, the vital work was already done. We do not have to win that essential victory all over again. What we have to do is to respond to the love poured out on the cross with love of our own: love for the one who died, yes, but also love for those around us, especially those in particular need. And part of the challenge of putting that into practice is that the powers, in whatever form, will be angry. They want to keep the world in their own grip. They will fight back."

Wright, N. T.. The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion (pp. 365-366). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

While in Christ we are freed from having to play only to harm and destruction (the "old music"), the old music still has power – people everywhere are daily tempted by it, and some do not understand there is a different music which can be played, one of life and love. We can be weak and fall. Even though Aphrodite, Mars, Mammon, etc. are defeated by God the Creator of All through Jesus' death and resurrection, people continue to give them life – and they jealously grasp.

What are you trying to tell me?

Be prepared for evil and suffering.

Have you ever experienced suffering because of following Christ?

Share your answer with others whom you trust.

Day 211: Evil

“One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked so much about a Dark Power in the universe—a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the Power behind death and disease, and sin. The difference is that Christianity thinks this Dark Power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong. Christianity agrees with Dualism that this universe is at war. But it does not think this is a war between independent (or equal) powers. It thinks it is a civil war, a rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by the rebel.

“Enemy-occupied territory—that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage. When you go to church you are really listening--in to the secret wireless from our friends: that is why the enemy is so anxious to prevent us from going. He does it by playing on our conceit and laziness and intellectual snobbery. I know someone will ask me, ‘Do you really mean, at this time of day, to re-introduce our old friend the devil—hoofs and horns and all?’ Well, what the time of day has to do with it I do not know. And I am not particular about the hoofs and horns. But in other respects my answer is ‘Yes, I do. I do not claim to know anything about his personal appearance. If anybody really wants to know him better I would say to that person. ‘Don’t worry. If you really want to, you will. Whether you’ll like it when you do is another question.’”

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (1952; Harper Collins: 2001) 45-46.

An independent, intelligent, evil power?

Describe your thoughts on evil, including evil “powers” and any kind of evil “intelligence.” An illuminating book on this may be The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis, or indeed, the bible.

Share your picture with others whom you trust.

Day 212: Identifying friend from foe

I don't like where you are going with this. I've just committed my life to pursuing LOVE, committing to Jesus, walking His path – and now you tell me that I may suffer and encounter evil?

Not may, but if as you walk with Christ you WILL suffer and encounter evil. Is that really such a surprise? Look at the world around you. Look at the people around you.

May I make an observation?

Please do.

Now that I'm on the "inside", it seems to me that people "in" the church frequently act and speak more evilly towards themselves and others than people outside of the church.

And?

I thought that since you described the church as the Temple of God, made up of individuals who were the Temple of God, I would find ... God. Not evil and harm!

Ah! As if "all the people in the church are godly, and all the people outside are evil?"

Shouldn't there be some sort of difference?

We need to clear up some fundamentals here.

Please describe the difference between people inside the church (the Temple of God) and those outside, in your own words.

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 213: Some things to consider.

1.) Jesus' greatest criticisms were for the leadership of the church of his day. He called them hypocrites ("actors"). He told people

a. "... do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they teach."

He said to them

b. "Woe to you, (church leaders), hypocrites! You keep locking people out of the kingdom of heaven! For you neither enter nor permit those trying to enter to go in."

c. "Woe to you, (church leaders), hypocrites! You cross land and sea to make one convert, and when you get one, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves!"

d. "on the outside you look righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

And leveled many other accusations against them as well.

Why would Jesus be so accusatory against the church leadership of his day? Do you have examples of accusations He may level against the church leadership of today? Of your specific church community? Of you?

Share your answers with others whom you trust.

Day 214: More to consider.

2.) John (one of Jesus' disciples) answered Jesus, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he is not a disciple along with us." But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you is for you."

Jesus' students had found someone who was following the Path of Christ, even though that person wasn't part of their group.

How is it possible to follow Christ even if you've never formally been introduced to Him?

How is it possible to NOT follow Christ even if you've invited Him into your life?

Elaborate: what did Jesus mean "whoever is not against you is for you?" What does this mean for people inside the church? Outside the church?

Share your thoughts with others whom you trust.

Day 215: Even more to consider.

Then Jesus' mother and his brothers came. Standing outside, they sent word to him, to summon him. A crowd was sitting around him and they said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are outside looking for you." He answered them and said, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who were sitting around him in a circle, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

How does Jesus define His family?

What does that mean for your answers to day 213 and 214? Day 212?

What is the 'will of God' that God wants you to do?

Share your insights with others whom you trust.

Day 216: Rest

We come again to the seventh day, so today we rest. Reflect on the past week and care for your needs (body and spirit). In the evening get together with a group you trust and share what you would like to from the previous week – good points, hard points, what you’ve learned, what you’ve struggled with, etc. Decide again if you wish to continue journeying together or want to stop.

Know that God loves you.