



## **This World Is Not My Home**

True spirituality is measured by my ability to live in the world, deep in the world. (Jn.17:18) At the same time not wearing my Christian “suit” as a costume designed to cover over and disguise who I really am, but as a means of being really one of them. The Word dressed up in a “people suit”, and really became one of us.

We haven't been made spies of heaven or secret agents of grace. Jesus lived here as a man while disguising his deity and yet displaying his humanity. “Adam” was again on earth. (Rom.5:17). Somehow we attempt to disguise our humanity, and display our “deity”, and in doing so we miss the point of the incarnation.

It may seem, because of the flesh, that we are simply and only “strangers and pilgrims”, and yet we are earth men as was Adam. The hymns we sing are of a longing for the “far off land” and we therefore dare not like it here or allow ourselves to be really human. The earth belonged to Jesus when He was here and He seemed at home . Jesus validated our humanity when he became “one of us”. (Heb. 2:14). And there was no way in which he was not like us. (Heb.2:17).

When God made us “complete in Him”, we were not only reconciled to heaven, but we were reconciled to earth as well, and to ourselves, and to our fellows. As believers, we are genuinely human, who are now alive in the spirit, and our humanity has been restored. As restored men, the imago dei, image of God, can be seen more clearly in us by how we behave as men, and not in some new religious fervor, or longing for another place. Jesus said...”I have left you in the world..”(Jn.17:15-19) No one better than us can love the symphony, or the smell of warm bread, or the touch of another we love. As complete men, we know why he took on flesh and blood and we should not fear our own incarnation.

His visit may have been temporary, (Jn. 1:14), (Lit. “He pitched His tent”) , but he was genuinely a man and did not speak of his anxiousness to leave. He was really one of us. We live sometimes, as though we are caught in a time warp...trapped between two worlds...not really longing for heaven and not really enjoying the earth either. We stand on Jordan's stormy banks, “and cast a wistful eye”.

The Bible says little of heaven and much of earth. This is our land to possess. “All things are ours...” There was mud and blood and even gravy on his seamless robe. He was deeply in the world.

Real spirituality is not measured by our aversion to the delights of life, or our isolation from the lost, but by our distinction, while deeply in the world. The true measure of a man's spirituality is best reported, not by our fellow church members, who can also recite the creed, but by our fellows in the workplace who don't even know what a Christian is. Jesus' best letters of recommendation came from his enemies; perhaps ours should too.

Much to the chagrin of the religious community, Jesus “ate with publicans and sinners” rather than feasting on the bread of pretense with those who required Him to be what He wasn't. Even we need not pretend to be Christian among the lost. Paul taught clearly by application that to be deeply in the world meant associations with those of this world, otherwise we would have to “leave this world” (I Cor. 5:10).

“Hold the Fort for I am Coming” ..... Let down the drawbridge! We are not called by God to hold out desperately until He comes to evacuate the fort. We are to spend and be spent. We are to live so closely to our fellows, that like Father Damien, missionary to the lepers, that we are in danger of catching the very disease we seek to cure from those we seek to heal. Jesus was tempted in “all points” just as we. He was deeply “touched” by the feeling of our infirmities. He was deeply in the world.

We live as though we had a Saviour who was not able to sin rather than one who was able not to sin. He lived with a choice; we live with an excuse. To live deeply in the world is risky and dangerous.

“Overcoming” doesn’t mean never touching or being touched. When Jesus was jostled by the crowds, he expected to be touched, and He risked being touched. It cost Him his “virtue”, but the woman who was hurting was healed. You can’t heal without letting people touch you. Serving involves touching; touching involves suffering.

Nowhere does “enduring to the end” mean living off survival packs while awaiting the rapture, hiding from the antichrist, and looking for the enemies’ destruction by the “wrath of the Lamb.”

Spending and being spent is the model of the Saviour. Perhaps it is time to enter into our “incarnation” as Jesus did and become willing to empty ourselves. Perhaps it is time to be found in the “form of a servant”. Perhaps it is time to voluntarily give up the use of our “attributes” as well. With everyone around us running from death, perhaps we need to embrace it. It is time for the “mind” that was in Him to be the “mind” in us, and not fear our own humanity and enter deeply into the world as He did, and be the model for those who have no idea what our “humanity” really is. Perhaps it is time to willingly and openly display our humanity as redeemed men , but men never the less.

- Bob Koivisto