

RECOGNIZING CHRIST IN EACH OTHER

MARKUS HANSEN

All scriptures are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

Recently, I have been asking the Lord, what is hindering the gifts of healing and miracles from being fully manifested in the Church? There are currently many dire needs in the body of Christ; many are seeking the Lord for divine intervention so that they may be healed. During a recent Sunday meeting we sang, "There is a Redeemer." "Thank You, oh my Father, for giving us your Son, and leaving Your Spirit 'til the work on earth is done." We are in a crucial hour in the church and we desperately need the Holy Spirit's help to inherit the many promises that God has promised us since this precious move of the Holy Spirit began.

The book of John, chapters 13 through 17, describes Jesus spending personal time with His disciples before being crucified. Interestingly, reading through the four Gospels it becomes apparent that the twelve disciples were human and different from each other in character just as we are. Peter, loudly proclaiming he would not allow Christ to wash his feet was the most outspoken, being quick to speak and express his personal views. He could be labelled as an extrovert. Thomas, often referred to as 'Doubting Thomas,' needed proof in order to believe. Jesus had explained to the disciples that He was going to be crucified and after the third day, He would rise again. Jesus also said that He was going to prepare a home for them in heaven. Thomas spoke up and said, "*We do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way*" (John 14:5)? Jesus answered him and said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to*

the Father, except through Me" (John 14:6). There are seven "I am" statements in the New Testament and examining these statements we understand that Jesus is explaining who He really is; "*If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him*" (John 14:7). Philip spoke up and said, "*Lord, show us the Father; and it is sufficient for us*" (John 14:8). Philip was one who had difficulty accepting what was said before gathering all the details. He is like an engineer or accountant who typically needs all the details filled in before reaching a decision. Jesus was astounded by Philip's statement and replied, "*Don't you know Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father; and that the Father is in Me*" (John 14:9-10, NIV)? From Philip's question, we can surmise that he, along with the other disciples, still saw Jesus as a human being. Jesus was born of a human mother, but He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and consequently inherited His Heavenly Father's divine nature. It was Christ's divine nature that the disciples were not recognizing.

The disciples heard Jesus teach and expound the truths of God many times, for they travelled with Him for about three years. The Bible records that Jesus was a gifted teacher for "*the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes*" (Matthew 7:28-29). The disciples had also witnessed with their own eyes, restored hearing to the deaf, blind eyes made to see, the lame made to walk again, the dead raised back to life and Jesus demanding even the winds to cease blowing. Yet they

didn't recognize who Jesus really was, so He expounded and said in John 14:11, "*Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves*" (NIV). Though Jesus was admonishing the disciples, He is speaking to us as well. Jesus then says in verses 12-14, "*Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it*" (NIV). Jesus makes a similar statement in John 15:7, "*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you*" (NKJV). This has to be one of the most astonishing statements that Jesus declared, that we, you and I, will perform even greater miracles than Jesus and that He will do what we ask of Him. Saints of God, this is Christ's promise to us. Why are we not seeing these promises being fulfilled?

The key to God answering our prayers, seeing the blind eyes restored, the lame to walk and even the dead to rise again, is contained in God's word. **We are required to not only believe and abide in Christ; we must see Christ in each other and be of ONE mind with each other.** When we abide in Christ we will also abide in God, our Heavenly Father, and therefore will be ONE with Christ and God, our Father. In apostle Paul's letters to the churches, he uses the term, "in Christ," approximately 85 times. "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit* (Romans 8:1). He also clearly states that Christ dwells in us; "*To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Colossians 1:27). If Christ abides in you and in me, then we are required to see Christ in each other.

Approximately a year ago, I cycled one of my favourite routes up to the Seymour Reservoir Dam. This route is paved for hikers, runners and cyclists with no vehicular traffic allowed. The trail follows the contours of the valley wall, generally climbing uphill all the way to the dam, a tough steep, hilly, ride. When I reached the dam, a group of cyclists caught up to me. As they turned around to cycle back I fell in behind them. The return was a very fast and exhilarating downhill ride featuring long steep descents and sweeping curves. As we were descending, my legs were pedalling as fast as they could. When we reached the bottom of the trail, we all stopped by a water fountain to fill our water bottles and were all excitedly chatting and sharing our cycling experience.

As I left the other riders to head home, the Lord asked me a question, "*What was the most important part of your human body when you were cycling at neck break speed down the hill?*" It was an interesting question and it made me think of Corinthians chapter twelve where the apostle Paul used the human body as an object lesson about how the body of Christ functions. Thinking of my ride, I could not think of one single part of my body that was more important than any other except my head. Yes, my eyes, legs, arms, and all my inner parts all played a critically essential role in biking down the hill successfully. My heart needed my lungs to function at their fullest capacity in order to pump enough blood to supply fuel to the rest of my body, etc. This is a beautiful picture of how the church, the body of Christ, should function with Christ the head and every member doing the part God designed them to do; contributing as a whole to the body of Christ so it can mature and grow to full perfection in Christ. Not one member is more important than any other; the only chief is Jesus Christ. Every member of the body of Christ has an essential part to play and with God's help to fulfil their ordained duty or function. David recognized this in Psalms 18:32, "*It is God who arms me with strength, And makes my way perfect.*"

Thinking of individual members of the church caused me to realize

how careful we must be when considering our fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord. Jesus warned us in the seventh chapter of Matthew about being especially careful that we don't judge one another "*for with the same measure we judge others, we will likewise be judged*" (Matthew 7:2). Let us be reminded that God made each one of us as **HE** wanted and we are different from each other by **HIS** design. We all have different personalities and come from different cultural backgrounds. Some people are very outgoing and talk a lot and loudly while others are quiet and soft-spoken and speak little. Others are always thinking of others while some only think of themselves before considering others. It was God who determined our personality traits. I have no right to judge you because you are different from me.

The body of Christ is a close-knit community and unfortunately, familiarity with each other can lead to loss of respect for each other through differences in upbringing, culture and personalities. The expression "*familiarity breeds contempt*" was first used in England in the 1300's by author Geoffrey Chaucer. It describes a human nature (carnal) trait that sometimes arises in close relationships. If we are truly being led by the Holy Spirit, this should not be the case. Paul writing in 2 Corinthians 5:16 wrote, "*Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.*" Paul had reached the point in his walk with Christ that he no longer saw individuals in the flesh but he saw Christ in them. "*Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's*" (2 Corinthians 10:7). Paul saw beyond fellow members' human nature and recognized God's given gifts and ministries of every individual in the body of Christ, the Church.

A while ago upon returning from cycling the Seymour Valley trail, the Lord asked me another question. "*When you were biking down the valley, spinning your legs as fast as they could go, were all the individual parts of your body in complete **harmony** with each other?*" I had to say "yes." There was not one of my body parts that was conflicting with another. Not one body part stood out above another. There was no competition between any of my body parts; they were all in **ONE** accord. Every member of my body was functioning in complete **harmony** with all other parts, just as Jesus described in John 10:30, "*I and my Father are ONE.*"

Jesus used the same expression of being ONE with His Father when He prayed for His disciples before going to the cross of Calvary. "*That they all may be **ONE**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be **ONE** in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me*" (John 17:21).

After reading these scriptures I felt very convicted, realizing as never before that our heavenly Father's desire is that we, members of the body of Christ must be ONE with each other. **GOD WANTS US TO BE OF ONE MIND, RECOGNIZING EACH OTHER FOR THE IMPORTANT, VITAL PART THAT EACH MEMBER CONTRIBUTES!**

If we do not recognize Christ in each other, then we fall under the same accusation as the Corinthian church where Paul admonished the members for partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily; "*For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep (are dead)*" (1 Corinthians 11:29-30). The words "*discerning the Lord's body*" means recognizing or honouring Jesus Christ in **EVERY** member of the body of Christ and subsequently, the essential role that every member contributes for, "*ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular*" (1 Corinthians 12:27, KJV).

QUESTION: Is it possible to see Christ in an individual who is 100% diametrically opposed to oneself in character, personality and disposition? **ANSWER:** Yes, with the help of the Holy Spirit. *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13). *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you"* (John 15:7). Let us not allow the enemy of our soul to rationalize our human reasoning to deter us from receiving the many promises of God.

It is clear from God's Word that to do; *"even greater things than these"* and for Jesus to *"do whatever you ask in His name,"* we must recognize that Christ dwells in each other. This will result in us being ONE with Jesus and our Heavenly Father. When we, as a corporate body, reach this point, we will begin to witness miracles, healings and divine life being manifested.

Though the Israelites were given God's Ten Commandments, His statutes and His blueprint for establishing a righteous nation as well as the opportunity to experience divine life (Deuteronomy 32:45-47) they could not grasp it because of the weakness of their human nature. The cycle of God revealing His plan to the Israelites and they, in turn, failing to follow His instructions continues throughout the Old Testament. They repeatedly turned their back on God. They were defeated by neighbouring nations and then called for help. God heard their prayers and rescued them, but over and over again we see the same cyclical pattern occurring throughout the Old Testament. Clearly, this indicates that man cannot obey God or appropriate His promises by self-effort, human will or determination. The Israelites could not and neither can we. We need help.

Help is what Jesus promised before ascending to be with His heavenly Father. Jesus committed to sending the Holy Spirit to live within us and help us overcome our human weakness and inability to obey Him (John 14:15-18). Though, *"The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our*

sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit" (Romans 8:3-4, New Living Translation). What is the *"just requirement of the law?"* Jesus said, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'"* (Matthew 22:37-39). If we truly love God with all our hearts and our neighbours (brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, the Church) as ourselves, then the Holy Spirit **WILL** help us to forgive each other for our shortcomings of not walking perfectly before Christ. He **WILL** also help us to be unaware of personality quirks or idiosyncrasies that blind us from recognizing Christ in each other. Let us also pray that the Holy Spirit will help us to overcome anything that we personally do that is not pleasing to God!

If we sincerely pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us see Christ in each other, HE WILL. Hallelujah!
Seeing Christ in each other will result in us becoming ONE in Christ and in our Heavenly Father.

I believe with all my heart that if we can reach the same point that the apostle Paul reached where he was able to see Christ in every individual member of the church, then we will begin to see divine life flow freely in the body of Christ, and, we will ***"do even greater things than these."*** Let us pray earnestly and ask the Holy Spirit to help us recognize Christ in our spouses, families, and every member in our local church, in our local elders and deacons and travelling elders and deacons.

Sister Grace Smith mentioned she was thinking of the second verse of the hymn 'Open My Eyes Lord' while I was presenting this message:

*If you would see Jesus and reach out and touch him,
If you would hear Him and the words He is saying,
Then look at your brother thru the eyes of the Spirit,
Then you will see Jesus and know Him and love him.*

God Bless you. ✝



URGENCY

ROGER KAMEL

We might think our lives are long, but to God, a thousand years feel like a moment. Right now, we should let go of distractions and be ready to respond to God's call quickly—that's what urgency is all about.

"As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more" (Psalm 103:15-16).

Yesterday has faded, and tomorrow remains uncertain. So let a sense of urgency be in our hearts continually. Life is but a trial and an opportunity to know the almighty Christ. Often, we procrastinate and just exist in our comfort zones and in complacency.

Proverbs 3:28 admonishes against deferring kindness or aid to others when we're capable of offering it immediately. *"Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it,' when you have it with you."*

Too often, we think we have an endless abundance of time, and we overlook those in need, whether it's a simple gesture of greetings, an act of love and compassion or even a cup of coffee. This lack of urgency stems from the misconception that time bends to our will. However, time waits for no one; the moment to act is now. With a sense of urgency, let us bear the fruit of the Spirit, leading others to Christ, and breaking barriers with love.

James 4:17 reminds us of the sin of knowing what is right yet failing to act upon it. Living in what might be the final days, we must seize each opportunity to serve Christ. For we do not know when He shall come. What we do for Christ today matters. Urgency. *"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin"* (James 4:17).

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:14-17).

These verses underscore the importance of pairing faith with action. In the end times, deeds performed for Christ will hold weight. Urgency compels us to engage in His work while time remains, for the day of accountability is imminent.

"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Nothing is hidden from Christ; He is omnipresent. Noah had to build an ark which was the consequence of sin. So we must continually examine our hearts, intentions, and deeds, and turn away from our earthly desires.

"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:13-16). Let us hold firmly to what we believe.

My loving body of Christ, it is urgent that we worship Him, keep His statutes, observe His commandments, and be fervent in prayer. Time is fleeting, and our need for devotion to Christ's work is urgent. ✝

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Headquarters:
802 Airport Road
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 934
North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3 Canada

Telephone:
(306) 445-2733

Email:
info@globalmissionsinc.org

Online:
www.globalmissionsinc.org

Traveling Ministry Contact List:
www.globalmissionsinc.org/about

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