

The Wednesday Word, November 29, 2023: The Gospel and the Believer - Part 2

“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” Colossians 1:18.

I once had a friend who was a devotee of a certain Indian Guru. My friend would sit for hours looking within himself and having all manner of so-called experiences. When he neglected to meditate, his quality of life, he said, was not nearly as good. He claimed that meditation on the ‘Divine Light’ within him brought peace and joy. His was a classic case of subjectivism. His experience and condition were the centre of his spiritual life.

He and his fellow devotees would congregate weekly and encourage one another to keep growing in their inward experiences. Sounds familiar doesn’t it? It sounds like they were having a testimony meeting or some kind of a mid-week church meeting! But it wasn’t church; it wasn’t Christian. The Lamb of God was not the centre. Their experience was the core of their so-called spiritual lives.

Now, let’s ask a question. Over there we have this ‘Indian Guru’ group of people meeting to encourage one another in their so-called faith. They sit around and inspire each other in their experience and growth. The speaker speaks about them and how they can improve their quality of life. They themselves are the centre of their meeting. Now here’s the question, is this a Christian meeting? Well of course not! Why not? Because, as already stated, the Lamb of God is not the centre! Jesus is neither the goal nor the sum and substance of their meeting.

Now, in a different location, meeting on the same night, in a different part of the city, we have another small group of people. They are not followers of the Indian Guru; they are Christians. Why then is their meeting to all intents and purposes the same as the Guru group? It’s the same cat with different whiskers. They encourage one another in their experience and growth. Their speaker speaks about them and how they can improve their quality of inner life. They are the centre of their meeting. Christ and His finished work are not at the core. So, let’s ask, what’s the difference? Both meetings have the common denominator of self-centred subjectivism.

“Oh no”, I think I hear someone object, “You are too extreme, the Christians are meeting in Jesus’ name!”

Are they indeed? If, in fact, they are meeting in His precious name then let Him, the Lord Jesus, be the centre of the meeting. Let Him be the preeminent one. Tell each other about Him. Teach one another about Him. Give testimonies about Him. Let the gathering of the people be unto Him. (Genesis 49:10)!

One of the many reasons why Christians need to be continually confronted by the gospel is that we are subjectivists by nature. As Luther said, “We need to hear the gospel every day because we forget it every day.” Mark it down; the gospel is God’s cure for subjectivism. The gospel proclaims a salvation that has already taken place outside of the believer. It is a salvation grounded in someone other than us and our performance. Furthermore, it is a salvation grounded

in concrete historical facts. Bible salvation is not centred in the believer's experience, but rather in Christ's experience for us on our behalf.

May it be said of our meetings "*...And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.*" *Luke 4:20.*

Lo! The Incarnate God, ascended;
Pleads the merit of His blood.
Trust on Him; venture wholly,
Let no other hope intrude.
None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.
Joseph Hart

And that's the Gospel Truth!