

# The Divine Obsession

There are three basic categories of Christians. The largest group consists of people who, though they try to avoid the darkness in the world, have no hope that the world can be redeemed. Assuming Christ's return is imminent, they retreat into what seems a shelter of apathy concerning the non-Christian world around them. Yet most are not truly apathetic. Their souls, like Lot's, are vexed by the conduct of unprincipled men (2 Pet. 2:7-8). Their compassion, though, is kindled even if it's limited. Rarely do they extend themselves beyond the needs of their immediate family and closest friends.

They love the Lord, but they don't know how or what to do to change society or even to positively impact their neighborhoods.

The second group of Christians consists of those who would rather rail at the darkness than adjust to it. Though much smaller in number than the first, they are by no means apathetic; in fact, they appear exactly opposite. They rage at the depravity of the ungodly and protest the audacity of the wicked. They pound the pulpit and the pavement; they are both vocal and visible. Yet their ability to transform their culture is, for the most part, neutralized by their negativity and rage. They

are dismissed as judgmental extremists. Most sinners simply cannot endure the harshness of their approach.

Both groups sincerely desire to see our culture transformed. Yet the same problem afflicts them: they are troubled that the world is unchristian, without being troubled that their own hearts are un-Christlike. They do not perceive the priority of God's heart, which is the transformation of the church into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:28-29).

### **World Changers Needed**

It is this very passion to be conformed to Christ that separates the third group from the others. Though smallest in number, its members are the most effective. Throughout history, these have been the world changers. These are the individuals who have understood the priority of God. They know that the Father's highest passion is to behold His Son revealed in a believer's soul. As much as they are moved with compassion for the lost, their primary quest is not to touch their neighbors' hearts, but to touch the heart of God. They know if they awaken the Father's pleasure, the power of His Spirit will go before them. God Himself will change the hearts of those around them.

It is my sincere quest in life to be like Jesus in everything. It stuns me to know that if I am truly

conformed to Christ, I have the Spirit's promise that I will also awaken the pleasure of Almighty God. Here, in my transformation, is the power to touch cities and redeem cultures, for it takes transformed people to transform nations.

### **To Be Like Christ**

Indeed, it was this hunger for Christlikeness that was the secret of Paul's success. His expressed vision was simply, *"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death"* (Phil. 3:10).

Paul's passion was taken up with this one heavenly goal of being conformed to the life and power of Jesus Christ. The apostle's quest was not only to win the world but to know Jesus Christ. The works Paul accomplished – founding churches, writing almost half the New Testament, winning the lost, demonstrating miraculous spiritual gifts, and remaining faithful throughout times of terrible suffering – were all by-products of his passion to know Christ.

Likewise with us, the Father's immediate, primary goal for the church is for us to be like Christ. He rescues us so He can transform us. Some say that the Father's goal is to win the lost. Yet, if this were His highest priority, He would simply bypass the church and save men Himself. Has He not proven, as seen in

Paul's conversion,  
that His abilities to save people are without limit? Did He  
not change the  
arrogant heart of King Nebuchadnezzar into a man of meekness  
who gave glory to  
God? Who can resist Him who is irresistible? However, instead  
of revealing His  
glory, it is His choice to reach to the lost through the  
agency of transformed  
people.

This, my friends, is the  
glorious mystery of our existence: the Almighty has purposed  
from eternity to  
create a race of men and women who, though tested in a corrupt  
and violent  
world, bear the image and likeness of Christ (Gen. 1:27).  
Christ calls this  
heavenly-natured people "the church," His "new creation" (2  
Cor. 5:17 NKJV).

### **The Holy Obsession**

To be in love is to be obsessed with one's beloved; to be  
obsessed is "to  
think continually about the same thing." In this sense, the  
Father is  
obsessed with filling the universe with the Spirit of Jesus  
Christ. Beginning  
with eternity past, revealing the Firstborn in the womb of  
time, and continuing  
with the transformation of the church, the Father desires all  
creation  
ultimately to be summed up in Christ. Our goal is to  
participate in this "*summing  
up*" (Eph. 1:10) until all that we are is conformed to Christ.

Now, if the Father is  
obsessed with His Son, let us also surrender not only to God's

will but also to  
His obsession. Indeed, Jesus prayed that the very love with  
which the Father  
loved the Son would be in His disciples (John 17:26). We can  
receive and be  
flooded with the very same quality of love that the Father has  
for His Son. We  
can know the divine obsession.

Therefore, let us ponder  
and then pursue what it means to be Christ-like. Let us give  
ourselves to the  
divine obsession of God: to see creation, starting with  
ourselves, summed up in  
Christ. For it is here, in the transformation of our lives,  
that we discover  
and fulfill the wondrous obsession of God: *the unveiling of  
His Son in the  
earth*. It is here, at the threshold of Christ in us, that we  
discover the  
power one life surrendered to Christ has upon the heart of  
God.

*Father, let my heart  
become as obsessed with Your Son as You are. Let the fullness  
of my absorption  
with Him displace all other pursuits until, at the mere  
glimpse of Jesus, my  
whole being is flooded with the pleasure You Yourself feel.*

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