

Devotional Thoughts :: Christ the Same: Yesterday, Today, and Forever**Christ the Same: Yesterday, Today, and Forever - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2021/5/8 8:28**

I am the Lord, I do not change. (Malachi 3:6)

The authority of darkness is a very real thing to us. We have experiences, and if we were to capitulate to them, that would be the end of us. He tries to bring upon us that impingement of the authority of darkness, and if we surrender to it, capitulate to it, accept it, we are beaten. If we are the Lord's, Christ is within, and Christ is supreme and we must go on even if we have no feeling, or if we have a very bad feeling; when it seems to be the last thing we ought to be saying, we say it because it is God's fact, and when we begin to affirm God's fact we win through.

Believers know what it is for the enemy to try to make them accept the authority of darkness. Stand upon the truth of God. God does not change with our feelings. God does not alter with our consciousness. This whole life of ours is subject to variation more swift than the variation of weather, but He rules, unalterable, unchangeable. He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." And if He is there within, He has come to stay, and victory is in faith; believing that, standing on that, holding to that; and we must carry that through to its final and full issue, that He is Lord of all, "Head of all principality and power." Satan will sometimes try to make us believe that he is in the place of ascendancy, the place of supremacy, but since Calvary he is not, we stand there.

By T. Austin-Sparks from: The Centrality and Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ - Chapter 4

Re: Christ the Same: Yesterday, Today, and Forever - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2021/5/8 11:55

Thank you for this. I remember in my previous Christian walk how I was taught that I still had a sinful "nature" that I had to try to overcome but I never had lasting success which I attributed to lack of sufficient will power. Eventually, I was led to the ministry work of Neil Anderson and the Steps to Freedom in Christ which emphasizes living out of our new identity in Christ, taking every thought captive that dishonors Christ and exercising authority over the surrounding sin and darknesses that tries to sabotage us.

I also remember hearing a preacher declare that "You can't cast out the flesh and you can't disciple a demon". While I believe that to be a true statement, it left me thinking that I had to figure out which one it was, the flesh or a demon, in order to respond to it. The truth is that demons gain access to us almost always through our flesh. The exception to this is occult practice where spirit influence is invited in directly. Anyway, I don't need to know whether a temptation or evil desire is coming 100% from my flesh or if it's 100% from evil spirits, it's probably a mixture of both. Under my old understanding I would have accepted flesh temptation as coming from "me" and thought I needed to bolster will power to overcome it. Now I know that all sinful temptation and desire comes from outside the real and new me in Christ and I boldly resist and cast down such thoughts and desires. Evil spirits are not obligated to obey our thoughts. Therefore I speak to evil temptation and declare my authority in Christ that I am free of such bondage and I cast down and forcefully resist such temptation and bondage immediately. It is the repetitive exercise of our wills against sin and darkness through bold exercise of authority and faith in Christ and the bold speaking that authority out loud over all that tries to lure us away from who we are in Christ that resulted in my experiencing sustained victory and deliverance from stronghold sins. Practicing discipline along with spiritual warfare together led me to wonderful freedom.

All of Neil Anderson's books are good but his most famous ones are The Bondage Breaker, Victory Over The Darkness, and The Steps To Freedom in Christ.

-Daniel

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2021/5/8 12:24

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Doesn't this take willpower?

Re: - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2021/5/8 13:32

I am sorry if anything I wrote gave the impression that we are to be passive. That was not my intention. If you notice near the end I said, "It is the repetitive exercise of our wills against sin and darkness...". So I did not mean to say our wills are useless or never a good thing. It is what our wills rely on which determines whether it is effective or ineffective in a Christian sense that I am trying to point out.

I grew up in a Christian church that believes in salvation and regeneration in Christ through His finished work on the Cross and the new life by the Resurrection. However, their message about practical sanctification and Christian living was very much law based and rather Pelagianistic. Here is the law, after all the good Christ has shown us we need to try our best to not sin and be a good person. That type of message isn't totally wrong but implies that we rely on our own selves to live out the Christian life. It was very much a message about obsessing over the "outer cup". Relying on our own resources apart from the indwelling Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit can actually produce a Pharisee type of external righteousness. This is not true Christian living. Again, the problem is using the will that does not rely on God's grace or Spirit.

I think that the biggest difference between Old Testament and New Testament living is how New Testament living is far more relational, and for good reason. God lives in our spirits directly and so can be accessed far more readily. Now we live in close intimate relational union and because of this, we live in dependency on Him and cooperate with His leading and moving with His Spirit. As much as someone might want a detailed list of how to live the Christian life I don't think it is possible other than to point them to relational terms like "abide, trust, rely, being led, etc."

So what I wanted to emphasize in my earlier post was to use our wills guided by our new identity in Christ and to boldly exercise authority that Christ gave us over sin and darkness and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Edit: I guess I could have used the term "self reliance" instead of willpower when speaking of the bad or unhelpful use of the will.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2021/5/8 17:29

Many find themselves defeated when using Will power alone without the power of the Holy Spirit. It is Romans 7 all over again. Trying to overcome the flesh by the flesh.

We cannot overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil by will power alone. We overcome our flesh by appropriating our death with Christ. (Romans 6:6). The greater one lives within us, and we must believe that sin shall not have dominion over us. The grace of God is the power of God to overcome sin. We overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the Word of our testimony.

There is a place for the will, and that is to agree with God and His Word.

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (Philippians 2:12,13)