

FOR THOUGH THEY KNEW GOD YET....

For though they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened.....

Therefore GOD GAVE THEM UP in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves,²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

For this reason GOD GAVE THEM UP to degrading passions.

Romans 1 : 21-26

At that time they made a calf, offered a sacrifice to the idol, and reveled in the works of their hands. But GOD turned away from them and HANDED THEM OVER to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:

'Did you offer to me slain victims and sacrifices
forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?
No; you took along the tent of Moloch,
and the star of your god Rephan,
the images that you made to worship;
so I will remove you beyond Babylon.' Acts 7: 41-43

I really want to discuss a big weight that is on my heart and also share the truth that God very recently opened my eyes to. Right from my early days I have read a lot mostly on the pioneering missionaries and the kind of holy life they lived. Not only have I read, God also gave me a great privilege to be in close contact with many God fearing leaders in many of the pioneering missionary movements of India. In all what I have read and whom I have met, the bottom line was humility, loyalty, praying knees, sacrificial, Christ-likeness and a great big love for the lost. There was no big difference between their preaching and their life.

But what is alarming these days is a big divide between what people preach and their personal life. And then my mind went back to this question of how personal and private can be the life of a wo/man of God, that preaching and living can be two different entities? This is not only applicable to the ministers of God, but to every person who has been saved by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

I have to tell this story yet again. It is the story of a missionary who was so tired from a day's work, when a little boy wanted him to go with him to a sick family to pray. The tired missionary asked the little fellow to take his Bible to them to read and pray. Immediately the little one replied, "No, no master they cannot read this Bible, but the Bible they read is you." Such a telling statement of wisdom from the mouth of a small boy. How true! Even this day amidst millions of non-believers , God has placed us as a little group to shine His love and so through us many may be drawn to the light of Jesus Christ.

But sadly, there seems to be no big difference in the life of a non believer and a believer. And worse even people who handle the Word of God , exploit it to their own selfish interests. How would some one who started so well in the Lord, be led astray? Is it possible that I can do the vilest sins, even after being saved by the blood of Christ? To be more explicit, the sexual sins which have become rampant, like perverse acts, pornography and some even go to the extent of dabbling in the spirit world.

Certain things I heard recently was churning my heart right at the root, and I again started to read the Word of God. Oh what a treasure that we have in our hands. My eyes went to the Paul's word and the last words of Stephen, a short while before he was martyred.

For though *they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened.....*

Therefore GOD GAVE THEM UP in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves... For this reason GOD GAVE THEM UP to degrading passions.

At that time they made a calf, offered a sacrifice to the idol, and *revelled in the works of their hands*. But GOD turned away from them and HANDED THEM OVER to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:

In both of the above verses, the chillingly clear connection is that both knew God, but they did not give glory to God and became proud or revelled in the works of their hands. This is so true of many believers, ministers, young or old, man or woman. Consider these statements below and check whether we have even thought or said such things.

This honour came my way, because of my merit.

I built this ministry with my blood and sweat.

No one else could have completed this project but for me.

This song I composed saved this soul.

I healed this man.

I can watch porn and not be affected by it.

One of the best deceptive ploys of satan is that his tactics are never opposed directly to God's word(remember the proverb that a bird never falls into a snare kept before its eyes!), but he always supplies a plausible alternative like, "hey you deserve this, didn't you work for this, you should be celebrated for this effort and so on" This is injecting slowly the poison

of pride. Though it seems so innocuous and harmless, this slowly builds an invisible barrier between us and God and one day eventually it may even lead us to proudly proclaim, "Ha this Babylon that I built!"

This morning I was thinking for a long time, the many people I had led to the Lord over the past 10 years. And the most painful thing is that for whom I've spent hours and hours and hours talking, praying, counselling have either walked away from God or mostly backslidden. But to those I spoke at the most 5 or 10 minutes have been wonderfully saved and I was not aware till some day after 5 years they suddenly call up and say it is all because of that conversation.

After struggling with this for long, the Lord made it clear that it is not my hours and hours and hours of talking, praying and counselling will keep anyone intimate to the Lord, but it is all His Sovereign work of grace. It was during one such time, the Lord revealed so clearly the meaning of this verse, "**One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.**" John 4, 37.

When time and again, the work of God is not attested and acknowledged in every single detail of our lives, then there is the real danger of getting hooked to the pride train. This is a big temptation in an era of more money and more independence. Young men and women even at 20 or 21, start earning more than 30,000 bucks . Gradually and naturally pride seeps in like a flood. It is at this moment when there is pride regarding the work of my hands and when God is not honoured or glorified in big or little things, then, God gives me up, hands me over to the worship of hosts of heaven, unnatural passions(homosexuality included), debasing of physical bodies.

Regarding the worship of hosts of heaven, I've seen this in the lives of many people who are always interested in the spiritual realm, more often

succumb to these occultic temptations. I had seen many of my friends strongly believing that they hear only from the Holy Spirit, were in fact hearing from the angel of light(satan). It is so easy to find out because their actions would totally contradict the Word of God. Some Christians speak more about satan than about Jesus. You don't need to give such importance to satan. Friends I warn you, not to dabble in any medium or spiritist experience. The line dividing the Light of God and the angel of light(satan) in your mind's perception may be very thin. Discernment is of supreme importance here. One simple test whether you hear from the Holy Spirit or other sources is that the Spirit of God, will never contradict the Word of God in the works or actions.

One main purpose that we have been anointed by the Holy Spirit and endowed by the gifts of the Spirit is to grow like Jesus and to bring the lost people home to the Father. Any gift which is not employed in the furtherance of the Kingdom of God, here on earth is dubitable and questionable. Indulging and focussing always in supernatural revelations rather than living like Jesus, will easily side track anyone from the path leading to the Author and Finisher of Faith. I write all this not as a theoretical proposition, but rather a long term analysis of why a good believer ends up in such situations. I've personally counselled at least 3 people who have gone astray like that. I tell you, it was one of the most heart breaking times . At the end I just had to let go. But I still pray. God's grace is still greater above all our greatest blunders. I still count on His great mercies.

Even so it is better not to let our souls and hearts to be so tainted and torn. Though you may be saved and forgiven yet again the ugly scars will remain and so much of precious time would have been lost. Prevention is any day better than cure.

So my dear friends young and old, I plead, I plead that you submit your heart and bodies as organs of righteousness(Romans 6,13) and as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

You can live a life like Jesus did, not even thinking a sinful thought. If that was not possible Jesus would have never asked us to live like He did. If Jesus lived that way, why cannot we also live like Him, when our lives are filled and led by His Holy Spirit who is indwelling in our hearts? We can and we should. But it calls for commitment and to always fight and swim against the current. Yeah it is hard to take the lonely road, but God will come with you. He who walked the waves, will also walk the hard way with you. Please control your fingers before you make that click to that dirty website. You have to do that step. Write this verse across your room or whatever.. "BUT DANIEL RESOLVED THAT HE WOULD NOT DEFILE HIMSELF WITH THE ROYAL RATIONS OF FOOD AND WINE(1,8) (INCLUDE WOMEN AND MAN)."

The power to say yes or no to sin is totally mine. But if I choose not to sin and when I place that decision in the hands of God, then God anoints me with courage and grace to overcome any temptation that this world or satan can bring. God is looking for a new generation, that will be after His own heart. Destroying and Rebuilding are always God's relentless work in His Kingdom. As in the past He is still walking out of the tabernacles and sanctuaries that have been defiled and desecrated by dark hidden sins and is looking for a home in a heart that is willing to do His purposes in his/her own generation. My despair will never thwart the purposes of Heaven. God is still on the throne and HE RULES. He will also JUDGE, REWARD and PUNISH . But this day will not be very far away. Even before the eyes of the world, the Lord will stretch out His hand and judge those who profane His holy name, market His awesome presence and exploit the weak and dumb in His Name. But I pray that this God hides you and

me in the day of His wrath, and empower us to live our lives worthy of His calling.

Dear Lord, give us grace, grace and more grace. Give us hope, hope and more hope. Give us strength to stand firm in faith, give us vision not to lose sight of those eternal eyes watching over us. Give us conviction to do every single act in the light of Heaven. In this sin soaked world, Lord keep us holy and godly, inside the sphere of your Presence. Let our every day personal time of prayer and reading Your word be filled with joy and passion for the lost. Restore our eyes to see the lost and to walk in ways You have ordained for us, from times infinite. Keep us close to Your heart O Father. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.