

Theology of AWOL

Are we going to let the world continue to *lie, steal, and kill*¹ and continue to allow the enemy of God to keep us asleep so that he can continue to bring chaos and *war against Jesus' children*,² or are we going to disciple them and be the salt, the fire, the voice that our LORD has called us to be? I ask this because it seems like the majority of Christians, young and old, seem to lack a commitment and fear to live a life that glorifies God. It seems that the lives of Christians are pretty much the same as the unchurched. We seem to be worshipping God with our lips, but not our heart; we seem to choose Jesus only if we have nothing else to do instead of cherishing Jesus with all that we are.³ We seem to fight more carnally with others than reconcile and overcome things spiritually.⁴ We seem to run with the world rather than walk with our God. If Christians are true to themselves, they know that something is missing and something needs to be done. We need godly living, not the norm. The glory of God is man and women fully alive as well as the end of life for mankind is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.⁵ Yet "Christians" are not joyful, they are not living under the lordship of Christ, nor are they wanting to. The church is in a catch-22. I or we (people that are reading this) are in a catch-22, because we know there has to be more. We have let things go for too long that we cannot stop the snowball of defection, we cannot just start over, nor can we afford to keep dividing off making another group of people, or system, or denomination. Division is not the answer.

Churches today have done something about this by making the church a business to gain worldly success and the attitude of keeping the people happy, rather than challenging them to grow and further the kingdom of God; yet is what we are doing worthy of the death of Jesus Christ? Churches in America can give people the best of everything, best programs, best curriculum, best and latest ideas, best and basic stories of God's word, but if they do not build the "body of Christ" and show you how to experience God, and if they don't change the lifestyle of the Christian, then we will continue to spin our wheels and produce lukewarm⁶ Christians. Now, do not get us wrong, we are not here to bash the church or Christians, not at all. Yet, we are here to call an awakening. Yes, the church is still a viable and needed expression of Christianity in our culture and world. We are not here to split, but to bridge the gap. We are here to call for a new tool, a new approach, or a new language even, that people can be the change we wish to see in our community and world.

With that said, this is why AWOL sees 2 Corinthians 4: 1-6 as the theological basis of existence.

¹ John 10:10

² Rev 12:17

³ Mark 7:6

⁴ Romans 8:6

⁵ St. Irenaus, & John Calvin

⁶ Rev 3:16

The Light of Christ's Gospel

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The world, created good, is given to humanity—not as a commodity but as a means of communion with God. The whole world and everything in it is sacramental in this sense. The world is not physical or spiritual but both, and its life is in God. Yet, we know that we have fallen short of what God intended when we gave away our dominion of the earth as a commodity rather than using it as communion with God. In other words, in taking and eating of the world apart from obedience to God, the woman and man approach the world as a commodity rather than sacrament. They desire to be like God (Genesis 3:5)—but to be like God, apart from God. This is the root sin, and in this separation from God, humanity dies since life is in God.

This is why Jesus Christ came to show us the way back to life in God; to help us receive our hearts back from a fallen world, fallen flesh, and fallen enemies that want us to believe that everything is about the “I,” the ego. To lose us because we bought into rebellion was too great a pain for God to bear, and so He took it upon himself to rescue us. The Son of God came “to give his life as a ransom for many.”⁷

For there are only two kinds of people on earth, those who live in communion with God, and those who live being their own god, which then become a devil to others.⁸ To be like God is indeed humanity's ontological vocation (Gen. 1:27). This is our calling as God's children to find and claim vocation: a purpose for one's life that is part of the purposes of God, but to attempt it apart from divine communion spells sin and death to self, humanity and the world. However, Christ the God-man is born into the world to defeat sin and death by destroying the works of the devil.⁹ He was born to be witness of truth.¹⁰ The world is under the evil one's power of lies and deception.¹¹ He is a spirit, masquerading as an angel of light.¹² A spirit of lies, actually the father of lies¹³, and doing anything and everything to get you to “buy” into his way of life, getting you off on some tangled path that has nothing to do with God (the temporal of shelter, money, work, etc.)

⁷ Mt 20:28

⁸ 1 John 3:4-8

⁹ 1 John 3:8

¹⁰ John 18:37, John 17:17, John 14:6-10

¹¹ 1 John 5:19

¹² 2 Cor 11:14

¹³ John 8:44

so that you will not take part in HIS communion and riches of faith, hope, love, hatred of evil... eternal. Or furthering God's kingdom and taking out the temporal kingdom. Now, Jesus on earth did not buy into self-centeredness of life nor Satan's temporal kingdom. He used what was in the world for the glory of His father, showing us a sinless life and His commitment to the truth even when it meant the agony of the cross to save us from our bondage to sin.¹⁴ Not only did Jesus defeat the flesh, but he also died for all.¹⁵ Thus He is a perfect and complete Savior!

After victory over Satan, Jesus ascended to Heaven to become High Priest who sits on the throne of grace.¹⁶ He showed all people that life is in God; God created all things to share in. Therefore Jesus is our intercessor, as he has sent the Holy Spirit as our guide, comforter and has instructed us to continue the works and life of Jesus¹⁷ so that we as the body of Christ may bring back communion with God.

Therefore since we have received this ministry.—the above overview of how we see things to be is our ministry to preach- it is our good news. Because God truly wants a fellowship with us, and He has given us things for communion with Him not as commodity. He truly does love us, knowing that we have been eating a lot of junk food lately, and he wants things to be healthy and good. He want us to be the hero, the victor, the adventurer, the ambassador for the kingdom of God as we share that anything without God is worthless. To sum it up in one passage we are to truly be what Gal 2:20 says, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life that I now live in flesh I live by faith in the Son of God."*

As we have received mercy, we do not lose heart— For God has given us mercy to see clearly what is going on around us. To see from the heart. More and more each and every day we see the deceptions and lies of life, and see that life is worthless without God, the more we become alive, joyful and Christ-like for others. Yet, many people are losing their heart, meaning they are too busy, too wounded, too lost, too twisted in thinking that they despise the heart, become something that they are not, and live for themselves rather than God. This means they are not alive in Christ and in giving, but alive in the world and getting.

The key is the heart; it is the treasure of God,¹⁸ it is our holy of holies, it is the "you," it is where you grow cold or hot. It is where you will love or hate, be hardened or be alive. This is where the enemy attacks, this is where if you have no heart, you have no GOD and you really live a lie of life. *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."*¹⁹

¹⁴ 1 Peter 1:2-5

¹⁵ (perfect love) 1 John, 1 Cor 15:3

¹⁶ Hebrews 4:15-16

¹⁷ John 14:12

¹⁸ This is why he is after it all the time

¹⁹ Ezekiel 36:26-27

“Renouncing the things that lead to shame”

To rename reality, success, life and love that the world gives means to renounce the things that lead to shame, to meaninglessness. If the greatest thing in the world is to be with God, then everything else we seek brings idleness and leads to shame and death.

“Not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth”

Ps 51:6- “Behold, you desire truth in the innermost being.” God is after the heart, because he wants truth to be of your source, not your self-deception of truth. The easiest person to deceive is one’s own self with craftiness and justification of ourselves rather than the word of God. We can become whoever we want to be by the simple act of stretching the truth. The greatest tragedy of deception is that it begins to remove life in God, our joy in the LORD, in life and in fellowship.

There is self-deception, the deception of others and finally the attempt to deceive God. But the manifestation of truth is needed. This is so serious for us that it feels like our heart and truth are in a war (much like the analogy of the wars in the O.T.) Yet Jesus said: *“I did not come to bring peace, but a sword”*, Mt 10:34. Sometimes a sword hurts. The truth and God’s word heals us. Just like a scalpel hurts before it heals the physical body, sometimes the truth hurts before it heals. This is how we are manifested in truth. Yet, we like to stay hidden in darkness or stay blind. The blinders are not of ignorance or blindness, but of our choosing. For whatever reason, we feel we are entitled to be what we want to be instead of what God wants us to be. Yet, it is not that God has not tried to reveal our deception, but that at each and every point we have refused to let truth reveal our true heart.

Commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God

We cannot do this on our own. Again, the easiest person to deceive is one’s own self with craftiness and justification of ourselves rather than the word of God. We can become whoever we want to be by the simple act of stretching the truth. This is why we need team ministry, accountability, bodies of Christ that can seek “truth and spirit” in one accord and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.²⁰

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe.

This has nothing to do with being saved or unsaved, but when you are not walking with Christ... living in God... you are perishing. For life without God is death.²¹ The kingdom of Satan, Satan being the god of this age, has cast a massive deception upon the human race to keep them prisoners of their own devices. To keep them living in life for them rather than sharing in life with God. The lesson in the story of the Emmaus

²⁰ This is why we feel the clearness committee is the way to go to bring this type of thing back to the forefront.

²¹ Roman 8:6

Road, many parables of the Kingdom of God—the lesson the whole Bible is trying to get across—begins with the simple truth: things are not what they seem. Something is wrong and we are caught up in it, we are asleep to it and are consumed by it.²² And most importantly, we think we have no power, no say to change it or to change the situation. Yet, truly it is about our heart in this as we believe in the faith. We do not often struggle with what is right or wrong but with the price tag associated with doing what is right or wrong (communion vs. commodity), or is this message really true, and how foolish we will look to the world to fight in a cause such as this.

Lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them

Now, Jesus with his victory on the cross has put us in the middle of the great epic story of God and his soteriology with mankind. We are worth dying for. We no longer strive for victory but from victory. We no longer fight in the physical, but the spiritual. Yet, in this fallen world, the flesh, the world, the god of this age will reign until they are seen for what they are, temporal pleasures at best. This is why AWOL must become alive and show the importance of being a disciple and seeking godliness.

The glory of God is man and woman fully alive. The glory of God is hidden in your heart.²³ We are God's offspring; we bear HIS image. We are sons and daughters of God. His reflection. His likeness. And we “shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the word of life”²⁴

Bottom line: when enough people believe and radiate with the glory of God, the body of Christ then becomes the bride for Christ, then we will see the LORD, then we will unveil (once again... the heart of the matter) our fig leaves and become naked again with glory—the truest you.

For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake

Satan is not mainly interested in us or in casting sickness or sorrows on us. He is mainly interested in making Christ look bad. He will do all he can from making you busy with other things to deceiving you and your faith to keeping people from seeing Christ as glorious.

It is not about us, but about Christ Jesus and His lordship in our lives. We must become obedient and serve for Jesus' sake. We have to become a bondservant in order to become spiritual and holy²⁵ and become a holy nation and royal priesthood,²⁶ or a bride for Christ.²⁷ so that others may see and know that the LORD is good and that true life is in God.

²² “The whole world lies under the power of the evil one”- 1 John 5:19 How? People don't see with their heart.

²³ Col 3: 1-6

²⁴ Phil 2:15-16

²⁵ 1 Peter 1:16; Hebrews 12:14

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²⁷ Rev 19:9

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is all about the glory shining through from the heart. It takes courage to live from the heart, to live in honesty and truth, to live in the light rather than the darkness. It is very easy to not really believe, to live in darkness, and not to unveil our nakedness. Your heart is the deepest truest you, and God wants us to live from that, because he created us to do so.

But in order to do so, we must come together and practice it, must help one another see it, and must live with one another in it. We don't see clearly because we don't see with the eyes of our heart. There is a battle raging—and it is over your heart! May AWOL help people see what is going on around them and be a resource to reclaim glory for our LORD.