

Would You Be Made Whole?

By Michael Clark

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Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God. My soul is cast down within me, therefore I remember thee from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep at the thunder of thy cataracts; all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me. By day the LORD commands his steadfast love; and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. I say to God, my rock: "Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" (Psalm 42:5-9 RSV)

Recently, I shared with a dear sister in the Lord who lives in Kentucky that I had been going through a time of feeling unplugged, so much so that I wondered if it would ever end. As many of you know, the Lord took me through a fourteen year period of wilderness earlier in the prime of my life when, like Ezekiel, I wondered, "Son of man, can these bones live?", "Oh Lord, only you know." I felt totally isolated from God, the church and the world all those years. Well, I have since found out that like many alcohol rehab programs that have an initial intensive month long period of isolation and therapy, God has a few two day follow-ups afterward.

God seems to see the necessity of giving us refresher courses along the way. Could this be the normal Christian life? A study of those used of God in the history of His working with man reveals that this seems to be the norm. David could write such wonderful psalms, speaking of the closeness of the Good Shepherd, yet he was often found in a terrible pit with his feet bogged down in miry clay. Yet, God always came through; even when David got tangled in sin the Lord brought Him back to Himself.

Paul wrote such wondrous descriptions of his own relationship with Christ and about true body relationships in Christ, yet he often wrote about his disillusionments with the churches he had ministered the gospel to and felt alone (See 2 Timothy 1:15, 4:10-16). He, too, would always end his description of these misgivings on an upward note, "But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the message fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Timothy 4:17-18 RSVA).

So after sharing about my own dry spell with this sister in Kentucky who had been praying for me, she wrote back saying, "I used to call [this experience] 'the Gloom.' I see how truly weak I am SO THAT the *POWER OF CHRIST* will rest on me. Somehow the ability to rely on His power instead of on my own strength is being wrought in me so that I may go forth **in HIS strength**. *Isaiah 40:29* precedes verse 31 (but is not nearly as popular), and says, 'He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.' I think that would be us, my brother..."

As I read this and sensed that my little stint in "the Gloom" was ending, I wrote back to her the following:

As I read your note I saw this weakness thing a bit clearer than ever before. The weakness that we feel is almost like a blank slate waiting to be written on by His hand. A slate cannot write on itself about itself. I remember when I was a child, part of my job when I helped my dad clean classrooms to augment his teacher's income was to erase and wipe down the chalk board with a wet sponge. Erasing them did not do the job. You could still see a ghost of what was written on them or at best a hazy white film would prevail. You had to wash them with water to get them really clean and ready for the next lesson.

So, the Lord seems to take us through these purging times where we feel totally weak and worthless so He can write on us what is on His heart. Even His previous message is erased most of the time. When I write these articles with George [Davis], much of what the Lord spoke through us is soon gone from my mind. It is unnerving to I think that I might someday have to defend what we have written to some church ecclesiarch or Sanhedrin, but I then

remind myself that the Lamb stood before His shearers in silence. Can I do more? Am I to defend myself or even teach with the abilities of my own mind? Unless the Father gave Jesus the words, He was not about to speak even in His *own* defense. To Pilate who threatened Him with death Jesus said, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above...." He totally relied on His Father for everything.

The just must live by their faith in Christ alone, not by their wit and ability to defend or express themselves. They, like Esther, go forth into battle in weakness and obedience to Him with the attitude that He is able to defend us if He wills, but if He doesn't will, "[If I perish, I perish](#)" (Esther 4:6).

Then as I thought on these things I saw how the Spirit in this sister reached out and pulled upon the Spirit in me in a most wonderful way and then I wrote:

Blessed be the Lord. It is a real blessing when the deep in one of His saints like you calls forth the deep in me and vice versa. I think that this should be happening all the time in an assembly of His saints that functions as His body. Like Paul taught, the joints in the body are where one member is joined in the Spirit to another and this is where the spiritual supply is found.

Organized religion has robbed and raped the saints of God until they are totally unaware of this wondrous supply in the Spirit through the least of the saints. They are taught to look to the "paid Christian" for all their supply. Then if they *do* dare to look elsewhere they are questioned and discouraged by those in control or at the very least held to be suspect of some kind of treason against the church leadership.

I am reminded of a quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Every cult of personality that emphasizes the distinguished qualities, virtues, and talents of another person, even though these be of an altogether spiritual nature, is worldly and has no place in the Christian community; indeed, it poisons the Christian community. The desire we so often hear expressed today for 'episcopal figures', 'priestly men', 'authoritative personalities' springs frequently enough from a spiritually sick need for the admiration of men, for the establishment of visible human authority, because the genuine authority of service appears to be unimpressive..." (*Life Together*). This propensity to look to a select few episcopal figures is not the freedom that Christ

died for that we might function as His body and come into the fullness of all that our Father has for Christ's body over whom He alone is the Head.

There is a subtle difference between being *dependant* on others for our supply of spirituality and being *interdependant*. When you are not sure of your own spiritual relationship with Christ and the free flow of the Spirit through you, you become dependant on what others have in an unwholesome way. Dependant people try to substitute for what is missing in their own lives with what others have. And there are thousands of people that look for these spiritually deformed ones to take advantage of, entice, control and sell their wares to. This becomes a form of spiritual rape and robbery. Why rape? Because they are fondling Jesus' bride. Why do I say robbery? They are being taught to be satisfied with living their lives by the spirituality of another and in so doing are kept in spiritual poverty, lacking the oil in their lamps because they have not learned to go to the Source to be filled.

So what is the difference between this and how the true body of Christ was meant to live and operate? Ephesians chapter four has a wonderful promise that always seems to be missing in today's visible church. In fact it is often used as a carrot to be dangled in front of the captive saints of God to keep them supporting the top heavy ecclesiastical system and keep the adherents of that system ever dependant on the blessed anointed few. That passage says, **"to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"** (Ephesians 4:12-13 RSVA).

We are taught to wait for something that is kept from happening by the unspiritual importance of the so-called "five-fold" that is spoken of in verse eleven. When men with highly visible ministries teach this passage, all the emphasis is put on "some apostles, some prophets, some evangelist and some pastors and teachers." The wonderful normalcy of *all* walking in the unity of the faith in the full knowledge and stature of the Son of God (found all through chapters three and four) is never encouraged, but rather the *some* and the *until* are emphasized as if it is something that is out of reach.

I submit that what took place in this simple exchange of emails between this sister and I was each of our members in that wondrous body of Christ functioning by the power of His Spirit. She simply wrote in His timing what the Spirit gave her to send

to this member in a simple act of obedience to His moving in her life. The "until" was allowed to happen because the *SOME*-bodies were out of the way and out of the minds of two of His saints who's focus is on Christ.

"I Have No Man!"

The church in Corinth is a shining example of what is wrong with Christianity today. To them Paul wrote,

But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ... For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely men? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth... Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you... So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's. (1 Corinthians 3:1-23 RSVA)

Can you see here how Paul's emphasis is not on Paul, Apollos or Cephas [Peter] or their "apostleship," but rather on God who supplies for the growth of the body? The indwelling Spirit is everything and these men emphasized Him alone in each and every saint, not "the restoration of the apostles and the prophets" or some great pastor or evangelist who is "so anointed" or "such a good speaker" (see 1 Corinthians 2). No! God is *all* in *all* and He is the source of our increase. All things spiritual are ours in Christ already! But we must get our eyes off men and onto Him alone as our supply and out of *that* place of spiritual normalcy, true body life, and service to one another can come.

This is what John said, "I must decrease and He must increase." The men who went before the saints, leading them into the fullness of Christ, were focused on one thing, Christ! They were provided by God as examples of how to walk in the Spirit and expected the saints of God to do the same.

Have you ever watched a cow or horse wean their young? They constantly run away from the calf or colt that is old enough to be eating grass, yet wants to nurse.

Finally, they will kick at them to keep them away. When men started to live their spiritual lives vicariously through these dear leaders in the early church and they could not get the faithful to put their trust in Christ alone, they cut themselves off from the saints and did so for Christ's sake. If only those who lead in the church today would do the same instead of taking advantage of its carnal need for *a man* to tell them what to do and be their spiritual guru.

God is after something more important to Him than seeing lame sinners walk. It is not enough for Him that they have their sins forgiven them. He is after far more than a simple salvation experience. He expects each of the saints to walk as Christ walks in heavenly wholeness and the same wonderful relationship with the Father that inspires others to grow up into the image of the Son. What He said to Paul He says to us, "[But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen \[in\] me and to those in which I will appear to you...](#)" (Acts 26:16 RSVA).

In John five, when Jesus came to the pool at Bethesda, he saw a man lying there and knew he had been in that sad state for thirty-eight years. When He asked him, "Would you be made whole?" the man answered, "Sir, I have no man!" And therein, dear saints, you have the reason for the church's perpetual carnality and immaturity. We are lame because we constantly look for a man to do what only Christ can do. Yes, many of us would love to walk again, but are we willing to *be made whole*? Wholeness means that we have found Christ as our sufficiency and out of *that* relationship, we then let Him in us reach out to others so that they, too, might be made whole. It is not about us! As long as it is about us or our pastor or our prophet or evangelist, apostle or even *our ministry*, we might have a walk, but we will never be made *whole*. Nor will we ever be used to help make anyone else spiritually whole. "Rise and walk!"



[Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.](#) (Philippians 4:1 RSVA)