

SEEING CHRIST IN YOURSELF

In his new book *The Pastor as Minor Poet: Texts and Subtexts in the Ministerial Life* (Eerdmans), M. Craig Barnes says:

“Just because people call themselves Christian and have a long history in the church doesn't mean they have a biblical image of God. To the contrary, the longer they've hung around religion, the greater the chance that they've acquired some false ideas about God that have a negative impact on their self-image.

“We are constantly wading through these false images, which are the real blocks to our ability to make changes. Until the image of God is seen correctly in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ, we never will be able to gain a correct image of ourselves.”

“When people tell me about their struggles with anger, a little digging reveals they believe God is angry with them. Those who struggle with compulsive work patterns have

been worshiping a demanding God who is never satisfied. People who have a hard time trusting their hearts to others don't really believe in the steadfast love of God. None of them can discover real change in their lives apart from a Christological view of God. So conversations that begin with improvements they want to make in life should end with the recognizing the changes Christ already has made to their lives.”

“We need to hold up Jesus Christ. *'Do you see Him?. That's who you really are. Everything else about you is just pretending.'*

The human self is never more truly itself than when it is living in Christ, the Restorer of the holy image of God in humans.”

So what is your biblical image of God? Is it accurate according to the Scriptures? Or has it been misshaped by opinion and/or traditions?

What do you see when you look in the mirror? Do you see Jesus looking back?



DO YOU HAVE FAITH-FACEBOOK ACCOUNT?

Some of you know already—but I'm on Facebook. If you don't know what Facebook is, it is a place where you can show off family photos, write on someone's Wall, poke your friend, and leave all kinds of sensical and nonsensical comments about how your day is going and what is happening on your life. You also get to keep up with everyone else's business as they post. In other words—it is a form of communication, a way to keep in touch with people by way of computer and internet.

But it is rather disturbing when you realize that it only works if you have friends. I have to be invited to be someone's friend—or I can invite someone to be my friend. Otherwise—I can't see what they are writing or what pictures they have posted or what their highest score on *Farkel* happens to be for the week.

I was reluctant to sign on to Facebook at first—after all—I don't have that many friends. However, I did begin to think I was a pretty friendly guy—until I realized the 98 'friends' I had paled in comparison to my daughter's 207 'friends' or Thomas Stanley's 506 'friends'! Man, I need more friends!

But we all have friends don't we? Probably more friends than we realize. And if we take a close count, many of them probably don't know the Lord Jesus as Savior. Maybe what we could do is have a "Faith-Facebook" and make them "friends" on that. That is what Jesus left us here to do, isn't it?

John 15.13 says, "*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*" Jesus requested our "friend" status from the cross. We have accepted His invitation to be His friend. Now we can recommend other people to be His friends. Wouldn't it be great to have a big "friend" list on our Faith-Facebook? All we have to do is invite them to know our best friend, Jesus.

Jack

THE LORD'S SUPPER: UNPRETTY AND UNAVOIDABLE

DELIVERING THE DEATH

Nothing delivers the death of Jesus like the Lord's Supper! The Lord's Supper, beyond being a memorial, forces us to think about the death of Jesus—specifically his substitutionary atonement to pay for the sins of mankind upon the cross. The Lord's Supper takes sin seriously. It meets our need with the only solution adequate in scope to our sin: God's righteousness.

While worship is generally celebrative and upbeat, Communion is a moment of marked sobriety. We don't care if people find the cross or vivid imagery of broken flesh and shed blood unsettling. It should be! The world would take the pretty symbols and esteem-boosting elements of Christianity and use them for their own purposes. Sometimes the church is tempted to do the same. Instead we must choose the unpretty symbols.

We choose the blood—the blood of the Son of God shed for the forgiveness of our sins. We choose to be washed by it—to be made mindful of its cost and celebrate the wonder of its forgiving miracle deeply in us.

OUR COMMON NEED

We try to avoid cliché-ridden, heart-tugging, chicken-soup-for-the-soul stories around our table. We bring people to the cross to proclaim Christ's death, to reflect on what was accomplished there, and to remember that he hasn't forgotten us, but is coming back. When we do this it creates a powerful sense of our common need and our unity despite our diversity. The Lord's Supper creates a profound sense of oneness.

HELP FOR NEWCOMERS

The Lord's Supper as a *constant reminder that Jesus made atonement for us*. The symbols themselves convey this. There is nothing mystical or magical about the bread and the grape juice, but what they symbolize—the

Communion we have with God through the blood of Jesus Christ is vitally important.

The apostle Paul said: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). It is through his death on the cross that the barrier between God and humanity was bridged, and now, through Jesus, we have a personal relationship with God.

The emblems have symbolic significance, explaining that when we partake of the bread we are reminded of the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. The bread symbolizes his body that was broken; it symbolizes his life that was taken. It delivers to our consciousness the truth "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3).

The grape juice symbolizes the blood of Christ. In the Old Testament we see again and again that blood is required for

reconciliation with God. The book of Hebrews says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22).

Jesus himself said that through the shedding of his blood—in other words, through his death—we are forgiven. The Bible says we are justified through his blood (Romans 5.9); we have redemption through his blood (Ephesians 1.7); the blood of Jesus purifies us from sin (1 John 1.7); and we have peace with God through Christ's blood (Colossians 1020). The Lord's Supper brings us face-to-face with this reality. Nothing delivers the death of Jesus like the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's table is also a *place of thanksgiving*. In Luke 22:19, the Bible says Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it. The word rendered "gave thanks" is *eucharisto*. Some traditions refer to the Lord's Supper as the Eucharist.

This is a meal of thanksgiving to a God deserving of our gratitude for

sending his Son to die on the cross while we were yet sinners. This helps us all remember our salvation is a gift, not a paycheck. We give thanks for what Christ *has* done, and we give thanks in anticipation of what he *will* do at the occasion of his promised return.

Finally—the Lord’s table as a *unifying time of Communion with fellow believers*. It is a compelling call for unity in the midst of our diversity. The table tends to intrigue, not repel! Catholics resonate with the symbolism and are accustomed to a weekly presentation of the emblems. While we don’t embrace the mass or transubstantiation, Catholic visitors are reassured by our observance of Communion. They reason, “Perhaps this is a ‘real’ church after all!” And what a witness when visibly diverse ethnicities pray with heads bowed in unity.

(Article from *The Christian Standard* by Jim Tune)

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are dead?

Why do banks charge a fee for "insufficient funds" when they know there is no money in the account?

Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?

Why doesn't glue stick to the bottle?

Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?

Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?

Why did Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

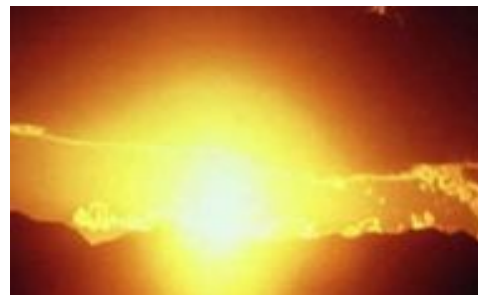
Whose idea was it to put an S in the word *lisp*?

What is the speed of darkness?

If you send someone Styrofoam, how do you pack it?

If the temperature is zero outside today and it's going to be twice as cold tomorrow, how cold will it be?

If it's true that we are here to help others, what are the others doing here?



The Gospel Unleashed!

The Word of Truth

October 4	THE GOSPEL UNLEASHED <i>The Power of the Name of Jesus</i>	Acts 3.1-26
October 11	THE GOSPEL UNLEASHED <i>Diseased Religion or Dynamic Religion?</i>	Acts 4.1-31
October 18	THE GOSPEL UNLEASHED <i>How Much is that Glory in the Window?</i>	Acts 4.32-5.11
October 25	THE GOSPEL UNLEASHED <i>Who's in Charge Around Here Anyway?</i>	Acts 5.17-6.7
November 1	THE GOSPEL UNLEASHED <i>Learning to Retell Our Story</i>	Acts 6.8-8.3
November 8	THE GOSPEL UNLEASHED <i>It's Not Magic and It's Not For Sale</i>	Acts 8.4-25
November 15	THE GOSPEL UNLEASHED <i>And the Walls came Tumbling Down</i>	Acts 8.26-40
November 22	THE GOSPEL UNLEASHED <i>The God of the Least Likely</i>	Acts 9.1-31
November 29	THE GOSPEL UNLEASHED <i>Just Like Jesus</i>	Acts 9.32-43