

## RELATIONSHIP

Hello I'm Jim Fuller. I'd like to share a few thoughts and some scriptures with you.

Let's look at John chapter 1 verse 1.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

Please notice that the pronouns used for the word is He and Him. Not it.

From this scripture we can see that God's Word isn't a teaching. It's the life of God expressed through a person.

Look at verse 14.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Please note, that God did not say, Satan has ruined my program. To fix it, I'm going to give these fallen, spiritually dead people, a book of rules, so they can try to do them with their best effort. Then they can study the book and become knowledgeable about everything that happened from the fall, all the way to the amazing miracles and exploits that Jesus did on the Earth. Then they can create and argue about their own doctrines and concepts and teach them to their converts until Jesus returns, never experiencing My life, My power, and My continual presence.

What God wanted to say to the whole world, He spoke through Jesus, the Living Word. He revealed the Father's incredible love for man, His Kingdom, and the eternal life that He prepared for us to live.

Hebrews 1 says that

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.

God's not looking for converts, He's looking for sons, who know their Father.

Jesus came and demonstrated in our world the life of God that is the inheritance of His children.

John 1.12 explains how this inheritance becomes ours.

But to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of blood, nor of the desire or will of man, but born of God.

Romans 8.16 also confirms it.

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. And if we are children, then we are heirs: heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...

Romans 8.29 reveals God's plan.

For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers.

As members of His family, we inherit the Life of the Father. The one that Jesus demonstrated in the Gospels.

Many today have bought into the idea that the Gospel is praying a prayer, going to church, and reading the Bible, so you can go to heaven when you die.

It's actually the supernatural work of God, that when we receive it by faith, makes us members of His family, His heirs, and citizens of His kingdom.

Christians are often encouraged to read their Bible regularly. Some people carry it to an extreme arguing over what it means and even which version of the Bible they should read.

Many use the Bible as a handbook or a book of rules that they try to faithfully follow with their best natural effort.

Several years ago, I had a conversation with one such man. He was emphatically trying to convince me that the Bible was the only thing that a Christian ever needed. He said that every word of direction a Christian would ever need for any circumstance that came up in their life they could find in the Bible.

I said, let me ask you a question. In the Old Testament there was a famine in the land Abraham went to Egypt for food. Some years later there was a famine in the land and Isaac stayed in the land. What would you do in case of a famine, based on the Bible?

He was rather dumbfounded. He looked at me with a very puzzled look, and was completely speechless.

I said the answer is, whatever God tells you to do. It's a relationship, not a religion.

Let me give you another example from the Bible.

Jesus chided the Pharisees saying, that you search the scriptures thinking that in them you will have eternal life. But they testify of me and you are unwilling to come to me that you can have the life.

We can see from this scripture that the Bible is not a book of rules, a handbook, or a how to book. It's designed to lead us to experience a relationship with God by the lordship of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Jesus said, it would be to our advantage for Him give us His Holy Spirit. His Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth. And in John 14.6 Jesus said, I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life.

The word translated as truth in the scriptures from the original Greek meant reality. Jesus didn't say the Holy Spirit will teach you all the teachings. He said He would lead you into the reality of their experience. And I AM that reality. The scriptures were to lead us to experience the life of Christ.

The main difference between religion and relationship, is the source of it. Man's efforts produce religion. God's efforts produce eternal life and a relationship with Him.

Religion is done by men for men. The gospel is done by God and for God. He's the only one who can establish this Oneness with Him.

For example, the Pharisees asked Jesus which is the greatest commandment?

They approached the scriptures as a handbook for behavior and a rule book for them to try and obey.

They had made a very strong, life-long commitment to follow all the rules and were inquiring to make sure that they were obeying the most important ones with their own natural effort.

Jesus elevated their focus from rote obedience to rules and commands, to a spiritual relationship with a spiritual God.

In John 6.63 Jesus said,

It's the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

It explains that God's greatest desire from the beginning was not obedience to commands. It's for us to have a relationship with God and impart His eternal life to everyone on this planet.

A religious commitment to rules and ordinances can produce the appearance of righteousness, but can't produce the reality of it.

In his letter to the Philippians, chapter 3, Paul tells them that according to the law, he was found blameless.

After his revelation of Jesus on the road to Damascus, he states that he was the chiefest of sinners.

Colossians 2.23 reveals the uselessness of natural religious efforts.

These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, *but are* of no value against fleshly indulgence.

Man's efforts can produce behavior modification, but not heart transformation.

In Philippians 3.8 Paul denounces any confidence in his own natural efforts to be righteous.

He says, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

In conclusion, the Bible was created to lead us into oneness with Christ, which is made possible by God's supernatural work on our behalf, so that we can possess His life and display it to this world.

In John 17.3 Jesus defined God's eternal life that He made available to His children.

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

Religion is a very poor substitute for an eternal relationship with the Living God.

God bless you.

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