

# Kingdom thoughts

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. Hebrews 12:28

**BMI Devotional** March 2014

## Revealing Christ

We have been looking at how Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4 instructs us concerning personal evangelism. We consider now what it is to reveal Christ.

Paul tells us that the Kingdom of Heaven is 'righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Rom 14:17). These three words are set in a defined order. In the same way as Moses told Israel that if they kept the law they would enjoy peace and prosperity (Deut 28), Paul is telling us that adherence to right and wrong is the key to securing peace and joy. To grasp this is to appreciate what of Christ which we need to reveal.

It is not our job to 'sell' Christ to a self-interested public. To the natural man it seems sensible to declare the Kingdom as peace and joy first and righteousness thereafter. Surely Christ has come in order to meet what Ps Peter Vacca refers to as our 'felt needs'. Maybe so, but success on these terms merely means that people move from being selfish sinners to selfish Christians! The Christ that we must reveal is the Christ who saves us from our sin.

Let us note this statement well, for many evangelists preach that Christ died to save us from hell. To present the Gospel as God's remedy for hell is, at root, an appeal to self-interest. The Gospel is not some form of fire and life insurance. Jesus did not die to save us from hell. He died to save us from our sin. It is

the gift of God that Christ's death and resurrection life transforms us by the renewing of our desires so that sin's allure and hold is broken (Rom 8:1-4). This is the ultimate and correct image of Christ which needs to be revealed.

And yet John the Evangelist offers no record of a repentant woman. We see in the woman no confession of sin and no declaration of faith. We are left only with the certainty that this woman knows that Jesus is Messiah (John 4:29).

To this extent we must be clear in our expectation but humble in our efforts. On the one hand it must be our goal to reveal that Christ who is both the Saviour of our souls and the one who blesses all those that call upon Him. On the other hand, we must recognize that it is God who convicts and reveals (John 15:16, 19). Many come to love Christ as a brother before they come to see that He is their King. The Psalmist's urging seems apt for these ones: 'Taste and see that the Lord is good' (Ps 34:8).

Thus, as with all things but especially with sharing our faith, we must be 'ready to be ready' but we must also be ready to let God have His own way. The person who does not know Christ as the Lord ruling in righteousness does not know Christ at all (Matt 7:21-22). And yet no matter how fervent our desire that others should see Him that way, we must accept that the path each person takes into that understanding is set by God Himself.

We have the Holy Spirit but we are not the Holy Spirit!

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