

Being The Reality Of Jesus To A Wicked World

Reality 5. We are old but we've never seen the repentant forsaken

"Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did" (1 John 2:6)



Pinpointing Key Facets Of The Hebraic Foundations

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Reality 5. We are old but we've never seen the repentant forsaken

In Reality 6 we'll continue our discussion of the halo effect that's keeping far too many Christians in bondage. But since it's the end of one year and beginning another, we wanted to offer you some personal insights. During the past several prayer walks we've found ourselves reflecting on events of the past year which have been important to us. It's also during these times of reflection that Father has given us understanding about His future plans for us and how He would have us be His blessing to others. This Reality contains insights the Holy Spirit has been giving us in recent weeks, especially concerning the times we live in and how He wants us to approach sharing His truths in the future.

“Everyone who is fully trained will be like their instructor” (Luke 6:40).

Over the years we've observed that a person's **frame of reference**, their set of values which guide their decisions, says much about them. For example, if you belong to Jesus, the non-optional frame of reference He demands is love for Him and for others which is enacted through obedient trust; in other words, that through His indwelling Spirit, the commands of Christ determine your thoughts and actions. By this frame of reference every person who claims to belong to Jesus should evaluate their own faith walk. And, make sure you use this frame of reference to evaluate those who are instructing you in your faith walk. This is why our Lord commands His own to gain the frame of reference of the person who is guiding them in their faith journey: *“Remember the ones leading you, those who spoke to you the word of God. Reflect on the results of their way of life, and imitate their trust — Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever”* (Hebrews 13:7,8).

We're well aware that many of you have never met us. Our own criteria which is our frame of reference dictates to us why we gratefully live in the lordship of Christ. It's summed up with the love-based motive we see in the Bible, **“Father, place us and use us where we can bring You the most glory.”** And in our longing for the Holy Spirit to sanctify us into greater Christ-likeness, we earnestly pursue for our marriage to **increasingly reflect our Lord's love, forgiveness and compassion.**

During Mike's years of active duty as well as throughout many of our years of serving our Lord Jesus, we were blessed with older, sacrificial companions whose frame of reference and lives role-modeled attributes we wanted in our own lives. And out of love for Jesus and for us they were willing to confront us when we needed it. Now at ages 75 and 73, we are the older people.

“Is not wisdom found among the aged, and length of days bring understanding?”
(Job 12:12)

Mike: When I was in Navy Officer Candidate School, Marine drill instructors trained us. These were combat-experienced men who could discern if we future pilots would break under stress. The drill instructors forcefully exposed any candidates who put their own well-being ahead of others, berating each arrogant and self-serving man as “a % \$@#! **feather merchant!**” A “feather merchant” is slang for someone who wants acclaim for something which involves little effort on their part, or who calculatingly evades personal sacrifice or responsibility.

Both from the Bible and from my military experience, my frame of reference for a Christian man is this: **“A Christian man does what Jesus wants him to do regardless of how he feels about it.”** Any other type of man to me is just a feather merchant.

The personal cost of our frame of reference:

Following the pathway of a number of others in Jesus whose lives were sold out for Him, we also have had to leave "Christian feather merchants" behind in order to obey our Lord. The most common feather merchants were those whose arrogance caused them to hold onto bitterness. Other feather merchants we had to leave behind were those whose quest for worldly goals and comfort far outweighed their desire to become more like Jesus or to bring glory to our heavenly Father. Our Lord's own words dictated our frame of reference: **“Let the dead bury their own dead, but *you go and proclaim the kingdom of God*”** (Luke 9:60; see also Mark 10:17-22; Luke 9:61,62).

“Baptism... the pledge of a clear conscience toward God...” (1Peter 3:21).

One characteristic which those who've gone before us to heaven had in common is that they had no fear of death (see 1Corinthians 15:26; Hebrews 2:14,15). This frame of reference, the complete absence of the fear of death, is a strong indicator that a person belongs to Jesus. Another is that they are diligently striving to keep a clear conscience toward Him. This attribute of **a clear conscience** is pledged by everyone who has been immersed (1Peter 3:21). Yet sadly, pledging to have a clear conscience has become just an historic frame of reference in most of Christianity today. We'll discuss this further, but first we'd like to share something that deeply affects us on a daily basis:

This past year has brought about huge change in our combined emotional and physical capacity. For Mike, what started out 25 years ago as a variety of difficult to diagnose ailments was ultimately found to be related to his service in Vietnam. Not only was he being poisoned by ongoing effects of Agent Orange (dioxin). He was also suffering the effects of hundreds of hours of inhaling burning bunker fuel oil as his helicopter hovered off the back of ships to pick up personnel and cargo.

Both of these poisons attack the human body at the cellular level and have accelerated rapidly this past year, and his meds have changed from pain relieving to life saving. But by the grace of our Lord, the spiritual blessing — our frame of reference — is difficult to explain to anyone who hasn't sacrificed themselves for our Lord **or** on behalf of others **or** looked forward to seeing our Lord face-to-face.

So please understand that other than the emotional toll it takes to live with constant pain and to support someone who must live this way, our joy each day is immeasurable. As we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, we purpose that our marriage would shine with the **love, forgiveness** and **compassion of Jesus**, and that **our heavenly Father would be glorified by us**.

In this light we want you to know that your prayers and emails have encouraged us more than our words can ever convey. May our prayer for blessings for you be attached to our thank you!

“However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual”

(1Corinthians 15:46).

First, the physical: The poisons affecting Mike’s body operate on a cellular level hidden in his body. So if it wasn’t for the intense nerve and musculoskeletal pain and the cancer, he wouldn’t even know about the poisons which persist in destroying him from within.

Next, the spiritual: Just like the unrelenting poisons operating out of sight in Mike’s body, your **sin nature** persists in enticing you to become a Christian feather merchant. That description is evident when you refuse to keep a clear conscience with our Lord Jesus, and/or when you extend a relationship under the guise of Christian fellowship to those who are comfortable with unconfessed sin and have no intention to change.

Unless your frame of reference includes a deep appreciation for the sacrifice of Jesus and unless you are guided by His righteous commands, you will just continue to give in to the poisoning of your sin nature. In time you become so predisposed to sin that you refuse to feel any guilt. Then, unless you repent, a day will come when you’re the lowest form of person defaming our Lord Jesus, **a spiritually dead feather merchant.**

Please understand the times and pluck your feathers!

We know with Spirit-revealed certainty that our ability to keep sending you these messages will soon come to a close. Nothing will stop Father’s chastisement that is simmering in the embers of political and relational chaos both here and abroad. Even noted historians are stating that all the ingredients are in place for the end of freedom in this nation. Other countries are already replacing democracies with dictatorships. Suffering on a scale that will be on par with the Holocaust in Europe is already at the door. NOW is the time to have a clear conscience with our Lord!

Our frame of reference keeps us sharing these messages with you:

When our heavenly Father has completed His chastisement, we’ve been assured by His Spirit that He is now preparing people around the world for the aftermath. HE intends to restore what our Lord Jesus envisioned for His called-out ones. May your frame of reference lead you to be one of these whom our Lord Jesus will use for His Name’s sake.

“Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ” (Colossians 1:28).

We wrote in a previous Reality that we want to help you younger generations avoid the pitfall of the vast majority of pleasure-bent Baby Boomers (born 1946 to 1964). One great failure of the Boomers is their raising feather merchant males. Over a quarter century ago in the US, both Humanist public education and organized Christianity recognized a condition which had existed for decades: both were **“totally effeminate institutions.”** This indictment has monumental ramifications for you younger people, especially if you want a marriage which both experiences and reflects the love and sacrifice of Jesus. The effeminacy of both Christianity and public education has left several generations of males mostly oblivious to self sacrifice. And within the Christian religious system the role of one person in particular has contributed the most to irresponsible feather merchant males:

Mike: Prompted by my own near-death experiences in Vietnam, I used a specific simulation with different groups who came to our retreat center during our almost 11 years there. I'd pretend to drop a grenade in their midst. I'd tell them they had 3 seconds to respond, and then would count off: "1...2...3...BOOM!!!"



- **50%** of the teenagers and women would jump on the grenade to save others.
- **10%** of the men jumped on the grenade. (What happened to them since adolescence?)
- **0%** of the clergy ever jumped on the grenade. Every one of them leaped over furniture to save themselves! I was appalled as I watched these self-centered feather merchants flee, and I realized the self-serving motives they were instilling in other males.

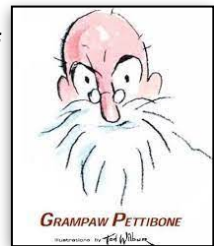
The seminaries which train clergy to be so centrally important to a congregation also instill in them the characteristic of being the least likely to sacrifice themselves for others. The more time a man spends under their teachings and feather merchant motives, the less likely he is to daily pick up his cross and sacrifice himself for others.

Please ingrain this in the innermost character quality of your Christian life:

A soldier who jumps on the grenade is already dead to self. He or she is filled with such tremendous compassion for others that they don't hesitate to jump on it. But clergy, who represent one of the leading occupations for divorce in this nation, are training men to throw their wives and children on the grenades. You younger men be warned! We don't want you to be this way!

"We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are working hard among you, those who are guiding you in the Lord and confronting you in order to help you change"
(1Thessalonians 5:12 CJB).

Mike: A few days ago while recalling how saddened I was in observing all the clergy fleeing the grenade, the Holy Spirit reminded me of Grampaw Pettibone – someone from my past who saved my life a number of times. Each month in Naval Aviation News, "Grampaw Pettibone" commented on recent aircraft mishaps. Grampaw was a character created by the Aviation Safety people. It was hoped that his pithy remarks and sardonic humor would hold your attention long enough to stab you with a vital safety factor – to make you safety conscious.



In his harangue Grampaw would connect seemingly unrelated events that led up to an aircraft accident or near accident. As we read his expositions and the piercing tone in which he shared them, we pilots acquired *capable forewarning wisdom*. On several occasions while flying missions, I'd find myself encountering unforeseen circumstances. It's then that I would remember the tirade Grampaw shared about similar circumstances that ultimately ended up in an accident. I'd then quickly change what was going on to break the pattern that had a great probability of leading to a mishap.

Here are some examples of Grampaw Pettibone's memorable style:

"Great balls of fire! If this fiasco wouldn't wilt the lily, nothin' would." "Gol darn it, to err may be human ... but in flyin' it can be fatal." "Holy retarded throttle jockey! ... This entire accident smacks of ignoring basics. Simple ignorance is not knowing; compound ignorance is not knowing that you don't know. Let's get back to basics!"

Keep in mind that it wasn't only the wisdom which Grampaw Pettibone shared that was so unforgettable. His deliberate, there's no way around it style was indelibly marked in my brain. He saved my life more than once. When I read the Bible for the first time after 7 years as a pilot, Grampaw's jarring tone enabled me to appreciate the depth of God's anger as He spoke through the Older Testament prophets (Jeremiah 2:20-24; Ezekiel 16:26,23:20). And I couldn't help hearing Grampaw's fiery tone in the voice of Jesus calling those self-serving religious leaders "HYPOCRITES!" or throwing the money changers out of the Temple (Matthew 21:12,13; Jesus also firmly rebuked His disciples when they gave way to fear or distrust, as in Matthew 8:26; 14:31; 16:8,23).

"Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: 'Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you'" (Acts 13:40,41).

The Bible warns that there will be feather merchants in Christianity, people who think too much of themselves — **scoffers** (2Timothy 3:1-5; 2Peter 3:3; Jude 18). The scoffing men will be the Hardened and Mocking Fools we've written about. They know better than everyone else, and resist admonition and correction. Rather than jumping on a grenade to save you, they'll throw it at you! If you're younger than 60, then ask those who know you well: "Do you think I consider it a blessing when someone rebukes or corrects me?" (See Proverbs 13:18; 27:5; 2Timothy 4:2.)

There's no way this side of heaven that a man will take on the heart motive and character of Jesus if he has an aversion to being **rebuked** or **corrected**. We pity the woman who marries such a man! We know that our time is getting short, so we're taking the gloves off when it comes to feather merchant men who think a pleasant personality and an occasional kind act makes them a good Christian. If this is you, you are hurting too many who need you to be the first on the grenade! And no matter how you view yourself as a Christian, your unwillingness to walk in Jesus' steps and pick up your self-sacrificial cross makes you a Christian feather merchant in heaven's eyes.

God's Word assures us, *"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love"* (1John 4:18). If you fear being rebuked or corrected, you ain't got love.

♥ **Love is saying what needs to be said.**

♥ **Love is listening to what needs to be heard.**

One last point for you men. No one gets to know Jesus experientially and intimately as their Lord in an academic environment. You can study the Bible all you want, and in time you'll get to know more about Him. But it's only when you actively serve Him in humility and love do you truly know Him. If you're expressing your faith to someone and you *habitually* use the words "I read that..." instead of "I saw our Lord do...", or "Jesus told me to...", then your words indicate that you don't really know Him personally. So humble yourself and do something about it!

Finally, when we wrote our series, *Turning The Hearts Of Fathers To The Children*, we still had a glimmer of hope that the Spirit would use this resource according to our

Lord's warning presented on the main page:

“[Elijah] will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction” (Malachi 4:6).

Now with Father's chastisement so imminent, we have no hope that His warning will be heeded and that He will relent. There's only time left to prepare you younger people to be all that Jesus commands His own and Who by grace gives the power to lovingly obey. You'll need the humility to keep a clear conscience and to seek the guidance and confirmation of our Lord's Spirit. And don't just ask, "Is this something Jesus would do?" Instead, make sure you ask, "Jesus, what would YOU have ME do?"

A Grandpa and Grandma in the family of Christ (Matthew 12:50),
Mike & Sue