

113 – Become a Child Again

Intro re: next week Q&A – be sure to have your CLNT's Bibles, Lexicons, whatever study-aids you have, or be at your computer with tabs up in these tools, because Barbara and I will be in the middle of boxes in every room of the house in Dallas, and I may have access only to a couple of books and Barbara's iPhone app.

I sent out an email yesterday, giving everyone plenty of time to think about, write down, and even email ahead of time questions you've always wanted answered or areas of God's word you want to understand better. Since that email went out, I've already had two responses.

Let me invite you to join in the first group discussion on "**Light Up The Scriptures,**" next Tuesday, July 3, at 8:00pm Eastern Time. I have already set an alarm on my cell phone for 6:55pm CENTRAL TIME to help me remember to be on the line in our new time zone.

Again, please feel free to email ahead of time whatever questions you'd like to investigate. I might also suggest that you do a little yourself to investigate the answers before our study and present them to the rest of us. In fact, I think it would mean more to you if you could teach the answer you discovered on your own. Not only would we benefit from your effort, but you would know certainly that the Lord has the answers in His word and they are there for all who will to discover. I think that would bring a smile yours and to the Father's face.

Now, tonight, I want to invite you to look objectively at doubt vs. certainty; impossibility vs. possibility; fear vs. faith. Obviously those pairs are made up of opposites, but to me, they also describe the difference between the flesh and the Spirit.

What do we consider impossible in our lives? What do we have doubts about, and what do we fear? I'm not asking whether we have doubts, fears, or whether we consider something in life to be impossible; I'm asking, what are they, because I'm pretty sure, based on conversations with many that there are those areas that so seem impossible for us to get the victory over. There seem to be areas where we can feel wounded still, unhealed, troubled, unfinished. I had something pop up with the mail delivery and a phone call a few days ago, and was followed up by another piece of mail yesterday that scraped off a scab from a wound I thought was healed completely. All of a sudden, doubt surfaced and I found that my sense of certainty was more vulnerable than I knew.

I felt fear and I hated it, even as I held my hand out to the Lord. My sense of God's sovereignty was tinged with resentment toward a person, and even a desire to retaliate.

I thank God for all the training He has effected in me over the past 4½ years, because I know the source of these emotions and I know that emotions are "energy in motion," and they change quickly so long as we allow them to move freely through us rather than get stuck somewhere in our minds and hearts, and eventually show up in some kind of physical pain, illness or dysfunction. And I'm deliberately withholding any details because this is an invitation to YOU to look at areas of YOUR LIFE, as I said a moment ago, where fear, doubt, or a sense of impossibility may be lurking. I would also invite you to invite God to open up those areas so that His healing touch may cover those wounds and accomplish the kind of healing that only He can.

So, if you'll join me in a prayer to the Father tonight: Abba, Papa, Daddy, God I'm asking You for Your healing touch in every area of my character, my emotions, my intellect, my thoughts and also in my body where I have withheld from You, knowingly or unknowingly. Father, I surrender all rights to myself to You. God, give me no choices anywhere and get everything You're after in me and in my life everywhere. Teach me where I'm ignorant or foolish; lead me where I'm blind or stubborn; heal me where I'm wounded and don't even know it. Thank You, Lord, for Your faithfulness to show, to lead, to reveal and demonstrate Your love, Your favor, Your goodness, Your kindness and Your faithfulness to me every day. I thank You that I am Your child and that You are my Father. I ask You to refresh me right now with Your presence that is so consuming that I can see myself climbing up and sitting in Your lap, being held in Your arms, loved and protected better than any flesh parent could love and protect *their* own child.

Daddy, God, I repent for any self-reliance that has denied or ignored or held You at arm's length. I lay the experiences at Your feet, at the cross – the ones I wish had been different or wish hadn't happened at all. I lay those down I wish were different or were not happening now. I would not have designed my life the way You did, but I would also have missed this moment of coming to You, once again, and laying all at Your feet in complete surrender and gratitude for all I've learned and am learning – much of which, perhaps, I may be yet unaware – nevertheless, I'm looking up at You now, and as a child in Your arms, I say, "Thank You, Abba, Thank You. Thank You for everything I've experienced throughout my life so far – all of it – and for everyone You put in my life along the way – everyone. I didn't like everything while it was happening. I didn't enjoy it all, and I certainly don't want to volunteer for it again; but You are the Lord and there is no other; You give and You take away; You build up and You tear down; You

designated, chose, and called me. I'm here strictly because of Your sovereign will and purpose, and You are good. Yeshua, Whose name is above every name, shed His blood and gave up His life for me to come after Him; to be saved out of death and into an almost incomprehensible and indescribable, glorious life with You that extends beyond my ability to reckon time and space. So blessed be Your Name, Father. Blessed be Your Name above every name that is named. Speak to me, show me, lead me everywhere. I pray only for the vision to see You, the ears to hear you, the will and wisdom to obey Your every instruction, and I pray for an infusion of faith to trust You in every detail of every area of my life. My life is Yours, not mine, Lord. It must therefore be entirely precious and sacred; and it is mine only to experience and carry out, like a child sent out to play, knowing that my Father has me in His love, protection and provision. I repent for unbelief and doubt, Papa. I repent for fear and the notion that something – that anything – is impossible. Forgive me, I pray, and keep me covered by the blood of Jesus in every thought, word and deed for as long as I draw breath. In His name, I pray. AMEN.

Mark 10:13-16

13 And they brought to Him little children, that He should be touching them; yet the disciples rebuke them.

14 Yet, perceiving it, Jesus **resents** it, and said to them, "Let the little children be coming to Me, and do not forbid them, for **of such is the kingdom of God**.

15 Verily, I am saying to you, Whosoever should not be **receiving** the kingdom of God **as a little child**, may under no circumstances be entering into it."

16 And, clasping them in His arms, He, in benediction, is placing His hands on them.

When Jesus said, "*of such is the kingdom of God*," referring to little children, I never really understood what He meant. I had visions of an Earth populated with 4 and 5-year-olds. I knew that wasn't what He meant, but that's the picture that my brain conjured. The words "*of such*" is what stopped my adult brain. It would be like referring to wheat when saying, "*of such is the loaf of bread*." He helps a little by adding, "*Whosoever should not be **receiving** the kingdom of God **as a little child**, may under no circumstances be entering into it.*"

It is inconceivable that everyone who lives in the kingdom of God couldn't be 5 years-old literally, like some gigantic Romper Room, there must be another explanation for the Lord's statement. Remember the principle that the scriptures are never confusing or conflicting, so whenever they appear so, our intellect needs attuned to understand what we seem unable to at the time.

Every parent probably understands what the Lord was saying instinctively, thinking about their own little children – notice by the way, that in this text, people had just brought some **little** children to Jesus. His disciples tried to prevent them from reaching Jesus, perceiving them as interfering or distracting the Lord, impeding His “REAL” work. And Jesus rebuked them. He “admonished or charged them sharply.”

This encounter was followed by the encounter with the rich guy who had done everything right according to the Law of Moses and who went away *sorrowfully* from the Lord's presence after Jesus said, “*You have one thing left to do: sell everything you have, give it to the poor, pick up the cross and follow me.*” Well, so much for thinking you can *buy* your way to the Kingdom, even by being the best at religious law-keeping.

Mark 10:23-30

23 And, looking about, Jesus is saying to His disciples, "How squeamishly shall those who have money be entering into the kingdom of God!"

24 Now the disciples were awe-struck at His words. Yet Jesus, again answering, is saying to them, "Children, how squeamish it is for those who have confidence in money to be entering into the kingdom of God!

25 Easier is it for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to be entering into the kingdom of God."

Read CLNT Commentary:

Children were not supposed to be capable of understanding Him, hence, hardly candidates for the kingdom. But they had the very essential which was so lacking among His disciples at this time. They had implicit faith in what they were told, and trusted those who told them. The disciples, alas, were also immature in understanding. They did not apprehend the need of the cross which He was seeking to sink into their hearts. Yet they lacked the child-like faith which believes, though it cannot comprehend.

20 The incident of the rich man contains the line of thought suggested by the little children. He was their opposite. He had confidence in himself, in his accomplishments, in his ideas. He wanted to work his way into the kingdom. As a matter of fact what he had done so far had resulted in a condition quite the opposite of the kingdom.

This is not a study on what the kingdom is like, because the destiny – or destination – of the Body of Christ is above the kingdom in every way conceivable. However, the scriptures regarding the kingdom contain principles that apply to us right now, and these principles put us in the proper attitude and correct posture for the kingdom of God to dwell in our hearts NOW.

- **Little children care nothing about wealth!** They don't even think about it! How many times have you heard someone talk about their youth and say, "We didn't know we were poor; we thought everyone lived this way. It was normal to us."

Barbara has talked about what she revealed to her, which she calls "paymasters"; individuals whom the Lord entrusts with great wealth but who know that the wealth they attract is for His purposes and not theirs exclusively – they are stewards of His wealth, if you will, and fund His purposes with the wealth He makes available to them. He does this ONLY with those whom He can trust to be "as little children" where wealth is concerned; caring nothing about it for themselves, knowing the One from Whom all wealth flows, and desiring His will over their own, being led by His Spirit rather than by their flesh, and not being snared by what the Apostle John calls, "*the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the ostentation of living, is not of the Father, but is of the world*" (1 John 2:16). The Apostle goes on to say, in verse 17, "*And the world is passing by, and its desire, yet he who is doing the will of God is remaining for the eon.*"

Now, go back to **Mark 10:26-27**

26 Now they were exceedingly astonished, saying to Him, "And who can be saved?"

27 Now, looking at them, Jesus is saying, "With men it is impossible, but not with God, for all is possible with God."

- **Little children believe that everything is possible!** Adults, not so much. Jesus could easily have said, "*with grownups it is impossible.*" There's a little book I've had for years, and there's still a link to it on our Library page at VictoryForLeaders.com. It's titled, "*Happiness is a Choice,*" by Barry Neil Kaufman. It contains a story about a 3 year-old

one of whose fingers had been severed in an accident. In the hospital, with her hand ballooned out with dressings as you might expect, a nurse assigned to change the bandages on the third day, if my memory is accurate, discovered that her finger had begun to regenerate! In fact, it did regenerate into a normal finger, just as if the accident had never happened. How is this possible? Well, with grownups it isn't, but not with little children, who believe all, and certainly not with, "*God Who is vivifying the dead and calling what is not as if it were*" (Romans 4:17). No one told that 3 year-old child that she couldn't grow her finger back. She didn't know it was impossible. She didn't even think about it at all!

- **Little Children aren't busy thinking; they're busy imagining and believing what they imagine.**

Now, Peter is about to show his state of mind, in Mark 10, but, for what it's worth, I would bet the others were thinking what Peter only spoke out loud:

Mark 10:28-30

28 Peter begins to say to Him, "Lo! we leave all and follow Thee! What, consequently, will it be to us?" in other words, "*What's in it for us, Lord?*"

- **Little Children have every sense of pure, innocent expectation, and no sense of self-interest.** They don't care what's in it for them; their world is naturally all *about* them!

Now, listen carefully to what the Lord says next...

29 Jesus averred to him, "Verily, I am saying to you that there is **no one** who leaves a house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or fields, on My account and on account of the evangel,

30 who should not be getting back a hundredfold **now**, in this era, houses and brothers and sisters and mother and father and children and fields, **with persecutions**, and in the coming eon, life eonian.

Be willing to pay the price to walk with Jesus; care more about His will and His purpose than yours – or anyone else's, for that matter – because you will lose nothing and gain

100 times over everything that you *left* to *follow* the Galilean – the Nazarene – with scars on his hands and feet and His side. Now there are persecutions added in the hundredfold list, so if you aren't willing to stand in the fire and take all of what being In Christ, as a member of His Body, His complement, get out now. Go enjoy all the world has to offer today.

The picture I have here is like our family of God will enjoy soon at Canobie Lake Park in New Hampshire, where, like any self-respecting amusement park, has roller coasters and other rides that are designed to elicit a profound sense of thrill or terror, whichever way you perceive the sights and sensations usually of climbing to great heights and the plunging straight down at breakneck speeds, while every survival instinct inside you is in full fight or flight mode, but you have willingly stepped into the car and strapped yourself in for whatever the ride is. And, of course, the first time has the most heightened sensations, because you have no frame of reference for this particular ride. You've been on others, but every first time has it's own unique, "virginal" quality.

Standing in line for the ride, there is often an exits along the way – sometimes more than one if the ride is known to be particularly terrifying or the lines maddeningly long. These exits are strategic places to get out of line and avoid the whole experience; they're called "chicken exits." In this section of Mark (the story of which also appears in Matthew 19 and Luke 18), Jesus provides everyone, both then and now, with a clear picture of how it works and what the price is of following him. He shows everyone listening and reading a "chicken exit."

Stay with me in the possibilities here, the certainty, and the faith in Christ Jesus. This is what it takes:

1. be like a child, with all the innocent, accepting and trusting qualities they possess naturally
2. Care more about Me and My message – the evangel – than about yourself or your self-interests.
3. Take up your cross – Hold nothing dear that is of this realm as you follow Me. Be willing to leave everyone and everything for My sake. Suffer whatever persecutions there are, and there will be many.

Here's My promise: You'll gain everything back that you left, including blessed relationships that I establish, and what you gain will be 100 times more NOW – not when I return, but NOW!

What do we think is impossible? What are we doubting?

Matthew 19:26

Now, looking at them, Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, **yet with God all is possible.**"

Luke 18:27 – favorite rendering...states the principle most clearly:

Yet He said, "**What is impossible with men is possible with God.**"

Matthew 17:20

Now He is saying to them, "Because of your scant faith. For verily I am saying to you, If you should have faith as a kernel of mustard, you shall be declaring to this mountain, 'Proceed hence-there!' and it will be proceeding. **And nothing will be impossible for you.**"

Luke 1:37 – Gabriel's visit to Mary, after telling her how she will conceive Jesus and how Elizabeth was already pregnant, who was barren:

seeing that it will not be impossible with God to fulfill His every declaration."

How does God see us? What Does He say about us? Let's make this very personal...Ask Him: Father, Abba, Papa, Daddy, how do you see me? What do You say about me?

Hebrews 6: 3-15

13 For God, promising Abraham, since He had no one greater to swear by, swears by Himself,

14 saying, "If, in sooth, it is blessing, I shall be blessing you, and multiplying, I shall be multiplying" you!

15 And thus, being patient, he happened on the promise.

Romans 8: 1-16

1 Nothing, consequently, is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.

WONDERFUL – I love that part, don't you? (read it again) So, do we feel condemned anywhere in our lives? I certainly have. Where does that come from? Clearly, it does NOT come from God, since His word, through the Apostle Paul declares that (read it again). Thank God! If we are having a feeling of condemnation, it is not from God nor of God. Now, keep that in mind during the next section . . .

Not according to flesh are they walking (*we who in Christ from verse 1*), but according to spirit,

2 for the spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus frees you from the law of sin and death.

Two things here: 1) in Christ, there is a “spirit’s law of [the] life” and 2) this spirit’s law of life FREES us from the law of [the] sin and [the] death. The biggie here are the words “FREES us” – to liberate from bonds. This is God’s sovereign doing...liberating us from the bonds of THE sin (Adam’s nature) AND THE death (the outcome of being in Adam’s race – oh, we may die before Christ returns, and our bodies may dissolve into the dirt from which Adam was made; but, like Christ, we will not be left in the grave either. As we have seen many times in our past studies, we will repose only until He arrives, at which time, we will arise to meet him [2 Thess. 4]).

What does this FREE-ing look like? Perhaps we’ll look at this more in depth another time. I suspect we’ve looked at many aspects of it before tonight. For now, let’s agree that the Freedom which God has provided us in CHRIST, now entirely apart from and unreachable by “condemnation,” looses us to fulfill the Father’s purpose to grow up mature sons and daughters who love and appreciate Him and delight to do His will out of mature love.

3 For what was impossible to the law, in which it was infirm through the flesh, did God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin, He condemns sin in the flesh,

The law was “infirm,” weak, sickly – it could not redeem except temporarily – man’s nature was unchanged. You could not observe the law closely enough to be saved out of death into life – that is something God alone does in sovereign grace. God did the impossible. He took the infirmity of the law, fulfilled it in His son, making Him sin, literally (2 cor. 5), condemning sin in HIS flesh – No wonder God went silent on Jesus – He has no relationship with sin -- the word “condemn” here is used to describe what God did by sending Christ, literally to His death. God condemns sin in the flesh... His son’s flesh -- God has no truck with sin...He never tolerates it, and will not look on it. He requires atonement for it, since He has given a clear and better way, first by His instructions to Adam, His directions to individuals up to Moses, the law He gave to Moses for Israel, and then “the spirit’s law of life,” AKA “grace” through faith in Jesus Christ.

4 that the just requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who are not walking in accord with flesh, but in accord with spirit.

How wild is this...we are fulfilling the just requirement of the law, which was totally a flesh administration – all outward signs and rituals – but we aren’t walking with flesh

but with spirit! This is a change of nature – see Paul's new creation and new humanity – that agrees with spirit rather than with flesh.

5 For those who are in accord with flesh are disposed to that which is of the flesh, yet those who are in accord with spirit to that which is of the spirit.

6 For the disposition of the flesh is death, yet the disposition of the spirit is life and peace,

7 because the disposition of the flesh is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither is it able.

8 Now those who are in flesh are not able to please God.

Here's another impossibility...flesh cannot please God. Why? Because it is enmity – it doesn't say it is AT enmity; it says it IS enmity! Flesh IS open hostility and extreme ill will toward God. People who say, "I'm not angry with God, or I don't have a problem with God" have no idea what they are talking about – they fail to recognize that, apart from the spirit – which then only leaves flesh – you have nothing BUT a problem with God...nothing BUT anger toward Him. Like it or not, or know it or not, flesh doesn't agree with God – find one example in all of scripture when a man walked in total agreement with God. I can think of one beside Jesus...Enoch; all we know is He walked with God and God took him away without dying. God loved King David, but David screwed up left and right.

And today it's even worse, I believe, simply because we have the scriptures that give the record of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension. We have the apostles' writings...so there's really no excuse for walking with flesh today, which cannot please God.

9 Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, *if* so be that God's spirit is making its home in you. Now *if* anyone has not Christ's spirit, this one is not His.

Let's be sure that God's spirit is making its home in us...that we have Christ's spirit, by all means!

10 Now if Christ is in you, the body, indeed, is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Our bodies may be dead right now, because of sin – not sins – SIN, as in Adam's sin. None escape the association, and even Jesus Himself was "made sin who knew no sin" (2 cor. 5). We have life in our spirit BECAUSE of righteousness – and

as we've seen before, that's not ours but God's righteousness out of Jesus Christ's faith!

11 Now *if* the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, *[then]* He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you.

So our bodies will be made alive BECAUSE God's spirit is making its home in us. God's saving us because He is in us just as surely as He was in Christ! Jesus even said, *"In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you...If anyone should be loving Me, he will be keeping My word, and My Father will be loving him, and We shall be coming to him and making an abode with him."* (John 14:20,23)

12 Consequently, then, brethren, debtors are we, not to the flesh, to be living in accord with flesh,

13 for if you are living in accord with flesh, you are about to be dying. Yet if, in spirit, you are putting the practices of the body to death, you will be living.

We don't owe our flesh ANYTHING. Indeed, our lives are found as we put its practices – its deeds, actions or functions -- to death! In John 6:63, Jesus says, *"The Spirit is that which is vivifying. The flesh is not benefiting anything. The declarations which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."* This "putting to death" the practices of the body is not literally killing the body itself – for my money, it's the practices of the body that ARE killing it. In spirit – perhaps we could say "BY the spirit" – we reign – or we ought to be reigning -- over its deeds, actions or functions. This is not some fakey legalism or religious ritual, but what Barbara calls a "heart check." Whatever we do, the question is, are we living by the spirit or by the flesh?

Seems impossible, doesn't it? How am I going to do everything right? Is a natural question that arises in our minds, perhaps. It isn't about getting everything right. It isn't Doing so much as it is BEING, as in being led by the spirit, as Paul says in the next verse...

14 For whoever are being led by God's spirit, these are sons of God.

Sons and daughters of God are led by His spirit...not by their flesh, obviously. I don't know anyone who gets "straight A's" at this, but that's why the first verse is so important...that there is now no condemnation to those IN Christ Jesus! Thank God! That's grace in action for sure!

15 For you did not get slavery's spirit to fear again, but **you got the spirit of sonship**, in which we are crying, "Abba, Father!"

16 The spirit **itself** is testifying together with our spirit that **we are children of God**. The spirit testifying with our spirit – that's called a witness of the spirit – and it's an important function to pay attention to. It's MORE than important; it's essential to live in this fleshly body and be God's child. Here is the most awesome news...1) we got the spirit of sonship, and 2) we are children of God. We are His offspring...we are beings of His own kind, children of unconditional love and incalculable worth.

All this is ENTIRELY IMPOSSIBLE apart from the grace and the spirit of God, because of Christ's blood shed for us:

Galatians 2:20

With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ. Now that which I am now living in flesh, I am living in faith that is of the Son of God, **Who loves me, and gives Himself up for me.**

New creation – No one but God could do this:

2 Cor. 5:17

So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!

Galatians 6:15

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation.

New Humanity,

Ephesians 2:15

13 Yet now, in Christ Jesus, you, who once are far off, are become near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He is our Peace, Who makes both one, and razes the central wall of the barrier

15 (**the enmity in His flesh**), nullifying the law of precepts in decrees, that He should be creating the two, in Himself, into one new humanity, making peace;

16 and should be reconciling both in one body to God through the cross, killing the enmity in it.

Ephesians 4:22-24 – Now add the “renewing of our minds”

22 to put off from you, as regards your former behavior, the old humanity which is corrupted in accord with its seductive desires,

23 yet to be rejuvenated in the spirit of your mind, **[rejuvenate is to make young again – we are “children of God”].** Elsewhere Paul wrote, **be imitators of God as beloved children.**” Eph 5:1]

24 and to put on the new humanity which, in accord with God, is being created in righteousness and benignity of the truth.

Bath of renascence

Titus 3:4-7 -

“Yet when the kindness and fondness for humanity of our Saviour, God, made its advent, not for works which are wrought in righteousness which we do, but according to His mercy, He saves us, through the bath of renascence* and renewal of holy spirit, which He pours out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, that, being justified in that One's grace, we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of the allotment of life eonian.”

Renascence: Moral renovation, regeneration, the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better. Commonly: the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, its renovation, as the renewal or restoration of life after death.