

## RANDOM THOUGHTS

1. Before Jesus DID any of His 3-year ministry, God the Father testified to the world, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (*Matthew 3:17*).
2. Forgiveness through Christ makes me *accepted by God*. My identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ makes me *acceptable to God*. I can never displease my Father. He loves me for who I am in His Beloved Son, not for what I do.
3. Saul focused on DOING things for God, until Christ revealed Himself TO Saul. Then, Christ revealed Himself IN Paul (Paul's true BEING). Then Christ revealed Himself THROUGH Paul in missionary journeys (Paul's DOINGS).
4. Referring to some Christians as "inactive" whenever their DOING is limited due to health or apparent apathy must be a myth. We no longer view Christian brothers and sisters according to what they do or don't do (according to the flesh), but according to our faith in the majestic Christ living and active in them (*2 Corinthians 5:16-17*).
5. Viewing a brother and sister solely based on the living Christ does not overlook their DOINGS, but rather it lovingly holds them accountable. When the Corinthians performed lewd sinful acts in church, Paul did not frantically try to get them to DO something to get right with God, rather he boldly proclaimed over and over that they already were right with God. "Don't you know who you are?! You are temples...sanctified...already rich...etc!!!"
6. Abiding in Christ is the key to life. Many of us have cried out "But HOW do I abide in Christ?" God lovingly took me to a place of brokenness to reveal that abiding in His precious Son is not based on DOING, but on BEING, and that through the cross and resurrection, God has already grafted me into Christ. So, for years I had tried to DO what God had already DONE.
7. I used to see God's commands as something for me to DO for God. I believe now that commands are promises He will DO through me. My faith is in the living Christ, not in my abilities to obey God.

## PERSONAL NEWS

I have been invited to speak at Washington Church in Pelzer, SC on July 11 regarding the ministries at the Boys Home and Christ Life Ministries.

I had a delightful fellowship with the pastor of Pendleton Street Baptist Church in early June. A mutual friend arranged the meeting.

A youth pastor, who I mentored 40 hours in the Fall of 2006, graduated from Luther Rice Seminary in May with a degree in Christian Counseling.

I continue to see up to 7 people nearly every week for one-on-one discipling. My wife Joy and our friend Kelli join with me in ministering to women.



**Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles.  
They shall run and not be weary...they shall walk and not faint.  
ISAIAH 40:31**

From the beginning of human existence, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil set man's mind on DOING. The curse from the Fall of Adam is that man became identified with that tree. As a result, man's burden is to determine what is good and to DO it, and to determine what is evil and to not DO it.

The Tree of Life is a picture of Christ, who is Life (*John 14:6*). Salvation is all about being cut out of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and being grafted into the Tree of Life (through the cross and resurrection)...a new identity...a new mind set. This is a finished work of Christ in a Christian. God has now given us a focus on BEING...BEING rooted in Christ the Beloved Son...BEING alive for the first time.

Our old DOING programming tempts us to read *Isaiah 40:31* (above) and ask God to renew our own strength so that we can DO things. However, the root meaning for the Hebrew word *renew* is *exchange*. This verse is about our "strength" being *exchanged for Christ Himself* who is our true strength. We can now experience the wings (resurrection freedom) of Christ Himself. Our body and emotions may often grow weary, however, our true hearts will never grow weary because Christ is our life...and He will never faint!

I hope the short articles in this newsletter encourage you. Blessings!



*"Resting in the beauty of who God made you."  
Photo by my wife Joy (2007)*

## TURKEYS AND EAGLES

If the evil one can keep us from knowing who we are in Christ Jesus – new creations, saints, children of God – then he can tempt us to act, by deceiving us to want what we think we do not have. This is the original lie from the Garden of Eden. The Christian does not DO in order to BECOME. He does because he is what God has made him in Christ Jesus.

Following is an excerpt from Peter Lord's book *Turkeys and Eagles* (Seed Sowers, 1977). It is a parable of an eaglet named Hagan, who fell out of his nest and was raised by a flock of turkeys. Be free. Enjoy.

"Hagen, you are an *eagle!*" said the wise old owl. "An eagle, my friend. You are a descendent of the grandest and highest of all birds. You belong high up there in the sky above all other creatures. Go now, Sir Eagle, and soar. Soar above us all."

A chill of glory and revelation ran up and down Hagen's mighty wings. Instinctively, he *knew* who he was. All he had ever needed was for someone to tell him! At that moment, he recalled that he had often dreamed of flying high in the sky, *above* the turkeys, *above* the buzzards, with some majestic species.

The wise old owl continued, "Look at yourself. You are not a turkey. You have a noble heart of an eagle. It is the turkeys who have told you that you were a buzzard and that you have become a wonderful turkey. You are neither! You need not live in the wood any longer. Go Hagan! You belong in the sky!"

It is true that an eagle does not take long at all to learn to fly once he has been set free. And at that moment, our dear friend Hagan had very definitely been set free! Hagan opened his mighty wings to their fullest, and with one tremendous sweep, he set sail into the skies. Nor was he afraid as he lifted his head and screeched a most terrible cry of strength, joy, and freedom. It was a cry of triumph.

Hagan circled the wood for one last view of the unnatural habitat which so long had held him. Having taken one last look, Hagan raised his head and saw in the far distance, and high above him, something grand and beautiful. Every fiber in his being called out, "Yonder is my home!" Unleashing again that terrible cry of freedom, he lifted his head, arched his wings, caught the wind, and soared toward the mountain peaks!

The Christian life is not climbing uphill against great odds to someday become holy. When you became His child, God placed you in His holiness. Behold Him. You are going to rise above the storms of life that drive turkeys into hiding, but drive eagles into the very presence of God!

## BEING AND DOING CANNOT BE SEPARATED

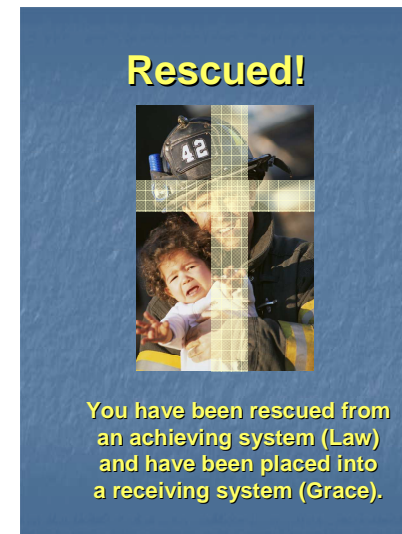
I am beginning to see that BEING and DOING really cannot be separated. The more I gaze upon the ministry of Christ to me and others, the more I realize that He gives Himself in His ministry. As He loves people, He doesn't just give to us an entity called "love"...He gives Himself.

BEING and DOING are perfectly united on the cross and in the resurrection. Jesus my Savior (being) died for me (doing). Jesus my life (being) lives for me (doing)! As we minister to others, we minister our very lives!

This is why discipling is through relationships. We give the Life from ourselves to others and they entrust their lives to us. Our DOING actually is the giving of our BEING to others. We truly are living sacrifices (*Romans 12:2*)!

## GRACE LIFE CONFERENCE (SIMPSONVILLE, SC) AUGUST 24-25

Below is one of my favorite slides from the Grace Life Conference. We have been rescued by Christ from the achieving (or DOING) system and have been placed into a receiving (or BEING system). We can now rest because we have already received ALL of God's blessings in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3)...an eternal supply of His love, joy, peace, longsuffering, hope. Now, instead of focusing on DOING things to get God's blessings, we are free to focus only on giving His blessings to others.



If you know of anyone who might be interested in this conference, please contact me. I am also available to present a 30-minute overview of the Grace Life conference to individuals, families, and groups.