

Daily View

"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today'" Hebrews 3:13

August 31, 2020



No matter how elaborate the building, you won't find Jesus there. You'll only find him in God's word and in the people who imitate him.
[Stanford University Memorial Chapel. 2014]

"We saw Jesus!! He was here!!"

In the last Daily View I wrote about Floyd Thompson, one of my, and many others,' early-life "influencers." Floyd was all about preaching from the Bible; sounds obvious but it's becoming less common today. There were a lot of churches in Orange County in the 60s and there were a lot of gospel meetings. My father was asked to preach a sermon on an evening at Fairview and there were hundreds of people there and several "big-name" preachers. My father had not been preaching very long and he was nervous. He was sitting up front and Floyd noticed he was squirming in his pew, fiddling with his notes, so he went up and sat next to him. He leaned over and said, "LeRoy...*just preach the text.*" He then got up and walked back to his pew. That was vintage Floyd.

My dad told that story many times because those few words made a deep impression on him. It wasn't just because Floyd noticed he was nervous and calmed him down. What was more important was what he said: "*preach the text.*" This is what we are supposed to do (II Timothy 4:2). My dad made an effort to do that for the rest of his life.

Preachers preach the text because it is the text we want people to remember, not our stories or clever word-smithing. I preached at Fairview one time and Floyd had placed a little sign as a reminder to himself and the many other preachers who stood at that podium. The sign said, "*Sir, we would see Jesus*" (John 12:20).

This is not just for preachers, though. The goal of every Christian is for people to see Jesus in us. Paul says, "Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1; cf. Ephesians 5:1). If I call myself a "Christian" I am saying that my primary goal in life is to follow and imitate Jesus in every way. We used to define a "Christian" as one who is "Christlike" but we've gradually moved away from that, perhaps because it seems too simple. But being like Christ is the object of our faith while we're here on earth; the object is not *just* to entrust our eternal salvation to Christ and then wait until we die. People are to see Christ in us while we are on planet earth.

I read an interesting illustration of this some years ago. Some preachers traveled to a foreign land to preach the gospel. They set up Bible classes and began teaching the inhabitants about Jesus. As one of the preachers was teaching, some of the men began looking at each other, with wide eyes of excitement. The teacher asked them, "what's going on?" The men said "*we saw him; we saw Jesus!!!*" Confused, the teacher asked what they were talking about. The men said, "follow us!" They took the teacher out to a grave of a doctor who had worked in their tribal community. "*He was here; Jesus was here!*"

Is this not the goal of a Christian? If someone can say of you, "I saw Jesus in him/her" surely, all things being equal, God would be pleased.

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