

MISAIMINGS

“Who concerning the Truth Have Misaimed” — 2 Timothy 2:18

Misaiming concerning Eating Jesus

Misaiming: “To confess that Jesus is Lord means that the Eucharist must form the basis for our life in the world, else we shall not have Life within us (John 6:53)” (*Again*, Oct.-Dec. 1999, p. 7).

Truth: When the Lord Jesus declared, “He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me” (John 6:57), He offended those who failed to grasp the spiritual significance of His words. To His disciples He explained that He was not talking about a material or physical experience, but that they were to enjoy and partake of Him spiritually. He emphasized that “it is the Spirit who gives life” (v. 63). To consider the physical bread of the Eucharist as the fulfillment of the Lord’s intention in this chapter is to make the same mistake that His initial audience did, that is, to reduce the eating of Jesus to something merely physical. Instead, to eat Christ is to enjoy Him, receive Him, and partake of Him in the Spirit.

Our relationship with Christ—including our eating of Him—is one in the Spirit and of the divine life. Christ is our life (Col. 3:4), because “he who has the Son has the life” (1 John 5:12). Christ dwells within the believer as the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), even the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Furthermore, when we enjoy Christ as our life, He also becomes our living (Gal. 2:20). Therefore, to eat Christ is, as the Lord declared, altogether a matter of life and of the Spirit, not of anything in the physical realm. Christ is available to us as the Spirit every day and in every place. We should not confine our notion or our experience of eating Jesus to the physical bread at the Lord’s table.

Misaiming concerning God’s Intention with His Glory

Misaiming: “When we speak of His ‘glory,’ we speak of the sum total of all His perfections, the uniqueness of His being, the totality of what distinguishes Him as Creator from His creation and His creatures. (Thus the concept is very close to that of God’s holiness.) His glory is what in its ultimate sense He ‘will not give to another’ (Isa. 42:8; 48:11), though He causes faint glimmers of reflected glory to show forth in His

creation and especially in humanity” (*Viewpoint*, Jan.-Feb. 2000, p. 5).

Truth: This passage both misunderstands and misconstrues the crucial New Testament term *glory*. It wrongly asserts that God does not intend to share His glory except in “faint glimmers” reflected through creation and humanity. It misapplies Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11 to mean that God does not want to share His glory when in fact these verses express the opposite notion—that God very much desires to give His glory to His people. These verses are His declaration that, on the one hand, He has chosen them as the recipients of His glory and that, on the other hand, He will not give His glory to those who worship idols. In 48:11 God reasserts His pledge that He will not cut His people off but, rather, will refine and try them so that He may give them His glory. He then promises, “I will not give My glory to another.”

This misunderstanding, perhaps, derives from the mistaken notion that God’s glory is an incommunicable attribute, i.e., the “uniqueness of His being,” that separates and distinguishes Him from His creation. In its highest definition, glory is God Himself in His expression, *especially* through humanity. Christ, in His first coming as the express declaration of the Father (John 1:18), is described as having “His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father” (v. 14). Christ is also “the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance” (Heb. 1:3). This means that Christ is the “out-raying” of God, the substantial expression of God. Whenever God was expressed in Christ, His glory was present. Furthermore, whenever Christ is expressed through His believers’ transformation, God’s glory is not only present, but multiplied. The apostle Paul describes our transformation into Christ’s image as being “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18). The more we express Him, the more His glory is seen.

God delights in giving His glory to Christ, and Christ delights to give the same to His disciples. John 17:22 says, “And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them.” In fact, in eternity the New Jerusalem will be the corporate, multiplied expression of the Triune God, forever “having the glory of God” (Rev. 21:11). From eternity, God has intended to express

Himself in glory through the church in this age (Eph. 3:21) and consummately in the New Jerusalem for eternity. God's glory—that is, God in His expression—is not merely parceled out to His creatures in “faint glimmers,” but by means of transformation, His glory is enlarged and magnified through redeemed, regenerated, and transformed humanity so that we ultimately would “be to the praise of His glory” (1:12).

Misaiming concerning Our Partnership with Christ

Misaiming: “God placed us in the middle of a bounteous creation....What is perhaps more amazing is that God recruits us to become partners in His creative enterprises. Adam was not only allowed to reside in the Garden of Eden but also ‘to work it and take care of it’ (Genesis 2:15).

“When we work and strive for excellence, we’re presenting the world with a brief glimmer of the image of God the Designer....Pray that God will help you see beyond the hassles that accompany work. Focus on the true joy that emerges from a job well done” (*Stand Firm*, March 2000, p. 8).

Truth: The article cited above misaims in its trivialization of our partnership with Christ, reducing it to the limited and mundane scope of the “creative enterprises” of our career. According to this article, our joint enterprise with God is simply an extension of Adam’s care for the garden, a calling to provide those around us with brief glimpses of His image by working hard and finding joy in “a job well done.”

The Scriptures affirm that indeed “we have become partners of Christ” (Heb. 3:14). However, this partnership is much more profound than mere industry and ingenuity in the workplace. According to Hebrews 1:9, our partnership with Christ is related to His precious anointing. It states that God has anointed Christ “with the oil of exultant joy above [His] partners.” This means that we share with Christ in the participation of the Holy Spirit (the oil of exultant joy). God has a divine interest, a plan, and it is through our participation in His anointing that He carries out His purpose and plan. What an honor and blessing to be called by God to share His anointing as partners with the anointed One! As we participate in the Holy Spirit, the One who moves to fulfill God’s plan, we become full partners with Christ in God’s glorious joint enterprise. We should not diminish our partnership with Christ to the level of mere human industry. Rather, by maintaining a constant participation in the Spirit, even as we engage in our earthly employment, we imbue even the most mundane activities on earth with eternal significance. We thus find our joy not merely in working hard and

doing a good job, but rather, in our experience of Christ’s anointing, the “oil of exultant joy.”

Misaiming concerning an Office of Worship Leader

Misaiming: “While much has been written about pastoring, the emergence of the worship leader as a staff necessity is new for much of the body of Christ. ...The effective worship leader combines musical aptitude with spiritual formation *and* people skills—the right brain, the left brain and the heart. A musical but socially immature individual may encounter rough water fulfilling the office of worship leader” (*Ministries Today*, May/June 2000, p. 67).

Truth: The New Testament never mentions the office of worship leader. This is a modern invention of the natural man, designed to fit and enhance the natural concept of a worship service.

Instead of an official worship leader, the Old Testament prophesies and the New Testament affirms that the Lord Jesus alone occupies the role of “leader” in the New Testament. Hebrews 2:12 quotes the Lord’s prophecy through the psalmist: “In the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You.” All Christian meetings and worship should focus on the invisible, yet very real presence of the One who promises to be in our midst when we gather into His name (Matt. 18:20). In addition, 1 Corinthians 14:30 tells us that during the meetings the indwelling Christ is actively revealing His truth to the believers. Therefore, all those in attendance should be allowed to speak for and to speak forth the Lord in the meetings in a spontaneous yet orderly way (v. 33), for the Word encourages us that “[we] can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged” (v. 31). Christian meetings should be open and responsive to the instant and spontaneous leading of Christ, who is present as the Head of the Body. He conducts the meetings as He wills.

Every believer should be prepared to speak something. Paul tells us, “Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation” (v. 26). If we are truly seeking to build up the Lord’s Body and help the members function in the meetings under the Lord’s leadership, we must provide them opportunities to express the Lord as He leads, not replace their function with a worship leader. The result will be meetings that are fresh, inspiring, and most importantly, filled with the Lord’s speaking through all His members. Such meetings will build up the church.

by the Editors