

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Revelation, Transformation and Manifestation of God's Nature

by Dan Trygg

“...I bow my knees before the Father, ...¹⁶ in order that He might grant to you, according to the riches/abundance of His glory, with power to be made strong/mighty through His Spirit in the inner person,¹⁷ Christ to-habitually-dwell through faith in your hearts in *agapē*-love. Having-been-rooted and having-been-firmly-established,¹⁸ in order that you-may-be-fully-able/may-be-strengthened-out to grasp, together-with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth,¹⁹ and to-experientially-know the *agapē*-love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, in order that you may be filled-up unto all the fullness of God.”

Ephesians 3:14,16-19

“The Lord is the Spirit; but where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. But we all, with having-been-unveiled faces, contemplating (gazing at) the radiant-glory of the Lord, are being transformed (‘metamorphosized’) into the same likeness, from glory to glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit.”

2 Corinthians 3:17,18

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the intense-revelatory-knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord,³ as all things of His divine power (the things toward life and good-devotedness) are having-been-granted to us through the intense-revelatory-knowledge of Him calling us to His own glory (radiance) and virtue (manifestation of divine power),⁴...in order that you might come to be sharers/partners of divine nature, escaping the corruption of the world by lust.”

2 Peter 1:2-4

I wanted to take another opportunity to look at what Paul, and also Peter, were talking about. It is tragic that so many people have no idea, no inkling, of what these apostles were trying to convey to us. **The Jesus movement of the first century has been so watered down, institutionalized, and “simplified” over the centuries as to be almost unrecognizable. It has been formalized, rationalized and religified so that the average church attender has little idea of what a disciple of Christ really is, ...or what we are called to pursue, ...or the incredible possibilities that God has for us.** There is *so much more* than simply “going to church”! I mentioned last time that **taking Jesus as your Savior and Lord, and being born from above, is not the *finish line*, or the *goal*, ...it is the *beginning*, ...the *starting line* for a pursuit.** According to John 17:3, eternal life is given *in order that* we might know God and Jesus Christ. So many people think that they just need to “get in the door” to heaven, and have no idea that there is more, ...or may not be interested in what God may require of them. **Sadly, many times the preaching and teaching do not call people to the deeper things of discipleship. The writer to the Hebrews said, “Therefore, leaving the elementary message about the Christ, let us press on to maturity...” (6:1).** As we have been learning in this study of Ephesians, there is so much more to perceive and discover regarding who we are in Christ, what He has done for us, and what we are called to.

We worked through Ephesians 3:14-21 last time. We saw that Paul understood that **the way to a deeper experience of God involves two parts: (1.) we must be praying and investing ourselves in growth; and (2.) God must grant empowerment and illumination. Clearly, there is a *process* involved. It takes time to be “rooted and grounded”.** But, even these initial steps of establishing a foundation for greater revelation, requires a “gift” of power from the Holy Spirit. In the context, this “gift” is granted in response to prayer. **Throughout this entire process, there is a partnership between the disciple and the Master. We must seek and pursue. God grants *insight* and *power*.** We must respond and obey the further revelation, ...and God will lead us into more. If you take a few moments to read through the scriptures at the top of this study, you will see that the other passages also involve human effort and divine empowerment. **If we are never told that there is more, ...we would probably not think to look for more.** Then, if we are encouraged to seek for more, and we choose *not* to do so, God may not “grant” to us more power or more revelation. We come back to the principle of relational reciprocity: “Those who honor Me, I will honor; those who think little of Me, will be little esteemed by Me” (1 Sam. 2:30). **God responds to us in proportion to our desire for Him.**

It is important to remember that God has *already* given us every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph. 1:3). This whole endeavor of seeking and responding to God is in response to His initiative and provision. This is true in all three of these passages.

In 2 Corinthians, God has *already* put His light within us, and has made us servants of the new covenant (3:6). The Spirit is already at work in our lives (4:6). If we want to go deeper, ...if we want to be transformed..., we must invest time and attention contemplating the glory of God. He will radically change us from the inside-out as we ponder and worship Him. **Again, there seem to be aspects of *illumination* (“enlightening of the eyes of the heart” – Eph. 1:18) and *revelation* (“uncovering of hidden things” – Eph. 1:17) that are clearly God's working.** If we are not *looking*, or *paying attention*, we might not notice some insight that God would place before us. **When we seek, God will respond; when God reveals, we must respond.**

In 2 Peter 1, the apostle plainly tells us that “all things of God's power that pertain to life and good devotion *have-been-granted* to us.” God has already provided them for us in Christ. **What is lacking is our**

perception and appropriation of them. How do we obtain them? Through revelatory-knowledge of Him. In my abridged quotation of the passage, I left out the “precious and magnificent promises” that God has provided for us to pursue and apply to grow in grace, incite us to seek, and to give us insight. It is clear, in the following verses, that Peter also saw this as a step-by-step process (vss. 5-9). There is knowledge or insight, ...application, ...testing, ...confirmation, ...perseverance, ...growth in brotherly affection among believers, ...and, ultimately, the expression of the divine love that only God can produce in a human life. It is to be the unique mark of those who follow Jesus.

Note the end result in each of these passages: (1.) “...that you might be filled up unto all the fullness of God”; (2.) “...that you might be transformed into His likeness from one degree of radiant-glory to another”; and, (3.) “...that you may become sharers/partakers/partners of the divine nature”.

In each case, the life and character of God is to fill us, and radiate from our lives. Is THAT the message being preached in most churches today? We are to be filled with God, ...be transformed to display His character, ...and manifest the power and reality of His life at work within ours. We are to talk like Jesus, act like Jesus, and interact with others as He would, ...by His power at work in us. We are to be light shining in a world of darkness. We are to express the attitudes and actions produced by the Spirit, not the attitudes and actions of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-22). **What is it that people are seeing in those who call themselves Christians today? What is it that modern-day Christians are pursuing?**

As I was doing research for this study, I was looking at examples of “second blessing”, “holiness” or “sanctification” movements in church history. I was thinking in terms of some of the more recent movements in the past few centuries, because I was familiar with them. **I wondered what was being taught in the earliest centuries of the church, and was surprised to find a significant tradition going back to the second century church fathers that referred to what Paul and Peter taught.** People like Justin Martyr (c. 100-165), Irenaeus (c. 130-202), Theophilus of Antioch (c. 120-190), Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215), Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296-373), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-395), Augustine (c. 354-430), and Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) are just a notable few who wrote of how we can become like God through the practical inworking of the Holy Spirit. **In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, they speak of this as “theosis”, or being made like God. In the Roman Catholic church, they used the term “divinization”.** Neither term means that we “become divine”. Rather, it refers to the process of transformation that leads to an intimacy and unity with God, through the inworking of His power. **They describe this process as having three main aspects: (1.) the way of purgation, or the purification of mind and body** (Gk. – *katharsis*), which involves utilizing the spiritual disciplines to establish the mind in the truth, and put aside error and deception, and to develop and exercise self-control. This is much like what is described in 2 Peter 1:5-9. **(2.) the way of illumination** (Gk. – *theoria* – lit. “God-sightings” or “visions of God”). This refers to receiving insights, visions or revelations from God, such as we have seen in all three of these passages. **(3.) the unitive way, or a life of unity with God.** This is where we are filled by the Spirit, led by the Spirit and responsive to His direction. There is a synergy, whereby we are “co-workers with God” (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1), as we have described above. **In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the unitive life is seen as the focus and goal of our lives, ...the fulfillment of our humanity.** It is what is sought in practice by believers in that church background. **A similar tradition is found within the Roman Catholic church,** especially exemplified by some of those who sought solitude and contemplation, though it is also considered the goal of every person. However, it would appear, in my limited exposure, that most attending Catholics are not in deep pursuit of oneness with God, as laid out in this path.

Similar teachings can be found among the Anabaptists, Lutherans, Reformed theologians (e.g., Calvin), and Anglicans. It was really emphasized by Wesley in the Methodist movement, and was a central belief of the early Quakers. The “holiness movements” and the Higher Life movements of the 1800’s and early 1900’s also relied on similar teachings and principles. Many of these emphasized an “instantaneous experience”, where seekers would encounter the Holy Spirit in a unique way, or would have a “breakthrough” that would enable them to walk in a freedom in Christ that they had not known before.

The point of this brief survey is to illustrate that the principles described in the NT have been experienced and verified by thousands throughout church history. There is a life of unity with God, ...a life where we are filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, so that we become like the glove on His hand, or a mouthpiece through which He can speak. Although there are many variations in experiences and doctrinal emphases, the main points hold true. **We start out our spiritual journey as babes.** We often must be fed and nurtured by others, but we need to grow to where we learn to develop our own walk with God. **We must grow in knowledge, develop obedience, and learn to ask for God to make Himself known in our lives.** There are insights and revelations to discover that HE Himself will give to us. We must seek Him, watch for His working, expect His leading and activity in our lives. We must apply ourselves to pursue Him, obey Him, and be willing to serve Him. **As we solidify our spiritual walk, He will reveal more to us. As we honor Him with our obedience and faith, He will honor us with more of Himself. The goal is a life that is transformed to become like Him, a life that is characterized by the fruit and power of the Holy Spirit. God has called us to a life that reveals HIM!** Oh, if the people of God would only keep the main thing the MAIN thing! But you can!