

This is Who We Are

Text: 2 Cor. 3:17-18

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Introduction

What does it mean that we live life as a reflection?

How are we the reflection of Christ's work?

Consider the work of Christ to understand how we participate in and are benefitted by that work

This is ultimately a change in our identity, a change in who we are

How do we know who we are? How do we identify ourselves?

Illus: identity in a foreign land, when separated from our identifying markers, death of parents or spouses, empty nest syndrome

In Christianity, there are clear markers

CHRIST IN HUMAN NATURE

Christ becomes like us, fully participates with us, Phil. 2:5-11

He becomes human to such extent that he even dies

Thus the cross becomes a great stumbling block because gods are immortal

How can a god die?

Jesus shows his power and mastery over death in his resurrection. Death is not final when one has power over death and can come back to life. This is genuine mastery of over death, proper understanding of God's plan for human beings made in his image, but capable of living physically on this globe

WE HUMANS PARTICIPATING IN THE DIVINE NATURE

Christ's sacrificial death

- In baptism we participate in his death. This involves death to the old man and death to sin (death to the old way of living)
- Christ's blood was shed in his death, thus in baptism into his death we contact the blood of Christ, through which forgiveness is received. Without blood shedding, there is no forgiveness, life is in the blood
- By shedding his blood, Christ established a new covenant
- In baptism, we thus become participants in the new covenant, and Christ becomes the first fruits of our hope
- In the Lord's Supper, we remember Christ's death
- We reflect his death in our baptism and regular, weekly observance of the Supper

Christ's burial

- We participate in Christ's burial in baptism
- His burial shows that he really died. Theories that say he merely swooned or was hidden by his disciples are clearly refuted
- In his death, he again participates with us, so that we might participate with him

- Man in God's image, God in man's image
- We reflect his burial in our baptism, confident that the previous life is no more

Christ's resurrection

- From our baptism, we participate in Christ's resurrection in new life
- In our renewed way of life, we reflect Christ's resurrection
- We shall one day participate in Christ's heavenly resurrection, 1 Cor. 15
- Because Christ has returned to heaven, we also have that hope
- In our confident anticipation of his return, we reflect our hope of resurrection

One thing remains....Christ's exaltation, enthronement

- How do we participate in his exaltation? How do we reign with him?
 - The Bible is clear about our reigning with him
 - 2 Tim. 2:11-13
 - Priests and kings, Ex 19:5-6, Rev 1:7
 - Rev 20
- We live as kings and priests

Conclusion

Christ sacrificed his physical body, so that we might in the church be his spiritual body. We (as the church) are Christ's body, that which he saves, so there is no salvation outside the body, the church.

We also live sacrificial lives so that others might know him and be saved.