

2014-10-18

Manipulation, Focus, and Jesus #1

Hi all,

Chris has a motorized wheelchair he travels around the neighborhood with, greeting the neighbors, dogs, children, and keeping a running conversation and commentary going about everything he sees.

As a result, his path down the gravel roads of our neighborhood zigzag based on where his focus is for the moment - a squirrel chattering at him from a tree trunk here, and over he zigs to talk to it. "Hello naughty squirrel, what do you think you're doing?" he asks with a chuckle to himself. Just then 'Shadow', our neighbor's black Giant Schnauzer will bark a greeting to Chris and off he zags to see him responding 'Hello Shadow, I'm coming, I'm coming', and on through the neighborhood we zig zag down the road and drive ways of the neighbors - he rides, I walk! It is 1/4 mile (.40 km) from our house to the mail boxes at the edge of the neighborhood which is our turn around point, meaning we turn around and do it all over again, often for 1 - 1 1/2 hours at a time, back and forth, back and forth.

As Barb and I were talking about the latest craze to grab the attention of Christians, The Mystery of the Shemitah (Which I enjoyed), I asked this question: "I wonder how many Christians realize they are being manipulated?"

She asked what I meant, and I replied that the "Christian" business system pushes things so that just as one hot topic begins to cool, another is pushed to the forefront, so that the body of Christ's attention zigzags from one 'hit' book, teaching, event, or movie to the next in a never ending parade. Some of it is by design, some by a spirit attached to it. Much of the body of Christ goes from one 'fad' or 'hit' to the next, like Chris zig zagging around the neighborhood.

You don't find that behavior in the New Testament nor taught by its writers.

Barb and I have known the Lord since the mid-1970's, and we've seen zigzag Christians all our lives. Back when I was a teen a spiritual book (but not Christian) my mom pushed on me was Jonathan Livingston Seagull, and before or after that (I don't recall) she insisted I read 'Born Again' by Chuck Colson. After that it was 'From Goo to You by Way of the Zoo' by Harold Hill, which I remember as being funny and entertaining. Then "They Speak with Other Tongues" by John Sherrill, and so on.

But rather than go forward from the 1970's, how about going backward from the present. Here are a few: The Mystery of the Shemitah, before it 'The Four Blood Moons'. Before it 'Heaven is For Real', and stretching it out a bit we had The Harbinger, the Left Behind series...going back still we had The Prayer of Jabez...and you get the idea. Many of you can fill in the blanks because you've seen the pattern too.

Not only were there books and movies, but also 'outpourings' and the related preachers and teachings that went with them, or at least were part of the culture temporarily. There was a time of named/naming angels, going to heaven at will, open heaven, personal prophecy, pleading blood lines, gold dust, feathers, demon related teaching/deliverance, inner healing, name-tag 'apostles', 'bishops', 'prophets', paying for personal prophecy, and going back further to name it claim it, get rich quick, the 100 fold return, and so on...

The Lord is saying FOCUS!

Last week I shared how the Lord has now 3 direct times this year in visitations with me plus another time in a ministry situation, told me the season of the body of Christ now is for us to know to whom we belong. That means it is a season in the Spirit to focus our attention, to narrow our investment of time and money to the important things - the people we fellowship with, are on the same spiritual page with, and stop zig zagging to the many Christian headlines screaming for our attention.

I love to be in the presence of the Lord. But I've never chased His presence nor felt I needed to. He lives in me, what more could I ask? His outpouring is first in me so why do I need to chase the newest Christian superstar? But there is a stream in the body of Christ that flocks to each latest 'outpouring', some of them living event to event which are spiritual highs, only to return home to real life which are spiritual lows.

And I love a good mystery, don't get me wrong. I love how there are many symbols and signs in the Word that speak of spiritual mysteries. But there is a stream in the body of Christ that makes that their focus, to find some deeper mystery of the lining up of world events with scripture so they may divine the future, searching for some key to unlock the date for the rapture or WWII or an invasion of Israel.

The spirit of fear - this is important!

Perhaps the biggest single thing getting the body of Christ's attention right now isn't a single event, book, teaching, or movie. It is the spirit of fear. In fact, the spirit of fear is what motivates a lot of people who devote great mental and emotional energy to all these things. Cloaked in spirituality, the truth is they run after these things because they are afraid of the future.

They are afraid their way of life will change. They are afraid money will fail. They are afraid they will be left behind to go through the Tribulation, or persecution, or hardship. They are in fact afraid because they don't know Him well enough to be in His presence where there is no fear, only love, peace, and certainty. They deal with the spirit of fear and worry about the future by running after the fad rather than getting alone with Him who lives within.

Beware of the spirit of fear attaching itself to Christian teaching, books, and 'outpourings/events'.

The characteristic of children

"We are not meant to remain children at the mercy of every chance wind of teaching and the jockeying of men who are expert in the craft presentation of lies. Be we are meant to hold firmly to the truth in love, and to grow up in every way into Christ, the head. For it is from the head that the whole body, as a harmonious structure knit together by the joints with which it is provided, grows by the proper functioning of individual parts to its full maturity in love." Ephesians 4:14-16, JB Phillips Translation

Most translations translate 'children' (Greek: nepios) 'babes' or 'babies'. A more literal translation of 'every chance wind of teaching' could be 'tossed by the waves and whirled about by every fresh wind of teaching.'

The word translated here as 'expert in the craft presentation' is the Greek word, 'cubos', in English, cube, and refers to one rolling the dice in a game of chance to trick and manipulate those in the game. The rest of the phrase in Greek is 'panourgia' and literally means men who are 'ready to do anything'.

It means we as the body of Christ are not to remain babies or young children, running to and fro from one slick presentation to the next for it is actually deception cloaked in Christian spirituality. It makes our spiritual lives like one floating on the waves of a storm.

We are to grow up in love in Christ, focusing on our single goal; To be like Him. Drop every distraction that takes away from that singular goal. Grow up body of Christ, stop being distracted by the manipulators. Be distracted by Him and pay the price to learn how to get in His presence, the discipline, the lifestyle of Him - the meek and lowly of heart Servant of all - we are to be like Him!

Do you know Him?

Many Christians don't truly know the Lord. They know OF Him. They know ABOUT Him. They have corporate experiences of His presence in some church meetings. They know some principles of His kingdom. But they either don't know Him well enough to NOT be afraid, even sometimes, those who've known Him for decades. Or they've never learned to discipline and control their thoughts and emotions to bring them captive to His Presence in their spirit.

As a result they zig zag in their spiritual focus like Chris zigzags around the neighborhood. As the Lord told me in the visitation of February 2001: "See what I see; people running to and fro to this meeting and that looking for the spectacular, thinking THAT is supernatural, while they miss the supernatural work in their midst, even in their own heart, for the process of discipleship IS supernatural."

This series is prophetic in nature and is what He is saying about growing up instead of running to and fro. This is about how to grow up and truly know Him. More next week, until then, blessings,

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2014-10-25

Focus & Jesus #2

Hi all,

An awakening happened a few months ago when the same lady who has cut my hair each month for years, asked with a straight face after my latest shearing: "Would you like me to trim your eyebrows?"

Her question was like a thunder clap. I didn't know whether to be insulted or submit to the sudden realization my body is getting old. No one had ever asked to trim my eyebrows. Not even Barb. Trim a few ear and nose hairs maybe, ok, after all I am 16 years past 40.

How far I've come down the path of hair maturity! When Barb and I were dating she asked if I thought I'd have sideburns and more than 3 chest hairs by the time we were married! Not only have I sideburns, I have a forest on my chest and the 'leaves' are starting to turn with the season too - gray.

The worst thing was, I had no idea they needed trimmed!

And this is like the body of Christ, how???

Proof that we are eternal is that inside we feel the same as we did when we were teenagers. Our body changes around us but inside we feel the same, proving we don't need these bodies to live eternally, making the issue merely one of destination. When I look in the mirror I feel like I'm looking at the same 17 year old I've always been, but the reflection has changed these last many years. Eternally we live forever, but we can choose how mature we are when we enter the next life.

Babies are focused on self and easily distracted. If they are fussy we dangle shiny and noisy car keys just out of reach, and they focus on that for a few minutes. But that gets old and more than one parent has resisted better judgement and for lack of something else safe to give them, given them the whole key ring to keep them entertained, figuring they'll take care of the germs later. And when that gets old and nothing else works, sticking a Binky* in their mouth might do it. (*Brand name of what my generation called a pacifier)

I shared last week from Ephesians 4:14, a characteristic of spiritual babyhood is running here and there to the latest 'wind of teaching', making the comparison between babyhood and spiritual growth. Many Christians reach for the spiritual keys dangling before them for a season, and then they finally get that key ring and slobber all over it for a time, then they move on to something else to pacify them for a season.

Sadly, the Lord then becomes their servant, having to provide something else for them to become distracted with until they reach a point they desire maturity, then He can begin to help them grow.

Babies can't help but grow into toddlers, who can't help but grow into children, who can't help but grow into teens, who can't help but grow into adults. Not so spiritually. We choose to grow, it isn't a process that takes over and we have to deal with the changes as they happen. We choose the changes. We choose to grow. We choose to make right decisions. We choose to be Christ like, or not.

If a person decides what Jesus is asking them to do is too difficult - forgive a person for instance, or refrain from spreading gossip, or stop defiling themselves with the world, and so forth - if all that is just too hard, then Jesus will do what He can to meet them where they are, but will be limited by what He can do in them.

Focus...

During a visitation years ago the Lord said He wanted to teach me how He teaches people. I was a young pastor and had been seeking the Father for wisdom. A pastor friend told me he didn't do any 'counseling' to members of his congregation. He said he would listen to them, show them the Word and what it said, and tell them to come back after they'd obeyed the Word. He said he rarely saw them again after that.

But another pastor spent hours and hours with people, confiding in me he was worn out because more often than not people merely wanted to vent or have a shoulder to cry on, or build their case on why they did what they did, rather than wanting serious answers to their questions.

One day when I was worshipping, the Lord came and told me He wanted to teach me how He teaches people, and it would answer many of the questions I'd asked the Father. The whole teaching lasted about 30 minutes as He talked of spiritual growth, but here are a couple main parts.

He opened by telling me the events of John 3 & 4

"Remember when John was baptizing people and the Pharisees heard I was baptizing many more than he was? When I learned the Pharisees heard that about me I left Judea and went into Samaria on my way to Galilee. Do you know why I did that?"

I said, "The text says you needed to go through Samaria to get to Galilee, but why did you choose that particular route?" He responded: "Because I knew they (the Pharisees) would not follow me into Samaria. I used their prejudice as a filter, for if their hearts had truly been repentant they would not have had a problem following me into Samaria. But they had refused to submit to John's baptism of repentance and wanted to skip repentance to 'jump ahead' to my baptism, and I couldn't allow that, so I left. Learn this: I won't let people grow in deeper things until and unless they have first grown in what is before them."

"I often bring the secrets of a person's heart before them that they might deal with those things, and like the filter of Samaria, they cannot follow Me into deeper things until and unless they deal with what I am asking right then, as the Pharisees had to accept John's baptism of repentance before they could go on in Me. And like most of them, not everyone makes the choice to grow in me by dealing with their heart."

He elaborated a bit and then said: "For instance. Often I will talk to a person something that is meant to be just between us. What you would call 'pillow talk', which isn't intended to go outside the bedroom. I will tell them something I intended to be just between us, but they will call their friend and tell them what I said, or maybe over lunch share with a friend what I considered intimate and between us. Thus they have demonstrated they are not worthy of that level of intimacy, and I will stop talking to them (in that way) for a season...giving them an opportunity to seek out why their spirit was grieved when they shared it, which confuses them because they knew it came from me, yet not knowing why their spirit was grieved. That is why."

"And they will wonder for a time why I have stopped talking to them intimately, though I will of course still share with them on other things. But few seek it out, which shows how they value Me and intimacy with Me, or lack thereof. Remember I said the value that you place on what you hear is how it is measured back to you*. If a person does not value what we have together, but cheapens it by sharing it with others, they show me the low value they place on Me and our time together." (At this point, tears welled up in His eyes reflecting the passion with which He spoke.) *Mark 4:24-25

I was stunned. Up until then I had never considered He truly is the same yesterday, today, and forever. That He used difficult parables and brought prejudices of our heart before us, making us go back to cover old ground when we didn't learn the first time - it often isn't the devil bringing up issues we think are being brought up to harass us, it is sometimes the Lord trying to get us to deal with our heart and to go on in Him, and He won't move us on until we have learned our lesson. I sat speechless.

He had just opened up His heart to me and demonstrated an emotion that caught me totally off guard. I didn't expect Him to be so...human. The fact He could be speak intimate things between me and Him, and then do that with everyone else in the body of Christ as well, and then be so disappointed when we share what was intended to be just between Him and us, AND knowing that must happen all the time...was overwhelming.

There was silence between us for what seemed to be minutes, as I just stared at Him and He at me. Part of me wanted to hug Him, part of me wanted to fall at His feet and repent. Even today as I tell this visitation, which I've never told of it anywhere start to finish with all the details (and won't so don't ask), and even now am just telling a part of it, the weight of it sits upon me.

He loves us so much and is in this relationship for the long haul. Ephesians 2:7 says the Father will use the ages to come to show us the riches of His love for us. Isn't it time we focused on Him? More on the above visitation next week. Blessings,
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2014-11-01

Focus & Jesus #3

Hi all,
When one of our sons was showing his future wife a family photo album, he paused at the picture of a 19 year old girl in a red bikini standing knee deep in the Miami beach surf. "She's hot! Who is she? And why is she in our family photo album?" he asked.

Barb, who was looking over their shoulders explaining the pictures as they flipped through the pages, said, "...You don't recognize her son?" Son: "No, who is she?" Barb: "It's your mother son! It's me."

He erupted, "Ohhh...yuck! I feel polluted! (making motions to scratch out his eyes and tongue) I just called my mother hot! Ohhh yuck...." as they all burst out in laughter. And then from an innocence that can only come from a young man with no fear of death, he asked his mother: "What happened!?"

His future wife and Barb gasped and withheld the temptation to do him bodily harm, and Barb quickly retorted: "3 sons! That's what happened son! 3 sons!"

More about that visitation

Inside we feel the same, but our body has changed around our spirit, as our son learned that day. And while the body changes just as a matter of the course of nature, being of the earth, our spirit which has been born of heaven, requires focus and determination to grow in Christ. We are born again as new born babes Peter said, and told us to desire the milk of the Word that we might grow. We determine our growth. (I Peter 2:2)

I ended last week talking about how the Lord said He shares intimate things with us and when we share them with someone, it grieves our spirit and we wonder why. Don't think these are always deep secrets of the heart, for the kingdom works on revelation from the Father, so even a simple thing revealed to the heart when intended to remain in the heart but then shared openly, will grieve the Holy Spirit, and our spirit in turn.

For instance, one time while looking for a job I saw an ad in the paper and instantly I knew I had that job - we had just moved from Colorado to Tulsa, leaving as a pastor there to get on staff at a church in Tulsa, but I needed a job to fill in the gap. I saw the ad and instantly knew I had the job.

Before I interviewed I told someone about it and that I knew I had the job - and my spirit was grieved, that hurt in my spirit my mind immediately noticed. I still got the job but it had been intended by the Lord to be a private assurance that He had given me the job. When I violated His intention my spirit was grieved.

The kingdom revolves around revelation from the Father - starting with the revelation that Jesus is the Christ, and all else flows from that revelation. And consider this - each revelation from the Father matures us in our spirit if we allow it to, growing us as we respond to each by applying it in our lives.

The line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little people often quote from Isaiah 28:9-13 as ways the Lord teaches us, according to Paul is actually about tongues and being moved by revelation from our spirit. Paul quotes that in I Corinthians 14:20-25 about how personal tongues leads to personal revelation but prophecy is for public revelation of the secrets of the heart (Larger context is 14:14-25).

The Lord teaching us "line upon line", "precept upon precept" and "here a little, there a little" is first about personal revelation in our hearts, one revelation building upon the next. When we respond and apply each revelation our thoughts change and our lifestyle changes and more revelation follows. As Jesus said, "Value what you hear, for with the value you place is how it will be measured back to you again, and to him who has, more will be given. And if you neglect what you hear, it will be taken from you. Mark 4:24-25

In that visitation there was more: The Lord told me about the events of John chapter 6

Matthew 14, Mark 6, and John 6 all record Jesus walking on water after feeding a crowd of about 5,000 men plus women and children. Matthew records Peter walking on the water, Mark records the fact Jesus would have walked on by them had they not cried out in fear, and John records when He got into the boat "...the boat was immediately at the land where they were going." (v21) In other words, Jesus, the 12, and the boat were instantly transported roughly half way across the lake of Galilee to the far shore.

Many of the crowd that Jesus had fed saw Him send the disciples away in the boat and saw Him going in the other direction, up a mountain to pray. Verses 22-25 of John 6 record that the next morning the people who later got in boats and crossed the lake, and those who had walked around the lake to get to where the disciples landed their boat, were very surprised to find Jesus there, and asked Him how He got there.

Verse 26 records that rather than answer their question, He made a statement that revealed the motive of their hearts: "Truly you aren't following me for the miracles I did, but because you got your bellies filled." These were the same people of v15, who after they were fed miraculously, wanted to take Him by force and make Him king. Can you imagine what would have happened if He told them He walked across the lake?

Jesus is the same today as He was then, and in the visitation He shared how it is situations like this where He will reveal their true motives to themselves, and then watch what they will do with it.

A modern version of John 6

A person in our church continually overdrew her bank account because she liked to shop, enjoy going out with friends and being able to keep pace with them as they were able to purchase items at will. She would ask me to agree with her in prayer for favor with the bank to drop some or all of the overdraft charges. When I suggested she curtail her shopping and live in a budget, she replied she loved buying things too much.

Some prayers were for favor with the bank. Others were "Lord give me more moeny." She even came up for prayer at Wednesday night services asking God to give her husband overtime to 'bless' their finances. That's correct, she was praying her husband would work more to support her shopping lust.

With each merchant who was forced to refuse to accept anything but cash from her, with each bank charge, with each argument she had with her husband over money, the Lord was revealing her true issue of the lust of other things - but she didn't want to deal with it. Instead of focusing on her lust and pride, she wanted a bigger budget and kept praying for that rather than looking at her heart.

She viewed each bank charge as an attack of the devil against their finances, and viewed the Lord as the adversary whom she had to convince to give her more money. At no time did she change her focus to ask how the Lord might be allowing her to reap what she had sown so she could deal with her lust of things.

Where is your focus?

In John 6 when Jesus revealed the motives of the people by saying they were following Him because of what He could do for them, He began a parable that was more difficult to understand than other parables. He told me because they would not deal with their motives directly He used another way to expose their focus and motive. He told them they had to eat His flesh and drink His blood because He is the true manna.

John 6:66-68 reveals that many who followed Jesus stopped following Him after His statement, their focus and motives exposed, they chose to back away from the difficult, back away from growth. Many

did stay with Jesus however, because they were following Jesus with purity and no ulterior motives, not serving Him because of what He could do for them. When Jesus asked if they would leave too Peter replied: "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life and we know and are sure you are the Son of God!"

Peter didn't understand what was going on, but he chose growth in faith, not allowing confusion to move his focus away from Jesus. Remember, the night before these events Peter had walked on water, but had begun sinking when he got his eyes off Jesus and onto the wind and waves. He wasn't going to let anything get his eyes off Jesus this time. But I see I am out of room - more on this visitation next week. Blessings!

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2014-11-08

Focus & Jesus #4

Hi all,

As most who read my Weekly Thoughts know, our oldest son, Chris, is handicapped. He was delivered by emergency C-section after he had gone into "fetal distress" during labor, and was found to have the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck in a slip knot. The result is that physically he will be 35 on December 23, but mentally he is about 4 years old.

Chris is very outgoing, talkative, and has a very funny sense of humor. But being brain damaged it also means he shares the traits so often found in people with brain damage no matter the cause, including disliking a change in routine, is easily startled by loud noises, and is prone to violent bursts of temper if either of the first two things happens.

Re-direct our attention

As a result, a skill learned early on is that of 're-directing' Chris' attention. If we were planning on going in the car to run errands, and suddenly the plans changed, he could get very angry and yell or even hit something or someone. However, if we could suddenly insert into his line of sight a new toy or something of interest like a train going by, the anger would be turned off like a switch as his attention was re-directed.

The visitation I'm sharing about, and the 3 examples from scripture the Lord used to teach me, is largely about how He redirects our attention from our ulterior motives and distractions, to purity of focus and love.

The last example in the visitation

The first example He used was from John 3, where He purposely went through Samaria, where the Pharisees would not follow, in order to redirect their attention back to John the Baptist's ministry of repentance. His point was they could not go on in Him before they had first accepted the repentance John preached.

The 2nd example I shared that He taught me from was John 6, where many of those who Jesus had miraculously fed and had wanted to take Him by force and make Him king, were exposed for the truth they weren't following Jesus for the miracles proving who He was, but because of what He could do for them. To expose their ulterior motives and make them face their own hearts, He told them a hard to understand parable, that they had to eat His flesh and drink His blood for He was the true Manna from heaven. Many left Him rather than face their own heart.

Today I share His 3rd example in that visitation, which is a redirection of the Rich Young Ruler's conversation with the Lord, as seen in Matthew 19:16-22.

As the visitation happened...

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus he asked: "Good master, what must I do to have eternal life?" Now if this were you or I, we would have just answered the man by telling him to believe in Jesus. We wouldn't have cared about why he wanted to follow Jesus, we would have reported that 'we got someone saved' as proven by the fact they prayed with us.

But Jesus replied, "Why are you calling me good? There is no one good but God." Jesus was asking the man this: By calling Me good, and knowing that no one is good but God, are you therefore calling me God?

That was the big question Jesus asked him directly, but the man side-stepped the question. We read these 7 verses in a few seconds not realizing it was a real conversation, with pauses at the end of sentences and thoughtful consideration given before answering.

When he didn't answer the Lord directly, the Lord tried another way to expose his heart, and in the next 3 verses the young man stated how perfect he was, how righteous he was, in a statement of his performance based faith, not realizing he was being set up by the Lord. Suddenly the conversation turned, and he was forced to look at his own heart: "If you want to be complete, go and sell all you have, give the proceeds to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow Me."

If he believed Jesus was God, as he inferred at the start but never answered directly, he no doubt would have done so gladly. as Andrew, Peter, James, John, and Matthew had all done previously. But he didn't, so this was the redirect, taking the conversation back to the man's heart and what he truly loved: Not what his performance based faith demonstrated, but the motives as to why he was wanting God in the first place.

The young man's focus had originally been on himself - What one thing must I do to have eternal life? I've kept all (these) commands from my youth. What do I still lack? It was a 'me' based faith.

Without accusing him directly of loving his money and status more than loving God, and without forcing him to be confronted with Who Jesus is, the Lord put it all back in his lap to force him to make a decision. And once redirected to see the truth of his own heart, he went away sad, not yet willing to give up his wealth.

Suddenly I understood why in times past I was in such desperate need of answered prayer or money or a solution and heaven was totally silent in that area, yet at the exact same time He was forcing me to work on some area of my personality while NOT answering what I thought was a more pressing need. He was trying to redirect my attention to what He was working on my heart about, while I kept wanting to focus on my need for answered prayer, my need for money, or just needing answers.

My turn

When the Lord shared this about the rich young ruler and how He redirected his focus back onto his own heart, I couldn't help but ask Him this: "Lord, there is an ancient tradition that says the Rich Young Ruler was Barnabus, who eventually did sell everything and follow you as seen in Acts 4:36-37, is that true?"

He was silent, just looking at me. And suddenly as I looked into His eyes it was like looking into a mirror, but the reflection I saw was not my physical being, but my motives in asking such a question. The first thing I saw was that I love trivia and history and that I was asking because I was curious. Then a layer was pulled back to the motive behind that motive, and I saw I asked because part of me wanted to know something I couldn't prove by chapter and verse, but could tell people 'the Lord told me'. And one layer beneath that was a hypothetical picture of me sharing that little bit of trivia with a group of people and doing so wasn't for their edification, but to make me look all the better in their eyes. The sin was that I would have shared that for my benefit, while under the guise of sharing to help them. I saw my pride and was abhorred myself.

I said "I'm sorry Lord" and made an adjustment in my heart to check myself in the future before sharing things of Him so that if I shared, it would truly be to help others and not for my own ego. It took just a second to repent and redirect my heart.

And then I realized the 3 examples He had just taught me about how He redirected people's focus to their own hearts and motives, is exactly what He just did to me. I had just become object lesson #4 in that visitation, and I was humbled in a way I had never been before. And all without the slightest hint of condemnation, just fact undergirded with Absolute unconditional love.

I saw Him that day as the Living Word of God who critiques and divides the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and before Whose eyes all things are naked and open. (Hebrews 4:12-13).

And suddenly He smiled and said to me: "It's OK. The teaching is over, let the lesson remain." And with that He changed the subject to talk of some other things, as a friend might lighten the mood of a serious conversation before going, and that's exactly what He did. He turned, and as is His custom, walked away, and half way into his third step, disappeared, no doubt to appear to someone else somewhere in the world, leaving me to think on the depth of what I'd just learned. And I'll leave you there too - new subject next week.

Blessings,

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