

feb 11

i don't mean to make anyone jealous. but it was another beautiful morning with the Lord. things and ideas rushed through my mind and i tried to collect them all. i just kept saying, "God, that is so beautiful. it's so You". but alas, we get up and begin our daily routine and we will see how much remains in me to try to share.

first, did you ever wonder about the parable of new wineskins? "new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved." luke 5:38

the comparison is a very apt one when we think of the properties of wine and wineskins; an old system unfamiliar to us now-a-days. when wine is new, it is in a state of fermentation. it bubbles and expands as the fermentation gases are released. a fresh, pliable wineskin can absorb such expansion and slowly age - with the wine until the fermentation process is complete. to put fresh wine into an old wineskin, however, is asking for trouble. the old wineskin has assumed a definite shape and is no longer pliable. it is fixed and somewhat brittle. the activity of new wine will stress it beyond its ability to yield. and so both the wine and the skin are lost. we can't put new ideas into old mindsets. we can't get new results with old behaviors and beliefs.

maybe that's why it is said we are new creatures in Christ - all things are passed away and all things have become new. except, what if all things have not passed away ... yet?

have you ever worried that you have "missed the mark"; that you haven't been good enough or done it all right? it's the great "what if". what if this and what if that and even among the doubters, an occasional "what if there really is a God". well, i for one, am assured there really is a God and i am also assured that i am not required to do it all perfectly. we have Jesus to thank for that.

there are many religions still full of do's and dont's; of laws and regulations. and what if you don't do them all perfectly? will one slip up make you miss the mark completely? will one wrong move keep you from "being accepted"?

i think of all the people wanting to and struggling to meet God's requirements. many good people just wanting to please God. the apostle paul was once like that as he sought the persecution of those who did not follow his beliefs of what God required. unfortunately, that trait has has been reborn in many christians throughout the ages. but paul had a revelation that many others never did. what was that revelation? "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. it is hard for you to kick against the goads." acts 9:5

you see, Jesus is the end of the law for everyone who would believe. He not only lived that "perfect life", fulfilling the law. He then died as payment for all our "dont's"; past, present and future. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 cor 5:21 Jesus is our righteousness.

are you familiar with the saying, "i've got you covered"? well, He's got us covered. so "covered" that "neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." john 10:28

no, there is no "once saved, always saved". but it's not all our "dont's" that will keep us out. we all fall short in many ways, but let us not fall short of His grace. His amazing grace. it's only if one quits believing in that grace, rejects that grace or maybe becomes presumptuous of that grace, that His grace may be missing. if our hearts remain pure before Him, our stumbles aren't that important. we just come to Him repentently and say, "Lord, i've messed up again. can you spare another drop of blood?"

the answer is always the same. "it was for you I shed it." and so, like paul, "forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, i press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus". phil 3:13-14 and by His grace, we are transformed by the renewing of our mind. so, have you got all your "dont's" covered? we you putting new wine into a new wineskins.

linda