

Christ the Pattern: The Vicarious Life

By David Townsend

John 5:19-20 “Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.”

From *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers for **May 4th**: “Vicarious intercession means that we deliberately substitute God’s interests...for our natural sympathy...”

The Vicarious Life

- Vicarious: **adjective** “to experience something through sympathetic participation in the activities of another rather than experiencing it yourself; substitutionary, delegated.”
- In regard to my message today: “to experience or express something of another’s because you have identified with them first.”
 - We experience redemption because Jesus Christ identified with us, and paid the ultimate price. Now if we identify **with Him** through surrender and repentance, we experience His righteousness and life vicariously.
 - **Phil. 2:5-7** “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.
 - **2 Cor. 5:21** “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
 - The Lord’s incarnation meant He was fully human, so that His sacrifice would mean vicarious atonement for us.
 - The way we fully identify with Him is through full surrender to Him. We surrender to Him; therefore, His righteousness is applied to us vicariously.
 - **But there is a deeper meaning that the Bride of Christ must walk in to prepare for His return.**

Christ the Pattern: What Did the Father Receive From the Son?

Hebrews 10:5-7

- The Son was uniquely positioned to glorify the Father in any way imaginable, yet the Father’s desire was “I want a Body on Earth to express Myself through; one that will do all of My Will on Earth as it is in Heaven.”
- Through this head and body relationship, the Father was expressed and to the people had an intercessor before the Father. This extended the Father’s glory, and

brought redemption to humanity. And yet Christ had no consideration of His own self at all. This is the nature of a priest: a vicarious life.

So what does the Lord receive from us?

Matt. 25:23

- What did this servant do that brought his master joy? The servant chose to *listen, mix faith with the command*, (Heb. 4:2), and *obey without self-preservation*.
- His master was pleased because the servant was a clear expression of His master with everything He did.

John 14:10 “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? **The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority***; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.”

John 8:28-29 “Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. ²⁹ And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for **I always do those things that please Him.**’”

- Our talents, our time, our ability, our best, etc—are all pitifully inadequate at glorifying the Lord. Our only hope to please Him is to empty ourselves of our opinions, our ways, our abilities, our self-preservation, etc. and subject them all to the Lord, while we heed His Word by His grace.
- As the Father lived vicariously through the Son on Earth in a real and tangible way, so too, the Son wants to fully express Himself through His Bride.
- This is our gift to Him: a vessel. BUT, we must surrender, and deny SELF first. Individually and corporately.
- I tell the Lord everyday: “Whatever You show me in Your Word today, I’ll do it.”

Why Doesn’t This Work? 2 Reasons: Individualism and Loyalty

Individualism (An Independent Spirit)

- Everything about our culture preaches individualism. Humans were not meant to live this way!
- No amount of prayer, preaching, counseling, or repentance in other areas can replace the missing essential element of building the Corporate, Covenant Body of Christ.
- We who are leaning into this need let the Lord show us where we are not “discerning the Body” 1 Cor. 11:29.

Moving Beyond Loyalty: Growing into Faithful Sons

Luke 15:28-31

- The Older Brother had learned to be loyal, but not faithful.

- **Gal. 3:24-25**
- **The Law is our tutor, and developing loyalty means the rebel has surrendered and the child has grown. But many people, like the older brother, fail to launch here. They are stuck in a loyal mentality.**
- **Loyal** - committed in such a way that my value to my boss, leader, parent or to God is based on completing tasks. This kind of person will show up on time, will do all that is assigned to them, but no more than that.
 - **There can be good and bad attitudes while still being “loyal.”**
 - Where there is a bad attitude, it stems from a surface-level, and selfish, commitment. **This kind of commitment lasts as long as the reward is good.**
 - Where there is a good attitude, there can be a very strong commitment, but there is no imagination or vision.
 - ***This is willing obedience, not loving obedience.***
 - **This kind of commitment can endure a lot; but without growth to a deeper understanding of partnership (sonship), fear and bitterness toward leadership are very common, and burnout is inevitable.**
- **Faithful** – committed in such a way that my value to my boss, leader, parent or to God is based on a pleasing and healthy relationship with shared goals. There are similar attributes and affects to a loyal worker with a good attitude; however, the faithful mentality grasps the larger purposes and desires of the Lord.
 - The faithful person is invested beyond the rules and requirements of their position.
 - There is a desire to meet needs and solve problems before the leader mentions anything or issues an “order.”
 - A faithful person can see how valuable constant improvement is, because they can grasp the larger purposes

How is this connected to a Vicarious Life?

Luke 2:49 “...Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

Rev. 12:11 “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

- ***Walking in faithfulness is loving obedience, and without it, the vicarious life, and the building of the corporate Body, etc. is not possible.***
- Loyalty is a desire to follow the rules, because these people are still led by externals like the Law. Faithfulness is a desire the higher purposes to be fulfilled. They are the sons of God, led by the Spirit. Romans 8:14.
- Self-preservation is still entrenched in a loyal mindset. The faithful mindset, the vicarious life, has given up even self-preservation for love.
- We must be about our Father’s Business, even if we are expendable in the process. The most important thing is that the Lamb must receive the reward of His suffering.