

## The Deception of Self & the Gift of Oneness w/Christ

### I. **Jesus' command to deny Self**

II. Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

III. There was a time in my life when I decided not follow Jesus *too closely* bc I was aware of scriptures like this one and it just sounded terrible and confusing. *Jesus says let him deny himself*

- a. what's so wrong with self?..
- b. And yet Jesus says..

IV. *When did Self, when did this version of ourselves that wants to pull away from God first emerge?*

### V. **Emergence of Self**

a. When we go back to the Creation story of Adam and Eve, we always talk about this moment when sin was first committed. This action of pulling away from God. *But it's also the moment when Self emerged.*

b. But let's back up a little further

- i. In the creation story, God created Adam, then God created Eve, called them very good, and set him in the garden to tend to it
  1. Can you imagine how much fun they had, learning, growing...
- ii. And during that time God would come and walk the garden in the cool of the day and spend time with Adam and Eve
  1. Just talking, learning, enjoying each other's presence
  2. There was no conflict, it was just...wonderful

c. **Genesis 2:25 <sup>25</sup>And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.**

- i. I heard a teaching that said: Not only were they naked, they were spiritually, emotionally, relationally **transparent** with each other and with God
- ii. They were completely unaware of any part of themselves inside or out to hide
  1. And God wanted it that way- their original design was for them is to not feel shame, turmoil, fear, ever, for any reason. He's a loving Father and He wanted to protect us from that. Because its awful to feel that.

- d. **3** Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" <sup>4</sup> Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."<sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* <sup>[a]</sup>pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate.
- e. In this moment Eve had a command from God, but she starts entertaining the idea of not following it, right. It becomes this moment where the lines start to form between God and Self apart from God. **God's will and man's will.**
- i. And suddenly she's looking at this fruit and she sees a quick answer to her appetite, looked **yummy, and it gave the appearance of empowering herself apart from God**- to gain this knowledge of good and evil
- f. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves <sup>[b]</sup>coverings. <sup>8</sup> And they heard the <sup>[c]</sup>sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the <sup>[d]</sup>cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
- g. <sup>9</sup> Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."
- i. In this moment of choosing self apart from God, they are no longer unashamed, and they are no longer transparent. In that moment of hiding they aren't letting God see their face, sense their emotions. And In this moment they stopped walking in their God-given design of tending the garden, so that they could cower behind tree.
- ii. And what does God say in response <sup>11</sup> And He said, "Who told you that you were naked?" Which is interesting because nobody told them right? The devil or the serpent didn't say it. What does scripture say? <sup>7</sup> " Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they **knew** that they were naked." They started having **thoughts**. They started having thoughts the Father wasn't having about them.

- h. Here's the thing with the knowledge of good and evil. It invites the questions: Am I good or am I bad? Is what I did good or was it bad? And based on the conclusion you feel shame or no shame. But it's ultimately a cycle of shame. And God never wanted that for us. It was not the design. If He had it his way we would never experience that.
      - i. But that's what happened. They made their choice.
- VI. Self needs constant care and attention. It needs to feed from whatever void most impacts you from being distanced from the Lord. That's why some of us isolate, others overcompensate, some anxiety, others apathy. Whatever it is, self is looking for forms of comfort, significance, and security **apart from God.**
- VII. It was in a garden that man first said "my will be done" and it was also in a garden where Jesus knelt down and said "Father, your will be done." He paid for the cycle of shame and the addictions of self to break.
  - a. For you to stop wondering am I good or am I bad?
  - b. His reply is **you are blood bought.** You are redeemed. You are justified. You are clean. You are mine.
- VIII. Jesus did not undo Adam and Eve's choice in that garden. He didn't go back in time and stop them. Would have been a lot easier and less painful for Him if he had.
  - a. Instead, He cleared a path for us to live again in holiness and union with Him. And in that holiness and union- the beauty of it enables us to lose sight of self along with its appetites.
  - b. And we see that with the disciples, do we not? They come into such extreme joy from union with God that even physical suffering- even being beaten and thrown in jail you find them singing.
    - i. I think it's important that what we saw in the disciples didn't happen overnight.
- IX. **Peter's Transformation**
- X. Just look at Peter. In fact- let's go back to **Matthew 16 where Jesus says If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. "**
- XI. Did you know the moment Jesus said that, it was right after Peter had rebuked Jesus. It is sandwiched into a story of deep struggle with Self, for Peter. Peter walked through unimaginable regret and shame just before and after the crucifixion of Christ
  - a. And everything for him started falling apart right before Jesus says pick up your cross and follow Him. Let's look at it:

XII. Matthew 16: 21 <sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. <sup>22</sup> And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord![5] This shall never happen to you." <sup>23</sup> But he turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance[6] to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.**"

a. So in this moment Peter is found speaking the words of Satan. But Satan didn't have direct access to do that with Peter. He came riding in on Peter's thought life. *For you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man.* That's what Jesus too issue with. *2 Cor. 10:5* take every thought captive to obey Christ. Peter in that moment became an actual hindrance to Jesus.

i. In this moment Peter had slipped back into Self.

1. And if you read the next several chapters, you see how Peter went through rebuking Jesus, to denying having any association with Him, **three times** and leaves Jesus to be crucified. Peter isn't there while Christ is dying.

b. So we see a lot of Self in Peter. **But let's look at this same story from the lens of Jesus. Let's look at how Jesus writes the story for Peter.**

XIII. **Jesus' story of Peter**

a. Jesus, knowing Peter would deny Him, tells him this

i. **Luke 22:31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you,[4] that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."**

ii. Jesus was praying for Peter. Jesus, who is about to be crucified, is interceding for Peter. Jesus also knew it was important to tell Peter that he was going to deny Him. And that's why this last sentence is so meaningful- when Jesus says "and when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." And when you put it all together Jesus is essentially telling Peter: Peter, you *are* going to deny me, but you **WILL** turn back to me. You will walk in victory. I have prayed for you.

iii. And now let's look at how Jesus responds to Peter when Peter actually denies Jesus

XIV. **Luke 22: 54 Then** they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. <sup>55</sup> And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. <sup>56</sup> Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and

looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." <sup>57</sup> But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." <sup>58</sup> And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." <sup>59</sup> And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." <sup>60</sup> But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup> And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

- a. In the midst of Jesus being surrounded by soldiers and an imminent death laced with torture, Jesus knew it was important in that moment to turn and look at Peter. Peter needed to see his Lord's eyes. He needed to remember Jesus had told him this would happen, but Jesus had also said Peter would come out of this.

XV. So now let's look at how Jesus pursues Peter after His resurrection

XVI. **John 21: 1** After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

- a. This part is significant, because Peter at this point knew Jesus had been resurrected, and Jesus had already breathed Holy Spirit on to him. And Peter was called to be a fisher of men. And yet even seeing Christ raised from the dead and having Holy Spirit breathed on him, he still went back to fishing.

XVII. They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup> Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, "**Children, do you have any fish?**" They answered him, "No." <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "**Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.**" So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. <sup>7</sup> That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. <sup>8</sup> The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards[1] off. <sup>9</sup> When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to them, "**Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.**" <sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore.... <sup>12</sup> Jesus said to them, "**Come and have breakfast.**" ...

XVIII. <sup>15</sup> When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "**Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?**" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Feed my lambs.**" <sup>16</sup> He said to him a second time, "**Simon, son of John, do you love me?**" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Tend my sheep.**" <sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, "**Simon, son of John, do you love me?**" Peter was grieved because he said

to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." <sup>18</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." <sup>19</sup> (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

- a. If I were to paraphrase this Jesus is essentially telling Peter- Peter I know you love me. I saw you leaping out of the boat at the first sight of me. And I have assignments I want us to do together. I have not changed my mind about you. And I know you love me so much, you will one day give your life for me. So follow me. Don't go back to fishing, follow me.
- b. This is the moment of Peter's restoration with Jesus.
  - i. And what we learn from it, is that You can be aware that Jesus rose from the dead, you can even have Holy Spirit breathed on you, and still need personal restoration with Christ. Letting Him address any areas of shame. Any way in which you have disqualified yourself from His calling. Any way you've pulled away from Him.
    1. This is his restoration. Peter comes back into the man Jesus always designed him to be. The two of them being one again.

**XIX. Oneness is such a crucial part of what Christ died for.**

- a. John 17:22 This is Jesus' prayer to the Father before He's crucified
- b. John 17:22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one
- c. If you don't see yourself as a carrier of glory, you should. *The glory which You gave Me, I have given them.* You carry glory. For what purpose? Scripture says *that they may be one just as We are one.* And here's how He describes that oneness. *I in them and You in me.*
  - i. And who else lives inside of you- HS. *Perfectly one*, as Jesus says. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in you. You're not separated. You will never be alone. You bear the Holy Trinity of God within you. That's why you are a glory carrier.
  - ii. We're not asking am I good or am I bad, we're just walking with Jesus. If something feels off we just ask- Lord, was that in union with You?

**XX. In Peter's Restoration, he stepped into this oneness**

- a. And you begin to see him start to burn with fearless passion. Book of Acts.
- b. In Acts chapter 3, the Lord heals a paralyzed man through Peter and then he gets questioned. But this time it's not a servant girl its the same kind of people who crucified Christ. So remember before when Peter was questioned he said essentially: I do not know Christ, I am not one of His followers, I don't know what you're talking about- this Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
- c. Now listen to what Peter says when he's being questioned by these men of power:
- d. Acts 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, <sup>9</sup> if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, <sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead--by him this man is standing before you well. <sup>11</sup> This Jesus<sup>[1]</sup> is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the <sup>[2]</sup> <sup>12</sup> cornerstone.<sup>[2]</sup> <sup>12</sup> And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." <sup>13</sup> Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.
- e. And then they charged Peter and John not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> ... we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." Peter, who once denied Jesus three times..he becomes this man of passion.
- f. Peter transforms into everything Jesus prophesied about him. Jesus was right about him. And Jesus is right about you too. There are things He has prophesied over you, and is interceding to the Father for right now, that are going to come to pass. They're not only going to come to pass, you're going to walk with a boldness like you've never known before..
- g. The disciples didn't have a superpower unavailable to us that made them able to endure whatever came their way. Because that's what I thought back when I didn't want to follow Jesus too closely.
  - i. But having been with Jesus, I've come to realize, the disciples weren't super humans- They were simply lovesick for Christ. Lovesick for the king with scars. Lovesick for the God become human walking in the dirt and dust with us. Jesus is gritty. Jesus is real. Jesus is right here if you let him.

### Small Group Questions:

1. After the fall of Adam and Eve, man began to question *am I good, or am I bad?* And from that place a cycle of shame emerged. Talk about how Christ transformed our questions from “am I good, or am I bad?” and into *Lord, is what I did in union with you?*
2. Read John 17:22-23 and discuss carrying the Lord’s glory and your oneness with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Do you see yourself as a *glory carrier, carrying the holy Trinity within you?*
3. Peter’s transformation from regret and shame and into radical oneness can be seen through the eyes of Peter, or it can be seen through the eyes of Jesus. Discuss how the lens of Christ is different than ours, and how we can utilize Christ’s lens over ourselves daily.
4. Read Acts 4:8-13 and talk about how “being with Jesus” results in boldness. Do you see the bride of Christ moving in this direction? Do you feel it over yourself? Why or why not?