

2. Be Glorious

Romans 3:23; 2 Cor 3:17-18; Exodus 34:6-7; Galatians 5:22-23; Hebrews 1:1-3

A memory came to mind of a much younger version of me sitting at a cramped school desk - one of those crusty wooden ones with a lift-up lid - looking up with alarm as the class ratbag took his place next to me. The teacher made him sit there. It was one of those moments that sucked any sense of happiness away from the day. "What'd you put HIM next to ME for?" I don't think I said it out loud, but I was certainly thinking it pretty loudly! I was a good kid. The teachers liked having me in their class because I liked being there. I wanted to be there. I got on with my work. I listened to the teacher. I responded when they spoke. The kid they put next to me was the polar opposite. He ignored. He played up. He disrespected. He didn't care. That's what it seemed, anyway, to this young little bloke, who just wanted to do good, and didn't want to get sucked into the world of a naughty kid.

The next weeks, as I recall with some amusement, were actually pretty good. The ratbag and I actually got along pretty well. We chatted easily. We laughed a bit. I still made good choices. And he did well while he sat next to me. He finished work. He paid attention. He was still him. And I was still me. As I look back and think of the "ratbag kid", who I now remember warmly as a bright, friendly, if troubled young man, I wonder if his time sitting next to me was good for him? Did he feel welcomed? Did he feel he achieved something?

Sitting again with this memory, I've prayed that God would redeem the moments of my initial attitude toward him. And as I've done so, I've been reminded of the invitation that's been extended to me: to sit close to a good God. A God with magnitude. A God with 'weightiness'. A God with 'brightness'. A God who sticks to who he is and what he's about, while welcoming me into his presence.

40 years later, I can empathize with a teacher who might choose to pair up the rowdy kid with the quiet kid, if only to get a bit of peace. I can even admire the vision of a teacher who might anticipate that when a troubled kid comes into the presence of a settled kid, HE might know some peace. Most of all though, I'm in awe of a God who would choose to invite someone as 'un-glorious' as me to come close to him, that I might behold His glory, and in so doing, to radiate His glory, that His glory be seen in this world He has made.

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

"As we seek to be like Jesus in our daily lives by both being and becoming image bearers, we can be confident that the Holy Spirit is working to transform us more into God's image and God's glory. This process works itself out in the daily routines of our lives, in the emails we send, the affections we show the thought-patterns we habituate, the decisions we make and the people we meet. These are the seedbed of our transformation as we grow more like God in our character, and learn to BE GLORIOUS like Jesus." (p. 22)

BE: When do you find it hardest to accept that you are made in God's image or that you are born to be glorious?

SAY: How have you already experienced the transformation that the Holy Spirit brings in your life to make you more like Jesus? How have you seen others transformed? Spend some time encouraging one another. What advice would you give to a Christian who was caught in a pattern of sinful behaviour that they can't seem to break out of?

DO: Which area is God transforming in your life at the moment? What can you do today to practise that?