IN NOMINE JESU

BORN ANEW TO A LIVING HOPE

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF OUR NEW LIFE IN XP – OF OUR "PRESENTING OUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES, HOLY & ACCEPTABLE TO GOD" – OF OUR BEING WORKING TOGETHER AS MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF XP? IT IS THAT WE "LOVE ONE ANOTHER!" IT IS THAT WE "LIVE AT PEACE WITH EVERYONE." IT IS THAT WE "DO NOT TAKE REVENGE, BUT LEAVE ROOM FOR GOD'S WRATH." LISTEN TO THIS: "IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM; IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM SOMETHING TO DRINK. IN DOING THIS, YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."..... OUR KNEE-JERK REACTION IS TO PLAY THE BLAME GAME – DO UNTO OTHERS BEFORE THEY DO UNTO YOU – "AN EYE FOR AN EYE, A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH!" (I DON'T JUST GET MAD, I GET EVEN.) ..... IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WE ARE LIKE THE MAN WHO WAS BITTEN BY A DOG AND TOLD BY HIS DOCTOR, "YES, YOU HAVE RABIES!' HIS IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS TO TAKE OUT A PAD OF PAPER & BEGIN WRITING. THE DOCTOR, THINKING HE WAS WRITING HIS LAST WILL & TESTAMENT SAID, "LISTEN, THIS DOESN'T MEAN YOU ARE GOING TO DIE. THERE'S A CURE FOR RABIES." ..... "I KNOW," SAID THE MAN, I'M MAKING A LIST OF ALL THE PEOPLE I AM GOING TO BITE." ..... WE MIGHT ALL DO WELL TO READ THE STORY OF STEPHEN, THE 1ST XIAN MARTYR, IN ACTS 7. TALK ABOUT HATRED AND RAGE OUT OF CONTROL. INFURIATED, HIS ENEMIES "COVERED THEIR EARS & RUSHED AT HIM." THEY DROVE HIM OUT OF THE CITY & VIOLENTLY STONED HIM TO DEATH. HE COULD HAVE DIED WITH CURSES ON HIS LIPS. INSTEAD, HE DIED WITH A PRAYER ON HIS LIPS. FALLING ON HIS KNEES, HE CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, "LORD, DO NOT HOLD THIS SIN AGAINST THEM!" THESE HOSTILE MEN DID NOT FIND THEIR OWN ANGER REFLECTED BACK AT THEM. THEY SAW A REFLECTION OF THEIR SAVIOR'S GRACE & LOVE. ..... IF YOU HAVE EVER BEEN TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF OR RIPPED OFF, YOU ARE IN GOOD BIBLICAL COMPANY. DAVID WS RIPPED OFF BY SAUL / ESAU WAS DUPED BY JACOB WHO STOLE HIS BIRTHRIGHT / JOSEPH WAS MISTREATED BY HIS BROTHERS [REMEMBER HOW IN A MOMENT OF ABSOLUTE HATRED THEY SOLD HIM INTO SLAVERY] / AND JOB WAS VICTIMIZED BY SATAN WHO USED HIM LIKE A GUINEA PIG. HE LOST ALL OF HIS POSSESSIONS, HIS SERVANTS, & ABOVE ALL, HIS TEN CHILDREN. ..... AS WE LOOK AT OUR OWN LIVES, SO OFTEN "LIFE JUST ISN'T FAIR." AND WE OFTEN RESPOND BY SAYING, "I DON'T JUST GET MAD, I GET EVEN!" ..... IT IS BECAUSE DAVID REFUSED TO TAKE VENGEANCE ON KING SAUL THAT WE REMEMBER HIS STORY TO THIS DAY. IT IS BECAUSE

JOSEPH WAS WILLING TO FORGIVE HIS BROTHERS THAT WE ADMIRE HIM TO THIS DAY. IT IS BECAUSE JOB DID NOT WAVER IN HIS FAITH / IN SPITE OF ALL THE UNFAIR CALAMATIES / THAT WE ARE IMPRESSED TO THIS DAY.

NO ONE WAS EVER MORE RIPPED OFF THAT OUR SAVIOR – ABSOLUTELY NO ONE. JESUS OF NAZARETH WAS THE ONLY PERFECT MAN WHO EVER LIVED / YET HE WAS MISUNDERSTOOD, MALIGNED, HATED, ARRESTED, TORTURED AND FINALLY "THEY CRUCIFIED HIM!" STARING IN HORROR AT THE CROSS, WE BECOME DIZZY! WHY SHOULD THIS INNOCENT MAN ENDURE SUCH UNJUST SUFFERING? WHY SHOULD WE? WHY SHOULD WE SUBMIT TO THE HAMMER BLOWS, THE PIERCING NAILS, THE CROSS OF UNJUST SUFFERING? IT IS BECAUSE BY GOD'S GRACE WE ARE ABLE TO SEE ALL OF LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF ETERNITY. WE HAVE A NEW VISION AND WITH OPEN EARS WE ARE ABLE TO HEAR THIS VOICE FROM HEAVEN: "IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM; IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM SOMETHING TO DRINK. IN DOING THIS, YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." BECAUSE WE ARE BORN ANEW TO A LIVING HOPE. WE ARE NOT "OVERCOME BY EVIL, BUT WE OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD." BY SHOWING KINDNESS TO OUR ENEMIES, WE WILL MAKE THEM ASHAMED OF THEMSELVES BEFORE GOD. THIS WAS DEMONSTRATED IN BIBLICAL TIMES BY THE RITUAL OF CARRYING A DISH OF BURNING CHARCOAL ON YOUR HEAD AS A SIGN OF YOUR REPENTANCE – A TOTAL CHANGE IN ATTITUDE AND PURPOSE AND BEHAVIOR. DO YOU GET THE CONNECTION WITH THE "TONGUES OF FIRE" ON THE DISCIPLES' HEADS ON PENTECOST? FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT EVERYTHING THEY DO AND ARE AND SAY HAS ONLY ONE PURPOSE: "TO PROCLAIM THE MIGHTY WORKS OF GOD!" ..... IN MY OWN PRAYERS & MEDITATIONS I CANNOT HELP WONDERING WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF PEOPLE LIKE O.J. SIMPSON AND DENNIS RODMAN WERE SUDDENLY OVERWHELMED BY SUCH UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

EVERYBODY ELSE LOVES THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM. THAT'S NATURAL! BUT WE XIANS ARE CALLED UPON TO LOVE THE UNLOVELY. IF YOU & I ARE DISCIPLES WHO HAVE BEEN "TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWAL OF OUR MINDS...TO OFFER OUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES" WE WILL AUTOMATICALLY FIND OURSELVES LOVING ALL KINDS AND SORTS OF PEOPLE – EVEN OUR ENEMIES / ESPECIALLY OUR ENEMIES. OF COURSE, THAT'S A HIGH IDEAL & THIS SIDE OF PARADISE REGAINED WE NEVER FULLY GET THERE. BUT WE START BY OPENING UP OUR ARMS TO ONE

ANOTHER / GETTING CAUGHT BY THESE LITTLE FISHERMAN / LISTENING TO OUR SAVIOR'S CALL TO US TO BECOME FISHERS OF MEN. THE BEST WAY TO LOVE OUR WORLD, OUR CULTURE, OUR SOCIETY IS TO "LOVE ONE ANOTHER." JESUS MADE THAT CRYSTAL CLEAR: "BY THIS ALL MEN WILL KNOW YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER." WE CAN ONLY DO THAT BECAUSE BY OUR BAPTISM WE HAVE BEEN "BORN ANEW TO A LIVING HOPE THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS XP FROM THE DEAD!" WE ARE FOREVER SAFE & SECURE IN HIS EVERLASTING ARMS. ..... PLEASE COME FORWARD AFTER THE SERVICE & WALK THE EXTRA MILE & SIGN UP FOR THE UPCOMING WORKSHOPS TO DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS!