

**WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING MARRIED TO ROXANNE? FINE. WE HAVE TO WATCH THE BUDGET, BUT IT'S BETTER THAN BEING SINGLE. ...BAD ANSWER! WE OFTEN SPEAK OF THINGS RATHER THAN RELATIONSHIPS. IMPERSONAL STUFF IS EASIER TO DISCUSS.**

**DEAR FRIENDS... WHAT IF YOU WERE ASKED WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A CHRISTIAN? WELL, WE HAVE WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY EVERY WEEK. WE TRY TO KEEP THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND VISIT THE SICK AND PRAY FOR EACH OTHER.**

**IF THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN, SO WHAT! YOU CAN'T SPEAK OF YOUR MARRIAGE WITHOUT MENTIONING YOUR SPOUSE AND YOU CAN'T TALK ABOUT BEING CHRISTIAN WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT CHRIST.**

**YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS. AS THE STAR GUIDED THE WISEMEN TO HIM; YOU ARE NOW GOD'S STAR CALLING OUT TO A WORLD IN NEED OF JESUS.**

**LISTEN, LISTEN GOD IS CALLING...THROUGH THE WORD INVITING; OFFERING FORGIVENESS, COMFORT AND JOY. AS A CHRISTIAN YOU LIVE IN CHRIST. DON'T HIDE THE RELATIONSHIP FROM PEOPLE; ESPECIALLY IF THEY ASK!**

**WHEN I TAKE OUT AT WENDY'S, I ALWAYS HEAR THE SAME THING: THANK YOU. HAVE A NICE DAY. EMPLOYEES ARE PROGRAMMED TO SAY IT - ONCE IN AWHILE THEY ACTUALLY LOOK AT ME WHEN THEY SAY IT. I DON'T PAY ATTENTION BECAUSE THEY'RE WORDS ARE FOR A CUSTOMER; NOT FOR ME AS A PERSON.**

**MAYBE, YOUR FAITH WORDS, PHRASES AND EXPRESSIONS DO PRETTY MUCH THE SAME NOTHING. ...I'LL PRAY FOR YOU...GOD IS GOOD...GOD BLESS YOU, CAN SOUND PROGRAMMED. MAYBE YOU DON'T CONNECT PEOPLE TO CHRIST BECAUSE YOU AREN'T CONNECTING PEOPLE TO CHRIST. HOW ABOUT I'LL PRAY YOU FIND PEACE IN CHRIST. GOD IS GOOD IN CHRIST. GOD HAS BLESSED YOU IN CHRIST.**

**MAYBE FOLKS DON'T LISTEN BECAUSE THEY HEAR, THANK YOU. HAVE A NICE DAY. THAT HARDLY DRAWS SOMEONE TO WANT COMMUNION WITH JESUS. YOUR WORDS MATTER; IT IS JESUS WHO GIVES PEACE AND JOY, LOVE AND HOPE, NO?**

**WHEN JESUS WAS BAPTIZED, HE SANCTIFIED BAPTISM. IN IT, YOU ARE ADOPTED BY A HEAVENLY FATHER; YOU DIE AND RISE SPIRITUALLY WITH HIS SON; AND YOU ARE GIFTED THE HOLY SPIRIT SO YOU NEVER FORGET THE RELATIONSHIP.**

**WHAT YOU HAVE IN BAPTISM IS WHAT PEOPLE NEED TO HEAR ABOUT. UHH, MAYBE THAT'S WHY JESUS SENT HIS DISCIPLES INTO THE WORLD WITH THE WORDS: GO TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. ...JUST SAYIN'!**

**PAUL SPEAKS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN TERMS OF LIFE AND DEATH. SOME THOUGHT THAT CHRIST'S GRACE MEANT THEY COULD GO ON SINNING. HE SAYS IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING A 'DO BEE' OR A 'DON'T BEE;' BUT, NEITHER CAN YOU REMOVE THE OFFENSE OF SIN. IT'S ABOUT BEING DEAD TO SIN.**

2 IN BAPTISM, WE PARTICIPATE IN CHRIST'S DEATH. THE DEBT WE OWE FOR ALL OUR SINS, AND THE STUFF IN US THAT CAUSES US TO SIN, IS PAID FOR BY DEATH. WE DIE TO SIN THROUGH BAPTISM. WE ARE NO LONGER SLAVES TO SIN BECAUSE SIN DOESN'T OWN US – THE GRACE OF CHRIST CLAIMS US FOR GOD.

AS WE WERE CREATED BY FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BEGINNING, WE ARE RECREATED IN CHRIST, FOR THE FATHER, BY THE SPIRIT. JESUS PUTS HIS GODLY LIFE ALL OVER US EVEN AS HE TAKES OUR IMPERFECTION ON HIMSELF. WE CAN'T HAVE A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP THAN THAT! WE CAN'T BE MORE LOVED!

WHAT FOLKS NEED TO HEAR ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IS THAT YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE REALIZING MORE AND MORE HOW ALIVE YOU ARE IN CHRIST. THIS ISN'T ABOUT BEING BETTER OR GETTING BETTER; IT'S ABOUT BEING FREE IN CHRIST!

THE RESURRECTION YOU SHARE WITH JESUS IN BAPTISM ALLOWS YOU TO LIVE WITH CONFIDENCE, KNOWING YOU ARE LOVED NOW AND FOREVER BECAUSE OF THE FATHER'S MERCY; NOT BECAUSE OF HOW HARD YOU TRY. THERE'S NO, *THANK YOU. HAVE A NICE DAY. JESUS SAYS, I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU.*

YOUR INADEQUACY AND INABILITY IS NOT REASON FOR DESPAIR; IT'S A REASON TO REJOICE IN GOD'S UNBELIEVABLE MERCY. HE DECLARES YOU HIS HOLY CHILD THROUGH THE ACTUAL HANDS ON, WATER SPLASHING, SPIRIT WORKING, WORD BACKED, GIFT OF BAPTISM.

PEOPLE CAN'T KNOW THAT IF ALL YOU'RE DOING IS PRAYING FOR THEM. YOUR *GOD IS GOOD* AND *GOD BLESS YOU* IS REALLY QUITE IMPERSONAL. PEOPLE NEED TO HEAR ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. TALK ABOUT JESUS AND BAPTISM IF YOU WANT TO FREE PEOPLE FROM SIN'S PRISON.

PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THAT GOD WANTS TO WRAP THEM IN HIS OWN LOVE, HIS OWN HOLINESS AND HIS OWN ETERNAL REALITY. LET PEOPLE KNOW THAT THEY CAN BE CHILDREN OF GOD. THAT, THEY MIGHT LISTEN TO; THAT, MIGHT HELP THEM EMBRACE FORGIVENESS; THAT, MIGHT GIVE THEM COMFORT AND JOY.

I WONDER HOW MANY AREN'T HERE BECAUSE THEY'RE WOUNDED BY EVERY MISTAKE AND ANGRY WORD; EVERY ERROR IN JUDGMENT AND CRUELTY; EVERY HURT, DISAPPOINTMENT AND FEAR! THEY PUSH GOD AWAY IN AN EFFORT TO FORGET THEIR SHAME; THEY PUSH BACK AGAINST HIM FOR ALL THE EVIL THEY SEE.

THERE IS NO GIFT THE CHURCH POSSESSES GREATER THAN FORGIVENESS. IT'S THE HEART OF BEING A CHRISTIAN AND IT'S INTENSELY PERSONAL; IT'S EXPERIENCED ONLY IN CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION - OUR DEATH AND RESURRECTION THROUGH BAPTISM!

THAT GRACE IS YOURS AGAIN TODAY IN A SUPPER PREPARED FOR THE BAPTIZED CHILDREN OF GOD. HERE IN BREAD AND WINE YOU PHYSICALLY COMMUNE WITH THE GOD WHO IS SPIRITUALLY CONNECTED WITH YOU IN WATER.

WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A CHRISTIAN? DON'T CHEAT PEOPLE WITH YOUR ANSWER. JESUS IS TOO GOOD TO HIDE BEHIND *HAVE A NICE DAY. AMEN?*