

It's funny how our memory works. And by "funny" I mean both amusing and weirdly strange. Every once in a while something triggers a memory that I hadn't thought about in a long while. One such memory was of a sermon I heard way back in 1967. I remember the year because I remember the circumstances of hearing the sermon and the year of those circumstances. I don't remember all the details spoken but the introduction and points of the sermon are etched in my mind forever. Just the intro is what I want to focus on now.

The lead in was a recitation of a nursery rhyme:

"Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?"  
"I've been to London to visit the Queen!"  
"Pussy cat, pussy cat, what did you do there?"  
"I chased a mouse from under her chair."

The point, of course, is that even when given a great honor like that of being granted a priveleged audience with the Queen herself the cat couldn't help but be a cat. Cat desires and cat impulses caused predictable cat behavior. The fact of the Queen being there and the purpose of the audience were quickly forgotten with the chance to be a cat and chase a mouse.

The subject of the sermon came next:

"Christian, Christian, where have you been?"  
"I've been to church to worship the King!"  
"Christian, Christian, what did you do there?"  
"I boogied to the music and let down my hair."

Now you know this is old as the term "Boogie" isn't used any more. But the point was that just as with the cat, people also tend to be the people they know to be rather than the people they aspire to be in a growing process. I was rather shocked when I first heard this as I couldn't imagine anyone "boogieing" in church. The next 20 to 30 years of my life proved that it was I who was naïve and unaware of coming trends. My own home church voted to dissolve as a body and merge with others to form a "Megachurch." Other congregations I was familiar with did the same thing.

The most notable difference of before and after, if you ignore the boogieing, was the cessation of the Lord's Supper. "It interfered with the Spirit of the service," I was lectured. The need to bring people into a religious setting and teach them right from wrong was the only consideration for church practice. That which drew the biggest crowd was the avenue of travel for church service. Get

them to enjoy themselves and then you can teach them the 10 Commandments and God's Laws. At least that is how it was explained to me.

But the apostle Paul confronted this idea about what constitutes proper religious practice and instruction and what is paramount in consideration. Faith in Christ is everything. Christ is the purpose. Christ is the avenue. Christ is the end. Paul does a masterful job of describing a life of faith in Christ and the difference it makes in his letter to the Galatians, 3:24 through 4:7. Let us look at it:

- 3:24) Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.
- 25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.
- 26) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
- 27) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
- 28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- 29) And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.
- 4:1) Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything,
- 2) but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.
- 3) So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.
- 4) But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,
- 5) so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
- 6) Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
- 7) Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

In Christ God has determined that we do not need guardians and directors for our lives. A call to be in Christ, to be immersed in the Spirit of Christ and live after Christ should guide our decisions on our worship of Christ as well as our day to day, err, ah, "boogieing." Christ is our example for living as He was obedient to our Heavenly Father in all things even unto death on a cross. We worship in the avenue of Christ's declarations for our conduct.

The Gospel is that the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of God, is here and we are all invited into it. That Kingdom is the Church. The Church is also the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ and the eternal family of Christ. We are God's heirs in Christ. It was God Himself through Christ that established the dinner table as the symbol of our fellowship with him. We are all invited to commune with Him and all the saints past, present and future at this table. Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." This we do now because we have it in our hearts and minds to worship the King.