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Oddly enough, do you remember the scruffy guy who used to stand on the street corner wrapped in a sandwich board saying something ridiculous like the world is ending? We used to laugh at him as we quickly passed him by. But now on our phones or computers he is no longer laughable, he is informative and confirms our opinions and shapes our thoughts and feelings about ourselves and the world and undergirds our views about ourselves and the world...he is able to do so because he has become faceless and invisible and is now called the internet and not some weird scruffy guy projecting a baseless thought from his sandwich board on a streetcorner. His baseless and ridiculous thoughts are now gospel found on any search engine that drives us through the vastness of the Internet. From the weird scruffy but lightning-fast Internet, we see what we choose to see and believe what we choose to believe...while truth is left limping along.

On the other hand, as a person who has made their living playing music, and as an artist of sorts, and even as a pastor who attempts to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ...I have often said I would love to see my art or listen to my music and preaching through another person's eyes and ears. I say this because I want to see my work from another perspective and not my own. When I listen to my work and look at my work from my perspective, I see the flaws and the shortcomings. It is like when you hear your voice for the first time on a recording...reactions are all the same...is that really me?!! Is that really the way I sound?!! But for me in my desire to see another perspective, folks have been quick to respond by saying, well Mark, you're just a perfectionist and you are only looking at the flaws...no one else can see them or hear them. Perhaps not...but I can and I know they are in there. But again too, I can choose to listen to the favorable "sandwich board" comments and let them confirm within me a distorted opinion of my work or I can seek an honest evaluation that may just challenge me and improve my efforts. Maybe this is why God sent Jesus, to enable God to see His creation NOT through divine eyes, but through human eyes.

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^{5:1} Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ² and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

I believe it would serve us all well to have an honest assessment of ourselves before we can speak the truth to our neighbors as Paul reminds us. Let's face it, honestly, none of us are the imitators of God we think we are. Oh, some will take offense and claim they are imitators of God, but we are merely imitators of *our* "sandwich board" views of the God of our interpretation and speak *that* truth to those *we choose* to be imitators to.

So how do we see ourselves? Do we see the reality of ourselves or do we see an idealized version of who and what we think we are? Do we honestly want to see the reality of ourselves? Do we really hear ourselves and listen to what we say and how it might sound to others?

We seem to think that we are imitators of God because we have done something *we* consider to be nice to those we choose and in turn, our actions make *us* feel good about ourselves. And if we feel good about ourselves because of what we conclude as good...we in turn, then label ourselves as imitators of the God of our opinion and understanding. But what about those things like sin that hold our feet to the fire? Do we claim it as our own or is it our idealized version of sin? This is to say, my sin is not as bad as "their" sin. What about the truths about ourselves we ignore and don't want others to see or hear? What about those things we are called by faith to do for the one's we don't like, to one's we don't accept, or those who we call our enemies? If we really are members of one another as our faith calls us to be, it seems that we are merely members of the one's we choose or the ones we accept and are comfortable with instead of truly being members of one another. Do we assume the ones we call "*they*" have NO belief or value because of what we think about them? Do we assume that "*they*" will not have eternal life because we say so or we feel they are not worthy according to "MY" standards based on "MY" opinion about them? Its at this point, I begin to wonder how "*they*" see me? How can we possibly speak the truth to others without speaking the truth to ourselves...first?

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Once we get past the flashy and radiant falsehood about ourselves and our self-righteousness, the truth that limps in and is handed to us is the most modest and simplest of elements...the bread and wine that honestly and humbly says to us, "This is my body, this is my blood given for you."

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There is a sense about these words concerning eternal life and that we will live with God in eternity, but how are we living with God right now?

I believe we live with God when we fully understand the depth of grace that destroys all falsehood...in others and ourselves, and allows us to see that eternal life with God is not an accomplishment that we are rewarded with when we are dead...eternal life is NOW...it is life with God NOW. Later on in this very Gospel we hear Jesus praying to the Father for His Disciples:

^{17:1b} 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³*And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

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our sinful self and see the grace that has been freely given, not just to me, but to all who recognize a need of grace that is shared among us who are in this world right now.

In this Holy Meal is the bread of life that feeds members of Jesus Christ...you and me...this is the same meal that *we feed others* as we go from this place as a member of this body that is Jesus Christ when we make His grace...NOT His judgment...known to all and NOT just those we choose. If we are truly members of one another, we are members of the one who is the bread of life, the one who makes each of us a piece of this bread of life that is given to the world...out there, not just in here...each one of us who confess a faith in Jesus Christ is a piece of this bread of life given for the world.

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