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Fire the committee! All of them!

"You and I are not integrated, unified, whole persons. Our hearts are multi-divided. It's like we have a board room in every heart. Imagine: a big table, leather chairs, coffee, bottled water, and a whiteboard. A committee sits around the table in your heart. There is the social self, the private self, the work self, the sexual self, the recreational self, the religious self, and others. The committee is arguing and debating and voting, constantly agitated and upset. Rarely can they come to a unanimous, wholehearted decision. We tell ourselves we're this way because we're so busy with so many responsibilities. But the truth is that we're just divided, unfocused, hesitant, and unfree."

When we follow Jesus, we have a choice. We can invite him to be a part of our committee; give him voice and vote on all decisions; allow him to be another factor in how the Self chooses to conduct our lives. The other choice is to fire the whole committee—every last member, including Almighty Self—and ask Jesus to be Lord over our whole lives.*

Sadly, we often choose the first option. And that is a major problem for Christians in America, regardless of our faith tradition. We are deplorably unformed in the Faith. Our Christian identity is not the defining factor in our lives, but just one of many. Tragically, many Christians are

The Gospel According to Calvin...You Can't Argue With Happy



People discuss all kinds of stuff. Some people like talking about the Kansas City Royals. Other people like the St. Louis Cardinals. I can't see getting all fired up about either one of those baseball teams. But some people will get in knock-down, drag-out fights about those two teams. People argue about the weirdest stuff.

Calvin and Hobbes are going to have a discussion. In the first frame, Calvin asks Hobbes, "If you could wish for anything, what would it be?" Calvin says "anything." In this discussion Hobbes can wish for anything he wants.

Here is Hobbes's wish: he wants to be in a big sunny field. And Calvin goes nuts. He screams, "Think BIG!" He thought Hobbes would go for riches or power. And all Hobbes wants is a big sunny field.

Did you notice what Calvin says in the third frame of the cartoon? He says, "A stupid field?! You've got that now." Hobbes is wishing for something he already has. He is happy with what he has. Imagine that. Imagine being happy with

indistinguishable from secular people who profess no faith beyond their self-reliance. Too often there is little difference between our beliefs, convictions, and behaviors and the beliefs, convictions, and behaviors of those who don't follow Jesus. We make Jesus a member of our committee, but nothing more. We worship him on (most) Sunday mornings and consult him when all else fails.

But that is not what being a follower of Jesus is all about. That approach lacks integrity. If we call Jesus Lord, then we need to treat him like it. We need to fire the committee in our hearts and surrender our whole lives to him. In practice, though, making Jesus Lord is not complicated. It's actually pretty straightforward-it's a matter of training our fleshly bodies to follow Jesus: being formed in God's image through worship, making a habit of praying throughout the day, reading Scripture-even if it's on your smartphone!-fasting from excessive food, serving others, and giving our money to God's purposes in the world.

So as school starts this fall, and as our church programs start up, let's all make a point to fire the committee in our hearts and enthrone Jesus over all parts of our lives.

Pastor Ray
First Presbyterian Church, Wayne

*Credit for these words and ideas goes to Ray Ortund, writing for The Gospel Coalition

what you have. Paul can. He says, "I've learned how to get along happily whether I have a lot or just a little. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need." (Philippians 4:12-13)

Well, imagine being happy with whatever you have. Imagine being happy with whatever gifts God has already given you. Like Calvin, we are tempted to wish for the "big stuff." We want what we have and more, much more. And Paul would say, "Stop it. Be happy with what you have whether it's a bunch or just a little. Ask Jesus to help you be happy with what you already have."

Like Hobbes. Look at the last frame in the cartoon. Hobbes loves his big sunny field. And Calvin says, "Actually, it's hard to argue with someone who looks so happy." And that's the truth. If we ask Jesus to help us love the life we have and the stuff we already have, we'll end up like Paul. We'll end up happy no matter what. And that is a great way to live. That is the life God wants us to have. Enjoy who you are and what you have.

Pastor Steve
First Presbyterian Church, Fairbury & Steele City

Blessing Opportunity *2 Corinthians 9:7-8*



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Keep Thinking...

You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try.
-Beverly Sills

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