

Mortally Wounded

By R.T. Nusbaum

There are a lot of people who claim they embrace the Cross. In truth, they have accepted a doctrine concerning the Cross. They have not had an encounter with the Cross. Those in the Word of God had an encounter with the Cross. It is not just an encounter with the contrast of the preaching of the Cross as opposed to what you may have once believed. That is certainly a crisis and can be called an encounter with the Cross. But the encounter I am talking about here is one that leaves you mortally wounded. There is a death that is experienced, not just believed. Paul stated of himself, "I am crucified with Christ." It is not simply believing you died with Christ. This encounter does not simply leave an impression on your doctrinal stance. This encounter leaves you mortally wounded. I use the term "mortally wounded" in an effort to show how very drastic the encounter really is. In truth, you are not only wounded but are put to death. But I use the term because the death blow is struck so deep that we know that we will never recover from it. The crisis of it has such an impact upon you that there remains a crushedness about you.

Jacob experienced this and the tenor of his life afterward was one of limping and obvious weakness in the flesh. Isaiah, though a prophet used mightily of God, had an encounter that mortally wounded him (Isaiah 6). Paul, Job and many others had an encounter with the Lord that struck deep into their being and left them as only dependent on the Lord. Now, most Christians feel that they are dependent upon the Lord. However, most Christians, when confronted with a crisis will quickly stretch forth the arm of the flesh in order to remedy their trouble or discomfort. A person has truly been mortally wounded when neither his arms are feet are available as a means of escape, for they are nailed to the Cross.

What I am describing is not just a matter of the will and will-power. A person who has not been mortally wounded may will to let Jesus have His way in their life but in the clutch situation they will always and automatically go in to "survival mode" and seek to save themselves. In other words, Jesus has first place until it becomes an issue of intrusion upon their self-life. At that moment, the will is not strong enough to save them. For a person to give up their self-life joyfully and pursue the Cross requires something much deeper than the action of the human will.

When a person has an encounter with the Cross such as the men of God mentioned above did, it will not just effect their will. This mortal wounding strikes a death blow. It cripples the mortal aspect of the person. The sword of the Lord is plunged so deep that the person will never recover. The ligaments and sinews that connect them with their own human strength are severed and they live as weak in themselves. They do not have to try to live this way. They cannot help but live this way. Something has changed deep within the core of their being. It is not accomplished on a mental plane. There are not new lessons that you have learned and can explain to others. It is simply that you walk with a noticeable limp spiritually. Your human strength is depleted. You no longer have hopes and dreams for yourself for self lies mortally slain before you and within you.

An amazing thing also transpires. You no longer mourn the loss that takes place to self. All the agony and fear that formerly arose concerning loss, death and self-denial are gone. Your existence is now centered on God and others. The Jesus you now comprehend is not a single entity seated somewhere on a throne. He is comprehend in a risen Body. Just as, to hug a person you must embrace their physical body, so now, to hug Jesus requires an embracing of the Body of Christ. Words, such as these, that used to strike terror in the heart are now just simply the truth. For the mortally wounded, there is no desire to wrestle with the Truth, only to flow in oneness with it. But self can never be reasoned with. Even if self is moved upon by the Holy Spirit and joyfully says "Yes!" to such things, it is still self. It must eventually return to its selfish and closed view and state for it is what it is.

Jesus knew this to be the case with men. His plan could never include just blessing and improving mortal man. Instead, "mortality must be swallowed up of life". Jesus Christ knew that He must come to earth and strike a blow against mankind that was so deep that he would never recover. Only then would mortal man look beyond his own strength and resources. The Bible declares plainly unto us: "For ye are dead". It also declares that "Christ is our life". For these truths to jump out of the realm of facts and into the realm of reality will require an incredibly deep blow to be struck. Mortal man must stand before his God and admit that he will never give up his selfish ways. Then mortal man must open his heart to his God and ask for the death blow. He must want it more than the air he breathes. He must want it because it is the only hope for any real change within mankind. He must want it and hope for it and not be content or accusatory until it is complete.

Too many live to protect self. They hide and cover themselves, even as Adam. They claim they want God to expose everything but constantly live in fear that He might. Be not afraid. When it comes to issues of the heart such as these, He will never expose you. You must expose yourself. While mortal man cannot change himself, he can come to self awareness. He can become sick of self, though helpless to do anything about it. When we sit in silence, our enmity screams out and we see the darkness of our own soul. It is then that we choose one of two paths. We either seek out someone who will console our flesh and distract us from our own plight by directing our attention to the problems of others. Or we let the Lord of Host, with sword in hand, swing away. We accept the judgment. In the midst of such a blood-bath faith arises. He who wounds us will also heal us. This sickness is not unto death but ordained unto life. We are buried by baptism into death. Now we truly look with hope toward Him who is the resurrection and the life.

The purpose for sharing this is because so many either think they have had a proper encounter with the Cross or are wondering whether they have or haven't as of yet. I can assure you that a proper encounter will radically and drastically affect your life so as to be mortally wounded. If a person believes the truth of the Cross but does not feel he has been mortally wounded, then I would suggest that he/she seek the Lord until their life has been touched in such a manner by the Cross. To not come to such a place is to open your whole ministry and all you touch to the arm of the flesh. We will live in an unsettled state of doubt and fear for we will see a regular intrusion of that which should be dead.

If I knew that such an encounter had not yet taken place in my life, I would dedicate my efforts to seeing the Cross in fresh revelation and not be content until that revelation broke out of the realms of blessing and into the realm of mortal wounding. ***