

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith  
Audio Script – July 10, 2009

If you've ever sneezed and said, "I need a Kleenex," you're branded! Referring to the soft material as the company name rather than what it is - a tissue - is exactly the kind of "branding" marketing experts seek to accomplish. How are you branded spiritually? That's the question in today's Templates of Truth.

The Apostle Paul declared, *I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus* (Galatians 6:17). The Greek word Paul uses in this passage means to mark the body with a prick or tattoo. Paul wasn't referring, however, to having a tattoo on your arm depicting a cross with the name, Jesus etched across it. The ancient practice of tattooing was associated with idol worship, for people had a symbol of their pagan god tattooed prominently on their body indicating their allegiance to the idol. That is why God admonishes His people not to be tattooed: *You shall not make any cuts on your body...nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the Lord* (Leviticus 19:28). Having a mark on the body will continue to indicate allegiance to that which is against God as people will bear the mark of the Antichrist during the Tribulation period. Christian believers should feel discouraged from the modern craze of tattooing as a result of these Biblical admonitions.

The *brand-marks* to which Paul referred were of greater significance and more profoundly displayed. The physical marks one might observe on Paul's body would include the scars from shipwrecks, stoning, the harsh conditions in which he was often imprisoned, and the beatings he suffered as acts of persecution against him for faithfully preaching the Gospel. Even though some of these may have disfigured Paul's appearance, he cherished them as *brand-marks* of his sacrifice in serving His Lord. As you look in the mirror today, can you observe any bodily scars that you acquired as a result of serving God?

Paul identified other ways that believers can be branded. His teaching to the Galatians was that if you *walk by the Spirit* (5:16), your life will manifest and demonstrate *the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, (and) self-control* (6:22-23). Indeed, Jesus declared, *I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit* (John 15:5). The evidence that God is a part of your life is the manifestation your life exhibits of these spiritual qualities. Paul placed this understanding in the context of spiritual agriculture: *whatever a man sows, this he will also reap...the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary* (6:7-9). Jesus taught that *a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit...so then, you will know them (or recognize them) by their fruits* (Matthew 7:19-20). Have you noticed what the marketers have been doing in recent years with Target stores? It is not uncommon any more to see only the bull's eye logo with no reference at all to "Target." When you see the logo, you immediately recognize that it refers to Target Stores. When people see you, do they immediately recognize Jesus?

Another brand-mark Paul identifies of genuine Christianity can be seen in how believers relate to each other. In general, he says, *While we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and*

*especially to those who are of the household of faith* (6:10). Paul said we do that in two ways. First, we *bear one another's burdens* (6:2). Secondly, we work together redemptively – *if any man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourselves, lest you too be tempted* (6:1). When our life demonstrates these relational qualities, we *fulfill the law of Christ* (6:2). That is because Christ bore the burden of our sinfulness on the cross, and He deals with us redemptively, seeking to restore us into a proper relationship with Him when we fall away into sin. How Christ deals with us is exactly the way He expects us to deal with each other.

Personally applying the punch line of a Christian humorist, he said: “I want to be so much like Jesus that when I get to heaven, Jesus will be wearing a bracelet that says – ‘what would Rick do?’” You are branded today whether you know it or not. The question is, what do others recognize in your life’s logo? Do others see Jesus in you?

That’s today’s Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

© Copyright 2009 – All Rights Reserved – Renewal Resource Services, PLLC