A walk with Mr O (59)

Is cynicism sin?

Mr O, as I get older, I find that I'm getting more and more cynical. Is cynicism sin?

People today use the word 'cynical' and 'cynicism' in all sorts of different ways, so please tell me how you are using them.

Well, it's like this I keep thinking the worst of people. it seems to me that most people do what they do because they are basically selfish.

Can you give me some examples?

Yes, easily. For instance, at our prayer meeting last week there was hardly anybody there. in my mind I could see all the absent people sitting at home in front of their screens and not caring at all about the cause of Christ.

And when I noticed that all the elders were at the meeting. I thought to myself, 'They're only doing this because it's expected of them. They're just keeping up appearances.'

Do you find that you're thinking the worst of people at work?

Yes, I do. Mr O. During the last few weeks my line manager has been really nice to me, but I can't help thinking that she's buttering me up because she's soon going to ask me to do something really difficult.

And it's not just at work. I enjoy our walks together, but sometimes I think that the only reason you agree to do this is because it gives you something to write about in ET!

Thank you for being so open with me! Now let me be open with you. Yes, constantly thinking the worst about people is sin. the fruit of the spirit is love and .as the scriptures tell us, love doesn't think evil thoughts about other people. When it considers their words and actions, it puts on them the best interpretation possible.

So why am I like this? And, as I am a believe, why don't I seem able to break from it?

I know you well enough to know that you believe the right things and that you are clean, honest, and sincere. The problem is deep down inside you, in the secret place of your soul. Right down there, in your heart of hearts, in the holy of holies of your inner being, it is self has polluted and violated the temple that should be held sacred for him.

Mr O, I don't know what to say. I don't understand.

Although you know the Lord, you have not been meeting him like Isaiah did. Your inmost soul has not recently prostrated itself before the throne 'high and lifted up' has not recently heard the seraphim's chant, felt the terrifying rush of holiness, and felt so weak, helpless, and dirty that you have cried out in utter despair. You have forgotten what it is to feel the infinite relief that comes from knowing that a Lamb has been shed and that a coal from his altar has cleansed and fired the whole of your being.

So, are you saying that I've got to have a 'second blessing'?

No. But what you've got to have is a deeper experience of what you already know. The awful holiness of God, the guilt of your sin, and the glory of Calvary must inform, inspire and motivate everything that you are and everything that you do. We need dealings with God that don't just touch our minds and emotions, but which reach deep down to our very core. Where this is not happening, cynicism is sure to be found.

So, what can I do?

Sit in the sunshine until you turn brown, stand in the rain until you get wet. Like Samuel, wait in the dark until the Calling Voice stands right beside you. Ask, seek, and knock until the Lord keeps his promise to meet you. 'Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, wait, I say, on the Lord! (Psalm 27;14) Long for him and wait. And wait. And wait…

And that will be the end of my cynicism?

It's a simple fact that if you're looking up, and you're looking in, you can't look sideways.