**Hello Jesus: my true confession**

It has been about three and a half years since I retired from teaching. I have to confess, I haven’t looked back at all. Don’t miss it, haven’t kept in touch, don’t think about it (but still dream about it!)—I even avoid good old Clemens High School like the plague.

I knew that when I retired I would be starting a new chapter in my life. I wanted to be fully present for that chapter. Of course, my old standby plan had been that I would concentrate on my writing. I always thought of myself as a teacher and a writer. Lo and behold, I discovered that I had nothing to write about. At least nothing that really grabbed me.

But it went deeper than that. I figure this is the final chapter of my life. Oh, I don’t mean to be dramatic. I hope it will be a long chapter. Maybe more like a Part III with a bunch of chapters contained within. However you look at it, the question confronted me: What do I want to do with the rest of my life? More than anything else? (No, not golf.)

I met Jesus when I was twenty-six years old. I was pretty lost—happy on the outside, broken inside. I accepted Him into my life. He led me to a fine and beautiful wife, blessed us with three vibrant children, guided me into a challenging and fulfilling career, rescued me from every bad decision and crisis I could manufacture, and gave me a life full of love and laughter and joy.

But all along the way, I knew I was only scratching the surface of my relationship with Him. I was a nominal Christian floating in the midstream. I checked okay on the exteriors: good on Bible reading (I like to read), weak on church attendance (still don’t love church, but I have gained an appreciation for it), no major David/Bathsheba transgressions but tons of minor self-indulgences. Naturally, when the major crises arose, I would become devout, and when they passed I would slip back into self-absorption. Still He blessed me.

And so my true retirement goal became clear to me. This most important of all my relationships was the one I had kept on the back burner. I was holding Him at arm’s length. Foolish Galatian! Just consider His promises: “I am with you always…” “…abide in Me…” “I can do all things through Him…” “…yet not I, but Christ living in me…” “…fountains of living water…” Those are invitations, folks!

I can remember in a book group discussion I had one time, the prevailing opinion was that Jesus was a wonderful teacher, a peerless role model, a proof of what exists inside us all. If I had to follow that Jesus, I would wither in despair. It would be like being presented with a brand new shiny Corvette and not having the keys or any other means of starting the engine. Nice to look at but basically useless.

So I have embarked on my retirement. Three plus years. Wow. I’d love to report that I am a changed man, transformed, walking around with a glow. Honestly, I doubt that you’d notice much difference from the man you knew whenever you knew me. But I believe that the Holy Spirit works from the inside out. I still do a thousand things to impede His progress, but I am on His side. He reveals Jesus to me.

I have over 2,000 friends on Facebook. This was a pitiful plan I hatched when I decided to use social media to become a famous author. To quote my boy Bob Dylan, “I was so much older then, I’m younger than that now.” If I have any “teaching” left in me, it can only be to point to Him. Praise His Name.

Love God and love your neighbor—the sum of the commandments. Pretty simple formula for daily living. And certainly something worth writing about!