

## The Two Natures

In 1886, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote a book and called it 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'.

The story is about an individual who is made up of emotions and desires that are opposite to one another:

some good

and some evil. It's about a man who has great inward battles. One part of him wants only to be perfect, with everything in order. He hates the idea that temptation and circumstances can rise and force him to make decisions that he doesn't want to make, or do things he doesn't want to do. He knows that men will often act on an impulse, almost without thinking, and are capable of terrible anger, so Dr. Jekyll finally decides to try and separate his evil side from his good side, so that his life could go as he would like it to go. He decides that if he splits his two natures, then he can enjoy life as Dr. Jekyll by day, and do all the good he would like to do, and then allow Mr. Hyde, the evil side to roam freely at night.

That was his plan but it just didn't work out the way he hoped. When I look at this story I am reminded of what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 7:18-21, 'And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong'. Paul has the same frustrations that Dr Jekyll had and in verse 24 of the same chapter he says and asks, 'Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?'. Inside of every one of us there is a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. No one can completely rid himself of the ability to slip into the evil nature from time to time. Neither can any man, however evil, say that he never has a good thought at some time or another. This inner battle, between the good and evil nature in all of us, has been raging since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, Sometimes we try to do some good and it works out wrong.

Rarely does anyone try to do evil and have it work out for good, though there are two very well known examples in the Bible. When Joseph was sold into slavery, and after he saved his family from the famine, he said 'You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good'. And of course the prime example for us is

Jesus, who was crucified by men with bad intentions, but whose death and resurrection we celebrate as part of God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

I can't use any of you as examples, though I have seen the Jekyll and Hyde in many of you. I can only use myself as an example since I know me better than anyone else, and I know of the terrible battle that rages. I admit that I am often my own worst enemy, not least in my work for the Lord, and that is all due to the Jekyll and Hyde on the inside. Dr Jekyll, appears in the kindness that I show to other people, in my concern for the sick, in the love of God that I try to let shine through me. But look out! Don't cross my path, say the wrong thing at the wrong time, or step on my feelings, and Mr. Hyde is liable to come out shooting and let you have both barrels. I could call it righteous indignation but it's really pure and simple anger not matter how you look at it. And it's often in those moments, when we are pushed into a corner, and threatened, that Mr. Hyde comes out with a vengeance. I cannot deny his existence in me. And I am not the only one. I have seen the most spiritually minded

and mature Christians being cool, calm and collected and then in an instant, turn and strike like a rattlesnake.

Yes, there is no doubting that the Jekyll and Hyde nature are both alive in each of us to some extent. If you don't believe it, just let an unexpected problem arise, or hit your thumb with a hammer, or stub your toe on something in the dark, and then see whether Mr. Hyde really is hiding in you somewhere.

Satan loves to play on those two opposing natures; he tries his best to get us to cross over to the Dark Side once in a while.

Dr Jekyll tried to control his evil nature by separating it from his good but in the end, Dr. Jekyll could not overcome his evil nature because it became more and more powerful with each appearance.

Man does not have the will-power or the ability to overcome the evil

nature within. We can suppress it, we can deny it, we can try to dress it up to make it more acceptable through a few good works,

but in the end, it just grows more powerful until finally we are overcome by our nature to sin.

We can't separate our lives. Dr Jekyll found that his desire to be good and to do good was never powerful enough to overcome the evil, sin nature. The Apostle Paul recognised this danger, since his conversion he had fought a good fight and did everything to keep the faith in walking before the Lord, but the battle was still raging. But Paul knew that he could not overcome this powerful sin nature on his own so he cried out to God, 'Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?' Paul knew that the answer wasn't within his power, that he needed someone, or something, bigger than he was to set him free.

The answer to the Jekyll and Hyde spirit in each of us can only be found in Romans 7:25, 'Thank God!' says Paul, the answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul found that answer and I pray that each of us will find it too. The only power that can deliver us from our old sin nature is the power of the Blood of Jesus Christ that can wash our sins away and make us into a new creation in Christ.

After Paul found the answer, listen to what he had to say in Romans 8:35-39, 'Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Ro 8:35-39 NLT)

We all have a little of Mr. Hyde in us, just waiting for the right moment to come out. We don't want anyone else to know it. We do our best to hide it. But in the end, the sin nature will win if we don't allow Jesus to take our lives, without compromising with the world.

Only by fully surrendering our heart and life to Jesus Christ, and repenting of all sin, can we finally have the victory over that sin nature. If you really want to get rid of Mr. Hyde then Jesus is your only hope!