

CLASSROOM IN A BOOK DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

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BOOK 7

COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

ROMANS

A NEW LOOK AT THE BOOK OF ROMANS



PIETY

Deepen discernment
of the Word



FAITH

Knowing the
Word



LOVE

Doing the
Word



HOPE

God's path
for you



GLORIFICATION

The path
you choose



by

WILLIAM E. VINSON, JR., PhD



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CLASSROOM IN A BOOK DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

Book 7

COST OF DISCIPLESHIP: A New Look at the Book of Romans

**By:
William E. Vinson, Jr.**

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Preface

THE CLASSROOM IN A BOOK DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

The *Classroom in a Book Discipleship Series* is a unique approach to education. The author has twenty-five years of experience in classroom teaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Internet teaching. The teachings covered Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, Church History, Hermeneutics, Christian Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Evangelism, and Biblical Backgrounds. In other words, the teacher was a generalist in the world of specialization.

During recent years of teaching, God sent two people into the classrooms that have made this series possible. One student brought in some audio recording gear into the seminary classrooms and recorded everything said by teacher and students. The other person, Helen Agnew, transcribed the tapes into weekly sessions. Finally, Helen put all the weeks together for a course into a book, which became the nucleus for a formal book. Next came the editing phases in which the improper English and sentence construction was corrected. Also, the organization and thought flow was improved in order to facilitate a reader's comprehension.

Each class session became a chapter that went through several iterations of the editing process. Also, Helen provided computer drawings of the theological charts and models used by the teacher. These models were inserted into the book at the appropriate places.

INFORMAL WRITING STYLE

You should be aware that the chosen style of communication in this series of books is much more informal than the typical. I have worked to retain the folksy way of expression

that I use in the classroom and pulpits. In a formal treatise, like my doctoral dissertation, the expression was stiff and formal (one may even say that it was written by a stuffed shirt). So, who is going to read my dissertation because of its stiff formality?

These books are going to be easy reading because they will be what you hear in everyday conversation. In the classroom, I am a great communicator. When reading the transcripts of my audio-recorded classroom lectures, the students have commented that they could actually hear my voice with its inflection and volume in the printed words. These sensory experiences add to the impact and learning by the reader. So, I want you to know that the folksy level of communication was purposefully chosen in order to enhance your learning experience.

Dear saint, you are in for a treat. There will be points of time in which your mind will be so absorbed into thinking new and analytical thoughts of our Most Wonderful Lord, that you will be unable to resist sharing them with a loved one. In my editing passes of the various drafts, I found myself reliving the classrooms and all the high emotion and drama. My pulse rate would quicken and convictions and tears would return.

CLASS PROCESS

Each book is a semester-long class. The subject matter is explored very thoroughly because all the students are participating in the questioning and answering. You will have the next best thing to being in the classroom. In fact, there will be times in your

reading in which you will be in the classroom through imagination.

BENEFITS

Discipleship has been declared by many to be the greatest need in Southern Baptist life today. In my many years of teaching, I have had churches to bus in many of their members to take my classes at Southwestern Seminary. The reason that was given was that it was a very good source for discipleship training. This discipleship training is a step up from Sunday school and other training because *it involves seminary training at the lay level*. Armed with this new discipleship training, the new lay ministers are fulfilling their calls and impacting the Kingdom of God in a very positive way. Pastors are benefiting by having some new lay ministers to help them minister. Churches and society are benefiting by receiving positive help that is theologically sound and practical.

For you, the busy Christian of today, this series is a rare opportunity to actually participate in a seminary classroom to learn from the teacher and your peers in high impact and focused studies that are not available in any

other books. The teacher's experience of teaching as a generalist will provide *interconnected insights and truths* that are not available in specialization. The *student interactions* in these books will create a *relevancy* that is unheard of outside the classroom. The quality of the *class dynamics* will lift you, the reader, up into unparalleled densely packed teachings that will greatly improve the *efficiency of your learning*. You owe it to yourself to jump into this series because you can get an education that is the next best thing to actually going to seminary.

In addition to the student interactions recorded in each chapter, the major points that I made which would be the source of the tests given to the classroom students are stated in the text, and the *test questions* are stated at the end of each chapter (class session). The *answers* to those tests are given at the end of the book for you to check yourself. If you seriously want to know that you have accomplished the goals of each chapter and to be able to teach a course like this, answer those questions to the point that you can do so without going back into the chapter itself—i.e. memorize those points and charts.

Planned Order

1. Doctrine for Disciples: A New Look at Our Theological Foundation (GREEN)
2. Destiny for Disciples: A New Look at the Book of Revelation, (RED)
3. Task for Disciples: A New Look at Evangelism (YELLOW)
4. Sanctification for Disciples: A New Look at the Book of Hebrews (BLUE)
5. The Crisis Facing Disciples: A New Look at the Book of Jeremiah (ORANGE)
6. The Disciples' Boss: A New Look at the Gospel of John (LAVENDER)
7. Cost of Discipleship: A New Look at the Book of Romans (BROWN)
8. Context for Discipleship: A New Look at Church History (PURPLE)
9. Deception for Disciples: A New Look at Philosophical Systems (BLACK)
10. Library of Charts for Disciples (GRAY)
11. Isaiah (WHITE)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface -----	ii
Table of Contents -----	iv
Introduction -----	1
Chapter 1 The Purpose of Romans Is Slavery -----	3
Chapter 2 Judgment of Works -----	23
Chapter 3 Details On The Judgment Of The Christian's Works -----	40
Chapter 4 Justification -----	59
Chapter 5 The Tribulation, the Fall, Imputation, and Freedom -----	77
Chapter 6 The Law, the Flesh, and the Spirit -----	99
Chapter 7 Spiritual Warfare and Suffering -----	115
Chapter 8 Romans 9 The Doctrine of Election -----	133
Chapter 9 Israel's Salvation -----	150
Chapter 10 Beseeching the Romans to the <i>Kenosis</i> -----	169
Chapter 11 Christians and the Government -----	184
Chapter 12 Christian Freedom and Relationships -----	201
Chapter 13 Christianity Is More Than Just Being, It Is Also Doing -----	214
Conclusion -----	228
Answers to Chapter Questions -----	230
Glossary -----	240
Certificate In Discipleship Studies -----	246

INTRODUCTION

This book is especially suited to the needs of the “normal Christian” in a normal Christian family. Who is the normal Christian? Are you a normal Christian? Let me paint a picture of a normal Christian family, and then you decide whether or not you are “normal.”

The normal Christian family takes their Christianity seriously. The parents know the importance of raising their children in the church. They sacrificially get up on Sunday mornings and get their family ready for church. Both parents are completely on board with this task of getting the family in church. In fact the whole family, every member, knows the importance of going to church.

The parents are good providers. They have or are seeking reputable jobs that pay the most but also have the least demands for travel and overtime work. In this context of being home with the family as much as possible, high pay is the most important thing because they believe that they must provide the best of every material desire, education, and entertainment experiences for the family. The push to satisfy every need and desire of the family is felt very strongly by both parents.

The lives of the family are devoted to success in this world. That success is defined as good health, good citizenship, good family providers, good churchmanship, good family life, good recreation, and good social status within their communities of work, religion, home, and sports. The hopes and dreams of the parents for themselves are monetary. Their hopes and dreams for their children are mostly for preparing them to grow up to exceed their parents in the monetary realm. While the children are still young, the parents want them to excel over their peers in school-

work, sports, and in their love for their parents.

Seldom does the parental discussion of schoolwork, sports, or the children’s love for their parents involve Jesus. Seldom do the family members even talk about Jesus. But they do say the blessings at mealtime and pray their bedtime prayers every night. The family thinks of themselves as strong Christians because they have all been saved and baptized, and they go to church very regularly.

My friend, I have just described my family to you. In the earliest years of my adult life as a father and husband, my family was just like the above description. I was well skilled in the compartmentalization of my Christianity so that I could concentrate my life on gaining success in the world. I devoted my self to the quest for the good life while maintaining a good church involvement. I understood, like nearly all normal Christians, that the best that I could do was to seek the great American dream life, while doing my best to equip my children to do the same. I added on the sports and recreational experiences to fill my traditional family duties owed to my children.

In addition to taking our children to church regularly, my wife and I made sure that our children were saved. We personally led our children to the Lord for salvation. Once we knew that they were saved, then we were greatly relaxed and contented with their spiritual progress. All that remained was for them to be baptized and stay out of trouble, and we counseled them along those lines. We were content to let the children take the initiative on fulfilling the requirement of baptism for themselves by waiting to hear a church sermon that would call them to act on that

requirement. We felt no urgency in regard to our children's baptisms because we knew that they were now going to heaven regardless of their futures. Our parental goals then began to change quickly to match that of the world because we had already taken care of the children's spiritual need of salvation.

I figured that my wife and I were great disciples of Jesus Christ, and we were raising our children to be great disciples. We, like nearly every other family in the church, were "normal." Our problem, which was unknown to us at the time, was that we did not have a clue as to what a disciple really was. Our understanding of the *kenosis* as a requirement for discipleship came relatively late in life.

What we came to understand so late was neither too late for us nor for our own children. Fortunately, God just chose to tell me directly about His requirements for discipleship (why me? I was just one among many "normal Christians," but God mercifully chose to break the chain of normalcy with me) so that my wife and I could wake up in time to devote a significant portion of our lives practicing and modeling discipleship to each other and to our children.

However, the world's brainwashing is ever present to push our children and us into the same lukewarm misunderstandings of discipleship that I had before. Every now and then I get glimpses of my children's true understanding of real discipleship, but because they are only glimpses, I am so afraid of their being conformed and devoted to this world. Our prayers for them now are that God would help them to excel their parents in discipleship.

Why did my prior pastors and teachers not tell us what discipleship is? Why did I have to go so long on the wrong path? These questions have haunted me and angered me for decades. In fact, the same angry reaction was made by one of my students when I was teaching the *kenosis* as a requirement for discipleship in one of my seminary classes. The student, a lady in the class who was in her mid 50's, blurted out angrily: "Why has this not been taught to me before now? I have been in church for my whole life, and I have never heard this taught before. This makes me mad because I needed to know the requirements for discipleship from the gitgo."

My friend, Paul wrote one letter to the Romans. He had to decide what were the most important things to include in the letter. He decided (the Lord decided) that the gift of salvation and the subsequent cost of discipleship were the two most important essentials to include if this were to be his one and only letter to the Romans.

It is my prayer that you will take seriously the teachings in this book. Hardly anyone today knows about the cost of discipleship. May God teach you and help you to get on your path of discipleship by giving yourself wholly to God. . . **IF** you are willing. Yes, there are costs for discipleship, but the eschatological rewards far exceed those costs even to the point of dwarfing them into nearly nothingness. This is your opportunity to learn how to truly lay up treasure in heaven by breaking the chain of normalcy for yourself and your family.

Chapter One

PURPOSE OF ROMANS IS SLAVERY**CHRONOLOGY**

I am going to start by just taking you through the chronology of Paul's epistles. You can find a chronology that is different from this one. You can even find some who reverse the order that I have. Everybody has his own chronology. I have mine, and you are certainly welcome to adopt one of your own. That is your right, your privilege, and your responsibility. But this is how I see it.

Missionary Journey #1

This journey was a short one up around present day Turkey; most of it was in Galatia. After that missionary journey Paul writes Galatians from Antioch and sends the book backwards. He sends it to the Galatians which he had just left behind.

There is an orientation that I want you to catch here. Sometimes he wrote and sent letters in front of him, to those he was about to visit. Other times he wrote letters and sent them behind him, where he had just been. In the case of the book of Galatians, he is sending it back to Galatia, where he had just been.

The book of Galatians, which was written in AD 45, has a lot to do with the book of Romans. A lot of similarities and a lot of the same problems are being addressed in both books.

Around AD 49 or AD 48 the Universal Church Council at Jerusalem occurred. The exact dates according to our own dating systems from our calendar are hard to determine because our calendar is about 4 years off. With the destruction of the library in Alexandria and the various destructions of the Christian recordkeeping, there has been some slippage in our calendars. Right now to the best of some authorities, and I am not one of them

as far as calendaring goes, Christ was actually born 4 years before we show Him to be born. Four BC actually begins at our AD 1. Thus, you can add four years to all of these dates.

Every once in a while, you will see one scholar who is very trustworthy, and he will have a date of AD 50. Another scholar who is also extremely trustworthy will have the same event occurring four years before that. There is just a slippage that is accounted for by some and not by others. Just bear with me because there is four years of play in here. But to the best of my reckoning, we have the dates that you will see in this book. However, you will find other scholars who will vary from these dates by around four years.

I place the Church Council of Jerusalem between Missionary Journey #1 and Missionary Journey #2. The reason we date Galatians prior to the Jerusalem Council Meeting is that the council dealt with the same issues that Galatians deals with, and since Galatians does not mention the council, we think that Galatians was written prior to the council. This is a simple approach at establishing chronology.

I feel quite confident in my placement of Galatians prior to the Jerusalem Council because of the importance that the Council carried within Christendom. When all the apostles gathered together to determine the requirements for salvation in the Council, those proceedings would certainly have been included in the first book by Paul which dealt explicitly with the requirements of salvation.

Missionary Journey #2

Missionary Journey #2, AD 49, Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth. This is also a letter which is being sent backwards. In Journey #2, he has already gone through

Thessalonica, and he had arrived in Corinth. Now, while he is in Corinth, he wrote and sent the epistle backwards to the Thessalonians whom he had just left.

Missionary Journey #3

Paul wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians from Ephesus before he departed for Corinth. This is a case in which he sent these epistles forward. Notice how important Corinth is; Corinth pops up in all of these writings. You have 1 and 2 Thessalonians written from Corinth. Then all the Corinthian letters are written from Ephesus, but they are going to Corinth. Then while still on the third missionary journey, Paul wrote the Book of Romans from Corinth.

Corinth is located at the bottom of the Greek peninsula. Paul came through Greece from the north to the south. Prior to that, he went through Turkey collecting an offering for the Jewish saints in Jerusalem because the Jerusalem Christians were going through some terrible persecution and tribulation.

The members of the Jerusalem church did not have jobs and they needed some help in order to ward off starvation. The Gentile Christians located along Paul's Missionary Journey #3 were being asked to provide offerings to be collected and sent back to Jerusalem to help the Jewish Christians there.

Paul, as he was on the third missionary journey, was collecting the offering to take back to Jerusalem. He traveled south in Greece. When he got to Corinth, he had to deal with tribulations and trials in the church of Corinth, and that is why 1st and 2nd Corinthians was written to Corinth—to deal with some factions and problems in the church before he arrived. He wrote to Corinth from Ephesus. Then he came to Corinth and the church became submissive to him.

While he was in Corinth, he looked to the west where Rome was located. Then he

looked to the east where his home church at Antioch and the starving church at Jerusalem were. He has the offering for Jerusalem in his hand, but also heavy in his heart resided the hunger to take the Gospel to Rome. Upon him weighed two heavy responsibilities. He was to supply the offerings to feed the starving people in Jerusalem, and he desperately desired to feed the people of Rome the Gospel food for their spirits. Because his people were starving in Jerusalem, they were counting on him to bring that offering to them.

Paul was torn in half while standing in Corinth. He yearned to go to the west, to Rome and then on to Spain. But he had to go back east, back home to take the offering there. That is the scenario in which he abided when he wrote the book of Romans. You will see in the book of Romans the yearning to go to Rome, but also the heavy responsibility to return to Jerusalem. So in AD 56 Paul wrote the book of Romans from Corinth.

Corinth, of course, has played a significant part in Paul's ministry. Corinth played a part in the first five books. Corinth was a very significant city because it was the crossroads of the Middle East where the highway and the seaway crossed. It was a church filled with turmoil, factions, divisions, sin, and lethargy. Here it is playing a significant part in the Christian beginnings of history.

Imprisonment and death of Paul

Paul returned to Jerusalem. He was arrested for taking Gentiles into the temple. He was imprisoned in Caesarea, and he wrote the prison epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians were letters going to the rear, to places he had been. The letter to Philemon is a personal letter, and it is the first of four personal letters that were addressed to individually named persons.

Then came the imprisonment at Rome when he appealed to Caesar. When it looked

for certain that he was going to be killed by the Jews, from his trial in Jerusalem, he appealed to Caesar and ended up going to Rome to stand trial under Caesar.

While in Rome, he wrote the pastoral epistles which are 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy (the other three personal letters). The tone of Paul's writings changed very much in these epistles because he is visualizing the end of his life. He saw that he had to pass the baton, and Timothy and Titus are the ones to whom he is going to hand it. There is, then, in Paul's heart this heavy responsibility, and he wanted to carry it forward and do it the right way.

Then we have his death. He is beheaded in AD 65 or 66, and that will then end the life of Paul as far as his life in the flesh. But Paul lives on. Paul lives on not only in heaven but also in his letters and in his work. The doctrine of salvation by faith for anyone who believes lives on. We are riding the crest of a tide that is coming right from that opportunity for justification by faith. The Reformation grew out of that doctrine, and we are riding on that wave too.

We owe a lot to Paul, the man who stood there and said, "No, No, No," to legalism. We have a great debt to him. He tells us in his epistle that he has a great debt to us, but we have a great debt to him. If we are going to pay that debt, we must pay it off by ministering to others.

The Writing of Romans

When Paul writes Romans, he writes it from the home of Gaius, and his amanuensis is Tertius. An amanuensis is the person whose hand actually writes the manuscript.

It is common knowledge that Paul had very bad eyesight. At times he could not see well enough to write extensive letters. There was one letter in which he said, "I sign this letter with my own hand." He did not write

all of the letter. He could hardly see by the end of his life. He had to dictate the letters to someone who could write for him, but he would often sign the letters with his own hand. I am not sure he could even see what he was signing.

That is enough of the chronology, and I want you to feel very free to disagree with me on this chronology. This is just my best reckoning. There is no one around that lived back then, you see. We all have to just do our best reckoning on chronology; you are responsible to do the same thing. I think that mine is an educated stab at it. But I would not risk my life over chronology. But we will risk our lives over the text when we get into it. That is where I do not budge.

ROMANS 1 PAUL IS THE LORD'S SLAVE

Romans

1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

We need to look at the words in this verse. "Paul, a servant." The word translated as servant actually means slave. The word is *doulos*, and it means slave. Paul is declaring that he himself is a slave of Jesus Christ.

When we start looking at slavery, you need to make a reference to Matthew 20:25-28. This passage in Matthew is dealing with this new position of Paul's. He goes from being a Pharisee to being a slave.

Characteristics of a Slave

Matthew

20:25 But Jesus called them [unto him], and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.
20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

“Slave” is a strong word, a very strong word. Hear what is implied here. To be a slave is not to be your own owner. A slave is not to be in charge of his own life. To be a slave means that you are at the disposal of someone else. Your owner can use you however he wants.

As an aside, there is a passage in Exodus that deals with slavery,¹ and if you become a slave and you like the position of being a slave and you have a good master, you can opt to make your slavery to that master permanent. The way you did that in the book of Exodus is to have a hole drilled through your ear.

I remind my wife of this scripture all the time. She is my slave, because she has made it public. She has a hole in both of her ears. I do not have a hole in my ears. There are a lot of young men going around now that have become slaves. I see the evidence in their ears all the time.

When you become a slave, you do not go where you want to go, you do not do what you want to do, you do not live your life for yourself, you do not have choices for your own self-betterment. When you become a slave, you become a vessel in another’s hand. This other person, then, tells you where you are going to go, what you are going to do, and how to better him, not yourself. If you have a good master, being a slave is something for which you would want to get your ear pierced.

We have had slavery in our history, you see, and there has been a terrible connotation brought through those times because of bad masters. The owners of the slaves did not al-

ways seek the best for their slaves. Thus permanency is not something a slave would desire when owned by a bad master. But now what we have here is Paul testifying that he is a slave of Jesus Christ. Jesus is his master. Jesus owns him, and he is testifying to that good and permanent relationship.

Noting that he himself is a slave of Jesus Christ is where Paul began this letter. He was writing to a people that he has never visited, and this mention of his own slaveship is where he started. He started with a red flag word that could possibly signify to the Roman recipients, “Look out! This guy is crazy. Here he is, a slave, and he is promoting slavery as a good thing.” After all Paul was writing to a people who were sophisticated. They may read this letter and think, “Who is this guy to be promoting slavery?”

This slavery idea is important. If it is important enough for Paul to risk in his initial level of theological contact with the Romans, then it is a very important thing, and we need to take acknowledgement of that importance.

We are going to have an invitation in this chapter that is going to deal with this idea of slavery. I am looking for us to walk out of here a changed people.

Divine Order of Calling Process

Paul said, after the announcement of his slaveship, that he is called. You need to see that there is an order of processes stated here—that your call does not come before your slavehood. You have to be a slave. You do not get a call out of the blue that says, “I want you to be an apostle.” Paul did not jump up and say, “Yeah, I am going to be an apostle. I am going to take off and do my apostle-ing over here in Rome.” It does not work that way.

First is the surrender of the self, the giving of the self as a slave into the Lord’s use. Then the slave’s Master says, “Okay, now I

¹ Exodus 21.

want you to be an apostle” or “I want you to be a teacher,” or “I want you to be a preacher.” or “I want you to be whatever He calls you to be.”

We have lost this sense of vocation. *Voca* is to call in Latin. Vocation is your call, and so there are people called to be carpenters. There are people called to be housewives. There are people called to be teachers. Your vocation, your call, is accompanied with your equipping from all that you have done in past times to where you are sitting right now. You bring that and more with you to where you are right now.

God has a vested interest in you because of the spiritual gifts that He has given you and because of the training experiences through which He has led you. When you were doing the bad things, He sent the angels to protect you and keep you from killing yourself. When you were doing the good things, He gave you the Spirit to give you the power to do the good things.

God has a vested interest in you because He has bought you with the blood of His only begotten Son. He has purchased you, given you gifts, and watched over you. You belong to Him, and you must surrender the papers of ownership of your life. Give them to the Lord. Then He can use all of your history for His glory in the way that He wants to use you from now on.

Slavery can be a wonderful thing. You see there are many things of life that can become redeemed. Like Motorcycle Ray² back there, a really bad guy in his prior years. He is probably one of the badest guys I have ever known—still is, in a way, if he should be provoked. But all of that history has been turned around. God has done a miracle here. He took a person that was sour and mean and cruel and turned him around, filled him with the Spirit. Now he is bearing the fruit of the

Spirit, and He has gifts. He brings all of his history with him. He has been able to witness to that network of all the people he has known. He was able to witness and show a difference to them. Now he is in a new network, and he is touching lives and ministering and pastoring and helping others where he used to help only himself.

Motorcycle Ray’s example of change is what God does with you. Every one of you has a history. Each one of your histories is different and remarkable and particular, but God has a vested interest in every one of your histories. There is not one of you for whom God is not concerned, and to whom He has not given His time, His effort, His resources, His angels, and His only-begotten Son. All of that has been given for you. Now it is time for you to surrender the papers of your life to Him so that you can hear the call.

Isaiah 6 had the purging of the sin, and then after the sin was purged, Isaiah could then hear God saying, “Who will go for Us?”³ After the purging there is that ready response, “I will go! Here am I Lord, send me.”⁴ That is what I want for you, every one of you. “Here am I, Lord, send me.” The thrill of your life will be to hear Him say, “Go, do ‘such and such’ for me.” That is what slavery is.

The Apostolic Office

Okay then, the vocation, the call of Paul is to be an apostle. Now I want you to see this. “To be” is to a title. The title of apostle is given to Paul. Paul is called “to be an apostle.” You, however, are called to the function of apostleship. There is a difference.

Paul has been called to be an apostle who is separated unto the Gospel of God. An apostle is a sent one with a message—*Apos-*

² Dr. Vinson’s nickname for one of his students.

³ Isaiah 6:8.

⁴ Isaiah 6:8.

telo. *Apo* is from, *stelo* is sent—a person sent from God.

You are a sent one as well, but your title is not apostle. Your title is saint. You have the apostolic function, as a saint, which originated in the Great Commission. We will look more at “saint” and “apostolic function” a little later. What Paul is separated unto, as an apostle, is the Gospel.

Romans

1:2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

I do not know whether any of you have had my course on Exodus. The whole book of Exodus depicts the Gospel. A bird’s-eye look at the book of Exodus illustrates the doctrine of salvation, and when we get into the book of Exodus in my class, I try to get the students to correlate the journey of the Israelites to the doctrine of salvation. It really does exemplify and explain the doctrine of salvation. Exodus does a terrific job on the Gospel.

Weakness and Suffering of Kenosis

Romans

1:3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

This is a statement of the humanity of Christ with its accompanying weakness. Jesus became a man. God became a man which means, then, that He took on the same kind of suffering as that of humankind. Verse 4, however, is a statement of power.

Romans

1:4 And declared [to be] the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Class, please connect Philippians 2:6-11 to verses 3 and 4 of Romans concerning the

weakness of the flesh, and the power of the Spirit:

Philippians

2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

You need to see this downward move in Chart 1.1, and the forgotten doctrine that came out of this is the *kenosis* (see Chart 1.1). *Kenosis* means emptying yourself, and in verse 7, where it says that “He made Himself of no reputation,” is the word, *kenosis*, meaning to empty Himself of His reputation.

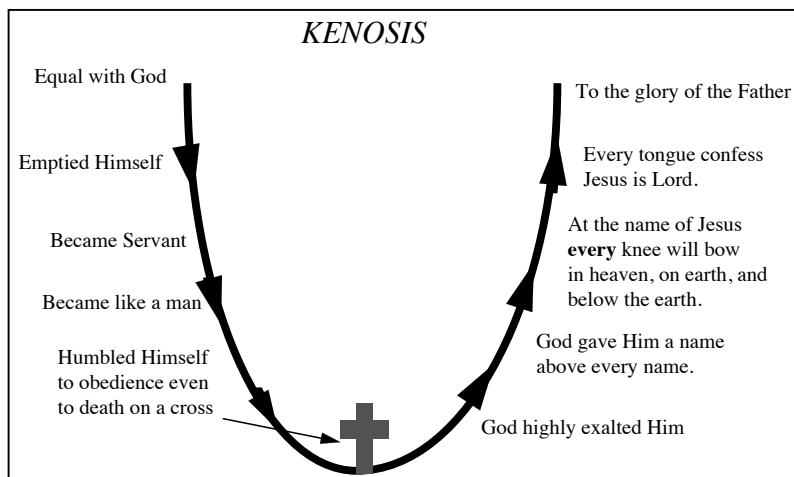


Chart 1.1

This chart shows what the *kenosis* looks like. Jesus is God in heaven when He begins His journey downward from heaven. Notice the stages of coming down: form of a servant, likeness of men, found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Thus, Jesus leaves His home, and He becomes a servant in the likeness of a man, humbles Himself, becomes obedient even unto death.

Talking about a slave! This description of Jesus' path is that of a slave which goes all the way down to even the worst death known to man. He demonstrated a downward move to the death. The upward move comes only after that death.

Philippians

2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;

2:11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Look again at chart 1.1. The exaltation follows after the cross, never before. The *kenosis* gives a model of what Christianity is all about. Jesus Christ is the model for all of Christianity. Listen, Jesus Christ is the model for Christianity! This chart describes what He did. This *kenotic* path is the path that Jesus walked and continues to walk through us as He seeks to save the lost before the time of judgment. You want to walk with Jesus? If so, this *kenosis* is your path. You need to see that He came down, down, down, to the very bottom—the death on the cross. Then after His death on the cross, He is exalted. Only after the sacrificial work comes the exaltation.

What is your Christian path? Your path should be the same kind of path that Jesus took. Or you could likely end up on the opposite kind of path (see Chart 1.2, the Path of the Gentiles).

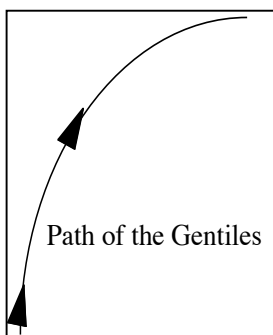


Chart 1.2

We saw just a minute ago in Matthew 20 where he said that the Gentiles exercised dominion. They have great authority; they climb up and become great and chief. But it

is not going to be like that for you. You are going to become a minister and a slave of Jesus and a servant of all, and if you will be chief, you will be last.

The *kenosis* is what we are called to do. The *kenosis* is the Lord's *model*. It should be no surprise to anybody that the *kenosis* is the model for the Christian life. The upward way, the path of the Gentiles, is the temptation, however, that is going to dog your heels from the day you were born until the day you go to the grave. That ever-present temptation is what you are going to be fighting against (Isaiah 14:12-14):

Isaiah

14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [how] art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

14:13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend . . .

You are going to be tempted to desire the same: "Oh, yeah, here is the life style that I want. I am going to climb into much power and riches. I want to have a great life with much adventure. Perhaps I could have enough power and popularity that I could become president of the United States, or even King of the world."

Isaiah

14:13 ...into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Your temptation will continue: "... I am going up here (see Chart 1.3) to this throne. I am going to get up to the top. I am going to have me a throne. Peo-

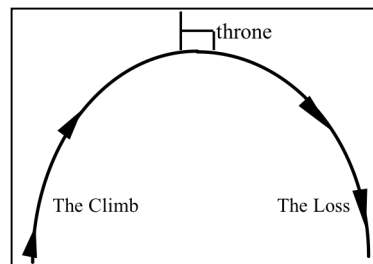


Chart 1.3

ple will look at me and talk about how great I am. What a wonderful achiever I am, a man who has great glory, power, recognition, and reputation.”

No, God is calling you to the *kenosis*. The deceiver, Satan, is tempting you to the reverse *kenosis*. What comes after the cross? Exaltation. What comes after the reverse *kenosis*? Loss . . . a long fall. Satan has the reverse *kenosis*; Jesus has the *kenosis*. Which model do you want?

You are going to be tempted. The idea of *kenosis* will escape from your brainwashed mind. You will lose your alertness. You will be in the battle, and you will not be alert to the deception that is coming your way. The next thing you know is that you will be climbing up, and when you start that climb, it will feel good because everybody will be looking at you and saying, “He is doing so good!” Doing good? You will think, “Yeah, I am doing good.” Then you will come to your senses, “Oh, my soul! What am I doing?” It is time to turn around and get down on your knees and wash the feet of the Brethren. You become the minister and the servant to others. That is the model you are to follow. This continuous temptation to follow the way of the world, the climb that has been programmed into us since birth, is what we are up against.

Our Apostolic Function

Now let us look back at verse 5. We are going to look at some things pertaining to us specifically. We have been looking at Paul and at the Lord; now let us take a look at some of the *kenosis* which pertains to us.

Romans

1:5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, . . .

We have already mentioned something of receiving grace and apostleship. That apostleship is what we get sent to. What kind of apostleship are we being sent to? It is . . .

Romans

1:5 . . . for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

What is our apostleship? We are being sent into the nations to demonstrate our slavery. We are going to go into the nations and be obedient to our Master and thereby bring the Gospel message to them. We are going to offer to them the opportunity to be like us.

We have to do our apostleship function right. We must have integrity in our character, in our obedience. It is obedience, as a slave, to the Master. If the Master sends a slave, and if the slave has truly thrown in with the Master, then when the Master says, “Go across town and get something and bring it to me.” You know what that slave will do? He will go across town, and even when the Master is not looking at him, he will diligently go across town and get that thing and diligently bring it back.

The real slave does not have to have the Master looking at him all the time because the slave has thrown in with Him. The Master owns him. What is the slave’s welfare? It is the Master’s welfare. If it helps the Master to get that task done, guess what that slave is going to do? He is going to do the assigned task with precision and diligence.

Class, exercising “diligence” in all of our service is what we are also to do. We should not have to be watched, we should not have to have some supervision. If you have thrown in with your Master, you then will do what it takes in your assignment to bring honor to Him. You are going to glorify your Master, the Lord. That is what we want to do.

Our efforts to shore up this idea of commitment to diligent service has been by getting human partners to hold one another accountable. However, that effort is not the real thing of serving The Master. It is instead to meet the expectations of others. It is to work for the approval of other humans. It is to

substitute human approval for the Lord's approval. If the slave has thrown in truly with his Master, our Lord Jesus, he will diligently seek to please Him, and Him alone. Whether or not, we are approved by other humans, means nothing to us when we "know and do" exactly what the Lord wants from us . . . period!

Office versus Function in the Call

Romans

1:6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

The kind of call is explained in verse 7.

Romans

1:7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called [to be] saints:

Now Paul is called to be an apostle. We are called to be saints. Paul is sent to take the Gospel message to the nations. We are sent to take the example of obedience to the nations. But we are sent.

Definition of Church

I want to show you here in Chart 1.4 what a church is. On the left is the world with all its people in the world. Then here on the right are all of the called out ones, i.e. the *ecclesia*. *Ek* is out of, *caleo* is called. Each person in the church is called out of the world. The church is made up of people who used to be in the world but now have been called out of

the world. The church is *ecclesia*.

Holiness

If the church is holy, then what does holy mean? Holy means to be morally clean and separated from the world. So to be the church, then, is to be holy, righteous and separated. What is the purpose of separation? (See Chart 1.4).

Separation is by far the larger understanding of holiness. Separation is specifically to be **set-aside for God's use**. You should be able to see that this idea of separation links back to the idea of slavery. To be a slave is to be separated from all the other non-slaves, and put over here in the *ecclesia* for the Lord's disposal. That is what you are as a saint. To be a Saint means to have been made holy. You are holy people who have been purchased out of the world by God.

If you have been saved, and you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, and His ownership has been stamped on you, then you are a holy person. To be holy means you have been called out of the world. You are separated from the world, and you are at the Lord's disposal. You are a slave. You may not recognize that. You may fight against it. You may say, "I do not want to be a slave! I am going to do my own thing; I do not want to do all this stuff. I am just going to go and do what I want to do, I am going to have my own life, and I will expect Him to bless me because I do not chew, drink, or smoke, or go with those who do." But that is not what the Christian life is.

The Christian life is to turn the papers of your life over to the Lord. Then He takes you like an instrument (e.g., like I take this pencil and place it on the desk), and He can put you wherever He wants you. He then can do whatever ministry that He wants to use you in. He can break you. He can sacrifice you for the welfare of someone else. You are His to

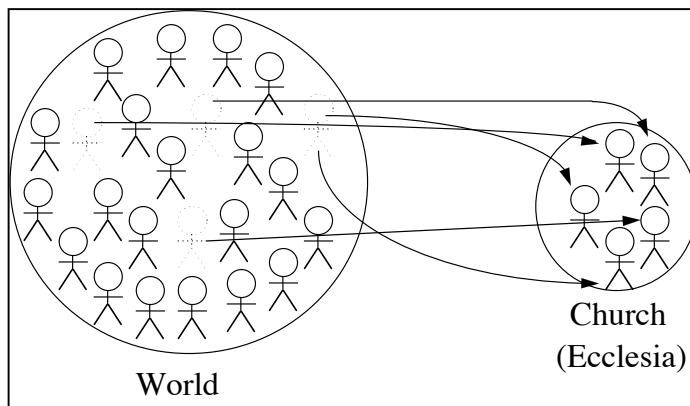


Chart 1.4

do with as He wants. The great thing about it is that whatever He does with you will work to your eternal advantage. It will work better for you than anything that you could come up with. And if you will become as faithful as a mustard seed (like this pencil in my hand), then you will just lay back in the Lord's grace. If you will become like that, He will use you in such a way that no matter how much pain and suffering in this life that you go through, it will be worth it many thousands fold—for eternity. All you will be able to think about in heaven is praising God for what He did with your life.

Just rest in His grace, fall into His arms, and let Him be the Boss. That kind of life will bring you an eternity of joy. That kind of life will bring you joy even now, but it may also bring you pain. But the eternal joy will exceed the temporary pain and suffering by an infinite amount. The return on investment of this kind of temporal life will so dwarf the sufferings of this life that they will not even compare in your estimation. The Lord was said to even despise His sufferings when looking at His eternity of Lordship.

RENOWNED FAITH OF THE ROMAN CHURCH

Romans

1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

This verse is a statement which was made from Corinth. Aquilla and Priscilla had come out of Rome. Because of a riot, the Emperor forced all the Jews out of Rome. The riot occurred in Rome between the Jews and the Christians. The riot occurred because the Jews hated the upstart Christians at that time. During this scenario, Aquilla and Priscilla were forced out of Rome. They were Jews, but they had been converted to Christianity. They were moving towards the Holy Land.

They had come from Rome going eastward, and they came through Corinth.

They arrived in Corinth to discover there a zealous and passionate Christian whose name was Paul. They came and talked to Paul. They informed him about what was going on in Rome, about all those Christians who were being saved. Paul had not been there, Peter had not been there, none of the apostles had been there. What was going on? Somebody was spreading the Gospel message in Rome, and people were being saved. That somebody was just an anonymous, little slave-to-Jesus-type person.

Class, this kind of miracle is a perfect example of what happens when YOU spread the Gospel. It does not matter where it is; you take the Gospel Seed and sow it faithfully. Remember that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.⁵ That power does not depend upon your stature, power, status, class, or anything else at all. All that it depends on is the Holy Spirit behind it. That Gospel power was happening in Rome. There was a spiritual wildfire going through Rome.

Out of this backdrop of the Gospel's workings in Rome, came Aquilla and Priscilla. After hearing of these happenings from them, Paul testifies of them in his letter to Rome. What he says is that the Romans' faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. Aquilla and Priscilla were going over the Mediterranean area as they headed back to Jerusalem. They were testifying about all their brothers and sisters that they had left behind in Rome. Their testimony about Rome was a good word indeed.

We ought to have some who have visited Fort Worth to testify to Christians in other places about the faith of the Fort Worth Christians. If they should come through Fort Worth, and see what we are doing here, it would be nice if our reputation warranted be-

⁵ Romans 1:16.

ing spread: “Man, you ought to go through Fort Worth; there are all kinds of faithful Christians over there. In their sufferings, they are spreading the Gospel and many are being added to the Lord’s Kingdom.”

Romans

1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

PRIESTLY MINISTRY

I want to talk to you about “serve.” *La-truo* is the kind of service that is associated with the priest. Each of you has, then, a priestly duty. Each of you also has a royal duty. Each of you also has a prophetic duty. The duties of all three of the offices that Christ bore, you also bear. You have the responsibility of performing all three of those functions (duties), and you cannot be released from them. You must do all three of these kinds of service.

Now here is Paul, an apostle, who is saying, “I have this priestly duty.” What is an apostle doing with a priestly duty? It just so happens that we each have priestly duties as well.

I need to tell you about the mission of an apostle as over against a prophet. The apostle is sent, like an arrow is shot, into a dark location as a messenger from God. However, a prophet is God’s messenger in his own location. Their common purpose, however, is to deliver a message from God.

The orientations of the apostle and prophet are the same as well. An apostle, like the prophet, stands with his back to God and his face to the people because they are to be given a message from God. That orientation means that they are standing with God. The process is that God has given the apostle and the prophet a message to be told to the people.

Okay, please picture it. On the one hand, the apostle comes speedily out from God with the message to be delivered to a people in a distant land. The prophet, on the other hand, lives in a land and observes that the people have departed from God’s instructions. God tells the prophet to tell the people to repent or else. . . . Those processes describe what the prophet and the apostle do. They are given a message by God to deliver from Him to the people. However, their orientations are that they stand with their backs to God facing the people. They deliver God’s message to the people. In practicality, they become the mouthpieces of God.

What is the orientation of a priest? First, I will describe the priestly process. People come to a priest and say, “We need help.” The priest says, “Yes, I will ask God to help you.” He turns to God with his back to the people and says, “These people need some help. Please help them.” That is what a priest does. So there is an opposite orientation for the priest from that of the apostle and prophet.

Paul said that he had to do both. He has to stand with his back to God and go to the people with a message. And he also has to take the burdens of the people to God and plead for them.

That priestly duty which is described above is what Paul says in this passage that he is doing right here throughout the whole time, i.e. “always in my prayers.” He says, “I pray without ceasing.” That is what a priest does.

You tell your burden to a Christian. He takes your burden to the Lord in intercessory prayer: “Lord, help that person.” Intercessory prayer is a priestly service, and it is incumbent upon every one of us to do that service.

There is, however, also physical sacrifice that is associated with all priestly service. You need to remember this: ***there is physical sacrifice associated with priestly service.*** The following is said with tears in my eyes:

We would like to break that physical sacrifice apart from our priestly service, and spiritualize everything. We desire to come through the sanctification part of salvation unscathed. We want all of our lives' physical trappings intact. We insatiably desire all material possessions, and we adjust our priestly service so that there are no requirements of sacrifices in the physical or material realms. Shucks, we might even get a little richer and fatter as we go through our priestly service. As we go into our ministry, we may be kind of poor at the beginning, but as we grow in material wealth, the temptation to separate the physical from the spiritual will grow as well.

Priests Make Sacrifices

Well, let me tell you something. Priestly service has to do with sacrifice. In fact, all of Christianity has to do with sacrifice according to the *kenosis*. This sacrifice business is in your temporal realm. It is going to cost you time, money, opportunity, food, fellowship, fun, career, etc. It is going to hurt your knees, you are going to have to listen to the people, you are going to have to be patient, and you cannot serve yourself when you are serving others. There are physical sacrifices. You are going to miss some meals, you are going to miss some sleep, you are going to miss some money, you are going to miss some career, you are going to miss the approval and applause of men, you are going to miss some comfort, you are going to miss some things from now on that you are going to wish that you could have like everybody else has, but it is not your lot because you are a slave. You own nothing. NOTHING! You do not even have possession of your body; you have nothing. God has everything! You are a piece of chalk in His hand with which He will use to write His Message on the blackboard. With-

out Him directing your life you are going to have problems.

The world and the carnal church is going to say, "Man! Look at what you are missing. We ought to do our ministry so that we prosper. God does not want us to suffer or do without. If we can make the congregation feel good, we can grow our church into a mega church. We are going to grow up here towards the top of the upside down *kenosis* (look back at Chart 1.3), the applause is going to be great and the money is great, the building is great. Everything is great. Come on; lets do it."

My dear Brother, you have to sacrifice. You do not get any applause. You do not get to lay down at the regular bedtime. When everybody else is tired and they can pamper their bodies, you may not get to do that. You have to keep on going. You must go when it hurts. You have to suffer a weary tiredness like that of the Lord who fell asleep in the bottom of a rotten, smelly boat, lying on the wood with His head rolling back and forth, hurting, the wooden boat ribs digging into His flesh. That is what you must do. You must pick up a cross to die on and get splinters in your shoulders. You are going to buckle and cave down and fall down under the weight. You are going to cry and weep, when you go to bed saying, "Oh, my! What am I doing? Am I doing it wrong? Everybody else is going the other way; am I doing it wrong?" It will get worse than that. I cannot tell you how bad it is going to be, but I am going to tell you this: the worse it gets, the greater will be the exaltation. **The worse it gets, the greater will be the exaltation!**

Prospering Entails Sacrifice

Romans

1:10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

Paul is saying here, “I want to do a prosperous journey to you. I want to do a prosperous journey to Rome.” You know how he prospered in his journey to Rome? Paul got his head chopped off. That is how he prospered. You see, to prosper is to do God’s will. To do your will is to become destitute. Destitution is your will. Prosperity is God’s will. Prosperity might require your death. Prosperity requires your suffering, your self-denial. Destitution occurs when you yield to your will to prosper materially. Your will brings destitution. God’s will brings prosperity.

What do we do today when we are practicing the real *kenosis*? We say, “Are we prospering?” We are moving downwards in our sacrificial descent in the view of the church. However, most Christians do not know of, or cannot even see, the *kenotic* model. They see us coming down, down, down, and they say, “Why do you not prosper? Come on over here with us. God is blessing us with prosperity.” This negative exhortation is another suffering part that comes on you. When you are doing it right, when everybody ought to be comforting you and exhorting you, you will get just the opposite. When fellow Christians should be saying, “Man! You are doing good in following the Lord,” they are going to say just the opposite: “What is wrong with you; get the sin out of your life. Get over here where the big boys run and enjoy God’s blessings.” You will be all alone just like Jesus was—all alone. The people will scatter and run from you. There you will be sacrificing in order to obey the Lord, and the questions will come, and you will agonize in your heart. But you must make your theology true and then do it.

You have to get into Romans. You have to come down the *kenotic* path of sacrifice. Settle it in your mind about what model you are going to follow, and then surrender the papers of your life. Give them to the Lord, and then when those people say, “What is wrong with

you?” You do not respond to them by turning back to their ascending model, but you turn to the Lord and pray, “Lord, I am following You, I am hanging on. I am hanging on to Your cloak. I am not letting go of You, dear God. Take me with You.”

Go the distance. Run that race. You will not get the applause of men, but I am telling you right now that if you will do what we are talking about here, you are going to thank me for eternity. You are going to be grabbing me, grabbing my neck, hugging on me for eternity.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Romans

1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

Lets turn to a reference which corresponds to the spiritual gift: 1 Timothy 4:14.

1 Timothy

4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

When you practice your spiritual gifts that God has given you by using them in ministerial service, there will be other gifts imparted to other saints. In this class right here, you are going to receive spiritual gifts. Paul is not saying here that “I am going to give you spiritual gifts” because he does not have that power, but I want you to see what the word is. *Metadone*. *Meta* is with; *done* is give. When Paul practices his spiritual gifts in ministry, God gives new spiritual gifts to others. God may not give His gifts to others if Paul does not practice his gifts in ministry to others. It is, then, a partnership, and that is why the scripture uses the prefix *meta*, or with. If Paul is in yoke with the Lord, and as he does his ministry by prophesying to the people, then God imparts spiritual gifts to the people.

If you will use your gifts in ministry, you too will be in partnership with the Lord, and as you do those things, God will impart spiritual gifts to your friends, to your saints, to your church, and to your family.

I anticipate that right here in the reading of this chapter, there will be gifts imparted to you, and I pray that the one gift that is imparted to you, if I could just pick one thing, would be the **wisdom** of the *kenosis*. If you can just get that much, then my primary purpose will have been accomplished. However, even though you may get it now, the temptation to abandon it is going to dog your heels every step of the way during your life.

MUTUALITY OF MINISTRY

Romans

1:12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

I want you to see that this comforting together of verse 12, this mutuality of exhortation, is a win-win situation. When you are ministering, there ought to be some reflection back to you from that ministry. When you minister to others, it should not be just an all-give with no receive back. There should be mutuality in ministry. The Lord's way is win-win. Zero-sum mentality is win-lose.

In a zero-sum economy, the minister has something which he gives away—i.e. time, energy, self, etc. When the minister gives it away, he no longer has it. He suffers loss. Everybody else now has it. They win.

In the win-win economy, there is multiplication. I give something away without suffering loss. In fact, I gain. That is the way God works. I give you my energy in ministry, and you somehow replenish that energy. You may provide a helping service by volunteering or by recruiting others to help. The result is that I still have sufficient energy to continue the ministry.

Win-win is God's established economy. When I make a business deal with you by selling you something, the value received should equal the value paid. I should win on the sale, but you should win also on the buy.

Win-lose is Satan's economy. It is a zero-sum mentality. In this situation, equality between value paid and value received is lost.

By using God's economy, the deserts will blossom, and the rocks will spring up with water. In ministry, win-win is mutual exhortation. I encourage you, and you encourage me. We encourage one another. Take that economy to your church and really use it in everything. It will bless your ministry, and many will rise up and follow your example. You are called to show others how to die to self in the *kenosis* and to encourage them to do the same. When you see them respond accordingly, you will be re-energized to go the next mile.

However, *agape* requires that we practice the sacrificial ministry at all times. Some times there will be no mutuality in our ministry. In those times, we must continue doing the unilateral sacrifice of *agape* just like the Lord did when He died for us while we were yet his enemies. Thus, the mutuality of which Paul speaks is a desirable but rare experience. Sad to say, you will most likely spend your lives in a win-lose economy in which you will sacrifice your temporal life so that others will gain salvation.

The good news is that after a life of sacrifice, there will be great eschatological rewards. In fact, the worse that you suffer in a win-lose economy during your lifetime, the greater you will win in heaven. Jesus is your model. In His lifetime, He gave, gave, and gave. Now, He is Lord!

JESUS IS THE SLAVE'S BOSS

Romans

1:13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to

come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

Paul clearly shows here that he did the planning, but Jesus did the deciding. Paul planned to come to the Romans, but he was not allowed to go because the Lord had other plans for his slave. God was his boss.

Romans

1:14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

1:15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Paul is a debtor to the entire world. He is a debtor to all men. That is what you are too. You are a debtor to all men because of what God has invested in you. You did not earn the salvation that you have, and you did not deserve it. What He has invested in you is from pure grace. You now are in debt to all of the world. You owe the entire world the benefits of your ministry.

THE THEME OF ROMANS

Romans

1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Out of these verses, the Reformation was born. Verses 16 and 17 go together, but verse 17 was the verse which brought about Martin Luther's salvation and the resulting Reformation. Because Luther was saved by faith, he preached justification by faith, and justification by grace through faith is our battle cry right now today. Through all these centuries following the Reformation, justification is by faith. You do

not work to get saved. You receive it by faith in Jesus. What good news this is—this is wonderful news for us!

THREE TENSES OF SALVATION

I need to talk to you a minute about the three tenses of salvation. In verse 16, it says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes." "Believes" has a sense of continuance in its tense. Now hold on right here. We must be careful.

I want to show you, the three tenses of salvation. It says over here, "the just shall live by faith."⁶ That statement points to future believing. The verse also says that the "righteousness of God is revealed from faith"—faith from the past. Along with the future faith, we also have, then, faith from the past.

I am going to draw this concept by starting with a timeline, a continuum. We are moving to the right—future is to the right. Some of you came through the cross a few years ago in the past and got saved. Here you are at present time, and you are walking along on your Christian journey. You are heading

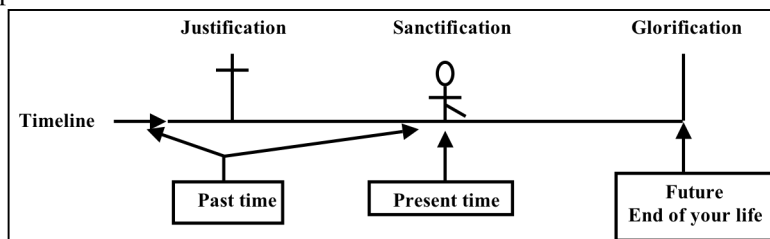


Chart 1.5

out to the future. The cross is in the past, you are in the present, and out to the end of the line is in the future.

Where is salvation? Most Baptists get confused at this point saying that the point of the cross is salvation. Other people come

⁶ Romans 1:17.

along and say, “No, no, salvation is only in the present time.” Others say, “No, as long as you are in the presence of sin at any time, salvation has not occurred. Salvation is only at the future point of glorification.

Please know that all of this time, from justification in the past and all the way out to glorification in the future, is salvation. When you reduce salvation to a punctiliar event in the past, i.e. justification, you become prone to leaving out all of what God wants to do in your life. Focusing on just your new birth experience may cause you to leave out sanctification as the larger part of your salvation.

Your conclusion, in this scenario of reductionism, will be that while you are in the safe zone, you are clean, but you do nothing because Jesus did it all. You are not a slave, you do not turn the papers of your life over to Jesus, you just kick back and enjoy life and cool it on through, have your career, have your family, have your everything, and do your own thing. If this describes your view of salvation, then this past event (justification) is salvation for you, one little dot, an event, a blink of an eye. That is salvation for you. But salvation is much bigger than that. Salvation is the new birth in the past, the present pilgrimage and the future glorification. There are three tenses in salvation.

How do you get the new birth? By faith. How do you get sanctified? By faith. How are you glorified? By faith. Faith is the key to all three tenses of salvation. You are justified by faith, you are sanctified by faith, and you are glorified by faith.

In salvation, you hand the papers of your life over to the Lord. That is a faith thing. You cannot hand over your papers apart from believing. When you hand them over to Him, and He tells you to go, you actually go.

Faith is like trust, trusting so much that you obey. He says, “If you will obey

me I will give you crowns, I will give you a mansion, I will exalt you.” Do you believe that? If you do, guess what? You will turn the papers of your life over to Him. When He owns you and tells you to go, you go. If you do not believe that, and you say, “I think I am going to hang out over here in justification,” then that is not faith. That is disobedience. Faith always leads to works of obedience. Lively faith results in works. Apart from works, faith is dead lip service. You might as well blow air through your lips for that is about all your faith is worth when not accompanied by works.

The three tenses of salvation are all based on continuous believing. You started it by asking for forgiveness because of believing. You continue by obeying the Lord in all things because you still believe in the present. Yes, you keep on believing in the hope of the future.

When you leave justification and get out here into the present time, then it starts getting tough. The battle in your pilgrimage is getting tough. If you are like Trouble,⁷ you start wandering around and dodging all the problems that come with sanctification. He stumbles, and when the faithful saints see him stumbling, they ask him, “Do you still believe?”

But, you see, here is what God had in mind for him (see Chart 1.6). His life is to be

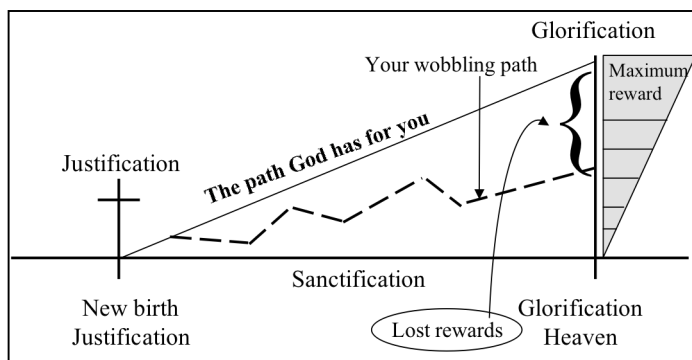


Chart 1.6

on the upward path through obedience, God's path for him. He wobbled around below that path when dodging the problems that were encountered during sanctification, you see, and his glorification is going to be cut short.

Some of us who are stuck in the event-oriented salvation only (past tense), get through the gate and camp only on the flat sanctification line at the bottom of Chart 1.6 because we are not obeying God. We are instead doing our own thing and being friends with the world. As we go along, we sing and think about all the mansions and crowns that we are going to have when we get to heaven. We are not doing any sacrificial good works of the *kenotic* sanctification. We are climbing instead. Because we are climbing so successfully, we are expecting to get to the point of glorification, and the Lord is going to swoon and say, "Man! What a great Christian you are." That scenario is not going to happen. Rewards in glorification come only through obedience with accompanying sacrifice, self-denial, and death to self.

WHAT ARE THE NEW THINGS OF ROMANS?

1. New position, slave. Matthew 20:25-28.
2. New call: obedience.
3. New title: saint.
4. New location: out of the world. John 15:18-20.
5. New direction: down in sacrificial obedience, i.e. *kenosis*. Philippians 2:6-11.
6. New values: self-denial. Matthew 16:21-27.
7. New greatness: the loss of things and becoming last. Matthew 19:27-30.
8. New orientation: to lay up treasure in heaven, not treasure on earth. Matthew 6:19-24.
9. New results: fishers of men. Matthew 4:19.

Some Scriptures Corresponding to the New Things of Romans

Matthew

16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Having old natural values is anti-Christ. Jesus declares to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan, because you love the things that be of men, not the things that be of God." He is basically saying that Peter's values are wrong, upside down. Peter rebuked the Lord's plan because the Lord's plan included a sacrificial death. Peter, and perhaps you also, thought that to live is to live, but Jesus says, "To die is to live." This *kenotic* thinking is the new value system: sacrifice for the welfare of others, self-denial in order to do the bidding of the Lord, slavery to Jesus, and death to self. These are the things of God.

Matthew

16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Sanctification costs you very much. For sanctification to progress, you must give the papers of your life to the Lord. Deny yourself by not doing what you want to but by doing what Jesus wants you to do. Sacrifice your life on the cross that you are carrying so that Jesus can live through you.

Matthew

16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall

⁷ Dr. Vinson's nickname for one of the students,

lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

We must lose our lives for the Lord's sake in order to find our lives. Our value system must be reversed in the Lord's economy. His economy also focuses our hope on our eschatological rewards, not treasure on earth. And we must never forget that those rewards will be surely based on our works as a selfless slave of Jesus on earth.

John

15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before [it hated] you.

15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

Your home is changed. The people of your old home will hate you because it hated the Lord. The new location for the slave's home is heaven. You are no longer of the world. You are in the world, but you are of heaven.

Matthew

19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

19:30 But many [that are] first shall be last; and the last [shall be] first.

The new kind of greatness is of being last on earth in order to be first in heaven. This value is extremely difficult to understand. Few Christians today comprehend what this

means. However, the way to unlocking its secret is by examining the life of John the Baptist.

Matthew

6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness!

6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

The new orientation is for making your life's goals to be focused in heaven, not here. We are to live our lives here as slaves of Jesus in order to receive rewards from Him in heaven. This orientation of life is difficult because it goes against every thing that the world teaches us.

Heaven is the place of permanence. Our sojourn in this earthly life is but a temporary preparation time for our permanent life in heaven. It is like working a temporary contract job away from home while enduring some extreme hardships in order to set yourself up for a really nice permanent job back home after the temporary job is done. The *kenotic* life down here on earth is an austere life filled with sacrifice and hardships and even persecutions. However, the permanent life will be filled with great rewards and rejoicing. We have to reorient our vision for the long term, i.e. our life in heaven.

Matthew

4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me,
and I will make you fishers of men.

The new results which are derived out of all the other new things are that we become like Jesus. His purpose was to come to earth in order to seek and to save those who are lost. His purpose must become our purpose. When that happens, we become fishers of men. This result of becoming a fisher of men is a promise from our Lord Jesus. Are you a fisher of men? If so, then you are following Jesus. If not. . . .

INVITATION

I want you to do business with God. We are at the point of making decisions. If you are willing to turn the papers of your life over to the Lord, to give your life as a slave to the Lord, I am going to ask you to make a covenant with God by doing something that symbolizes your entering an unbreakable covenant. If you touch your ear in this prayer, it will mean that you are taking on a physical symbol which means that you are God's slave. If you have been a disobedient slave in the past, then this same symbol means that you are renewing that slavery. Or if you have been a good but partly ignorant slave and you touch your foot, then the symbol means that as you go forward on your next step of your journey, you are moving to the next chapter of your life—come what may.

You are going to be self-denying and self-sacrificing in your obedience to the Lord. I am asking you to make a covenant as you finish this chapter. You do not have to make this covenant, but I am asking you to make it

now with God. You will not regret making it even if it should eventually involve pain and great sacrifice. Here is my prayer for you. Please join me in it:

Lord Jesus, I just want to lift up this reader to You, Lord. I want to lift up myself also as a fellow Christian, and I am praying that you will let us do business with You by turning over the papers of our lives to You. Here they are, Lord. Take them and seal them forever as I touch my ____ (ear or foot or both). We belong to you.

Lord, some of my brethren have already done that commitment but have become disobedient. There are others who have tried to do that commitment but did not know how to carry it out. There are others who have not even known that they are supposed to do that. I lift them all up to you, and I pray that each one will make his covenant gesture of touching his ear, or foot or both. Based on the gesture we make, please give them and me, a new position, a new set of values, a new location, a new orientation, a new call, a new all of these things that we have studied. I am asking that for this reader and for myself to Your Glory, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Now touch your ear if you are becoming the Lord's slave, or you are renewing your slaveship after a period of disobedience. Touch your foot if you are ready to move forward into the next chapter of your sanctification journey of an obedient slave to Lord Jesus.

Chapter Questions

1. Briefly describe each of Paul's missionary journeys: where he went, when he went, what significant events happened during or afterwards and which book(s) he wrote following or during those journeys.
2. What are the Pastoral Epistles?
3. Describe what being a slave means.
4. Draw or illustrate the *kenosis*; give the major passage that describes the *kenosis*.

5. Draw or illustrate the reverse *kenosis* and give the Scripture reference.
6. Define the following:
 - Apostle:
 - Saint:
 - Ecclesia*:
 - Holy:
 - Priest:
 - Prophet:
7. Explain the three tenses of salvation.
8. What are the new things of Romans?

Chapter 2

JUDGMENT OF WORKS

In this chapter we are going to deal with some of the hard things of this book. The first chapter was a great one. We looked at the positives of being a slave of our Lord Jesus. There was an opportunity to surrender to the Lord, and that always feels good. However, this chapter deals with some hard things. We are going to have to come down off the mountaintop, and so our going shall be a little more difficult. Who knows, there may be some healing for you in this chapter.

ROMANS 1 CONTINUED: THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Romans

1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed [it] unto them.

1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and God-head; so that they are without excuse:

We are dealing here with the knowledge of God, and remember that this book is being written to the church, to the saints in Rome. These are some hard words being delivered to the church. Some of these words are going to be applied only to lost people, some of these words are going to be applied to only saved people, and some of the words are to be applied to both.

General Revelation

I say that some of the words are applied to lost people because Paul is dealing with general revelation. General revelation is avail-

able to all people including the lost, but it is not salvific to the point of justification. General revelation is the ability to see something about God in nature, history, and experience.

Paul is saying here that you can know two things about God by looking at nature. First, you can know the power of God by looking at nature. For example, Job was asked, "Can you make a lightning bolt come down in a predetermined path?" The answer is no. You cannot even figure out how to make the path, you do not know where it is going to come from, you do not even know when it is going to strike, and you do not know where it is going to strike. You not only do not know any of those things, but you also cannot determine any of those things. The power of God is demonstrated even in a simple lightning bolt.

Think of the entire universe and then look at the majesty of creation in your immediate surroundings. That gives you, then, an understanding that God is a lot more powerful than all of humankind put together. Nobody can put the moon up there. It is just all we can do to get to the moon, much less put it up there.

And then the other thing that you can see in nature is something of the deity of God. There is a deity that pre-exists His creation, and there is something majestic about the creator that is seen in the creation.

We are dealing now in this scriptural

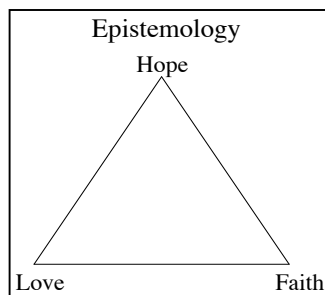


Chart 2.1

discourse with the mind, with knowledge. Look at the following illustration in Chart 2.1 where we have FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE on a triangle. In this trinity of episte-

mology, we are going to change the words of faith, hope, and love to words with which you are more familiar, i.e. KNOW, DO, and FEEL (see Chart 2.2).

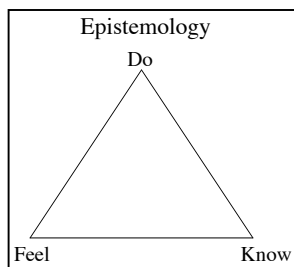


Chart 2.2

This passage deals with the know corner, i.e. with our knowledge of God. If a man can see and know something about God through general revelation, then there is something of redemption in that knowledge that has been given to man. This knowledge is a general and common grace from God to all men because all men everywhere receive this advantage. Given that advantage, it is also expected that all men are to do something redemptive with that knowledge. That responsibility is where the rub comes because every one of us has knowledge, and we are to do something with that knowledge. To know the truth and not do it is sin.¹ In Chart 2.2, the "do" corner follows the "know" corner when traveling counter-clockwise from the beginning point of knowledge. In other words, we are to do what we know as truth.

We Are to Apply Our Knowledge

One of the problems in coming to these classes is that you could actually end up worse off because if you do not do what you have learned, you will be heaping sin upon sin. The worst thing that could happen to somebody is for him to go to church or go to seminary and know what God's Word is all about and then do nothing with it. So there is a high accountability for us to know something about God and then do what we know.

That accountability occurs right here in verse 21:

¹ James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth [it] not, to him it is sin.

Romans

1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

It is amazing that mankind is so foolish that we can look at the stars and the moon and the complex workings of this earth and all of the magnificence of creation, and then get a knife out, cut a limb off of a tree and go to carving out something, and bow down and worship that carving. That is amazing to me. But, not only have we done it that way, we have done it in other ways as well. I dare say that we all have done it. This scripture is an indictment against us because every one who can have any kind of understanding of general revelation is accountable and is without excuse. That indictment means that everybody, regardless of who he is, even if you are the biggest atheist in the history of the world, is without excuse because you understand enough of two basic things about God—His power to create all that exists and His deity because of His pre-existing His creation.

Let us look at some words in this last passage that are going to be pointing at the "doing" part of the triangle. The "doing" that is described in this passage is a negative. Instead of acknowledging the majesty of creation and therefore, the power and deity of the Creator, we are doing just the opposite of that by not giving any thanks or glory to the Creator and by giving them instead to something created. And when we do this terrible thing, there is something that happens to the mind. Whenever the epistemological trinity in Chart 2.2 is skewed or disrupted, there is a deleterious impact on the mind.

You need to highlight this warning of potential consequences because you are learning some stuff here that you are not going to learn elsewhere. This warning is a fact, and as we go through this passage, I think that some illustrative examples are going to begin to pop up in your mind.

But watch how God describes the people who are looking at general revelation. Because they do just the opposite with their knowledge, their foolish hearts are darkened.

Head Versus Heart Knowledge

Many people, me included, make a distinction between head knowledge and heart knowledge. What I want you to hear from me right now is that head knowledge is what Romans is talking about here. The actions by the people who are described in this passage are misapplied head knowledge.

Head knowledge that becomes existential to you impacts your mind. My use of the word existential here is not the modern philosophy of Existentialism in which all knowledge becomes subjective. I am using the word in the adjectival sense which means, then, that your knowledge has a direct bearing on your very existence. If your knowledge, what you hold to be true, turns out to be false, your existence is going to suffer. But now, if your knowledge, the truths that you know, does not have you assimilating it and applying it in your life, then that knowledge is not existential. When the Scripture says that the heart is darkened, it means that the very basis of this person, the core of his life, his very foundation of the knowledge part of his life, is becoming darkened.

When you come into this class, you bring with you a certain amount of true knowledge. We add a little bit of knowledge to that. Then when you leave the classroom and do not do what you know, you will become worse in your knowledge than you were when you first came in here because you are being darkened

by your omission. That negative process will continue on to a point where (to use another word here) you will become “vain” in your speculations and imaginations.

Two situations are in process. First is learning and applying. Second is learning and not applying. The first will enable you to grow and increase in knowledge. In the second, however, you will become totally upside down and backwards in your knowledge if you should leave this class without assimilating and doing the truths that you learn here. If you should come back and repeat that cycle about 20 times, you could become a babbling idiot because it says that we are dealing with a process: “He became vain in his imaginations, and his foolish heart was darkened.”

Now this process of darkening ends at a point. Not only did they become darkened, but the next verse says that they professed themselves to be wise as they became *fools* (the end result).

Spiraling Up

In Chart 2.3, the process begins with knowing something. Next comes doing what

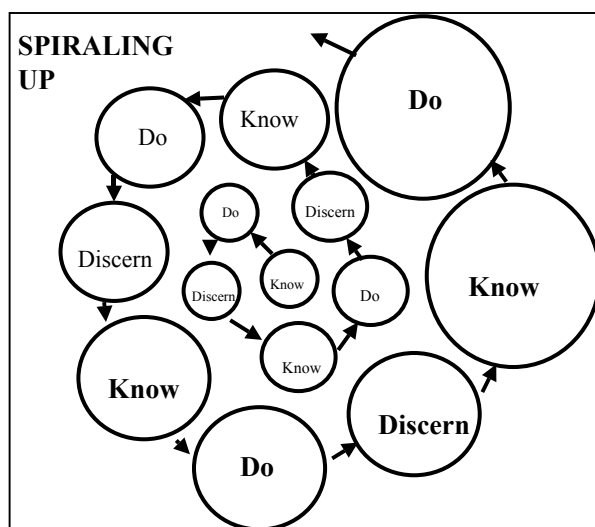


Chart 2.3

you know. Lastly in the cycle is feeling (this feeling is more about discernment of the mind

than it is about emotions). The next cycle will begin with an expanded knowledge. Out of that expansion comes more doing and greater discernment. Thus you can see that there is a growth spiral as the cycles are continued.

Spiraling Down

The reverse spiral happens when the doing does not follow from the knowing. In this case (see Chart 2.4) the discernment is diminished. The next cycle of not doing what you know increases your darkness by decreasing your understanding and discernment. Thus a dwarfing spiral occurs as these cycles are continued. Pretty soon you are dark and vain but think that you are wise. You want to tell everybody how much you know, but you do not know anything.

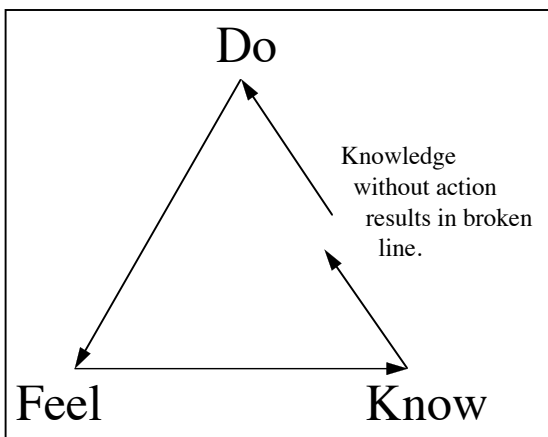


Chart 2.4

That darkening is a process that is happening all around especially where there is good teaching in the churches, Sunday schools, seminaries, and colleges because any time you learn the truth and do not do it, you are on a downward spiral. In verse 22 when he says that they became fools, this word means that the person has dull perception. The person in darkness has perceptual dullness.

Have you ever experienced the following? I know you have because it has happened to me. I have read something profound in the

Bible, but it did not strike one nerve. I just read right straight through a wonderfully profound statement in the Bible without its registering in my mind. Then something changes in my life so that I begin to be a doer of the Word, and I come back and kapow! it hits me like a sledge hammer. My teaching becomes enriched, my preaching has power, there is an existential involvement between me and my knowledge of God's Word.

That existential involvement is in the moving from knowing to doing. This movement is what I think is the difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge. It is an application of Truth that does something to your existence by sharpening your perception and increasing your discernment.

Idolatry

Let us look at what the fool does. The fool gets out his pocket knife, cuts off a branch or a limb, and makes an image like a bird or a beast or a bull, as did the people of Israel. Then the fool worships the thing that he himself created.

The people of Israel made a bull, an old wooden bull, and it was kind of common looking. So they decided that because the carving was a god to which they had been praying, they would make it a fancy piece of wood. "Let us get some gold and hammer it out. We will tap-tap-tap and make a gold sheet for covering our wooden bull." Thus they ended up with a laminated bull. Because it was a really fancy, shining bull, they reasoned then that it could really answer their prayers.

Defilement

The foregoing describes the process of defilement about which we are talking. The way that you defile the mind is by not acting on the truth coming in. Truth coming in is good, but it is only good for the mind when it leads to action. But if this line between

knowing and doing is broken (see Chart 2.4), there occurs a defilement of the mind. That is what is happening to these people here in this passage. All of this defilement is just based on general revelation. It is compounded when it happens to the person who has the Scriptures, the person who gets a greater dose of the truth and fails to do it. It is kind of scary.

We are going to pick up and go further now with the guy who has the general revelation of God but worships creation:

Romans

1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Verse 24 means, then, that when you break the corresponding line between know and do, you have defiled the body. The body is the doing part. You have to have a body to be doing. If you break that connection between knowing and doing, God gives darkness, and you cause your body to be defiled in the same way as your mind is being defiled.

This defilement is a bad situation, and it is all caused by the truth coming in but not being used. When persons have the truth coming in, they must do something with it. This defilement which results from not doing known truth will lead to the point of dishonoring their own bodies between themselves. God gives them up to uncleanness. Then they have another problem with the mind being darkened even further. They are in a cycle which is spiraling down.

Romans

1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Here in verse 25, we have the same word “serving” as the word in verse 9. We committed, in our study of the first chapter, to the kind of serving as seen in verse 9. And that kind of serving is a spiritual service to God

that has physical sacrifice. Over here, though, these people are giving spiritual service with physical sacrifice to an idol or to a creature or to another person or to an institution or to something else, you see, but it is not to God.

The same word is used in both cases, but in this latter case the object of the service is an idol. The people, in this latter case, have defiled their bodies. They combine with their knowledge the idea that there must be a god of some kind. The result of that combination moves them into the next cycle of determining which creature their god will be. Then they devote themselves to worshipping and serving, physically serving with physical sacrifice, that creature.

Romans

1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

Look at that phrase “vile affections.” First there was a defiled mind, then there was a defiled body, and now there are defiled affections. The whole three-part makeup of the human, i.e. the body, soul, and mind, is defiled.

Just in these few verses here, we are talking about a simple truth, not about gobs of truth. We are not talking about knowing all Scripture, Systematic Theology, Biblical Backgrounds, Romans, Church History, Philosophy of Religion, and all the good stuff that we spend our lives studying. All we are talking about is looking at the creation in general revelation. As a simple result of denying the obvious, the whole personality is now ruined, and the person is in a cycle that is spiraling down towards destruction. The person’s perception is growing darker, darker, darker. He is going toward perversion which leads to dehumanization and immorality. He is becoming vile in his whole being, and his affections are going against nature.

God's Rules for Nature

You know what nature is? It has its own rules of normalcy. When you look around and see what the natural thing is, i.e. marriage between a man and a woman, but you choose to violate that normalcy, then here you go. You are in a terrible loop. Somebody has to get you out of this loop.

Romans

1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

We have heard testimony in this very classroom of this kind of defilement occurring in their church. In this particular case, we were talking about people who were involved in homosexuality to be specific, but it goes into all the various sins. For example, there are some people who have drunk alcohol to the point where they have cirrhosis of the liver and are dying. Their suffering would be a recompense, you see, that is meet for the evil that they chose to spend their lives in. Others have all kinds of diseases and sufferings. I just do not know what all there is, but some of the diseases and the terrible situations that are coming upon men are based on their behavior, and behavior, i.e. not doing known truth, is what this scripture is all about.

Behavior was also what our commitment in the first chapter was all about. We gave the papers of our lives to the Lord and became slaves to him. Our behavior as slaves is to be determined by our Lord. Thus our behavior will be acting on the truth.

Defiled behavior, however, does not activate the knowledge of truth. It has to do with passivity. And so, we are getting truth in, but we are not acting in accordance with that truth that we get in. Please understand and know this: if you get truth in, and you do not behave according to it, you are going to be

darkened, and you will start a spiral in which the DO (in chart 2.4) is defiled, and the FEEL/DISCERNMENT is defiled, and then the KNOWLEDGE is defiled. This cycle is going to progress to a point. The point is described in verse 28 as reprobation.

Reprobation

Romans

1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in [their] knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

A point will be reached when, in this cycle going around and around, a spiral going down, down, down, you get to the bottom. At that bottom point, you will be reprobate. Reprobation means then that the mind can no longer discern right from wrong.

I have met people like this. I mean, they look clean, they have on clothes and all the kind of stuff of normalcy. You will see them in the marketplace, and you will even see them in the churches. You will see them out here on the sidewalk, you will work with them, and you will relate with them in all kinds of things, but they do not know right from wrong. They have spiraled down to the point where they think that the best things to do are to kill innocent babies and preserve the lives of guilty murderers. They might even begin to think that we need to promote homosexuality because this part in scripture that declares homosexuality to be an abomination was not what God really meant. In their warped minds, they are persuaded that God meant the reverse of what He said, i.e. that homosexuality is actually a good thing. Hey! The homosexual actor is portrayed as a hero on television. The mind that thinks like this is an undiscerning mind that has been defiled.

Look back at verse 22. Do you remember the words "they became fools"? The fool has both a perceptual dullness and also a lack of discernment. That inability means that the

fool no longer has normal sensibilities. When the “truth” hits the fool, it is liable to go on by, and he will not pick up on it. That is an inability to grab it when it comes by, and hang onto it, and say, “I am throwing in with this truth. I am investing my life in it.”

That inability that is described above is a lack of discernment, which is called perceptual dullness. Dullness is when the truth comes by, and you say, “I wish the truth would come to me. I wish I knew the truth.” Sadly, it has gone right by you, and you did not even see it.

That dullness results from the process of degenerating from one’s normal ability to perceive. There is a point that is described in this scripture to which you are going to reach in the process of degeneration. When you reach that point, how are you going to know truth? How are you going to know anything because you will have an undiscerning mind that is totally defiled. You will have gone beyond perceptual dullness to an undiscerning and defiled mind.

Then with a defiled mind, things that should be clearly evil, like dying early, will be thought to be good.² You will begin to think: “I would like to escape this body, escape the torment of the life that I am living.” You see, suicide is popping up everywhere. People who have their whole lives ahead of them, have every gift and advantage known to man, and yet they kill themselves. Why? It is crazy nonsense!

Values of the Reprobate

These are hard, hard things being said in this scripture. And the process will continue until we have arrived at that point of reprobation. Look at what verses 29 and 30 list as things that a reprobate is going to be doing:

Romans

1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

1:30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

1:31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection . . .

You see how all that unrighteousness of fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whispers, and all this other evil stuff will be engaged in by the reprobate. All of this evil connects back to verse 26 where it is declared that God gave them up to vile affections. The good and evil of the reprobate are totally reversed. In a reprobate, it is good to hurt people. It is good to inflict pain instead of helping.

Romans

1:31 ...implacable, unmerciful:

Verse 32, however, is the terrifying hook for the reprobate person.

Romans

1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Here God says that they know somewhere down deep in their souls, perhaps in their memories of former values. In spite of their defiled minds, they know that the judgment of God is coming to execute death on the perpetrators! They know what the natural things are, they know that there is going to be a judgment, they know that they have done wrong, and they know that they have gone against nature. They know that they have violated their consciences. They **know**, and even when they know that judgment is coming, they keep on doing those things and even endorse and confirm others in the doing of those same evil things. They do those evil things because they love doing them. They

² The book of Revelation describes the desire for death in the last days (Revelation 9:6).

love doing them because their affections have been defiled. In their depraved state, they are now recruiting others to join them in the doing of the horrific evil.

Jill: They do what CBS News denies. Look at how the presidential approval numbers in the polls are still going up in light of what Slick Willie is doing. Like you said, they do the evil and confirm others in the doing of the same. That is it in a nutshell.

V: Yes, and that confirmation is actually an exhortation to do the reverse of good.

Do the Truth that You Know

Now, here is what you, a Christian, are supposed to do. You come in here to this class to learn, and the truth of scripture comes into you. You leave this class, and you do that truth, and when you do that truth there is going to be an affirmation coming from the Holy Spirit that is going to say to you, “Well, done, my good and faithful servant.” When that happens, your discernment and perception will grow and sharpen supernaturally, and you are going to be encouraged to come back and get some more truth. And then you will go out and do that truth also. You see, as you continue to do the truth that you learn, you will spiral up. The warning is that not doing the truth produces a spiral down toward reprobation.

Now what is the exhortation going to be from the man spiraling up? He is going to say, “Get the truth and do the truth, and then God will bless you. Get some more truth; grow and go.” That is what the Christian who is acting properly with the truth will say to others.

Look at the spiral down however. What is the man going to do on his spiral down? He is going to encourage others to do the same thing that he is doing. Look at what God says in verse 32, “knowing the judgment of God,” the reprobate not only continues to do those

things that are unseemly, but also he encourages others to do likewise.

ROMANS 2: JUDGMENT OF WORKS

Chapter 2 of Romans is about the judgment of works, and all of this in Romans 1, you see, is pointing to works. What you do with what you know is the key to your judgment of works. Whatever knowledge you have must be done according to John 7:17. If you will do your known truth, your capability for growth will increase, and He will give you additional knowledge. You will be on your spiral up. But the essential key is doing what you know as real truth. Works are the key. Works are going to be judged. So now, God wants us to look next at the judgment of works because of its great importance.

Is Knowing Not Enough?

Romans

2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

2:2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

2:3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

No way is knowing to be considered enough! Here is the deal. Knowing is not enough, and so whenever you have enough knowledge to become a judge of behavior, you are yourself accountable for that behavior. You are going to be judged based on the amount of judgment you are issuing.

Here is a situation, and we have this all over Christendom. We think that because we can see error, and we can see evil, that we are good. You see, this is a temptation to substitute knowledge for doing.

If you can see something that somebody else standing next to you cannot see it, then you may think: “Man! I can see that issue. Why cannot others see it? Man oh man! I must be really good to be able to see the evil that is invisible to others.” That scenario is a natural temptation to think that the knowledge that you are expressing by basically being able to judge the behavior of others somehow accrues to your credit. If you can judge another’s behavior, then it is incumbent upon you to behave based on that knowledge. And if you do not behave accordingly, then knowing and saying, “Oh, that is a terrible bunch over there,” does not buy you anything. Instead, the scripture says that you will not escape the judgment of God.

I am supposed to give you a list of judgment Scriptures at this point because we are talking about judgment.

Scriptures about Judgment of Works

1. Job

34:11 For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to [his] ways.

2. Psalms

62:12 Also unto thee, O Lord, [belongeth] mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

3. Proverbs

24:12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider [it]? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth [not] he know [it]? and shall [not] he render to [every] man according to his works?

4. Jeremiah

17:10 I the LORD search the heart, [I] try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, [and] according to the fruit of his doings.

5. Jeremiah

32:19 Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes [are] open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one

according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:

6. Matthew

16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

7. 1 Corinthians

3:8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

The above scriptures are a small sampling of being judged based on your works. That is what this Romans passage is about, i.e. doing what you know. You will be rewarded not according to what you know, but according to what you do. Doing what you know is going to be the primary judgment factor. Every person is going to be judged on his works no matter whether he is a Christian or whether he is a non-Christian.

Amos 3:2 indicates that God’s judgment is going to come first to His people. That means then that we are first in line when it comes to this judgment of works. The reason is that to whom much is given, much is required.³ We are the ones who have been given all this knowledge. We have been given the Bible. We have knowledge of church history. We have knowledge of the destruction and capture of Israel and Judah because of idolatry. We have knowledge from the Middle Ages, the Roman church, the Reformation, and all of the education that came out of those things. We have the Bible in many languages, and we have inexpensive printing so that everybody can have their own copy, rather than just one copy for the whole town. Every one of you has at least one Bible. So Judgment will begin with us be-

³ Luke 12:48 . . . For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

cause we are God's people, and we know the most.

God's Goodness Leads to Obedience

Romans

2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

The mercy, the goodness, and the grace of God come to us, but they may lead us to go two different ways here. When we see God's mercy and grace, it is supposed to lead us to repentance. However, when we mess up by knowing something and not doing it, and God does not whip us immediately, then the mercy and grace of God are being despised by us. His willingness to forgive and straighten us up by giving us a brand-new start upon our repentance should lead us to repentance.

The person who does not look at his need for doing overemphasizes, cheapens, and despises God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness. This person will do just the opposite. He will indulge himself, heap sin upon sin. Instead of doing good works, he will in fact do bad works and say, "I am forgiven." He will sing songs about the mansions that he is going to have in heaven because he is a child of God.

There are actually Christians today running around thinking that God is swooning over them because they can tie their own shoelaces and breathe in and then out without getting all mixed up. A reprobate does not know that he is already mixed up. Reprobates think that good is bad and bad is good. Using the breathing analogy, they breathe in and then in again; they keep swelling up with their own air. Or, they breathe out and then out again, and then they cave in.

Romans

2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

God's mercy and grace are supposed to lead to repentance. When you realize God's mercy and grace and willingness to forgive and give you a new start, but it does not lead you to repentance, then it leads to this: the hardening of the impenitent heart, and the treasuring up of wrath. **Laying up wrath! Did you hear? LAYING UP WRATH!!** The Bible says that we are to lay up treasure in heaven. But when you start overemphasizing God's grace, how you are going to have mansions and crowns and all of this stuff, and you are behaving like a terrible person, then you are laying up wrath. Laying up wrath is just the opposite of what God commanded. It is therefore a spiral down (see Chart 2.5).

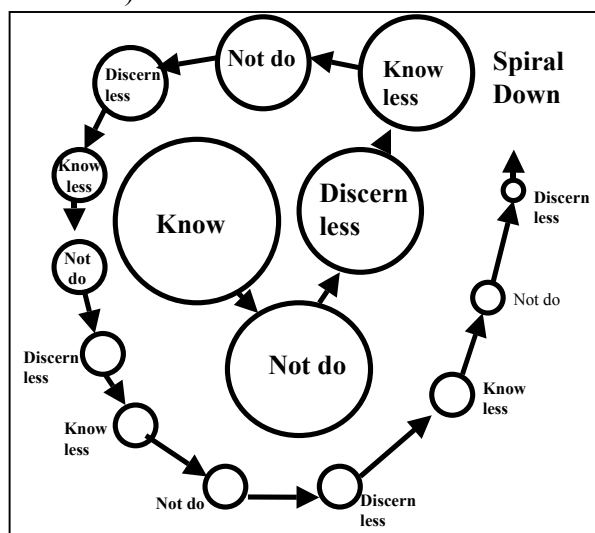


Chart 2.5

Steve: Are you saying that Christians are laying up wrath, too?

V: You bet. Any body that breaks this cycle, whether they are saved or unsaved, is laying up wrath. You need to hear that. I am going to break a lot of bubbles around here because laying up wrath is the biggest problem in the Church, and it is a serious problem.

Romans

2:6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

It does not say here that every man except Bill Vinson, or every man except the ones in Fort Worth, every man except those in the church, every man except. . . . No, you are going to get rendered unto you what is due on account of your deeds, period! **Every man, whether saved or unsaved**, will have rendered to him by God according to his deeds.

The Terror of the Lord

Let us look at the following Scripture, which is where I am coming from. This future event is my motivation. To this passage, I react by teaching sanctification.

2 Corinthians

5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.

5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

I know something about the terror of the Lord. I am terrified. I am terrified that I am going to mess up and break this spiral up, and lead others astray. I have a hard time with this threat of failure. I am telling you that the pressures of knowing the truth are awesome. They will haunt you in the bed; they will be with you when you wake up in the morning; they will haunt you to the point where you just think, "Oh, I have to do this and teach this! People do not want to hear this, but I have to teach it!"

Second Corinthians teaches that the terror of the Lord results from knowing and not doing. When I know something and I teach it, I have to check my life to make sure that I am doing it before I teach it. If I am broken in any one of these things that I am about to teach, I have to get that thing fixed in my own life before I can come and teach. It is a high responsibility.

The teaching would be good for you either way whether I am doing the truth or not. If I come in and teach you knowledge, you can build and spiral up even if I am spiraling down. But what I do not want to happen is for me to spiral down. It would delight me for every one of you to excel and go beyond me, and just spiral and go all the way up. That is what I want for you, but I want to make sure that I am heading up too.

I have some accountability here, because I know something. One of the things that I know is the terror of the Lord. I know that there is going to be a judgment of works and that we must get ready. Now if I know that there is a judgment of works, and if I know the terror of the Lord, do you think that I am not going to teach you? To fail you at this point would be to throw myself into the jaws of the problem. I must teach you and encourage you and push and do everything I can to get you up and doing the truth that you know. That same responsibility belongs to the pastor, and it is the same for a Sunday school teacher, a mother, and a father. You must do this same thing. If you know the terror of the Lord, you have to do this to and for others. You see where I am coming from now?

I have the same kind of feeling over this as I have over salvation. I used to be a street preacher. That is all I did, getting people saved (justified). I left the teaching to the church. This is where I messed up. Things were not happening; people just got saved and then just drifted off. They did not grow to amount to anything. I thought there must be more to it than this. I had to do something else, so now I am teaching. But I am also evangelizing. I cannot leave my first love. I cannot breathe without that fresh air of evangelism. But you see the terror of the Lord just drives me; I cannot stop. It is the fire in my bones that Jeremiah spoke of.

Heavenly Rewards Are for Those Who Apply God's Word

Romans

2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

What God is showing us here is that He is going to reward those who are patiently continuing in well doing. They know something and are doing it.

The “patient continuing in well doing” means that they are continuing the spiral upwards. Patient means to abide under. The word picture for patience in Chart 2.6 is to have a big burden to come down upon you.

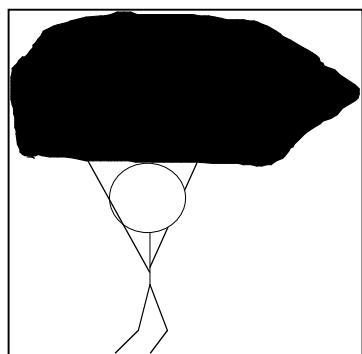


Chart 2.6

There you are standing, and there is a big, giant boulder on you. God says, “Hold this boulder up.” Thus you get all hunkered down, and it rests across your shoulders, and you are balancing it with your hands, and it is just mashing you down. It is hurting your neck, it is hurting your shoulders and your arms are tired. Your knees are aching, your legs are trembling, and then you look around. Everybody else is walking around and enjoying life. They do not have a burden to hold up because they are doing their own thing, but you have this big burden to support with all of your life’s force. You just do not know what else to do.

Patience is to stay in there, under the burden. While experiencing the pain, you may think, “I cannot last, I cannot make it, but God wants me to do this. I am going to do this, I am going to do this.” You grit your teeth and keep on holding it up. Every fiber in your being is saying, “Drop that thing off,

just let it fall down so that you too can walk around and enjoy yourself like everybody else.” Then you too can say, “Is this not fun being a Christian?” But patient well-doing is to stay under the burden. You stay under it. You do not do what you want to do. You deny yourself and do what God wants you to do. You stay under it. It is going to cost you. You are going to grit your teeth, and if you are chosen to be one of those special saints, it is going to cost you your life because you are going to die physically.

We have a history full of those martyred saints. Our forefathers have been tortured, burned at the stake, drowned, but they would not get out from under the burden. The highest burden of Christianity is when it is going to cost your life to say, “I follow Jesus Christ.” When you say that, and they say, “Light the fire,” that is staying under the burden. To drop the burden is to say, “I recant, I was just fooling, I really did not mean it.” There is where Antichrist is going to step in and demand that you worship him. And some of you may be alive when Antichrist comes to the throne. You may have to face this decision. Are you going to stand under the burden, grit your teeth, and go the distance, or are you going to rock the burden off of your shoulders and have your freedom to enjoy life?

Even now, you who are under the burden will be tempted by the pervasive claim of the feel-good Christians: “God does not want us to suffer! God does not want me to suffer. He wanted all those other saints in history to suffer because they were full of sin. He wants Christians on the other side of the world to suffer but not me. I am a special saint because I go to church and tithe. Just look at how God is blessing me. I have a great job, many friends, a nice big house, kids in the best schools, . . . yada, yada, yada.”

Paul got his head cut off. He must have been a pretty sorry saint. There must have

been sin in his life. Is not that “sin in your life” what we normally hear when we are suffering?

No Respect of Persons

Romans

2:8 But unto them that are contentious, . . .

This is the opposite of those who are patient in their well doing.

Romans

2:8 . . . contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

2:10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

No respect of persons? What that means is that just being a Christian will not turn God’s wrath. Just because you are a Christian does not mean that you will escape God’s wrath because there is no respect of persons with God. When He does His works judgment, when He judges deeds, guess who is going to be first in the line? God’s people the Jews and the Christians will be first in line. Make note of the following passages that are references to non-respecter of persons.

Scriptures Which Deny Respect of Person by God

Deuteronomy

10:17 For the LORD your God [is] God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:

You cannot even bribe Him.

2 Chronicles

19:7 Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do [it]: for [there is] no iniquity with the LORD our

God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

Job

34:19 [How much less to him] that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all [are] the work of his hands.

Acts

10:34 Then Peter opened [his] mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

Galatians

2:6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed [to be somewhat] in conference added nothing to me:

Ephesians

6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Colossians

3:25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

1 Peter

1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning [here] in fear:

Now if you are saved, listen to this. If you are saved, then please listen to Peter: “. . . if you call on the Father,” i.e. you pray to the Father “who without respect of persons judges according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” The warning cannot be plainer than that. Fear God because there is no respect of persons in Him. So judgment of works, all this business up here in these scriptures, is for everybody.

Romans

2:12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be

judged by the law;

2:13 (For not the hearers of the law [are] just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and [their] thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

God is going to judge knowledge, thoughts, conscience, and all of these things which should result in good works. And God is going to judge us all without respect of persons. It is a terrible thing to think that there is unsaved people out there that are behaving more seemly than Christians. Doing what you know to be truly right is what the Scripture is talking about. The Gentiles do by nature the things that are contained in the Law, and they do not even have the Law. They do by nature the things of the Gospel, and they do not even have the Gospel. On the other hand, here are the Christians who have the Gospel, and they study it and study it and study it, and they can even quote it, but do they do it? There is the issue. You must do it if you know it.

Looking at Ourselves in the Mirror of Scripture

Take a look at this next passage. He is writing this letter to Christians, to the Roman Church. In that church, there are two different sets of Christians, i.e. Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. We will get into this Jewish thing a little bit more as we go along, but we are fixing to make a jump here by looking at the Jewish Christians.

Now in order to make this passage more relevant to our time right here where we do

not have an extensive mix of Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians in our churches because we are all Gentile Christians, I am going to ask you to think in terms of just Gentile Christians.

We each have a Bible and all this wonderful knowledge that we are learning in these courses. Is that not us? Well now we are about to look at ourselves! It is a terrifying thing that we are about to see.

Romans

2:17 Behold, thou art called a Jew

Behold, thou art called a Christian. It says Jew there, but for our inward look at ourselves, I am replacing that word with Christian.

Romans

2:17 . . . and retest in the law, . . .

Instead of the Law I am going to put Gospel there.

Romans

2:17 . . . and makest thy boast of God,

Now all of us go around praising God, talking about our being saved and walking on streets of gold in heaven.

Romans

2:18 And knowest [his] will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

Our instruction is out of the Gospel.

Romans

2:19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

2:20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

We are confident in our teaching of the truth in the Gospel.

Romans

2:21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preacheest a man should not steal, dost thou

steal?

2:22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

2:23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

2:24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles . . .

I am going to replace Gentiles with the word unsaved. Thus our works contradict our teachings. The unsaved see our works, our hypocrisy, and blaspheme God.

Romans

2:24 . . . through you, as it is written.

Our behavior, like that of the Jews, is why we have such an unbelieving pile of people in this world. That is why the world is sliding into oblivion. That is why the Gospel message is closed off; many ears are closed to the Gospel message because of our breaking the cycle of doing the truth that we know by merely talking about all that we know. We have a Bible, we love God, God is love, and so God sacrifices because of His love. We do not do the same as God, we do just the opposite. Any sacrifice that we do is in tithing to an institution, an idol. Our sacrifice is to be like God's; it is to be for the people who are in desperate need. Our sacrifices should be so evident to the unsaved that they would praise rather than blaspheme God because of our doing what we teach. We are spiraling down, and we are causing God to be blasphemed. We are guilty!!!

Watch the following passage for I am going to illustrate the principle meaning by substituting for the words circumcision and law the words baptism and gospel.

Romans

2:25 For circumcision (baptism) verily profiteth, if thou keep the law (Gospel): but if thou be a breaker of the law (Gospel), thy circumcision (baptism) is made uncircumcision (unbaptism).

2:26 Therefore if the uncircumcision (unbaptism) keep the righteousness of the law (Gospel), shall not his uncircumcision (unbaptism) be counted for circumcision (baptism)?

2:27 And shall not uncircumcision (unbaptism) which is by nature, if it fulfil the law (Gospel), judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision (baptism) dost transgress the law (Gospel)?

2:28 For he is not a Jew (Christian), which is one outwardly; neither [is that] circumcision (baptism), which is outward in the flesh:

2:29 But he [is] a Jew (Christian), which is one inwardly; and circumcision (baptism) [is that] of the heart, in the spirit, [and] not in the letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God.

What we are dealing with here in this passage is an exhortation. We did all the good-feeling part last week getting up through verse 17. Boy! That was fun city—everybody left here feeling great. Man, oh man, just show me where the battle is.

The Battle Is with Our Own Wills

We come back this week, and everybody is down at the bottom, saying, "Oh, my soul, I am getting clobbered. I do not think I can fight another battle."

We are looking at what is causing that downward fall, and that terrible cause is the will. It is not just what you know, it is what you **will** do with what you know. If you can give control of your will to God and be submissive, then you will, because of submission, naturally not do what you want to do, but do what God wants to do. You will supernaturally be sacrificial, you will supernaturally deny yourself.

You know by now that to love another is to give of yourself. Love is unilateral sacrifice. That is what agape is. Agape means that you give, you make the other person's well being more important than your own. If

the man loves the woman with unilateral sacrifice, i.e. *agape* love, then what is the woman going to do? She is going to submit. Submission is a wife's version of *agape* love because she does not do what she wants to do. Instead, she wants to do what he wants to do. What does he want to do? He wants to do whatever is best for her. What do you want to do? Every one is trying to do what the other person, the object of one's love, wants to do.

We cannot even figure out how it can all work, but it does. Once we start moving in that direction, then we are spiraling up and the love for one another grows.

I use the marriage example, but the principle goes far beyond that. It is you and me, your whole family, it is the family of God, and the love for one another, and the love for Jesus.

If you love the Lord, guess what, you will do what he says. That makes sense, does it not? He says in John 14 and 15 over and over again, "If you love me, keep my commandments. He that does not keep my commandments is the one that does not love me." Submission is the way of the bride, and you are the bride. You submit to your husband, the Lord. Guess what He does? He loves you with *agape* love. That kind of love means that He sacrifices for you. That is what He did, and He is still doing it. He forgives you. Every time you insult Him, hurt His feelings, and everything like that, He says, "I love you. I forgive you." Then if we can discern that loving, forgiving, gracious nature, we should fall on our knees and say, "Your will, not mine. I will do whatever it is that you are calling me to do." Then, when you do that, wow!! It is shouting time! That experience of submission is what sanctification is all about.

All that negative part in the former chapter is dealing with not doing the truth that you know. But then this second chapter is dealing with judgment. It is the judgment of works

that we are dealing with here. Do not be fooled, your works will be judged. Everybody's works will be judged. Your personhood is going to be judged as well. All people's personhood is judged.

Everybody goes through two judgments. Your personhood judgment has already been accomplished. You agreed with God that you were a sinner, a sorry, no-good sinner deserving of hell. You have already gone through that. He said, "Yes, you are a sinner." You agreed with God that you are not worthy of heaven. Then you asked for forgiveness, and guess what He did? He forgave you and cleansed you of sin and gave you a new heart. He gave you a brand new start, and said, "Now this is the rest of your life. I want you to go and start doing My will." He will give you a little bit of truth and test you to see if you do it. If you do it, then He will give you some more truth via increased discernment and sharper perception. If you do that, He will give you some more, and by passing those tests, you start your spiral up. But nobody hovers, you are either going up, or you are going down.

Bob: You cannot stand still if you go with God.

V: That is right. You cannot stand still. You have to go and do.

This entire chapter 2 here is dealing with the judgment of our works. The negative part of chapter 1 is saying that you are accountable for what you know, and that accountability is in the doing of the truth that you know. That doing is your works. Chapter 1 is saying, "Do some works." However, chapter 2 is saying, "Beware. If you do not obey, then just because you are God's child does not mean that you are exempt from His wrath. You will receive it because there is no respect of persons in God."

The best thing for us to do is to get real close to God. I learned one thing at an early

age. When my daddy was going to whip me, I always got this warning because I could hear his belt when he pulled it through his belt loops with the accompanying pop, pop, pop sounds as the belt flapped at each belt loop. My heart would go “ptoomm.” But one thing I found out is that if I could get close to him, he could hardly swing to hit me. I would get around his leg. I would be hanging on. That is the way we should do now. Just grab hold of God and go and do what He wants.

Bob: That way he could not hit you hard.

V: Yes.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC EMPHASES OF THE INTRODUCTION? (ROMANS 1:1-15)

1. Providence. V. 1.
2. Old Testament roots of Christianity. V. 2.
3. Incarnation of Christ. V. 3.
4. Resurrection of Christ. V. 4.
5. The Holy Spirit. V. 4.
6. Faith. Vs. 5-8.
7. God’s gifts of grace and peace. V. 7.

WHAT ARE THE KEY WORDS IN THE THEME OF ROMANS? (ROMANS 1:16-17)

1. Gospel.
2. Power.

3. Salvation.
4. All or everyone.
5. Righteousness.
6. Faith.

HOW DOES BRUCE⁴ SUMMARIZE ROMANS AND THE PAULINE GOSPEL?

1. Justification comes by the work of Christ.
2. Our verdict concerning our justification on that great day can be had in this present life.
3. If it were possible for us to be justified by keeping the Law, what was the purpose of Christ’s death?
4. We are saved by faith in Christ, not by works.
5. Abraham was accepted by faith, and so are we.
6. If we choose justification by the Law by making circumcision a legal requirement, we fall under the Law’s curse because we would have already failed. The same principle would apply to baptism.
7. Jesus underwent the curse of the Law and nullified its curse on me.
8. The just shall live by faith.

⁴ Bruce’s Commentary on Romans was the text for the Seminary Extension class on Romans.

Chapter Questions

1. What can be seen from general revelation?
2. Distinguish between existentialism and existential.
3. What are the basic emphases of the introduction? Romans 1:1-15.
4. What are the key words in the theme of Romans. Romans 1:16-17.
5. How does Bruce summarize Romans and the Pauline Gospel?

Chapter 3

DETAILS ON THE JUDGMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN'S WORKS

SPIRALING UP OR SPIRALING DOWN

In the last chapter we were dealing extensively with the judgment of works, and we looked at the faith, hope, and love model, and the defiling of the mind, body, and sentiment. We saw that you were either spiraling up or

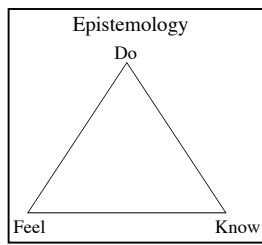
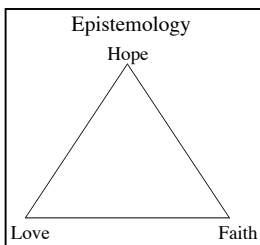


Chart 3.1

spiraling down, and that there is no such thing as just maintaining the status quo.

When knowledge comes in, then there is a responsibility to act upon that knowledge. To fail to act upon truth is to begin your spiral down. If you break with your knowledge, i.e. if you do not do the works required by truth, it

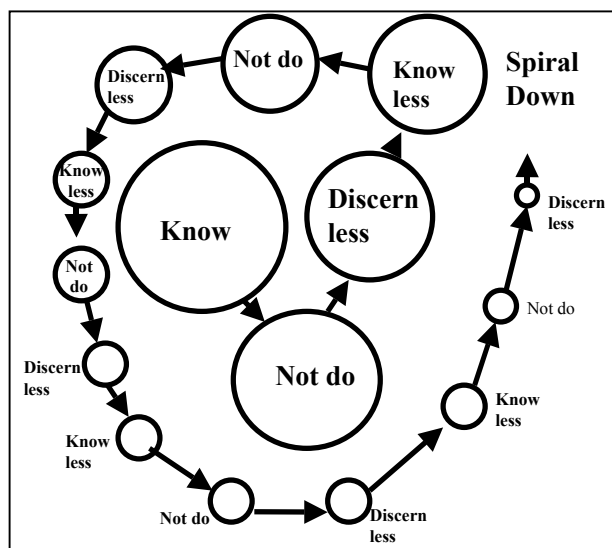
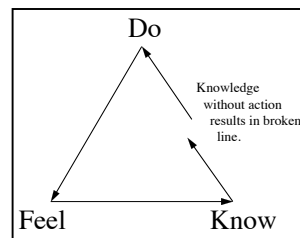


Chart 3.2

will defile your mind, and you will begin to turn the truth into a lie and the lie into a truth. This degeneration of the mind into defilement will cause other things to happen. There will be works that will defile the body because you will begin to work out of the false knowledge, i.e. the lie which became a truth.



When you defile the mind by simply not doing your known truth, you will begin to do things that will be an abomination to God. Your sentiments and desires will become perverted to the point where you will

want to do and even confirm others in the doing of those abominable kinds of things.

There is a spiral, and its direction of up (see Chart 3.3) or down (see Chart 3.2) depends upon what you do with your known truth. Your direction of spiraling up or spiral-

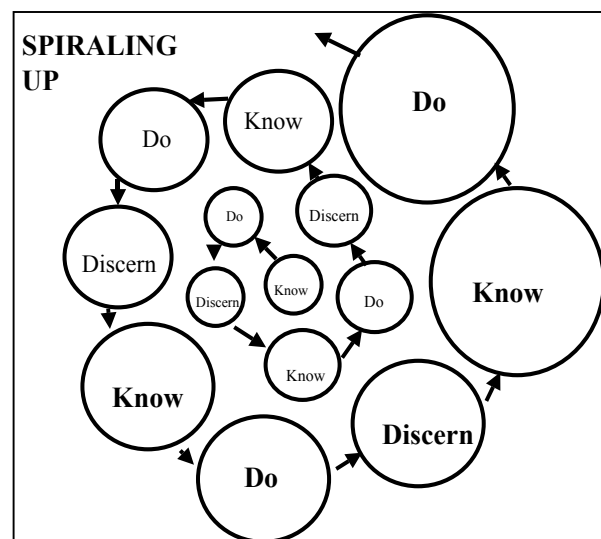


Chart 3.3

ing down depends on your choices in life. We are going to have to deal with this degeneration/generation issue all of our lives. Every choice we make concerning applying the truth of the Lord's Gospel will send us upward toward maturity or downward into apostasy.

Paul is teaching the Romans with his letter, and he is hitting hard in this area of knowing and applying the truth. First, we saw in chapter one that he dealt with general revelation. He took away all excuses from the Romans when he disclaimed that there is no understanding or knowledge of God. He said, "No, if you can see the creation, you have responsibility and you are without excuse." Then he moved into "once you are without excuse, then what do you do with that known truth which took away your excuse?" If you can look at the created universe and say that there is a God, then you need to be looking for God, listening to God, being receptive to God, and worshipping God. But anti-faith, or a hostile faith, is a willful rejection of known truth, i.e. a willful rejection of the overwhelming evidence which is seen in creation for worshipping God the creator.

When you receive the truth of God through revelation, you are to do so with a receptive faith. Imagine, if you will, faith to be on a scale of -1 through -10 for an extreme hostility to +1 through +10 for full receptivity. Receptive faith is in the plus category. Faith in the negative category is a negative faith. Negative faith is a hostile faith. A hostile faith is the sin of unbelief, and so this is what we are up against here in the first chapter of Romans. To know the truth and refuse to do it is the sin of unbelief which will defile the mind.

ROMANS 3: ADVANTAGE FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Given all of that negativity that Paul has described, he poses a question to himself,

something like a straw man question. It would be a question that he would anticipate the Jews to ask: "Well, what is the advantage for being a Jew if God is no respecter of persons? Since He is going to be judging the works of the Jews, His own people without regard to who they are, just like He is going to judge the works of the Gentiles, then what is the advantage of being a Jew?"

You might ask the same type of question: "What is the advantage of being a Christian?" If God is going to judge our works regardless of who we are and regardless of our confession, then what advantage do I have for being a child of God? It is a legitimate question. Paul anticipated that question, and he is going to pose it and answer it.

We are now in Romans 3, and the straw man's question is put forth in the first verse:

Romans
3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit [is there] of circumcision?

In verse 2, he begins to answer this question from the straw man.

Romans
3:2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

So what is the advantage of being a Jew? They were the chosen ones. God gave His Word to them. Like all men, they have been given general revelation, but unlike other men, they have also been given special revelation, i.e. they have been given the precious Word of God. The Jews were given the oracles of God. They are the possessors of something that no one else has; they are the chosen ones to possess the oracles of God. That possession is a huge advantage.

The Jews are self-content and self-righteous. They are kicking back and saying, "We are God's chosen, we are the children of God; therefore, God loves us, and it does not really matter what we do because it does not change

the fact that we are Jews. We can behave like sin, but we are still Jews, we are still the chosen ones, we still have the oracles of God, we still have the advantages.”

What Advantage Does the Christian Have?

So what about Christians? Is it not strange, that many Christians despise their possession of God's Word by possessing it in their hands but not in their hearts? They praise the Bible by claiming it to be the inerrant Word of God, but they do not study it. They carry it back and forth to church, but that is it.

My friend, with advantage comes responsibility. We have a huge advantage just like the Jews had, and we can begin to see it in this statement here where he is dealing with the Jews. I hear those same comments: “We are saved. It does not matter what we do, we are still going to heaven. We have the Bible. We are chosen of God. We are blessed above all people. We are the apple of God's eye.” Many of our number make the same kind of comments.

Now, what if those Jews and we Christians do not believe Paul's teaching about the judgment of works being done without respect of person? What if we do not believe that truth? What if we reject that truth? In this case, he projects another straw man's question in verse 3.

What Effect Does Disbelief Have?

Romans

3:3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

Let us just imagine that the whole Jewish nation got together and took a vote and unanimously declared that Paul is wrong. That action would not change anything. They could vote it all down, and we Christians could all join in. We could have a unanimous vote across the world, but it would not change

a thing. You and I and all the world are still going to face a judgment of works regardless of our personhood.

Is God a Respector of Persons?

We have this belief today that God is a respector of persons. But we need to get it nailed down in our minds that God is not a respector of persons. Our advantage is not that God will be swooning over us when He judges our works because we are Christians. In fact, there are Christians in our current times who do not even believe that there will be a judgment of works for Christians. But my friend, our unbelief does not change a thing. God says, “Does your faith or lack thereof make the faith of God without effect?” Implicit in this question is that nothing will change God's declarations of truth.

Romans

3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

If you want to judge God, go ahead. However, you will be overcome when God does His judging of you.

Verse 5 is pretty interesting.

Romans

3:5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? [Is] God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)

He is saying, Okay, let us just say that we decide that we are not going to do the truth that we now know. We are just going to relax on our laurels of being Christians. We are going to say that God is a respector of persons, and because we are saved, He is going to follow us around and swoon and think we are the greatest thing that ever happened. If that is the approach that we take because we truly believe that God is going to be a respector of person, then how is He going to judge us? How can He judge me if I say that

He is going to be a judge of works, and He is really not, and He is just going to be so gracious that it does not matter what you do. He is just going to swoon over you. Then what we have is His inability to even judge me who would be proclaiming a lie. Paul is now at the point where if he joins in with this idea of opposing good works, then if God should not judge him for not doing good works, then God would be in the wrong. God would be unrighteous for going against His promise of judging our works.

Romans

3:6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

If God cannot judge the works of His children, how is He going to judge the world? If He cannot judge the works of Israel, how can He judge the world? If He cannot judge your works, how is He going to judge the world? Is God only going to judge those people that are outside the family of God, the non-children of God? You had better believe that He is going to judge them, but He is also going to judge us too. In fact, He is going to begin His judgment with us. Judgment starts with us.

SALVATION CONTAINS MUCH WORK AFTER JUSTIFICATION

This whole issue of the judgment of works is rejected by many present-day Christians. I have been exposed to many Christians (some in this very seminary) who reject the judgment of works without respect of persons in totality. I mean that they reject it all. There is a general lack of understanding of this business about being judged in works. I want you to see something here in the following Chart 3.4 on the doctrine of salvation. Justification is followed by a long process of sanctification and ends with glorification. You can certainly see that salvation is a much bigger thing than just one little event at justification (see Chart 3.5). Please understand that there

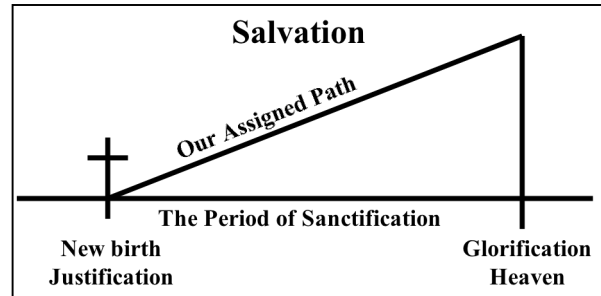


Chart 3.4

is a pilgrimage here called sanctification (look back at the slanted line in Chart 3.4) on which we are supposed to be, and we are to walk this path that God has laid out for us. When you are walking on that path, please understand that your walk is a process that is going to be judged because you are expected to exercise stewardship over the opportunities and over the gifts and over all the blessings that God has given to you for use on your path. Your works judgment will be about those stewardship responsibilities that He is expecting you to perform.

Let us just see an example of how you might do. As you are walking along and exercising stewardship (see the slanted line in Chart 3.4), He is saying, "That is my child right there." He is pointing and saying, "That is my child, and he is doing good." But now let us just say that Chart 3.5 is your concept of salvation, and all that you have is the new

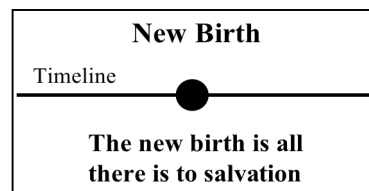


Chart 3.5

birth which, in your mind, will entitle you to rewards of mansions and crowns in heaven after you die. There is no walk, no works, no judgment, nothing. You are just going to cool it by just hanging onto your dot, i.e. your new birth. You are going to go to church and cool it with everybody else on the pew. You know that is where most people cool it. So in this scenario of Chart 3.5, where is the walk?

Where is the stewardship?" Where are the trials, and the persecutions, and the going through great struggles. Where is the demonstration of your love for the Lord when you are not required to lay your life down in order to demonstrate love? Self-denial, the first requirement for discipleship is to deny your own desires in your walking God's designated path for you. Self-denial is the very first requirement for discipleship, and how are you going to meet that requirement if you are just cooling it, relaxing, kicking back, and indulging yourself?

There are going to be two judgments for every person. There is both a personhood judgment and also a works judgment (see Justification and Glorification in Chart 3.6). Personhood judgment is the judgment of your

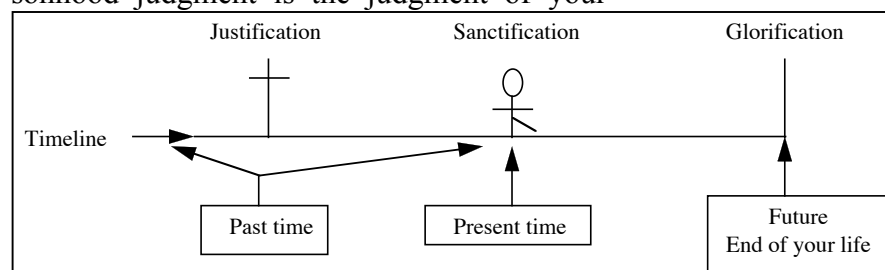


Chart 3.6

being. It is, "Are you justified, are you reborn, have you met Christ as Savior and Lord, have you received the gift of eternal life?" That is a personhood judgment. If your answers to those questions are "yes," then you have passed the first judgment, that of personhood, and are going to heaven after your works have been judged. That judgment of personhood is something that every one of you have already supposedly had. But that judgment is only of personhood.

You went through your personhood judgment when you agreed with God and said, "Yes, I deserve death, I have sinned, I deserve to die and go to hell. Oh, God, save me. I am a sinner and lost without hope unless you wash away my sin and save me." Then when you come through that new birth of justifica-

tion, that first judgment (of personhood) is behind you.

Next, you start on something else, and that is sanctification, a journey of good works, a pilgrimage, something that is going to be judged when the point of glorification is reached. That judgment is going to come at the end of your life when your opportunities for works die with you. When you get out here at the end (glorification on Chart 3.6), God is going to review your life, your Christian walk, and He is going to say, "Okay, we are going to look at your stewardship over living your life for Me."

You may say along with the majority, "Now do not forget, God, I am a Christian so you cannot be mad at me! Right?" That is what the majority of Christians seem to think, but I cannot allow you to think like that. I think it was in this class last week, that I, knowing the terror of the Lord, began to exhort you and press you and push you. I am going to do everything in

my power to get you up on your feet and on your pilgrimage, reaching out for the full-blown, great adventure that God has for each and every one of you.

THE PERSONHOOD JUDGMENT AND THE WORKS JUDGMENT

Your path is different from everybody else's. It is customized and built by God, and you are led on it by the Lord and empowered by the Holy Spirit and helped by the angels. All of heaven is looking at each one of you to see that you are running on your path and pressing on. There is a lot at stake here, and so this judgment out at the end, i.e. glorification, is going to be a works judgment.

We have majored on issues dealing with the church here because this letter is to a

church. But there is another side of all of this, too, and that is the judgment of the lost people.

There are two judgments on the lost people as well. If the lost person is not justified, and his physical body dies, he is judged as lost and unsaved. His personhood judgment is one in which he is found at death not to be sealed as God's property, or a child of God. When he is judged to be a child of the devil, not a child of God, the angels come and get him and take him to hell.

Hell is like jail in which you are held for trial of your actions. It is similar to our judicial system. When you do a crime, the police catch you and take you to jail. You wait in jail until the trial. The trial is the judgment of criminal works. When you go and stand before the judge, he says, "Now let us see here, you robbed and you shot the guy and you got in his car and you sped over there and you ran over and killed a pedestrian. Okay, I sentence you to life in the penitentiary."

The penitentiary is like the lake of fire. You see, the lost people are judged in their personhood at death. Their personhood judgment takes them to hell. When it is time for their works to be judged, they are taken out of hell to stand before the judge. That trial is the Great White Throne Judgment. At that point their works are judged and they are sentenced to the lake of fire to suffer proportionately to their evil works.

Do you see how the two judgments work for the lost people? They have two judgments: a personhood judgment and a works judgment.

You have two judgments also: a personhood judgment and a works judgment. What we are trying to do right now in the first two and one-fourth chapters of Romans is focus on the works of Christians. We are going to shift eventually to the issue of personhood.

That issue will be, then, the ontological judgment, dealing with the lostness of people.

I want to hammer away on the works judgment because this is the message I want you to understand right here so that you may take it to your families, to your churches, to the people, to your friends and everybody that you can rally to this crucial message because both their eternal destinies and also your eternal destiny rest upon your delivering this message. You are responsible not only for doing it yourself, but also for teaching others about it. Your responsibility is heavy.

Romans

3:7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

Paul is saying, "If this business that I am teaching is a lie that elevates God's righteousness or glorifies God, then how can I be judged as a sinner? If my lie glorifies God, how can I be judged for lying?" See the contradiction? It is obvious. "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto His glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" That is an obvious question.

Romans

3:8 And not [rather], (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

Those people accusing us of that evil are going to have a just damnation.

Romans

3:9 What then? are we better than they? . . .

Paul is making a little switch here. He is moving from works into ontology or personhood. Paul is saying, "We are going to look at the works out here at the judgment of works and then look back here at the personhood." This kind of examination is standard procedure. You know a tree by its fruit. You look at the works and look back to see . . . There should be evidence in their works

that they have already gone through a personal judgment, i.e. justification.

Judgment of the Christian's Works Is a Judgment of His Profitability

Romans

3:9 What then? are we better [than they]? No, in no wise: for we have before proved

both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Describe the unprofitable man in Romans 3:12-18. Please focus on the descriptions that pertain to body parts. Making an association of the sin with a body part shows the sin's relevance to life.

1. Throat (an open sepulcher/grave)	3:13 Their throat is an open sepulcher.
2. Tongues (deceit)	3:13 . . . with their tongues they have used deceit.
3. Lips (poison of asps)	3:13 . . . the poison of asps [is] under their lips
4. Mouth (cursing and bitterness)	3:14 Whose mouth [is] full of cursing and bitterness:
5. Feet (shedding of blood)	3:15 Their feet [are] swift to shed blood.
Not associated with body parts	3:16 Destruction and misery [are] in their ways 3:17 And the way of peace have they not known.
6. Eyes (no fear of God)	3:18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

This list describes the unprofitable man that we are talking about. The unprofitable

man has behavior that is just like the person who is spiraling down. A spiraling-down person is a person who is unprofitable to God. The unprofitable man has the items in this list as his description.

Purpose of the Law

Romans

3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Paul declares that the Law is to give some restraint to the unprofitable man, i.e. to shut his mouth, stop his evil behavior, and show his guilt.

The Law is a good thing. It is supposed to restrain evil and promote good. But it cannot be used for justification. This accomplishment of the Law that is described here is not legal achievement of innocence.

Romans

3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin.

You see, by law you know sin. It is not how you are justified, but it is how you know that you need to be justified. The Law is redemptive in its purpose.

I must bring in a lesson here at this point on stewardship. I prayed, and I asked God what He wanted me to do for you in this chapter. He told me, but I said, "No, no, that is not what you want me to do because it is not in Romans." He told me again, and I said, "Okay" and began to think about it. I prepared along those lines, but there was not a spiritual "uumph" there that indicated to me that this was truly it. I went back to the Lord today, and I said, "Lord, I am not sure that this is what you want me to do." I said, "I need a spiritual confirmation on this." He gave it to me, so I am going to do it. Now you may not like it, but I am going to do it.

MATTHEW 25: THE JUDGMENT OF WORKS

I am going to give you my interpretation of the judgment of works for the saints. I get this from chapter 25 of Matthew. I will provide the Scripture here for you. The reason I am doing this is because of all of this information on judgment that we have covered to this point in Romans.

We are going to be shifting over to personhood judgment in the following chapters. We soon will be looking at justification and the judgment of our persons, the ontological judgment. At that time, we will leave works for a while. So, I want to get a good last hammering on this very important issue of works judgment before we leave it.

The Lord Owns His Kingdom

We have in this passage a picture of the Lord who wins the Kingdom. He becomes the Lord of the Kingdom; He is owner of the entire Kingdom.

God speaks in this passage of something that has to do with stewardship. The Lord was born in a completely righteous state in His Being, He has walked a perfectly righteous walk that matches His Being. Part of His walk was to pay for the sin of the world that He did not commit, and He has been glorified as Lord. In the glorification, He has been given the entire universe. He owns it, He owns you, He owns this world, He owns everything in it, He owns the stars, and He owns everything there is. He is the owner.

Stewardship Is to Manage the Lord's Property

Now what is He going to do with His property? Well now, He says, "My people are going to do the same thing I did. They are going to be given this justification that I purchased for them so that they can have perfect righteousness like I have. They are going to

walk the sacrificial walk that I walked. Also I am going to provide them something for their walk. I am going to hand them My Kingdom to manage for Me as a test of their stewardship. I am going to commission them with the responsibility for stewardship over My Kingdom."

Judgment of Works Is a Judgment of Stewardship, i.e. an Evaluation of Profitability

"When they get to the end of their walk, I want to receive from their efforts some profit for My Kingdom. I do not want them to live for themselves. That kind of life would make them unprofitable men who would have this throat, mouth, lips, and feet that I describe for the unprofitable man. That is unprofitable. I want profit. I want every one of them to be profitable and bring a profit to Me at the end of their walks."

Here we go. I am going to start in Matthew 25:14.

Matthew
25:14 For [the kingdom of heaven is] as a man travelling into a far country, [who] called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

Description of the Stewardship Scenario

This is a picture of your life after getting saved. When God delivers into your hands His Kingdom over which you are to exercise stewardship, you are at the beginning point of the part of salvation known as the sanctification process.

You are now one of His servants. You are His slave. That change of role from slave-to-sin to slave-to-the-Lord is the deal. When you come through the justification event, you are accountable to Him, and He is going to use you to exercise stewardship over His Kingdom. When He says, "Go over here," you are to go over here. When He says, "Go over there," you go over there. It is just that simple. You do not do your will any longer.

You do His will. In order to exemplify this new scenario, the Lord gave us this story in Matthew of these saints and how they used their talents.

Distribution of Talents and Expectations for Corresponding Profits

Matthew

25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

25:16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made [them] other five talents.

25:17 And likewise he that [had received] two, he also gained other two.

This is the principle of stewardship, i.e. you take what you have and multiply it by making a proportional profit.

Make a Profit by Redeeming the Time (Ephesians 5:14-17)

Ephesians

5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord [is].

Wake Up, Get Up, and Get Active

Here is a picture of a person who is becoming a good steward. It is an awakening out of a sleep. It is a coming out of a stupor. Just think of someone just lying there sound asleep. The first need is to awaken. He awakens, and his eyes open. He looks straight up and sees the ceiling. He is just lying there awake, but there is more to the process of becoming a good steward. The next command is to "arise from the dead." So the Christian must arise. He gets up and stands around. He is just standing there until

he finds out that there is some more to the process. The Lord's next command is, "Walk." So far, the candidate servant has awakened, has arisen, and now he is walking around. These commands are for the purpose of getting the Christian ready to do something. The Christian is mobile and moving about. He is coming to a point of being useful.

Be Circumspect in Your Activities

Next the Lord says, "Walk circumspectly." That means that the Christian is to examine himself to see if he is walking in the right way. Every one of us has the Law written on our conscience. So even if you do not know the Word of God, there is some circumspect walking that you can do.

God expects you to do all that you know, i.e. walk circumspectly. When you do that much, then you will begin to see right and wrong. You are to walk a path that is honoring to the Lord. You may not be a seminary graduate, but you can still walk an honorable path here based on what you do know.

Redeem Your Time in Your Activities

Then, God commands the Christian, "Redeem the time!" You have the time between justification (new birth) and glorification (heaven). That is all the time you have. How much time is that? For some it is very short. For some it is quite long. The person who has a long time has a lot to redeem. The person who has a short time needs to get on it and redeem it now because time is growing short. So He says, "This time in the present is all the time that you know that you have, therefore, redeem it."

He also gives us the accompanying warning that "the days are evil." If you do not get after it and guard your time, your days are going to slip into an evil waste of time.

Wisdom Is Understanding the Will of the Lord

The Lord advises the Christian “not to be unwise, but wise, understanding what the will of the Lord is.” If the Christian takes that advice, then he needs to receive proper education, exhortation, and encouragement and things like that. Those are things that come from outside of yourself, i.e. from the brethren.

However, in order to be complete in your wisdom, you will need help from the Lord Himself. To be wise and understanding the will of the Lord comes from quality time in the Word of God and intimate time on your knees with God in real prayer.

From God is where your wisdom is going to come. Then fellow Christians can come along and cross your path and give you an encouragement and a little boost along the way. Others can come along and give you some knowledge with which to equip yourself. But accountability is in every one of those gifts, and they carry with them a great burden of responsibility.

Redeem Time by Being Profitable (1 Timothy 4:13-16)

The following is the picture of redeeming your time. Two of the three stewards (slaves of the Lord) were redeeming their time. One received five talents, and he doubled them to ten talents. The other one received two talents, and he doubled his also. They both doubled the investment that the Lord had placed in their hands. They used their time wisely for the Lord, i.e. they both redeemed the time. They both were profitable servants.

The first reference stated the commandment to redeem the time. This reference is to show **how** to redeem the time.

1 Timothy

4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

4:15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Can you see this exhortation not to neglect your gifts? This is a stewardship principle. If you have been given some gifts, do not neglect those gifts. Do not! Do not neglect the time. Do not neglect the opportunities. Do not neglect the wonderful things that God has put into your care because to do so is to behave unprofitably.

Know and Use Your Gifts to Be Profitable

He also says to meditate on these things. Meditate on what God has given to you! Think about your opportunities. Each one of you is unique, and God has a plan that is specifically designed for you. I cannot do your plan. You cannot do someone else's plan. God has a plan designed just for you, and you can do it like a champ. It is up to you now to meditate on these things, see God's plan, and then give yourself wholly to it. Throw yourself into that plan with reckless abandon. Go hog wild in that plan. When you do, the profiting that you will bring to God's Kingdom will become manifest to all people around you. That is what it says here: “that thy profiting may appear to all.”

Profiting is bringing forth profit for God, and that is what these stewards did. The five-talent steward profited by getting five more. The two-talent steward profited by getting two more. Both of these examples demonstrate the principle of proportionality: “to whom much is given, much is required.”¹ A five-talent man needs to earn five more

¹ Luke 12:48.

talents; the two-talent man needs to earn two more talents. A twenty-talent man would need to earn twenty more talents. The principle is one of proportionality. Proportionality in our stewardship demands that we absolutely maximize the Lord's return on His investment in us.

It is assumed, now, that these two stewards exercised proper stewardship or they would not have been profitable. Where do we get profitable stewardship principles? From the Word of God. That is what I have done. I have gone over to these other passages and pulled those principles out and set them up so that we can all see them very easily in one sitting.

One Steward Was Unprofitable

Matthew

25:18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

This is a guy who is going to do nothing but celebrate and protect his justification. He gets his justification in which he is endowed with certain talents. He spends his time by being super religious. He attends church and Sunday school. He keeps himself morally clean. He is a good citizen. He never creates any turmoil by button-hooking someone and forcing a Gospel witness on him. His plan is to cool it: "I am just going to sit in the pew. I will stand up when they say stand up, and I will sit down when they say sit down. I will move my mouth when they are singing; I will not move it when they are not. I am just going to sit here and be a good old boy. I will go to Sunday School and eat donuts and drink coffee with the others. Then I will go home and do my thing, and then I will come back here and do my religion thing again."

This description is of an unprofitable person. Please note that it does not necessarily follow that the unprofitableness of this steward derived from only having one talent. The

unprofitable steward could be a twenty-talent person. However, for this example in the Scriptures, it is a one-talent person, and he is not doing a thing about redeeming the time or becoming profitable for the Lord by using proper stewardship principles.

God Does Not Respect Our Persons When Judging Our Works (1 Peter 1:17)

Matthew

25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

When the Lord comes to reckon with His stewards, it is not going to be as a respecter of persons. I refer you now to 1 Peter 1:17.

1 Peter

1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning [here] in fear:

If you dare to call on the Father, then pass your time in sojourning in fear because He does not judge with respect of persons.

God Expects Proportionality in Our Profits

Matthew

25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

25:22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Certainly, you can see the proportionality here. When you do what you are supposed to do with what God has given you, you are going to receive these words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

You do not have to do what the Apostle Paul did to receive those words of commendation from the Lord. All you have to do is get on your path and stay on it. You will then receive those good words. You do not have to be a super person, some kind of superstar Christian. All you have to do is exercise good stewardship over the talents that God has given you and take advantage of the opportunities by redeeming the time. The principle of proportionality is always in place under which you are to operate.

Wrath for Unprofitable Stewards

Matthew

25:24 Then he which had received the one talent . . .

Now I do not want you to hear that a one-talent guy is a bad guy. This particular one is an example of a bad one for us to learn from. Besides that, this is not a real person that we are talking about. But there are going to be real people in the works-judgment who have been unprofitable and are going to receive this kind of result.

Matthew

25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not straved:

25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, [there] thou hast [that is] thine.

Notice that the one-talent steward did not lose his talent. He brought it back to God at the Judgment. God had put this talent in His steward's hands, and he brought it back untarnished and fully intact. It was shiny and bright, unused. It had no scuffmarks on it or

anything else. It is bright and shiny, brand-spanking new. That steward thought what was common to most of his peers, "Boy, this is going to be good. The Lord is going to point to me as the perfect example of how the Christian life should be lived. My talent is perfectly new. I did not use it up, dent it, scuff it, or get rust marks on it. I kept it exactly as it was when it was given to me."

Matthew

25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, [Thou] wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not straved:

25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and [then] at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Please notice that this judgment is of an unprofitable servant. He is a servant who had been given a talent from God, but he was unprofitable. Instead of bringing a profit, he just brings back what was invested in him. God says to that man, "You are wicked."

I want you to see here that this declaration of wickedness is in the steward's *sins of omission*. We are not talking about a person who is so terrible that he filled his life with the sins of commission. He is not one who went out and lost his credibility and sullied the Lord's name. No, we are talking about a Christian (one who is typical of today) who did not bring a profit. He sat in the pew. He did all the church kind of stuff, but he brought no profit to God's Kingdom (the sin of omission).

This guy did not go out and slander the Lord's name by committing all kinds of evil. All this guy did was to not bring a profit. It was simple and seemingly benign kinds of self-indulgence which occupied this guy's life. He lived out the American dream. He did not deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow the Lord. He compartmentalized his

life into at least two compartments: normal life and religious life.

Then the Lord says to him, "You slothful servant." You surely know what slothful means. It means that the steward was lazy. He did not redeem his time. He pursued his own dreams instead of getting on his assigned path as a slave and doing the express will of God by not following his own will, not having his own life, and just doing whatever the Lord said. He did not let the Lord live through him by denying himself, taking up his cross, and following the Lord. He went where he wanted to go and did what he wanted to do. He lived life for himself.

Much selfless stuff is required for redeeming the time. The self-seeking life by this guy means that he did not do that self-denial, cross-bearing followship.

This servant received his gift, his talent, and then kicked back and indulged himself, and probably sang songs about how he was going to have his crowns and his mansions and how he was going to walk upon streets of gold in heaven. You hear this all the time.

Then God said, "You knew." If you know something, then you are without the excuse of being ignorant. Please understand that when you know something, you have a responsibility to act upon it. But this servant did not act upon the plainly stated requirements of a disciple. He had no profit, no action, the sin of omission because he was slothful and self-indulgent. God follows up by saying, "The very least you could have done was to have helped someone else who was going to be profitable, and then you would have earned a share of his profit."

If this one-talent man cannot figure out how to deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow the Lord, he is not going to give himself into meditation, and he is not going to awake, arise, and walk, and walk circumspectly, redeeming the time. Instead of doing

that kind of stuff, he is going to live a compartmentalized life by adding his religion as a veneer on top of living his own comfortable life. The least he could have done was help somebody else who was going to do the cross bearing, self-denying profitable life. If he had helped somebody else do all that self-sacrificial stuff, he would have an interest in the profit at the end. He would have at least had usury, some interest, to give to the Lord at the end.

The Scenario after the Judgment of Works

There are the two profitable slaves standing up there after being judged. One had five, and now he has another five. He has his hands full with ten to give to the Lord. The other one had two to start with, and now he has two more. He is doing pretty good because now he has four to give to the Lord. They are standing there still holding them wanting to give them to the Lord because they belong to the Lord. The Lord has already said to each of the two, "You are good and faithful servants." Man, if they had tails, their old tails would be wagging like an old hound dog, you know?

But here is the third guy. He is standing there with only his original gift without any earnings. His tail would not be wagging. His countenance, jaw, cheeks, eyes, and ears are all just hanging down.

Tim: His tail is tucked between his legs.

V: Yes, his tail would be tucked. And the Lord says to him . . .

High Risk Brings High Rewards

Matthew

25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give [it] unto him which hath ten talents.

Get this now. Here is this guy, he has been saved, and he has gone all through his life without committing the terrible sins. He

has come to the end after being in church and singing all the songs. He thinks God is swooning over him because of his church and Sunday school attendance. He has kept his talent intact; he did not slander the Lord's name or anything like that. There he is expecting to receive all manner of rewards for his super Christianity. But contrary to his expectations, he has been told that he is slothful, he is wicked, and that down deep he knew better. Then the original talent is taken away from him which leaves him standing there empty handed.

Furthermore, here is this guy standing nearby with ten talents, and to him is given the talent that was taken from the slothful servant: "Golly, why are you are giving me this? I did not earn this one. I only did the stuff that was on my assigned path."

Brethren look at this end result! The high-risk (many talented) steward now has eleven talents, and he knows that he does not deserve any of it because God did it all. All he did was submit to the Lord. He just lined his will up with the Lord's will. All he did was deny self and let God do what He wanted to do through him. He just picked up his cross, and said, "Where are we going, Lord?" He goes over here and works with the Lord, and profits start accruing. He goes over there and works with the Lord, and profits accrue again. He is getting profits for the Lord all over the place as long as he is following the Lord. All he is doing is just surrendering his life to the Lord by not doing his own desires.

Loss of Rewards for Unprofitable Stewards

Please get this picture. Here is a guy in heaven who has less in heaven than he had on earth. Does this strike terror in your hearts? This is serious business. The terror of the Lord causes me such trembling from this picture that I push and press and call for action. I want for you to teach your families, to teach others to do the same because I am telling you

this is not a game! You have one life to live. You have to live it as profitable servants or else you become the unprofitable servant. That unprofitable servant is going to be standing there before all of the saints, being called a wicked and slothful servant, and ending up with nothing. He earned nothing so he not only gets nothing, but he loses what he had been given. He ends up with less than he had on earth. Still, he is in heaven. What a glorious thing that is because our being in heaven is unmerited! Even the unprofitable servant goes to the fringes of heaven. The grace of God is beyond understanding. I just cannot fully comprehend this grace of allowing an unprofitable servant to go to heaven.

As I study this judgment, I have likened it to employment on commission. The employer invests something in his servants, and the servants earn a commission on the profits that they make for the employer. However, based on the example in Matthew, I dare to say that in the Lord's plan, the commission is 100 per cent for the low-risk steward and 100+ per cent for the high-risk steward. And in the case of the unprofitable servant, he not only receives no commission but also loses his original investment. That original investment is then given to the Christian upon whom much was risked but who also came through for the Lord.

There is more about the judgment of Christians in Ezekiel 3:20-21.

Ezekiel

3:20 Again, When a righteous [man] doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou . . .

. . . Thou is you, me, us.

Ezekiel

3:20 . . . because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered . . .

We are talking about a righteous man here. When a righteous man turns from his righteousness, i.e. when a righteous man gets off of his path, he shall die in his sin and his righteousness that he has done shall not be remembered. Folks, you can lose your rewards! **You can lose your rewards (remember the one-talent man)!** I have a responsibility to warn you that you can both lose your rewards, but also that you will be required to be the punisher of the person whom you fail to warn . . .

Ezekiel

3:20 . . . but his blood will I require at thine hand.

3:21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous [man], that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

This is a heavy responsibility. It has been emphasized in an earlier book that the earlier verses in this passage apply to our telling the lost, but now these later verses apply to our telling the saved. It is imperative upon me, and it is imperative upon you that we tell every one of our loved ones, friends, and acquaintances who have gone through justification to get on their paths and run their race all the way to the end, persevering through all of hell to get there. If we neglect to warn them, then we will be the person who must remove their talents and give them to another Christian.

The Five Talent Man Ends Up with Eleven

Matthew

25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

While the one-talent man retains not even that which he had because it has been taken away, the ten-talent guy has eleven now. He is getting more than he earned. Following this principle in the ongoing judgment, the

ten-talent man gets more and more. The unprofitable servants lose what they started with, and the profitable servants upon whom much was risked continue to increase in rewards because they walked their assigned paths. Reward after reward is bestowed upon him. Because there are going to be many of these unprofitable folks who are going to be judged, the relatively few ten-talent guys are going to be covered up in talents. If you decide to be one of the profitable stewards, you are going to wonder in amazement, "Wow!"

Outer Darkness for Unprofitable Servants

In verse 30 there is a hyperbole that you need to understand. Please see the truth here. The truth is that this passage refers to stewardship/lack of stewardship judgment of the Christian's works. It does *not* describe the judgment of personhood, i.e. a saved/not saved, justified/unjustified judgment. This is hyperbole in verse 30 that I will show you.

Matthew

25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The outer darkness does not mean hell. That is not hell. There will be unprofitable Christians at this judgment who be removed from the presence of the Lord's intimate fellowship. There is going to be a weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You think of yourself ending up here as this one-talent man. You may have 20 talents, 30 talents, a million talents. It does not matter how many you start with because stewardship of your life on His path for you is what is being judged, not your starting point. If you should stand up here in this works judgment, and you were given a million talents, then you had better bring in more than your original million talents. Else He will say, "You wicked, slothful servant. Take that which he has and give it to these guys over

here.” You will end up standing there with nothing. He says, “The very least you could have done was help somebody else, and then you would have had interest on what he earned. You knew this principle, but you followed along with the majority who said, ‘God is a respecter of persons, and He does not care about my work because I am saved, I am a child of God, and he is going to give me mansions and a crown and all this stuff because I am His child, not because of what I have done, but because I am a child.’” This lie is prevalent today. Do not buy into it, but strike it down where you find it. Help the people to get on board with the Lord and follow Him in self-denial, cross bearing, discipleship that is profitable for Him.

This “outer darkness” is hyperbole which means standing a good distance from the Lord’s intimacy.² When you are standing close to the Lord because of having suffered in like manner as He did, you are going to be in the most brilliant light. But when you are set way out to the outer edges of heaven, you are going to be in the dark. It is a relative situation. Compared to the brilliant light of being next to the Lord, that light at the outer edges is going to be like outer darkness.

Anybody who violates this principle of stewardship, and I believe it is written on every Christian’s subconscious heart, is going to be out there saying, “Oh, why did I waste my life! How could I have been such a fool! Why did not my pastor warn me! That Sunday school teacher, where was he?” This is going to be some serious hurt because your eternity will have been permanently set. It is established, and you are in it, but you are not in it with the guys that are at the right hand and left hand of the Lord. Therefore, I want

you to see that this outer darkness is hyperbole, and that this business of thinking it is hell is not true. Thinking that it is about hell will cost you infinitely. Look at Luke 12:47-48.

Luke

12:47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not [himself], neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many [stripes].

12:48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few [stripes]. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

The principle of stewardship is one of how you use what you have. Ignorance is no excuse. But there is some moderation of the negative consequences for true ignorance.

This next verse in chapter 14 illustrates the principle of hyperbole. It has to do with hating your mother and your father.

Luke

14:26 If any [man] come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Can you see the principle there of hyperbole? To be on one’s assigned Christian path requires that you hate your mother and your father. But when he says hate your mother and your father, it does not mean that you should literally hate your mother and your father which is the opposite of our command to love. That word hate is hyperbole. It means that in comparison to your love for Jesus, your love for your parents will look like hate because you give your life to Him, not to them. Can you see that?

Well, outer darkness is hyperbole in comparison to the light that you will have next to the Lord. Standing out there away from Him in the perimeter is going to be like being in outer darkness. You will not be in

² To be intimate with the Lord, one must experience everything that He did. If you do not understand and know intimately the agonies in your own soul that He suffered, then how can He relate to you? This kind of intimacy would be only half of what it should be.

the outer darkness of hell. But in comparison to the light so brilliant next to the Lord, it will seem like outer darkness. Please see that in the same way that the hyperbole about hate works, this hyperbole of outer darkness works also.

Ending Up in Heaven with Nothing: No Mansion, No Crowns, and Destitute

Let us look at 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. Coming to the end and ending up with nothing is the idea that I am trying to show you here.

1 Corinthians

3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The miracle, the grace of God, is that once you get past justification, you are going to heaven. You are going to come all the way out to glorification, but there is still going to be the judgment of your works. The Lord is going to look at all your works of stewardship, all that slavery business of which we have been speaking. What did you do? Did you bring forth profit, which is building gold, silver, and pearl upon the foundation that was laid by Christ? He provided the foundation, and you build the superstructure upon that foundation.

Justification is the foundation. Sanctification is the superstructure. Glorification is the giving of rewards based on the final examina-

tion of the superstructure that you built. If you build with wood, hay, and stubble, which are self-indulgent religion, if you are not on the self-denial track but on the self-indulgent track, then your superstructure will not pass the fire test.

Many are going to bring their superstructures of the good life of ease and applause of men to the Lord bursting with pride over their works leading to wealth, status, power, and fame. The Lord will apply the judgment fire, and poof. There will be nothing left. Their superstructures will have burned up because they were not of the precious materials of self-denying, cross-bearing following of the Lord on His path for you. Precious is costly. It costs you your life of ease, wealth, comforts, and applause. You pay with your life for those precious materials.

From that commitment you made in the first chapter, "your" life ended. The "Lord's" life began in you exactly where you began practicing self-denial, cross-bearing, submissive, and continual following of the Lord. When you do that the profit begins to roll in, and it rolls in, and it rolls in. You will have much profit to hand to the Lord at glorification. But if you practice self-indulgence, doing your thing, and you declare that God is not going to judge you because you are His child, and you are excluded from all these negative consequences because you are a child of the King, then woe be unto you because you are going to be terribly surprised. Brethren, you are officially warned!

You need to make sure your people are not surprised because those little statements I made earlier about where is that Sunday school teacher? . . . where is that pastor? . . . are really going to be uttered. Many people are going to be terribly surprised because of your and our lack of stewardship of our teaching opportunities and responsibilities.

THE LAW OF THE HARVEST: GALATIANS 6:7-9

Galatians

6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Not being weary means to hang in there. Hang in there when you are surrounded by enemies, and are wondering if your loneliness and agonies are worth it: "This just cannot be right. Everybody else is back there with the masses who are cooling it and enjoying life. I am out here alone and in the fire. Why?" Just know this: ***Persevere!*** Persevere because if you will continue to persevere you will reap in due time. Your rewards will be there. Do not give up. Hold on to your faith. Press on. Go, when you think that you cannot go any further. Go on! When you fall down, pray that there will be a brother right there to help you the same way as that man did with Jesus when Jesus collapsed under the cross. That man bore our Lord's burden. **Some man bore His burden!** When you see a brother fall, pick him up. When you see him collapse under a burden, take that burden up. Help each other to keep on going.

Many people are falling by the wayside today. There are marriages collapsing, and there are churches collapsing. There are families that are splitting apart. There are friends betraying friends. All of this terrible failure is because of self indulgence and pride, i.e. indulging the flesh, not running the race, not doing self-denial, not being sacrificial, and not persevering. We must persevere, press on, keep on keeping on.

I will tell you this, "Everyone of you is accountable. I mean, golly, you are in the same boat of accountability with me now!" Every once in a while I feel this pressure so hard that I can hardly hold it up any more. You are in the same boat with me. Some of you were not ready to get into this boat, but it is too late. You are in this boat, and we are on a journey together now. We are out in the middle of this ocean of life. We are past the point of no return. We must go on.

I beg you, please behold the eyes of the Lord. Fear Him. Know the terror of the Lord because this judgment of being out here in the outer darkness is not going to be pretend. It is not going to be playtime. There is going to be gnashing of teeth and wailing. On out in time a thousand years later there is going to be the drying of the tears, but for a thousand years there is going to be this gnashing, hurting, and agony.

Beth: I have made an observation. The problem with the church is that we have not distinguished between Christian and disciple. We think . . .

V: . . .that they are one and the same. You are right, Beth. We must make that distinction and become disciples.

Ted: My question is: is the White Throne Judgment the works judgment of the lost?

V: Yes, the Great White Throne Judgment is the judgment of works for the lost people in order to determine the level of their punishments.

Ted: Then the works judgment of the saved is the mercy seat or the *bema* seat.

V: Yes. The Judgment Seat of Christ is the works judgment of the saints in order to determine our rewards if any, the Great White Throne judgment a thousand years later is the judgment of works for the lost.

WHAT HAS THE GENTILE DONE TO EVOKE THE WRATH OF GOD?

This is looking back at Romans 1.

1. The knowledge of the true God was accessible to them via general revelation and conscience.
2. They have chosen a deliberate ignorance by suppressing the truth in unrighteousness.
3. God's wrath is the response of His holiness to wickedness.

4. End-time wrath is anticipated by the wrath principle displayed in the ongoing life of the world.
5. The lost have to endure the freedom that they demanded by being self-enslaved.
6. Those who have chosen rebellion are filled with all manner of wickedness.

IS PAUL ABLE TO ASCRIBE A COMMON CONDITION TO BOTH JEW AND GENTILE?

Yes, they are both guilty of sin (in both personhood and works).

Chapter Questions

1. In Romans 3:1, Paul gives the advantages of being a Jew. What are they?
2. What are the two judgments that all people must face?
3. Compare the judgment of the saints with the judgment of the unsaved (natural man).
4. Describe the unprofitable man. Romans 3:12-18.
5. Describe the process of a person who is becoming a good steward.
6. Describe how to redeem the time (1 Timothy 4:13-16).
7. Describe the difference between our witnessing and our failure to witness at the Great White Throne.
8. What has the Gentile done to evoke the wrath of God?
9. Is Paul able to ascribe a common condition to both Jew and Gentile?

Chapter 4

JUSTIFICATION

ROMANS 3

In the last chapter, we did a lot of talking about the sanctification part of salvation. We were trying to demonstrate that there is something beyond the new birth (justification) in which God is expecting for us to participate with Him (see sanctification in Chart 4.1).

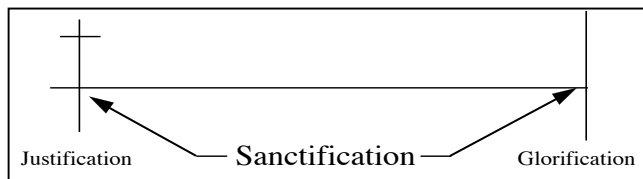


Chart 4.1

We are to participate with the Lord not only in sanctification, but also in glorification. Yes, there is another participation at the end of our journeys that is very important for us. That participation is the judgment of our works and our glorification with rewards. We need to anticipate it and live in sanctification for the future reality of glorification.

We have been looking with a great deal of emphasis on the sanctification part of salvation. I showed you something about a path that God has laid out for you, and how you are supposed to get on that path and walk it. That path is customized by God specifically for each individual. I cannot walk your path, and you cannot walk mine. We are to be

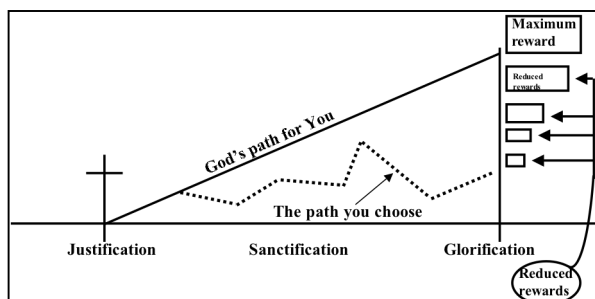


Chart 4.2

submissive to the Lord while we are on God's path. Some people begin to wander below their God-given pathways, and when they get to glory, part of their glorification is lost to them (See Chart 4.2). Rewards are lost to that person who did not live and walk wisely.

My friend, your rewards are at stake. If a person just gets his justification, and does nothing to invest his time or his energies or anything else, he will end up on the bottom of the sanctification line (see Chart 4.2), and be a pauper in heaven. These are the things that are at stake in our walk, and we have looked at them with diligence.

JUSTIFICATION IS AT THE BEGINNING OF SALVATION

Now we are going to change our emphasis, and we are going to return to the justification part of salvation. This is the part that is difficult for the Jewish people to understand. Basically, God's messenger Paul is trying to bring the Jews on board with the Gospel presentation. The Jews are like a lot of us; what they want to do is join a church and get through life and come out to the end, and then have only one judgment. That judgment would be a balancing of good deeds against bad deeds (see Chart 4.3). If their good-deeds side tips down, then they expect to get into

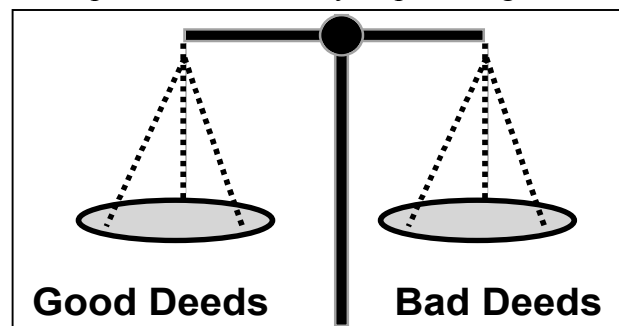


Chart 4.3

heaven. There are many Christians who have begun to think like that. You will hear things like, “Well, I have not been all that bad. I have not been doing this, and I have not been doing that.” That perception is of a justification by works, and it is an end-of-life look at a single judgment. The people holding this view want their deeds measured at the end of their lives to warrant their entrance to heaven. They want to go through life doing what they want. When they die, they want their works measured and a determination made of whether or not they will get into heaven. All they have to do is just make sure that their accumulated good deeds outweigh their accumulated bad ones.

Christian justification is just the opposite of that view of justification by works (see Chart 4.4. In Christianity your destination is

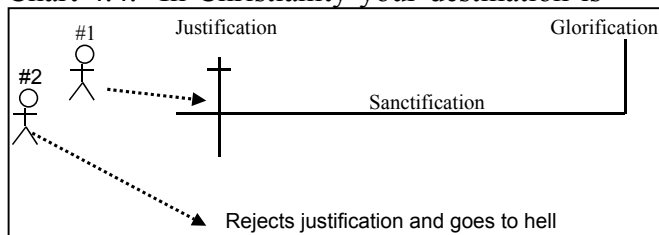


Chart 4.4

formed up in the front end (at justification) of your journey through sanctification. Instead of having your life's works measured out at the end as to whether you get into heaven or not, that determination is done at justification. So then your Christian life is actually a trip with a known destination. That knowledge ought to give you encouragement and hope and a new attitude as you walk your path with the ever-present purpose of bringing glory to the Lord by earning rewards.

Sybil: In light of that understanding, as a person wanders off his path, as you did that little squiggly line, can he get back on it? If he makes a shift to get back to where he should be, can he expect the full level of rewards once he has arrived at the end of his journey? I mean: can he get to that same spot

where he would have been had he not wandered off path?

V: You are not going to like what I am going to say. I would like to invite you into our course on the book of Hebrews. There is a river analogy in that book that uses a river as a picture of the Christian life. God's will for a saved person is depicted as a river flowing along on God's created path to God's created destination. You are supposed to get into that deep river after justification and go with the flow with God. He directs the path of the river, and you go around and about and through and with the current of the river. You must be totally submissive in order to get out into the deep water to flow with the current.

Many Christians want to get up into the shallows and splash around, and play around. The river is flowing on down while they are playing in the shallows. Those are our opportunities that are flowing on down past us. Those opportunities are lost forever. If you should get back into the current, you will enter the river at its present location, not where you would have been if you had stayed in the current. What has been lost stays lost forever. If you stay on the bank all the rest of your life, when you die, all of those wonderful rewards and opportunities to glorify the Lord are lost forever.

I answer your question with bad news, and that is that we have only one shot at this life. We need to be sure we are in it with all the wisdom and focus that we can muster. And we are to bring as many with us out into the deep water as we can get out there. You are going to be out there alone most of the time. While you are out there, and trying to get others to come out there with you, they are going to be saying, “You ought not to be so radical, you ought not to be out there, and you ought to get up here with the rest of us. Look, the whole church is up here enjoying the blessed life. You need to get up here with

us so that you too can get it right and enjoy the Christian life.”

Friends, this kind of tug of war will be going on all the time, but what I want is for you to tug hard because you know that the judgment is out here in the future, and you must face it with the terror of God in your soul. So, do not be denied. You, yourself, are going to be out there going the whole distance. You are going to take as many with you as you can get. It is hard stuff!

Betty: It is kind of like what you said in lesson 3; you must redeem the time. If you get off the track that time is lost.

V: Yes, it is gone; it will be gone forever! This truth is a hard thing, a terrible thing. I get such a heartache for the saints who are not being warned. I am telling you that my pain is continuous because I know what is going on, what is happening to many in the churches, and even to my loved ones who will not read my books.

Sanctification is difficult for us to understand. Sanctification is the most maligned part of salvation in Christian circles (see Chart 4.1). Sanctification is the part that is not done. Leaving off the requirements of the disciple's life is the sin of omission. The justification part is a barrier to sanctification, but all it takes to get through the barrier is a simple faith. All this intellectualism, and stuff like weighing our deeds at the end of life in order to determine justification is no good. We have to just believe in Jesus as savior and Lord. We are going to look at justification extensively.

Justification: The First Step of Salvation

Romans

3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

3:22 Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and

upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Glory is way out at the end of life (see Chart 4.1). However, we all tend to want it now.

Here is a picture of a person who gets saved. He is going to come through the cross of Jesus in order to be justified. Once he passes through this gate of justification, it is certain that he is eventually going to get to glory in heaven. Glory in heaven is signed, sealed, and delivered. That fact gives rise to joy in the Christian life during the trials of sanctification. The presence of that fact and its accompanying joy is why you have the opportunity to live right now as a child of God walking with your head high, taking the hits that life is dishing out to you, and bringing honor to the Lord. Because you know where you are going, you carry the hope of persevering in your journey. Achieving your destination is a signed deal, and God signed it. That promise of heaven and glory for every saint who gets justification should give us some real courage.

It says here, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” This first picture is of a sinner, but he is willing to accept the gift of salvation from the Lord. Thus he enters the gate of justification by faith (look at guy #1 in Chart 4.4).

Here comes another guy who is a sinner (guy #2 in Chart 4.4). The second guy does not go through justification, where does his life take him? He may behave every bit as good as person #1, but he refuses to go through justification. He is going to fall short of glory in heaven.

Please note that sin shortens glory for everyone, even for the saved person. The first guy (Chart 4.4) will likely sin while saved, and as a result, he will fall short of his full potential of glory. He reaches glory, but he

falls short of receiving all the rewards that staying on his path would have gotten him (look back at Chart 4.2). The second guy in Chart 4.4 does not achieve any glory because he never was justified in order that he could enter the path of sanctification, which is the only path that leads to glory. His is a desperate situation which leads to the greatest tragedy available to mankind.

God is telling us through Paul that every person who has ever lived has sinned and comes short of the glory of God. We need God's help in order to reach the glory of God. We must get saved; we must enter the path of sanctification through the gate of justification. Otherwise there will be no achieving glory in heaven. The following references for Romans 3:23 need to be noted: 1 Corinthians 3:18-21, John 12:42-43, and Matthew 4:8-9.

MUNDANE GLORY VERSUS DIVINE GLORY

1 Corinthians

3:18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

3:20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

3:21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;

Glorying in men is a mundane glory that is in competition with God's Glory. If you cannot get hold of this, then you cannot get hold of the *kenosis* (Chart 4.5). The reverse *kenosis* is in competition with God's Glory, and it is mundane glory (Chart 4.6). The *kenosis* (Chart 4.5) is a true kind of glory, God's Glory. God's Glory is bestowed upon man at the glorification stage in salvation, i.e. at the exaltation which comes *after* death. That divine kind of glory is difficult for the Church to understand.

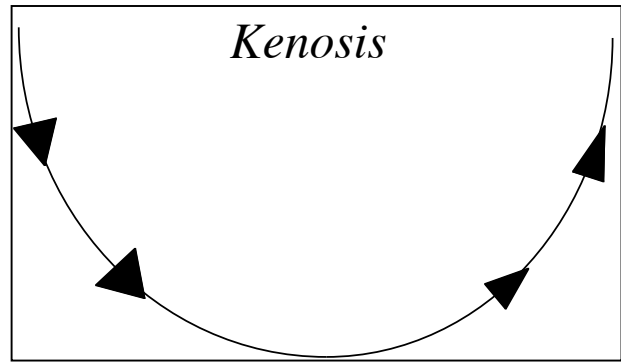


Chart 4.5

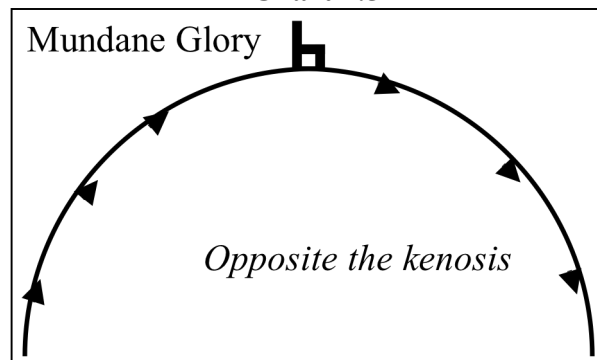


Chart 4.6

God's glory comes not in the temporal realm; it comes after death. Jesus Christ was despised and ridiculed and mocked and whipped and spit upon. He went to the cross. That is as low in mundane glory as you can get. There is no human glory in that. But now He is glorified with God's Glory, and every mouth is going to confess that He is Lord. Every knee will bow because He denied mundane glory during His Life and accepted humility in order to gain divine glory after death. Mundane glory competes with self-denial and cross-bearing for our devotion, and that is what we must fight against.

Mundane Glory May Rob You of Salvation

John

12:42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

12:43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

This passage shows how people cannot even get saved because of their desire for mundane glory. Once you get caught in this trap of living for mundane glory, you cannot even get saved because salvation requires you to die to self.

You must approach salvation this way: you have to agree with God and say in humility, "I am a sinner, I am lost, I cannot find my way out of this dilemma."

This confession to the Lord is to forget about mundane glory. It is to let loose of mundane glory. That confession of wrongness and impotency is the starting point of the journey on which every one of us started, but its competitor (the quest for mundane glory) will dog your heels and follow you every waking moment of your life. You will continuously begin to think that you are knocking it out and following the Lord and carrying your cross when you are not doing anything but climbing up for the applause of men.

Matthew 4:8-9.

4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

This passage illustrates one of the temptations for accepting mundane glory. Likewise, the devil will show you that same kind of enticing glory and offer to give it all to you if you will just step off of your path. All you have to do is fall down and worship the devil by taking a flesh-pleasing shortcut. Do not go to the reverse *kenosis* by pampering yourself. This devilish approach succumbs to a carrot-and-stick approach by the devil.

Jesus Provides Our Model to Follow

Please see that God, the Son, our Lord Jesus, was facing a life of self-denial, pain, and suffering. That divinely designed path is what He had in front of Him. Walking that path would be like walking on hot coals. As a matter of fact, in the book of Revelation, His feet are described as burnished brass. Burnished brass is a brass that has been refined in the fire. His walk was one that took Him through the fire. Facing the coals of fire, the Lord denied Himself and became submissive to God, the Father. He denied His Flesh and stepped off into the burning coals of the sacrificial life and walked all the way through those coals of pain and suffering.

The World Provides Another Model

There is another path, and it is filled with gold, splendor, ease, and the glory of man. The devil says, "Do not go all alone on that terrible path of suffering. Come over here to this path which is fit for a child of God. Look at all the glory being achieved by the great Christians who are being celebrated in their leadership positions."

Here is what we do: We think, "God does not want me to hurt my feet. Jesus has already done all the sacrificing. As His child, I am to receive the benefits which have already been purchased. Surely this path to fame and fortune that the whole church is applauding is the proper one. Also as I walk in this popular path, I am getting blessed; God is blessing me with all manner of material goods, power, and status. Look at me! God is blessing me. Look at all this wealth and this applause and everything that is accruing to me. Surely, I must be on the right path."

Mundane glory is the chief competitor to Christian discipleship. Discipleship always requires self-denial, cross-bearing, and following Jesus. You must have these essentials not only in your path of sanctification, but their pattern appears at the beginning point of

salvation, at the point of justification. At the beginning, you must have that ability to just fall on the mercy of the Judge, and say, “I am a wicked, worthless sinner (self-denial). I do not deserve a thing but eternal death in hell (cross-bearing). Have mercy on me and forgive me, Lord. Please make me a new person to live a new life (followership).”

Peter Wrongly Sought Mundane Glory

Matthew

16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

This event is right after Peter just got through saying, “You are the Christ,” to which statement the Lord replied, “Peter, the Holy Spirit has revealed that to you.” Soon thereafter, the Lord said, “I have to go die.” To which Peter responded, “Oh, no! Do not go down that hard path to death. Go on this good path to life because this is the path that all men know to walk. We want to follow you. So get on this one, and we will follow you.” The Lord’s shocking reply was, “Get behind me, Satan, because thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

In this passage, what does Peter love? What does he relish? What does he desire? Human glory, of course, because it is desired by all men: “Thou savourest the things that be of men.” Discipleship is hard stuff. It will test the very core of your human soul.

This temptation for adopting the upside down *kenosis* is so strong that you can know all of this truth when you walk out of here, and five minutes later, you could abandon the *kenosis* and be on the reverse *kenosis* while not even being aware of the change. When you do become aware of your deception, you may come to your senses and say, “How could I have gotten so far off path?” Next,

you repent and get back on your assigned path. You are chugging along your path, and then somebody comes along and says, “Hey, man, you should come over here with us?” Then you are back on the reverse *kenosis*.

Bob: The adversary is subtle.

V: He is! The thing that I notice about my own periods of deception is that I find my same companions over on the path of human glory every time that I find myself there. I will get some soul mates, and we will be chugging along on our respective *kenotic* paths and knocking it out. All of a sudden, I will find myself being alone on the *kenosis*. Then I will fall into temptation and get on that reverse *kenosis*, and there are my soul mates. I will say, “What are you doing over here?” To which they will respond, “What are YOU doing over here?”

JUSTIFICATION IS BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

Romans

3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

3:25 Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

In this passage, we are looking at justification of a sinner by God. Verse 24 describes a sinner’s being justified freely by grace. Think about this sinner. He goes through justification and has all that sin and all of that terrible stuff of his former life wiped away. Now, hold it, there is seemingly something unfair about that forgiveness of sin without its required punishment. This perception of laxness might provide someone the capability of accusing God of not being just. In other words, if God is just winking at or blinking at or omitting His seeing those sins

of that bad guy who just walked through justification, then God comes under suspicion.

Is God Unjust to Forgive Sin?

Paul is going to address that suspicion of an unjust God in verse 25, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” We need now to look at this balance of sin with its punishment. We are going to see how God is just when forgiving sin.

Propitiation

If sin requires death, how can God give justification? The way He does it is by giving Jesus as a propitiation. Propitiation is a death or blood offering in order to pay for sin.

Justification, then, is given here freely by God’s grace, but **He paid for it**. He is **not** just giving away salvation by generating it out of the sky without paying for it, and saying, “Everybody line up and get your free gift of salvation. I am creating salvation out of nothing. So, it does not cost Me anything. Here, take all you want.”

God’s provision of salvation is not like that at all. He bought that salvation for us; He paid for it. God is just because He took seriously the penalty for sin. The penalty for sin is death. He is giving justification as a gift, but He paid for that gift. That death in hell that I owe was paid for by the Lord Jesus’ death on the cross. God paid my debt. He is not just generating it out of the blue sky and saying, “Here get all you want,” and throwing it out like confetti. He paid dearly for it. That means then that sin is taken seriously by God. When He said that the sinner will surely die, He meant it. We must conclude, then, that He is just if the sinner dies. So in order for the sinner, me, to live, then the One Who took my sin, my Lord, had to die. There is nothing but perfect justice in God.

Sin brings death; there is no escape, no escape! If you are not in salvation, if you are not justified by the receiving of God’s grace freely, you must pay for your own sins. Thus the Lord is justified because He takes sin seriously enough to require payment for it.

Expiation

I want to show you something about this word propitiation. It translates the Greek word, *hilasterion* which has two facets of meaning. One facet, propitiation, emphasizes the sacrificial death as the payment for sin, and the other is expiation which emphasizes the forgiveness of sins.

The word *hilasterion* is translated propitiation here in my Bible. I do not know what it says in your Bible, but the word covers two meanings within it. Some translators want to emphasize the sacrificial death, and others want to emphasize God’s forgiveness. Both meanings are present in the word *hilasterion*, and they derive from the requirement of two goats in the Passover ceremony.

In the Passover there was one goat for the blood offering and another goat for the scapegoat. The blood offering required one goat to be killed and offered up to the Lord to pay for sins. That offering is called propitiation. The death of the goat temporarily substitutes for the death of the sinner. That substitution temporarily appeased the requirement of the Law of death for sin.

The other goat was the scapegoat. The way that sacrifice worked was that the priest put his hands on the goat and transferred the sins of the people to the goat. The goat, then, was loosed into the wilderness to carry the sins away from the people. The scapegoat expiated or removed the accumulated sin of the people for the year. Thus expiation emphasizes forgiveness or mercy.

Both Expiation and Propitiation Are in the Cross

Jesus is both our propitiation and our expiation. By the use of the word propitiation, the translators are placing the emphasis on the sacrificial death while not omitting the forgiveness part of the total meaning. When the translators use the word expiation, their emphasis is on forgiveness, also without omitting the sacrificial death as the payment-for-sins part of the total meaning. In this Greek word *hilasterion*, God indicates that both kinds of sacrifice are contained within the sacrificial event of God's Only Begotten Son.

On the one hand, you have expiation in some Bibles because the forgiveness of sin is seen in Jesus' taking your sins on Himself to the cross. On the other hand, you have propitiation in some Bibles because Jesus is seen as paying the Law's requirement of death for sin. In both cases, it is because of the sacrifice of Jesus who bore our sins to the cross that justification is the free gift of life and the freedom from sin for anyone who will believe in Jesus.

So then, you see, when it is just one word, then it looks like all the emphasis is on one side or the other. So neither propitiation nor expiation tells the whole story. You have to go back to the two goats in the Passover in order to understand the whole story. That whole story is contained within the word *hilasterion*.

Romans

3:26 To declare, [I say], at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

All of those prior verses justify God. God is just. Even though He forgives sinners, He is just because He took seriously their sin and required a blood sacrifice to pay for those sins. God would not be just if he just gave forgiveness without the sacrifice because He would be overlooking sin's seriousness. That

oversight would constitute a contradiction in God's holiness. God takes sin very seriously.

Scenarios of an Unjust God

Let us think about one side of the just God issue in which He takes the sin seriously, but He does not provide a way of forgiveness for the sinner. That means then that God's justice and good will towards men would be in question if He created men and sent them to hell without the possibility of an escape.

Imagine this scenario where God creates men who will all sin and will be required to go to hell for eternity: "I think I am going to create humans. Everybody I create is going to hell. Okay, I will create this one and create this one and create this one, every one of them just flops right into hell. That would be a causative action in which God sets up a scenario in which everyone that He creates must go to hell. Certainly, that scenario would bring into question His justice, but His justice is above board.

God both takes seriously sin, and He provides a way out for every person. Jesus, His Only Begotten Son, both paid for our sins (as in the sacrificial goat) which propitiated God and also took our sins upon Himself and away from us (like the scapegoat in the Passover ceremony) which cleansed us. These two substitutionary factors in the single event of the cross, which was provided by God, justify God. God can justify you and still be just Himself.

If God had taken sin seriously without providing a way for paying for the sins of sinners, then God's justice and good will toward men would certainly have come into question. In this scenario, every person would have to pay for his own sin by going to hell.

The good news is that with the death of His Only Begotten Son as payment for our sins, God is justified in giving us the gift of

life because He has paid for it. Thus God can give you the gift that He has purchased. God is both just and justifier.

Oscar: Are you saying that in the sacrifice of Jesus, God satisfies His own requirement for fulfilling the requirements for our sins?

V: Yes. He establishes the requirements for sin, He meets the requirements for sin, and He establishes the definition of justice, and wrote all that on our conscience.

Oscar: That sacrifice of His Son fulfills everything that He has established.

V: Yes. Because to do otherwise would make Him an unjust hypocrite either if He provided pardon and gave life to sinners as a gift without meeting the Law's requirement, or if He refused to provide an escape for sinners. There is no contradiction between God's Justice and God's Character. His Behavior, His Character, and the Law all match. We need to have some of that matching in us.

JUSTIFICATION REQUIRES TRUE FAITH

Romans

3:27 Where [is] boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

3:29 [Is he] the God of the Jews only? [is he] not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

3:30 Seeing [it is] one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

I want to show you in James the qualification of true faith.

James

2:14 What [doth it] profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

2:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be [ye] warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what [doth it] profit?

2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

James is qualifying true faith. You need to understand the kind of faith we are talking about in Romans. We are not talking about rinky-dink, lip-service faith. We are talking about faith that kicks you into high gear.

Romans

3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

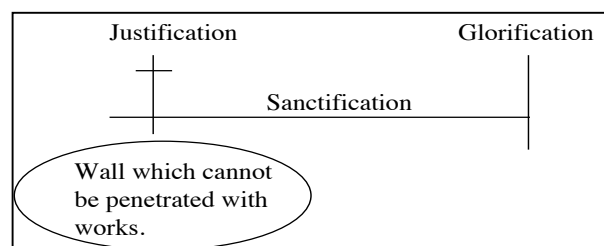


Chart 4.7

You cannot work your way through the gate in the wall of justification (see justification in Chart 4.7). You cannot do anything to earn that salvation. There is a wall here at justification that you cannot penetrate with works.

Works do not get you into the sanctification journey. There is no way that works can get you in. It is by faith, and by faith in Jesus alone. But that faith is a faith that meets the qualifications specified by James. Once you get through the gate, your faith is to be lively enough to demonstrate that your confession matches your heart, that you are not a hypocrite, and that your words and your deeds line up. That is what real faith is.

If you should make the confession of faith with tears and repentance and then come to the beginning of sanctification, but you live like hell during your sanctification, I will suspect that your faith is false. Your faith for justification may have been actually real, but I will suspect that it is not a real faith because of its lack of corresponding works. This is difficult here because I am emphasizing works in the total scope of salvation while maintaining that justification cannot be achieved by works.

If we are saved by faith, then what happens to the Law?

Is the Law just thrown away? That is what Paul is going to ask: “Do we then make void the law through faith?” The answer to that question is “God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” You see, faith establishes the Law by agreeing that salvation is attainable only via faith. The Law is the norm of God’s righteousness. The Law, then, comes right out of the character of God. We need to live out the character of God, and we can only accomplish that vicariously as the Life of Jesus Christ is applied to us by faith.

Faith is the norm of God’s righteousness. Faith does not annul the Law. God’s Faith is what Jesus has done, i.e. He fulfilled the Law. The Law is God’s Word, and it is not going to be thrown out. Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the Law, and we are going to establish the Law by our faith in Jesus.

Our faith is going to establish the Law because our faith agrees with the Law’s requirement of death for sin. That is what your faith says: “the Law requires death for sin.” Why does your faith say that? Because the Gospel says it: “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”¹ The wages of sin is death.”² That Law is created by God’s Word, and Jesus fulfills it. By being the sacrifice of God, Jesus propitiated the justice of God by fully meeting all requirements of the Law. He fulfilled the Law, and we are going to establish the Law with our faith in Jesus.

We do not say, “Nullify the Law, get rid of the Law.” We say that the Law is still in effect, and it will put you to death if you refuse to establish it by faith in Jesus’ accomplishments. There will be many to die at the hands of the Law because they have no faith in Jesus’ fulfillment of it.

Mary: What do you do when people start poo-hooing you, and calling you legalistic?

V: I know, and I have a hard time with them too. There is this super grace bunch that nullify the Law and even make void the blood of Jesus. Their denigration of the Law and its deadly requirements having been met by Jesus makes no sense to me, but what I say is that we establish the Law by our faith in the saving work of Jesus Who fulfilled the Law. Jesus fulfilled the Law by satisfying its requirements, and the Law is still active for all sin. I hate to hear the Law being denigrated because it is God’s Word which reflects God’s Character.

ROMANS 4

What is the Abrahamic Covenant?

1. It is the covenant of promise. Genesis 12:1-4.
2. It is of faith. Genesis 15:6.

¹ Romans 3:23.

² Romans 6:23.

3. Isaac is the instrument of fulfillment, Genesis 17:19.
4. It results in works (the sacrifice of Isaac), Genesis 22:1-2, 15-18, and Genesis 26:5.
5. Circumcision is its sign. Genesis 17:9-11.
6. The Law came 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant. Galatians 3:17.

As we begin to look at the next Scriptures in Romans, we will probably have to refer back to some of those in the list regarding the Abrahamic Covenant.

Was Abraham Justified by Faith, or by Works?

Romans

4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

4:2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God.

4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

A reference to the justification of Abraham can be found in James 2:21-26.

Right here in Romans it says that Abraham was made righteous by faith. That is what we are talking about when discussing justification. You get inside the sanctification part of salvation via going through the gate of justification by faith. Abraham got inside righteousness by faith. How about that? The doctrine of salvation by faith was active in the Old Testament. How about that? Some people think that justification by faith is a brand-new doctrine.

Let us see what James has to say about how faith and works are related in connection with Abraham:

James

2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

2:22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his

works, and by works was faith made perfect?

2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

2:25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent [them] out another way?

2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James says that Abraham was justified by works and not by faith alone. What does that mean?

It says in Romans 4:2 that Abraham is justified by faith. It says in James 2:21 that Abraham is justified by works. How do you reconcile those two statements? You can get into big trouble right here with the two sets of people: one set who thinks that justification is via works and the other set who thinks that justification is via faith.

However, James and Paul are both correct because they are each addressing justification from a different perspective. Picture this scenario where they are standing back to back fighting off their own particular enemies. Their enemies have surrounded them. Thus by standing back to back, Paul and James are enabled to fight their respective enemies while protecting each other's back. They are fighting enemies of true Christian doctrine, not personal enemies.

One set of those enemies says, "You do not need any works. Salvation is of grace alone, not of works. Once you are saved, just cool it, and the good times come rolling in."

The other set of enemies says, "Man, you must have some works, especially circumcision, to get into salvation. You cannot get in just by faith alone, without works."

Paul is standing against those people who are saying that you have to get in by works. James is standing against those who are saying that all that is required of Christianity is belief. You see, there are enemies on both fronts, and Paul and James are standing against them. It is not a conflict of thought or a conflict in God's plan. We need these passages to protect the true doctrine of justification by faith alone, but it must be a true faith which issues into good works during the process of sanctification.

Here is James fighting in one direction and saying that faith without works is dead. His position is that when you come through justification, you ought to be changed. You ought to live differently. There ought to be some works that validate your faith.

Somebody else will say that you must have some works on the front side of justification. To which Paul says, "Oh, no! There is no such thing as justification by works for us. Justification is a done-deal when it comes to works because Jesus did all the works."

This double perception of faith and works are what we are dealing with. It is not a contradiction between Paul and James. It is instead the need to deal with works in the right way concerning salvation. If we do not establish the right connection of works in regard to salvation, then we are going to have some serious problems with our doctrine of salvation.

In the Abrahamic Covenant faith is counted as righteousness. Faith is believing God (see the faith corner of the triangle in Chart 4.8). When God says something and you believe what He says, that belief accrues to righteousness. But the belief that you

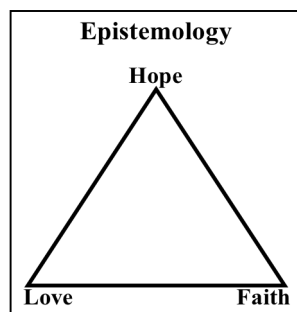


Chart 4.8

have issues into works (a move counterclockwise to the hope corner of the triangle in Chart 4.8).

When truth comes in and you believe it with the James kind of faith, a lively faith, then you will do what it is that you believe. That belief means then that you will apply it (you will go up to the hope corner on the triangle of piety). When you go to the hope corner, God affirms you with additional discernment and the ability to know, which coincide with your move to the love corner (Chart 4.8). That affirmation from God inspires you to get back over to the faith corner and get some more truth. As soon as you get it, then you go tearing up to the hope corner after which you get affirmed again. Here you are spiraling up because you are converting knowledge into works, and God is rewarding you with expanded knowledge and discernment. That picture is of a Christians with a lively faith.

The reverse of a lively is a dead faith. A dead faith is when you do not believe God to the point of issuing into works. You say that you believe, but your belief is just lip service because it does not issue into the works of implementation. When that disconnect happens you spiral downwards, and the next thing you know, your mind is defiled, your body is defiled, your discernment and sentiment are defiled, and you begin not knowing what is right and what is wrong.

Irrational Christians

I have had Christians say to me, "If we should stop abortion right now, we would have tremendous over population. How could we feed them? There would be more abuse of unwanted children if abortion were outlawed." About these Christians who could say such things, I have wondered, "What is wrong with their minds? Their minds must be broken because they cannot figure out right from wrong any more." I can tell you that

when you meet that kind of person with a disconnect between his knowledge and works (see Chart 4.9), he will be irrational in what he thinks is good.

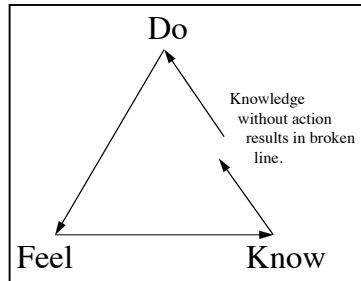


Chart 4.9

Did I talk to you about the word for irrationality, *alogos*? The word, *logos*, means word and also rationality. The opposite word is *alogos*. Jesus is the *logos*, the Word, and He is rational! When you use *logos* in the adjectival form it means rational. Well, guess who is the Antichrist. He is the *alogos*, the anti-word, and when you use this word in the adjectival form, it means irrational.

When you have the mind of the Lord which is commanded of us in Philippians 2 (the *kenosis*), you are rational. When you have the defiled mind because you have disobeyed God's command in Philippians 2, you are irrational. Irrationality among Christians brings anti-faith and its corresponding lack of works, or dead works. But what we are trying to do here is activate our faith by obeying the command of the *kenosis* and doing the good works of a lively faith. We will go from the knowledge corner up to the hope corner. We do what we know.

IMPUTATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans

4:4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

4:6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

4:7 [Saying], Blessed [are] they whose

iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

4:8 Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

I want you to see what imputing means. Suppose that a man comes up to the point of justification. The Gospel is presented to him. It is telling him that he is a sinner who is lost, without hope, and heading for hell. He believes the Gospel that Jesus died to pay for his sins and then arose to continue His ministry to him.³ When he believes the Gospel, he does not work. He receives the gift of new life because he trusts who said it. That trust means then that as soon as he believes, he is justified and enters into sanctification. As soon as God moves him across that barrier of justification, he was given the Lord's righteousness as a gift. It is not a works righteousness. A works righteousness is not an imputed righteousness. An imputed righteousness is an instantaneous action by God when He gives the man His Own righteousness. The man just receives it. It is the Lord's righteousness that is given (imputed) to him.

A Perfect Righteousness Is Received

At the event of justification, you receive perfect righteousness imputed to you by God. How did you get it? By believing God's Word. If you believe the Word of God, your belief converts into righteousness. It is an imputed righteousness, not a righteousness achieved via works. If you do not believe the Word of God, you lose the opportunity for God to impute His Own righteousness to you. You do not have a chance to be righteous apart from God's imputation of it to you.

³ The first time I heard the Gospel I believed it. It always shocks me when I present the Gospel, and somebody does not believe it. I am staggered. "What? You must not understand," and then I tell them again, and they reject it. What?" Their rejection just does not compute.

The scenario opposite to the man who receives God's imputation of righteousness occurs when a lost person comes up to the point of justification by having the Word of God presented to him. He rejects that Word. He detours around the wall of justification to walk his own path of self-righteousness. Therefore, he falls short of the glory of God because his righteousness is not perfect. No amount of his own self-sanctification will make him perfectly righteous because he did not believe the Word of God and receive the imputed perfect righteousness from Jesus that goes with that belief.

The first scenario was of a man who believed and received the imputed righteousness through God's justification. The justified person has in his ontology (his being/his personhood) an imputed righteousness. That imputed righteousness is going to take him to the destination of glorification, i.e. he will go to heaven. Justification is an ontological righteousness. However, the man does not have an imputed righteousness for his works. His works from the point of justification on, you see, are going to be judged. He should match his righteous personhood with works of righteousness for the rest of his life. Living the Word (the hope corner of the triangle of piety) comes after believing the Word (the faith corner).

Righteous Works Are Not Imputed

When you teach your people from the pulpit or in Sunday school, you are expecting them to implement what you teach them. Guess who else is supposed to implement what is taught? Guess who is supposed to be the model for others to imitate? We too must do that righteousness. When we teach them and expect them to do what we are teaching, then we should also believe it to the point of its issuing into our own works of obedience.

If you refused to obey, you would then have an unrighteousness in your works. That

unrighteousness would not be in your person. It would be in your works because, you see, your works are not imputed.

There is a distinction between personhood and works for a saved person. Your personhood has an imputed perfect righteousness, and it is so perfect that it will take you to where only Jesus can go. Only Christ goes all the way to heaven because He has an absolute righteousness, a righteousness that exceeds all human righteousness known to man. Only Jesus has enough righteousness to go there. But if you have His righteousness imputed to you because you believe Him, guess where you are going. His perfect righteousness that is in your being will take you to heaven too. But your righteousness in your being does not mean that your works are all automatically righteous. From the point of justification on, you must **do** works of righteousness.

The way you work righteousness is by hearing the truth and believing it to the extent that you **behave accordingly**. Works of righteousness are what is required of a righteous person. If you do not obey the Word of righteousness, then you will begin to wander below your assigned path of sanctification, and you are going to fall short of the full glory of God. You will still get to heaven, but you will not get all the rewards that you should have gotten.

Failing to Do Works of Righteousness Is Hypocrisy

The doctrine of sanctification means, then, that we must guard our minds and make our behavior fit our knowledge of the truth so that we are not called hypocrites. To know the truth and not do it, to him it is sin.⁴ The world calls that sin hypocrisy. In hypocrisy there is a gap between belief and works, and that gap will eventually show up out at the end of life's journey in a corresponding loss

⁴ James 4:17.

of rewards. Our justification is an imputed righteousness, but that righteousness is of your personhood only. You must follow up that imputed righteousness with your own actions that correspond to your righteous personhood.

What about the Law's Requirement of Circumcision?

Romans

4:9 [Cometh] this blessedness then upon the circumcision [only], or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

4:10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?

And the answer to the question of how is . . .

Romans

4:10 . . . Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

. . . because, you see, the Abrahamic Covenant was ratified by a lively faith, and that was prior to the circumcision. And so Abraham becomes the father of all people saved whether they be of circumcision or outside of circumcision. He is the father of all because he alone was in both states, circumcision and uncircumcision.

Romans

4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised:

See, he already had the righteousness of faith prior to circumcision.

Romans

4:11 ...that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

4:12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which [he had] being [yet] uncircumcised.

4:13 For the promise, that he should be the

heir of the world, [was] not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

That is a perfect righteousness that is given to him because he believed God.

Romans

4:14 For if they which are of the law [be] heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

If you could get to glorification through Law, then faith is made void. But on the other hand, you can get to glorification by faith without the Law's being voided. The Law is instead established by faith.

Purpose of the Law

Romans

4:15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, [there is] no transgression.

The Law works by defining transgression. If a man is standing somewhere outside of the area prescribed by the Law, and you come to him and say, "Man, you are standing in the wrong place because of the Law. If you are standing in the wrong place, you have to die and go to hell." He may ask, "How can you know if you are standing in the wrong place?" You do not say, "Just take my word for it that you are standing in the wrong place." No indeed, you tell him what God's Law says. What the Law does then is define transgression. Apart from the Law there is no transgression. If you remove the Law, there is no wrong place. Without the Law, you cannot know that you are in the wrong place. The Law establishes then the transgression.

BELIEVING GOD IS ESSENTIAL FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans

4:16 Therefore [it is] of faith, that [it might be] by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father

of us all,
 4:17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, [even] God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

You see how Abraham believed God, and the believing of God brings the power of God into the situation. It not only imputes righteousness in you but if you believe God with an active faith, it changes your behavior, it changes your actions, and it changes the person to whom you submit to be the Person of God. That change in person to whom you submit is how God works through you.

If you believe God, and He says, "Walk this way," and you walk this way, then the power of God is loosed into you where you are, and it is like God Himself walking this way. You, then, become part of the active body of Christ. When you are in submission, you believe Christ, and you follow Him. It should be like He is walking around through you on this planet right now. Wherever you are, Christ is as well because He is in you, and the power of God is loosed in you, through you, and touching all those around you if you believe Him enough to obey Him. That kind of belief is a kind of belief that is not a mere lip-service confessional thing, but it is a confession of true belief with its corresponding actions. It is an actual walk, an actual taking hold of the things of God.

Romans

4:18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

4:19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

4:21 And being fully persuaded that, what

he had promised, he was able also to perform.

You see, Abraham believed God. He was trusting enough to believe God.

God is asking **you** to believe Him. There are some things He has put in front of you to do. Every one of you has a call from God to do something that is humanly impossible. It is time for you to step up and believe God and let His power invade the situation and change this world, the people around you, and your circumstances. His power is not for you to gain the world. ***Please hear this. It is not for you to gain the world,*** but it is for you to change the world the same way Jesus changed the world. Jesus came through the temptations to gain the world, but He chose instead to sacrifice His Life by obeying His Father. He believed God and never, ever said no to the Father.

THE JUSTIFIED ARE TO STEP OUT IN FOLLOWSHIP

The *kenosis* is what He is calling for you to do. All you have to do is say yes to God. Believe God, say yes, and then step out. He is going to do something through you to seek and to save that which is lost. If you are alive and you are a Christian, then in front of you is God's call to participate with Him in His *Missio Dei*.

There is not a Christian soul reading this sentence who does not have a supernatural call on your life to do something that is humanly impossible to do, to meet a situation that is beyond you, "beyond all the king's men and all the king's horses," and it is time to believe God. Step up and step out. Like Abraham, you are not called to a lip service belief, but to that kind of belief that causes you to move forward in your faith.

God is looking for you to step out now. We are coming into some very treacherous times. Antichrist is soon to come on the

scene; his spirit is already here. You are going to have to stand and fight and take your hits. My Bible tells me that there is going to be an innumerable multitude of those who are going to give their lives in this fight. You had better start learning how to give your life right now, or you may fail and end up saying, "I recant my faith in Jesus," in order to save your life or the life of your little daughter or your little son.

Start denying yourself right now. Learn how to sacrifice right now and lose your life right now in the little things through self-denying, cross-bearing following of Jesus so that when that big thing comes along, you will be standing up there with Abraham who was called to sacrifice his own son. He stood in there true to an unthinkably difficult trial. He believed God in order to pass the *humanly impossible* test. The instrument of God's fulfillment of His Promise was through Isaac, but God said, "Sacrifice Isaac." It did not compute. It was humanly impossible. To live is to die?⁵ It does not make sense, but that is what He is calling you to do—He is calling for you to turn human wisdom upside down.

I think that each of us needs to face up to some issues, step out in the faith of God and let God change our world. It is here before us to do, and it is time to do it. That is why you are in this class (reading this book). If you do not take anything away from this course but this, please be sure to take this challenge to apply your faith.

A cross-reference for Romans 4:21 is Hebrews 11:17-19.

Hebrews

11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten [son],

11:18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

11:19 Accounting that God [was] able to raise [him] up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

The birth of Isaac was a miracle in that Abraham received Isaac from the dead figuratively. Abraham was a very old man, and Sarah's womb was dead. God created Isaac through the dead gateway, and then God commanded Abraham to sacrifice him back to the dead. Abraham knew that if Isaac is dead, the instrument of God's fulfillment of His Own Promises is dead. Thus, Isaac would have to be raised from the dead because God's promises cannot die. God and His Word are immortal. Thus Isaac must either survive or be raised from the dead, and Abraham must believe the impossible.

What did Abraham do? He believed the impossible command of God which pitted God's Own promise against His Own commandment. Thus Abraham committed his whole being into the sacrifice of Isaac to God, and God changed the action at the very last possible moment. This decision by Abraham had the reality of the sacrifice and the figurative resurrection of Isaac all contained in his absolute belief and corresponding obedience of God. That example is what believing God is like.

But look at Romans 4:24-25 and see if this promise will not make you jump up and down. It says that the promise is for *us also*. That means that I am in on this promise. I am in. I believe! Do not count me out. The Word says: "... for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Folks, we are in on the promise of justification by God if we too believe.

We have the promise of Abraham. With that promise comes the requirement of sac-

⁵ Philippians 1:21 For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain.

rificial obedience like that of Abraham, the disciples, and our Lord Jesus. We too must sacrifice. I should give in this life what I have been given. You should give in this life what you have been given. Abraham freely gave his son, the instrument of God's Own blessings to Abraham. What instrument of God's Own blessings to us should we freely give?

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Please pray with me: **"Lord Jesus, I am going to continue to give. I am going to die to self. I am going to give up mundane glory. I am going to become a fool for Jesus. I am going to take the real *kenosis* for my path. I am going to be submissive, and I am going to go through the valley of the shadow of death just by believing God. I have received God's imputation of His righteousness to me. I am perfectly righteous in my personhood. My person is going to make it to heaven. Now I am going to act like what I am. I am going to live by walking my path of sanctification and following the impossible path that God has for me. I am going to get out into the deep water. I am going to tread water to stay afloat while the current of God's Will**

carries me where He wants. I may go down at times under the surface and then bob up gasping for air. But I am going with the river current. I do not want to be on the bank playing and being safe. I want to be out there where it is deep. I want to go as far as the big current will take me, and I want to take all of my loved ones with me. Amen."

A WISEMAN WOULD KNOW THIS

What is the relationship between righteousness and works in the life of Abraham?

1. Abraham was the friend of God. Isaiah 41:8.
2. Abraham kept God's laws. Genesis 26:5.
3. Abraham believed God, and it was counted as righteousness. Genesis 15:6.
4. Abraham's works were the fruit of his faith. James 2:14-26.
5. Abraham's righteousness is prior to circumcision, Law, and good works. Genesis 17:9-11.
6. All subsequent good things in Abraham are valid only as consequences, not as causes of righteousness. Romans 4:9-11.

Chapter Questions

1. Explain the difference between God's glory and mundane glory.
2. Compare the meaning of propitiation and expiation.
3. What is the Abrahamic Covenant?
4. Discuss the different points of view about salvation through faith and through works as described by Paul and then by James.
5. What does the Law do?

Chapter 5

TRIBULATION, THE FALL, IMPUTATION, AND FREEDOM

This chapter will stretch your mind a little; my mind is already stretched further than it can go. It is about to snap. We will never get a full understanding of all that we are about to study in this chapter, but we need to address it, and we also need to find out that we do not know everything. That knowing of what we do not know is important for us. We are starting in Chapter 5 of Romans.

ROMANS 5: TRIBULATION

We start off with Chart 5.1 which shows our wandering below God's chosen path of sanctification for us. We have looked at this

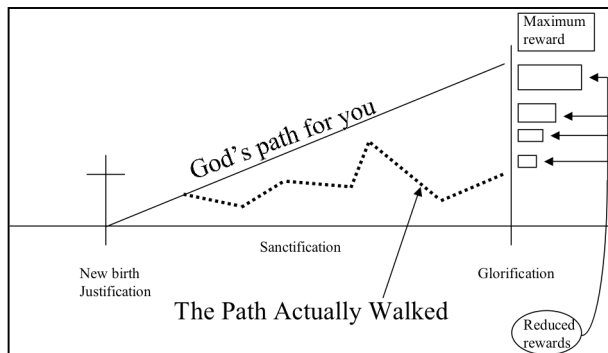


Chart 5.1

chart before. It covers justification, sanctification, and glorification.

The Joys of Justification

We see again the principle of justification by faith in Romans 5:1.

Romans

5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

5:3 And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

5:4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Faith is mentioned specifically as the key that unlocks access into the grace of justification, then through the journey of sanctification, and finally to the glory of God. Rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God will occur for any who stand inside justification. That rejoicing is going to first of all look way over here at this hope at the end of the journey of sanctification, the hope of glory (glorification in Chart 5.1). When you begin the journey of sanctification, you should look down there towards the end of the journey at the future glorification. You will then know where you are going. You, then, cannot help but to rejoice.

This word, rejoice, has several translations. In some places it is translated as boasting, in some places it is called glorying, in some places it is called joy, and in some places it is called rejoicing. All of those terms really mean the same thing. The man on his path of sanctification is rejoicing or boasting in the hope that he has.

In your process of sanctification you should certainly take the long look down to the endpoint. However, you should also know that there are some elements within the journey of sanctification of which we must be aware. One of those things is tribulation. But guess what? The same person that looks at glory and rejoices in hope also rejoices in the tribulations. Is not that something remark-

able? There are three joys for a saved person mentioned here.

1. He rejoices in his hope. (Romans 5:2)
2. He rejoices in the tribulations. (Romans 5:3)
3. He joys in God. (Romans 5:11)

We have here a person who is rejoicing in his future hope. He looks to his present time and rejoices even in the tribulations through which he is walking. He looks to his past and rejoices in God who gave him this whole new life because of his faith in Jesus Christ. This person stands where he is by faith.

Rejoicing in Tribulation

Even though the person is standing in grace, tribulations are a part of that grace.

What happens in tribulations? God allows tribulations because of His grace to us. A chain of events is described by Paul in Romans 5:3-5: tribulation leads to patience; patience leads to experience (experience may also be translated as character); experience or character leads to hope, and hope eliminates

Tribulation — Patience — Experience/character — Hope — No shame

Chart 5.2

shame (see Chart 5.2). Shame is eliminated because of the love of God that is coming into our hearts.

Remember the triangle of piety (see Chart 5.3)? The end result of tribulations, i.e. the absence of shame, is the same thing that is happening right here in the triangle of piety. In piety, faith gets you the knowledge. Hope is when you act upon that knowledge, i.e. you put

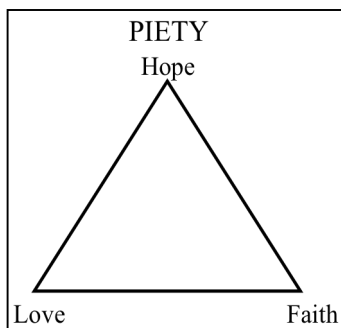


Chart 5.3

it into practice. Love is the confirmation that God gives to you and is shed abroad into your heart. God says, “Well done, my good and faithful servant¹ (shame is eliminated by these much-desired words). Now continue on this path.” So you go, and you loop around the triangle again and again. Remember how we spiraled up? But then do not forget that faith that is not acted upon defiles the mind, defiles the body, and defiles the emotions. Thus, you spiral down once you have a faith that is not acted upon.

Faith, hope, and love: where does the gift of tribulations connect with love? God puts these things in your path because He loves you, He wants to grow you, He wants you to strive and press on, and climb over hurdles and do something difficult in order to glorify Him.

If He should want you to be a dwarf, a little baby, then He would just grease the slide, and make it easy for you. You would come into the gate, zoom right along the path, and zip right in to glory. But it is not like that because He wants you to achieve victories,

and He wants you to receive all that He has laid up for you. How is He going to do that?

He is going to have you climb over these hurdles, stump your toe, and fight all these battles! He is going to give you the opportunity to be all that you can be in the Kingdom of God for eternity.

Do you remember the word patience? Patience is this giant burden on your shoulders (see Chart 5.4). When it presses down on you and you begin to strain and weaken, you will think, “I cannot handle this!” Your knees begin to shake, fears begin to

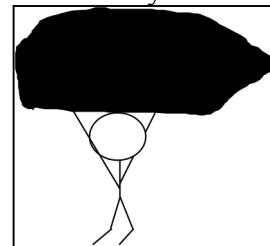


Chart 5.4

¹ Matthew 25:21.

well up, and you think, “I need to get out of here. I need to get out from under this labor.” Every part of your body and your mind begins to think about escape: “Get out of this, you are in over your head, get out, get out!” The temptation is to throw the burden off. That is where patience comes in.

Patience is the translation of *hupomeno*, to “abide under” the burden. You stand in there, and your knees begin to shake and bend. You are going down and about to collapse, and you just cannot stand it any more. Then some teacher comes along and opens the Bible and says, “God does not put on you more than you can handle. Hang in there and build muscle now because it is going to get worse further on down the path.” You say, “I can hardly stand it now! Why cannot I be like all the other Christians who are living the good life, i.e. living the American dream?”

These hardships are part of sanctification’s journey. God’s love sets a path for you, and the tribulations that you are going through are gifts to you. It is not that He wants you to hurt—that is not it. He wants you to achieve what is on the other side of the trial. He wants you to grow and become all that you can be for eternity, like in the army slogan, “Be all that you can be.”

This life is like an army boot camp in which you will be trained for the big struggles. You do not “become all that you can be” by sitting in a chair as a spectator. You must apply the knowledge, and get out there and stress and climb and fight through the struggles. Like the army boot camp, these hardships of the Christian pilgrimage (tribulations) are designed just for you to become all that you can be.

God is not going to put something in your path that you cannot endure. Just like Jesus was enabled by God to endure the cross, you too will receive the necessary help from God to go through your tribulations.

Imagine that while you are struggling along in your life, you encounter this big boulder (trial) in your path. The first thing you want to say is, “I am on the wrong path. I need to find that other path that everybody else is on—that wide, easy path.” You will think that you can get on that path and be a great Christian too. You want to be with the majority of Christians instead of being one of these despised saints with all these burdens on you and all these pitfalls, traps, ambushes, stabs in the back, loneliness, sleeplessness, hunger and thirst, beaten with rods, a day and a night in the deep, and threatened by robbers. Does that not sound like the words of an apostle? Tribulations are for the obedient! Please get this fact, class: that tribulations are for the obedient saints who are following the Lord on the special paths that He has designed for them.

Scriptural Examples of Tribulation

I picked out some verses to emphasize this lesson on tribulation.

Acts

14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Much tribulation is in the path that leads to the Kingdom of God.

2 Thessalonians

1:5 [Which is] a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

It is an honor to be counted worthy of the Kingdom for which you are suffering.

2 Corinthians

4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory;

4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are]

temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

When you are going through these afflictions, this glory at the end is what you should look at. And you must be able to see that glory with the eyes of faith. When you can see that invisible glory through the eyes of faith, it then motivates you to struggle and climb over the obstacles and go through the battles. When you do that, the love of God floods into your heart, and the promise of glory is given to you as confirmation for your struggles.

When you can see the invisible things of hope through the eyes of faith, and you do your assignment by denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Jesus, the love of God will be shed abroad into your heart. This is a description of the piety model, and it fits perfectly in the doctrine of salvation because all of the doctrines are supposed to fit together and integrate into a perfectly whole system.

Romans

8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together.

Our being heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ comes through *our suffering with Him*. Suffering with Jesus means that we suffer in our following Him. Plain old suffering which is common to mankind is not what is being spoken of here. Also suffering for doing wrong is not being spoken of either. The suffering being spoken of is that which results from self-denying, cross-bearing, fellowship of Jesus on His designated path of sanctification designed just for you.

1 Corinthians

4:11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;

4:12 And labour, working with our own

hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

4:13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, [and are] the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Paul is a good example of suffering for the obedient saint.

2 Corinthians

11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? . . .

. . . these false ministers were encountered in Corinth. Paul shows that in contrast to the false ministers, the true ministers can be identified by their sufferings.

2 Corinthians

11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I [am] more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

11:24 Of the Jews five times received I forty [stripes] save one.

11:25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

11:26 [In] journeyings often, [in] perils of waters, [in] perils of robbers, [in] perils by [mine own] countrymen, [in] perils by the heathen, [in] perils in the city, [in] perils in the wilderness, [in] perils in the sea, [in] perils among false brethren;

11:27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

11:28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

The undeniable marks of a true minister are centered in their sufferings for the cause of Christ.

2 Corinthians

12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in per-

secutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Glorying in our infirmities corresponds to glorying in our tribulations.

Jack: Tribulations are specifically the trials and tribulations that come your way as you serve God. It is not what a lot of people say about a normal trial of life.

V: Correct, suffering with Jesus occurs only when actualizing the faith walk. It comes only in Christian service. It is only in obedience of His commandments. All of the Lord's commandments require us to obey by denying ourselves, picking up our crosses, and following Him in the paths of righteousness and through the valleys of the shadow of death.²

Joe: It is not driving down to get a lottery ticket and having a flat tire?

V: No, that is not the kind of tribulation that we are talking about. I have met Christians who think like that though. I have even seen some church members who have a favorite pew get bent with self-pity because some visitors were sitting in it. To them, that was real tribulation.

PATIENCE THAT BREEDS CHARACTER

When you endure with patience this load that is on you (see Chart 5.4), muscle is being built in you. Also when you begin to see with the eyes of Paul, i.e. the eyes of faith, you can see that there is purpose behind your struggle. That purpose is to glorify God and also to be equipped for future sanctification struggles which will be even bigger and require a lot more muscle.

As you gain the ability to look at glorification way out there in heaven, you will see that there are great rewards being laid up for you in heaven. While you are going through

the struggle, there is then the present confirmation of the Holy Spirit's whispers to you: "You are doing good, keep on doing it. Hang in there; you are doing good. It is not everybody that I can get to sacrifice his or her lives for Me, but you are doing it. You are doing good. You are my friend." Remember that greater love has no man than that he lay down his life for his friend. As you walk a life of sacrificial obedience, you become a friend of Jesus.³

My Brethren, you too need to lay down your lives for Jesus.

WHAT ARE THE THREE "WHENS" OF CHRIST'S DEATH?

Romans

5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

5:7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, . . .

. . . we are Justified by his blood, it is paid for, and we are safely in Jesus . . .

Romans

5:9 . . . we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Once you are justified, you are going all the way to heaven. There is not going to be any punitive wrath from God for you, you see. That punitive wrath is hell and the eternal lake of fire. There will not be any of God's eternal, punitive wrath to fall on you because Jesus took it all on Himself.

Romans

5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his

² Psalms 23.

³ John 15:13.

Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Thus the three “whens” are:

1. Verse 6: When we were yet without strength.
2. Verse 8: While we were yet sinners.
3. Verse 10: When we were enemies.

In verse 10 it says that “if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God.” Thus we were outside salvation, we were enemies without strength, we were sinners, and yet we became reconciled to God. We were reconciled by the death of His Son. Furthermore, it goes on to say, that after being reconciled, “we shall be saved by His life.”

Saved by His life. What does that mean? If you are already reconciled by His blood, what does it mean to be saved by His life? This is an important question and I want to hear your answers to it.

The following is a dialogue about this issue:

Henry: Through His love, we are to live a Christ-like life, to follow Him in the life that He lived.

V: Okay, to follow Him, to live a Christ-like life.

Henry: To be delivered.

V: To be delivered from . . . ?

Henry: . . . sin basically. We read scripture last week that we do not have to sin. It is a choice. We are delivered from the . . .

V: . . . okay, to be delivered from the power of sin . . .

Henry: . . . deliverance from the power of sin through His love. He is the example.

V: Okay . . . by His example.

Henry: If Christ were not living now, death would have conquered, so it is through His life that we are now able to have life of our own.

V: Okay, that “through His life” part is good.

Bob: I was just thinking in terms of a process. We have been saved through Christ, we are being saved through Christ, and we shall be saved through Christ.

V: Okay, that concept of one’s total life as the scope of salvation is good. That is real good!

Henry: He loves us, and we are allowed to put down our hostility against Him, and we, then in return, can love Him. Until we do that, we cannot really love Him.

V: That putting away of our hostility is a good point.

Henry: It is talking about His having risen to be Lord of all.

V: Okay, that universal lordship is real good, and that comes back to what Bob was saying about the tenses of salvation.

Bob: We are freed from the power of sin. Through His life, we are saved continuously in the present in an ongoing saving basis. We are not overtaken by the power of sin.

V: Okay, that point is real good, and what you are basically talking about is a present tense walk. We are being saved (the sanctification part of salvation) as we are walking.

Henry: Because when Jesus was dead, He had a resurrection, a new life, and at our point of justification a death occurs, too, and we receive a resurrection. Right now there is a new life resurrected in us, and that new life is that process of sanctification. Sanctification is the resurrection that we have now. Prior to that resurrection, we were . . .

V: . . . okay, so then before justification we are lost without hope. After justification, we have been raised with Christ. Sanctification is our living the resurrected life.

Henry: We are alive and living by His power. It is His power in His resurrection that is given to us by our faith so that we can walk the path of sanctification. We are living right now in that power.

V: Excellent, that summation really does home in on where we are headed. There is a new power that is available here in this world.

Henry: He lives in us.

V: Right.

Henry: And He lives through us.

V: Okay, Good.

Henry: Somewhere Paul says that each one works out his own salvation through fear and trembling.⁴ That is the sanctification process.

V: That acknowledgment of individualized sanctification is good.

Henry: The problem for me is remembering the power and remembering that He is alive. To live that victorious life is to keep going back to that power and asking God to be alive daily through us. That daily recognition that He is there with His power is what saves me.

V: Your description of the sanctification part of salvation is real good Henry. The stumbling block is caused by not being on guard all the time mentally because your Christian walk always starts or continues with self-denial followed by actions of faith. Faith is this part up in your head. You must get this head part right. You must take every thought captive to Christ, to the mind of Christ. When that fiery dart of giving into self comes into your head, you grab that idea and toss it out fast.

⁴ Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Henry: You can guard against temptation, though. You do not have to guard against faith because when God says to me, "You take this step," and I take that step, and He says, "Step out again," and He says that over and over and over and over, and I do it over and over and over and over, at some point that is no longer faith to me. The first time I did not want to go, but I did it. But at some point that step is no longer faith to me. At some point that step becomes knowledge. I have to be very careful, through knowledge, what steps I take. I might be stepping the wrong way in my own power, and not through faith.

V: That is a good illustration of how obedience becomes habitual, but faith is always faith and not just mere knowledge. Faith is knowledge from God that is acted upon.

Why is there a future tense verb here in the phrase "shall be saved"?

Henry: I think that action occurs after we are justified by faith. Satan continually brings up the things of God in contrast to all the bad things that I have done after justification. I can see my sins and what I am deserving of. That "shall be saved" is that process of Jesus continuing to intercede and say, "But I have paid the price for that sin. Henry did that, but because I am alive I am still saving him from that sin." It is that continual process of keeping us saved.

V: Jesus is forever our effectual High Priest who can intercede for us forever because He lives forever. That intercession is the process done for us all when we wander off the path. However, we are to add to that process our repentance.

Henry: We have to be very careful about what we say about salvation, but I think this is true: if justification happens, sanctification is going to happen. If we have been reconciled

to God, how much more then shall we be saved.⁵

V: Amen!!!!

Henry: The process is going to happen. We are going to reach glory. It is almost as though that when we look at professing Christians and see no sanctification, then we cannot help but wonder where was the justification? This is telling me that if we have been reconciled to God, sanctification is going to happen. Look for the fruit, look for the tribulation, look for that pathway to appear. It is going to happen. So it shall happen. It is future tense because it is out there in the future. It does not matter that it is out there in the future. It is going to happen.

V: Good. Now there is a past tense, a present tense, and a future tense here in salvation.

Henry: On the understanding in the past, present, and future, Christ is not done either. The cross has happened in the past. We are justified at the cross, and then there will be His return in glory. The glorification of all of His saints is a continuation of His purpose, His mission, and His focus for all of us. The future tense is that we all reach glorification when His time is complete. Like you said, we all should now understand that tribulation is a major part of sanctification. We all have been talking about it, but at His return it will be completed . . . we are living a golden age that has not yet completed.

V: Amen. I really like the word that you used, "continuation." It is so important for us to see that we are continuing on that same path that the Lord went on during His incarnation. If God, through His Son, did *ALL* of the work on the cross, then there would be no need for our continuing work during

sanctification. What is our work to be done? It is the continuing work of the *Missio Dei*.

Henry: Some think that there is nothing for us to do.

V: You are so right, Henry. Many think that there is nothing for us to do. The sanctification period for the misguided Christians is a life of being pampered by God while they indulge their flesh.

Do you realize what has happened concerning sanctification? God has chosen you to do His work! Man!! How could He choose somebody like me to do His work? Now I can see Him choosing His own Son to do His work, but He brought me in from outside salvation and said, "Now that I have given you the gift of eternal life in your rebirth as my son, I am giving you the honor of continuing the work of My Only Begotten Son." How can it be? Me? And You? The body of Christ is going to continue to do the work of Christ. The pattern of His work is already in place, it is the model for us to follow, and it is this: all the way through the entire life of suffering, self-denial, submission of our wills to the Lord, we will do the good works of Jesus all the way to glory.

Please note that our lives are going to be filled with mockings, despisings, persecutions, loneliness, and desertion of friends. You are going to be treated just like Jesus was. But unlike everyone else, He will not desert you. When you cry those tears, then reach up and touch them. Only in your sufferings in works of righteousness can you feel the tears of Jesus. But if your sanctification is all big fun and glory for you right now, how can you know the hurt, how can you know the loneliness, how can you touch His tears? But when you do touch his tears, there is going to come a re-affirming touch from Him. In that touch of His understanding love, you will hear Him say, "You are doing good. You are not all alone, you are doing good, My beloved and faithful servant."

⁵ Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Henry: In Hebrews it talks about how God's chastisement proves His love for us, so that when we go through tribulations, we will know and understand that He is affirming His love for us. If He did not love us, He would not care. Perhaps He may even grieve more over Christians who do not ever do any of His work than He may grieve over the ones who do not accept His Son as Savior.

V: I hear you, Henry. The many Christians who do not immerse into their paths of sanctification will cause many to reject Jesus.

We need to remember the requirement for patience when that burden of the *Missio Dei* weighs down on us. Our having to stand under that burden during sanctification is not so that He can say, "I want to smash him down." It is not that! He puts a burden on you in order to grow you up and make you strong. That burden is an unspeakable honor. Hold that burden up, stand under it, and carry it!

We are going to marvel and fall at the feet of Christ when we look at the scars in His hands and realize the extent of His burden of His hanging on that cross while He had the power to have come off of it. But He did not take the easy way out. He stood under it, He stood there in steadfast patience, and he stayed with it to the death. That, my friend, is your example to follow.

Wanda: You know, Dr. Vinson, as you were speaking and I was listening to every one, I was looking at that representation there (Chart 5.1), and I thought about the grace of God right here in our present lives. Here we were. We were enemies, separated from God. He gave His Son in order for us to be reunited, and not only did He give His Son for us to be reunited, but He gave us a path to follow after justification. All we have to do is to follow after Him on that path, and like the gentleman said earlier, we will reach the glory that He has provided for us. All we have to do is just follow that path.

V: Amen! You know that if there were a string that went out that door and around the corner and every which way, and we were told that there is a million dollars at the end of that string, we could and would all go out and follow the string.

Steve: Just like Wanda was saying over there, I was looking at your chart (Chart 5.1) and how we could get justified and into sanctification and go all the way to glorification. All over that chalkboard, everywhere, is God's grace.

V: Amen.

Steve: It is all grace.

V: It is!

Jack: As I was going through the textbook,⁶ it said that Adam's sin caused death, but Christ's obedience brought life. I thought, you know, if our model is Christ's model, then all of our obedience can bring other people life.

V: That is right!!! Jack, I am so glad that you said that. Our walking our assigned paths of sanctification brings life to the lost people. On the other side of the coin . . .

Jack: . . . our disobedience can bring people death.

V: Exactly! That conclusion is right on target. You are going to do the work of Christ, and it is the same work. Your death will bring life, but your life will bring death. That is a hard thing for us to get hold of. That fact is the purpose behind the *kenosis*.

We are flying high in our own self-indulgent lives until we meet the Lord. And then we are given new lives and introduced to what sacrifice means. The rest of our lives is to be sanctification through sacrifice, i.e. we

⁶ The textbooks for the class in the seminary were *Introducing Christian Doctrine* by Millard Erickson and *The Moody Handbook of Theology* by Paul Enns.

journey downward to the bottom of the *kenosis*.

Jill: And we are going to be held accountable for that ministry that we are supposed to do but fail to do.

V: Yes, because many are going to suffer because of what we left undone (our sins of omission).

ROMANS 5:12-14: DESCRIPTION OF THE FALL

Note to the reader: Please make sure that you are rested and alert while you study this part because the fall and its reversal are big-time difficult to understand. You should be aware that we discussed this issue without coming to a definitive conclusion about the total doctrine of the Fall of mankind.

1. By one man sin entered, and death by sin. Romans 5:12.

Before the sin of Adam, the world and all of God's creatures existed in their pristine state. Even when Adam and Eve were first created as a part of the world, there was no sin and death in them. However, when this one man sinned, death entered via that sin, and it penetrated the world. What exists now is sin in the world and death passing upon all men. That sin and death sentence which was passed on us all was caused by Adam.

2. Death passed upon all because all sinned. Romans 5:12.
3. Prior to the Law sin was in the world, but it was not imputed: Romans 5:13.
4. However, death reigned prior to the Law. Romans 5:14.

Imputation

Sin came into the world, and embedded in that sin was death. Sin and death penetrated the world throughout and passed upon all men because all sinned.

Please see that sin is not imputed until after the Law was given. We have then, before the Law, death of all because all sinned. The idea that death occurred to all because they sinned gives rise to the question of infant sin and death. This is hard stuff, and it harkens back to the doctrine of imputation (the word impute is mentioned in Romans 5:13). When speaking of imputation, we must address this very first occurrence right here with Adam.

When we came into salvation through justification, we had the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. The doctrine of imputation connects the doctrine of justification all the way back to the Fall of Adam. Some theologians, like perhaps you when you study on this, need to start linking that together and developing a full doctrine of imputation. We are just touching on it tonight, but Paul is putting it on the table. I have studied on this thing, and studied and studied, and it is just too big for me. I cannot get a good grip on it. I am going to give you what I have, then you can take that and develop it more fully because there is a lot of road out there to be traveled.

The pivotal phrase occurs in verse 12. *Eph-ho* is the phrase that has caused a lot of difficulties for translators. The phrase comes from *epi* and *ho*. *Epi* means upon (think of epidermis the skin upon the body, the body covering), and *ho* is a pronoun which means "whom." *Eph-ho* is a phrase which combines the two words and means "upon whom." However, the phrase is many times translated "in whom" when it is related to people. Another way this phrase is sometimes translated is "because" or "for that." I am not sure what your Bible says there in verse 12.

Student responses: Some said: "Because!" Others said: "For that!"

Romans

5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so

death passed upon all men, *for that* all have sinned: KJV

Can you begin to see what the argument is? If it is “because” or “for that” all have sinned, then you are responsible for your own death because you have sinned, but if it is “in whom” all have sinned, then it is an imputed death from Adam in the same way that we receive an imputed righteousness and life from Jesus.

In the debate, Augustine was the one who said that it is “in whom.” Many of the other church fathers held that it was “for that.” The debate began to rage. Is it “in whom”? If it is, then the minute you are born you are “in whom.” If you are in Adam, then you are a sinner who must die. If it is a “for that,” it would mean that after you are born and live a while, you sin and become a sinner who must die. There is a doctrinal connection to infant baptism in this debate.

Beth: Do we not carry the original sin though? Many of these things about guilt and sin cannot be pulled apart. Is that what we are trying to understand?

V: Is sin apart from guilt or does it necessarily have guilt with it? The scripture declared that the Law was required for sin to be imputed.

Beth: We fail either way whether we do it or . . .

V: . . . yes, but when do you fail?

Homer: What difference does it make?

V: It makes a lot of difference to the Roman Catholics who practice infant baptism.

Carl: Guilt comes from the Spirit, is that not right?

V: No, guilt comes from the Law.

Betty: Guilt comes from knowledge of the Law, but reconciliation is still of the Spirit.

V: We are not talking about guilt as a sentiment, we are talking about guilt as a legal fact.

Joe: A result.

Betty: But that knowledge of the difference of good and evil is from Adam, right?

V: OK, Betty, concerning knowledge, if guilt is imputed, it would come to us at our birth. Your question then becomes: *do we have that knowledge of guilt at birth?*

Ted: I did not have to train my kids to be sinners. They figured it out readily. We all just did it, and we still do.

There was a chorus of amens from several students.

V: Some do it more than others (smile). (Much laughter around the room.)

I am going to break the discussion into the two options of interpreting the phrase as “because” and “in whom.” We will also discuss a third option which will combine the other two options.

Option 1: Because

Let me walk through these possibilities of *eph-ho*. If each sinned and became guilty which would be the “because” and “for that” option, then death was imputed, but guilt is actualized. Did we not have over here that sin and death entered the world, sin permeated the entire world, and death passed upon all men prior to the Law? That meant, then, that death was imputed. Are you following me?

Death is imputed, but sin is done by each person under this option. Thus when the Law comes into the situation, then guilt is actualized when it is associated with the sin. Then in this scenario of the “because” or “for that” translation, each person sinned and became guilty of that sin because the Law forbade that sin. The guilt, therefore, comes with the will of actually putting into practice the sin, and it has to be after the Law was given.

Pete: Post our “knowledge” of the Law?

V: Very good question, Pete. In our nation’s laws, it is common practice that ignorance of the law is no excuse.

Mary: Well, later on He says that the Law was added that trespass might increase.

V: Yes, and we will get to that in a minute, but Law becomes our tutor for giving us the knowledge of our need for salvation. The Law by coming to us in conjunction with the act of sinning informs us of our guilt.

See in the scripture how that we sinned prior to the Law. Death and sinning were both prior to the Law. When the Law comes in—WOW! The knowledge of that sin and its resulting guilt skyrockets.

You remember last week when we looked at the discovery of our lostness? The scenario was that you thought that you were standing in a safe spot, and then the Lord declared that everybody standing outside of Him was going to hell. Then, all of a sudden, when we discovered that everyone standing in the same spot with us was outside of Christ . . . Whoo! Woe is me! I am headed for hell! I need to be in Christ to be safe! That is what the Law does.

Option 2: In Whom

Let us look now at option number 2 the “in whom” translation. In this version, each person is in Adam. Death and sin are both imputed in this option.

Ted: You cannot have guilt until you have the Law. So we understand that the Law makes the sinner guilty.

V: Okay, now, think with me. What if Law enables you to “know” your guilt? Thus could there still be the imputed guilt without our knowledge of it?

Pete: You are still guilty even if you do not know it.

V: That is right.

Pete: Even with our lack of knowledge, the law says ignorance is no excuse.

Joe: Yesterday in church, we studied how that scripture says that humans are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners. I heard Adrian Rodgers the other night on the radio, and he said the same thing about liars.

V: They lie because they are liars, not that they are liars because they lie. We sin because we are sinners.

Option 3: Combination of In Whom and Because

Think with me here for a minute. Another scenario would be to hold to the two versions described above but stage them in there chronologically in relation to the Law’s entrance. Imputed sin would be prior to the Law. In this scenario, you would actualize your sin and become guilty without knowing of your guilt. Prior to the Law, each sinned and became guilty, and death was imputed. Where does the death come from? Does it come from the sin? Does it come from guilt? Does it come from “knowledge” of sin?

Homer: The Bible says that the wages of sin is death.⁷

V: So it comes from sin. It is a wage of sin.

Homer: Sin is sin whether you know it is sin or not.

V: Exactly. And that is the center of this debate over the translation of the *eph-ho* phrase. Prior to the Law, the people were sinning, but until the Law came in they did not know their guilt. When the Law came in they said, “We are in a heap of trouble here!” It is because of the Law that you know you are in trouble and that you need help. Other-

⁷ Romans 6:23.

wise, why would you call on the Lord for salvation?

Jack: We have never had to think about this issue because we have always just assumed it in the traditional way.

V: And we keep on doing what we have been doing without knowing why. That sounds like lazy Christians.

Beth: You are saying that the people did not have knowledge of sin before the Law?

V: That is something of what I am thinking, but I could be wrong. I think that they did not know of sin's guilt unless they knew of the corresponding Law that creates the guilt.

Beth: God told them to not eat of that tree.

V: God's prohibition foreshadowed the Law as a simple type of Law, and Adam rebelled against God's prohibition and ate. Thus he knew of his guilt.

Bob: But Adam knew that he had sinned, and the Law was not there then.

V: Certainly the sin was before the entrance of the formal Law of God, but there was that known disobedience of God's prohibition (a violation of a microcosm of the Law).

Carl: He hid because he was guilty, and there was no Law then.

V: Yes. See, I believe that a special law existed for Adam in the form of one single prohibition. It forbade the eating of the fruit of that tree. Adam knew that he was crossing the boundary when he ate, . . .

Carl: . . . and he knew then that he was guilty.

Joe: He would not have hidden if he did not know he was guilty.

V: From the time of Adam to the time of the Law's entrance, there was no Law, but there was sin.

Ted: And also there were the consequences of sin because man died before the Law. Sin and death were present. Adam died as well as all others.

V: What did we say about these four descriptions of the Fall at the beginning of this issue, the four rules? By one man, sin and death entered. Death passed upon all "because all sinned" or "in whom all sinned." Prior to the Law, sin was in the world, but it was not imputed. Death reigned prior to the Law even though the sin was not imputed.

So, where did the death come from?

Jill: Sin.

V: Whose sin?

Jill: Adam's sin.

V: So then, Adam sinned, and you die.

Jill: Right.

V: Then death is imputed. Death has to be imputed if Adam sinned, but we die. Are we coming to an agreement here? . . . Yes? Or no?

Betty: I have a problem. Say what you said again.

V: Okay. Adam sinned, and we died. For the purpose of clarification, let us go back a ways: Adam sinned, and before the Law entered, everyone became subject to death. Adam sinned, but the people following him died. Why did they die?

If they died because Adam sinned, then death is imputed to them. They did not cause their own death. It was imputed to them in the same way that we did not cause our own righteousness. Our righteousness is imputed to us. The terrible issue of the imputation of death brings us to the glorious issue of imputation concerning life.

Oscar: I think the knowledge of the sin was in there to some degree because of the fact that man passes his knowledge on down. Adam would have passed on the knowledge of sin.

Bob: Just the knowledge itself would impact humanity since then. It would mean that we die because of Adam's deed. Man has knowledge of Adam's sin. Thus mankind is cast to sin, and sin is death. Sin and death are a residual of Adam's sin, and each individual is exposed to his own sin. We are just saying that all these people died because of Adam. The original fall cast sin and death on them, but we each have that knowledge. We are like Adam, and we are of Adam. So, what you are saying is that imputed means that all those died because of Adam. Well, they died because they have sin. I am not saying that Adam ate the apple and thousands died. The knowledge came to humanity. Humanity is cursed.

Ted: We are all born with the knowledge of good and evil?

V: That is a good point, Ted. Does every man, including infants, possess the congenital knowledge of good and evil because it is written on their consciences?

Ted: We have sin in us. It is not taught. The idea of imputed is that . . . I am not dying because of Adam. I am dying because of me.

V: If death should come from the "knowledge" of good and evil, then one would be dying because of one's own knowledge, not because of Adam's.

Tim: The eating of the fruit by Adam and Eve started the whole thing, but we are held accountable even then.

Ted: What did we gain from the tree? The knowledge of good and evil?

V: I think we did get the capability to know good and evil. Just like somebody said

a while ago, they did not have to teach their kids how to be bad.

Steve: The first thing out of a kid's mouth is "mine." Selfishness.

V: Yes, selfishness. That comes from Adam's fallen nature.

Pete: You do not have to teach a person evil. A kid does not have the knowledge of good **and** evil. My kid has the knowledge of evil.

V: I hear you, Pete. We have to teach our kids good and acceptable behavior.

Oscar: Have you ever seen your kid say, "Mine," and look at you questioningly?

Ted: So you are looking at humanity in a child's stage, prior to the Law. Prior to understanding the Law there is sin in the child's being. Is that individual born in sin because of the sin of Adam? Or is the sin committed by the individual? That is what you are asking?

V: Yes, that is what I am asking. Now if it is the sin of Adam, then sin is imputed, and with it death is imputed but not guilt because babies who die do not go to hell. Guilt comes only with the understanding of the Law. I am open to discussing the idea about the congenital knowledge of "good and evil," but I am not open to discussing congenital knowledge of the Law. If knowledge of the Law is congenital and guilt follows with it, then that would suggest that the little babies need to be saved somehow. Furthermore, in my theological studies, I have concluded that the Catholics believe that sin **and** **guilt** are imputed, and thus the babies are hell bound unless they get saved by the church through infant baptism.

Pete: They do not have that knowledge of good and evil, they are only born with that knowledge of evil . . .

V: . . . okay Pete, if that is the case, do we have to wait until they get some knowledge of good because they come in *knowing only evil*?

Sybil: They are born with that sin nature. The ability to live in sin, they are born with that.

V: But they do not have the other side?

Sybil: They are also born with the ability to do good, but it is what they learn that makes the difference. When they are at the point where they understand, then guilt comes in. Is not that right?

V: That age of accountability is a good point to consider.

Henry: Dr. Vinson, when Adam knew that he had done wrong, did he not hide? Was that not evidence of guilt? Have you ever noticed how a little child hides?

V: You bet! around the corner and under the bed.

Betty: When they do something wrong, they know that they have done wrong. Where does that come from?

V: The sin nature comes from Adam, but I question whether a child is born with the “knowledge” of what is wrong.

Oscar: Did not the Law point out specific sins though?

V: This is a good point, Oscar.

Carl: That is something we need to think about, too. The Law pointed out something specific.

Henry: But that specific sin was not the first sin. Before that first sin, there was no sin.

V: But death reigned after that first sin anyway. So, Adam is connected to our death.

Henry: No doubt about it.

Steve: He is connected to my death when I did not have any understanding of Law.

Like you say, we did not know right. He is bound in there somewhere to our problem, but we are still responsible.

V: That is right, and it says, “All have sinned.” Upon all death is imputed, but sin is done by each and every one. Every one of us has sinned. But where is the guilt. Is the guilt imputed, or is it actualized.

Steve: The point that I think that Paul is making, with which I agree, is that we all have choice.

V: That is right, Steve.

Homer: We can choose to remain in the sin that is passed down or imputed, or you can choose to follow Christ and change. Even David talks about being brought forth in sin as an infant, being conceived in sin by his mother. I think sin is there the moment you are conceived, and then there is a point where you are given a choice, and that choice is between good and evil. The Gospel presents a choice between justification and staying in the sin that has continued from generation to generation.

V: Yes. Now Pelagius came along and said, in opposition to Augustine, that man is born saved, and they have the ability to retain their salvation.

Jill: Is that like starting our class with an “A”?

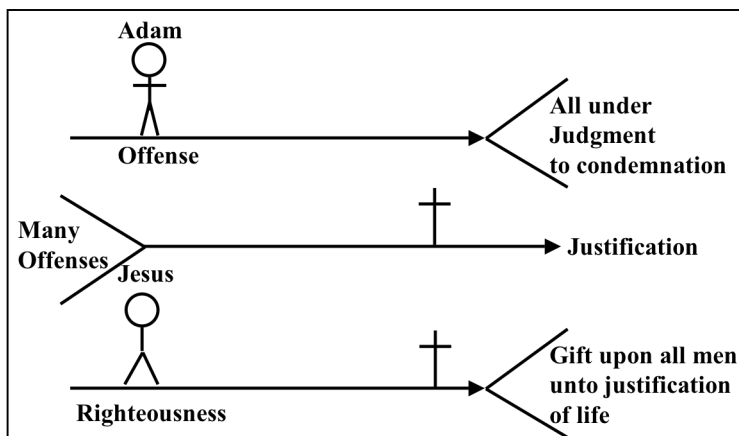
V: Yes, starting with an “A,” and not getting any deductions from it.

Beth: In all of this, and in what you were saying, sir, what we have not done here is just to carry it from here to the cross.

V: Okay, good, we shall proceed to the next point.

Note: All of the preceding was describing the fall of Adam. It is very difficult to understand, and the students and I were trying to understand by thinking out loud in dialog. We did not have enough time to develop a

definitive statement on the inter-relationships of sin, death, knowledge, guilt, Law, imputation, and Adam's role in all of them. Suffice it to say that neither I nor any of my students believed that infants who die go to hell. Also none of us believed in infant baptism. We were all challenged, however, to study more of the Scriptures in an effort to arrive at a definitive theological statement on these connecting issues.



ROMANS 5:15-21: THE FALL'S REVERSAL

In the Fall, death came to all by the offense of one. In the reversal of the Fall, grace came to all through the righteousness of Jesus. This process is described in the following steps:

1. The offense of one brought all under judgment and to condemnation (see the top diagram in Chart 5.5). Romans 5:18.

Romans

5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one [judgment came] upon all men to condemnation; . . .

That condemnation links us back to Adam. Adam is a bad guy here; Adam fixed us up with condemnation.

Joe: Achan's sin caused defeat for Israel's army going into battle . . .

V: . . . Achan sinned and many died. So through the offense of one, many came under judgment all the way to condemnation.

2. Many offenses came unto justification (see the middle diagram in Chart 5.5). Romans 5:16.

Romans

5:16 And not as [it was] by one that sinned, [so is] the gift: for the judgment [was] by one to condemnation, but the free gift [is] of many offences unto justification.

Chart 5.5

3. The righteousness of one brought all unto justification (see the lower diagram in Chart 5.5).

Romans

5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one [judgment came] upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [the free gift came] upon all men unto justification of life.

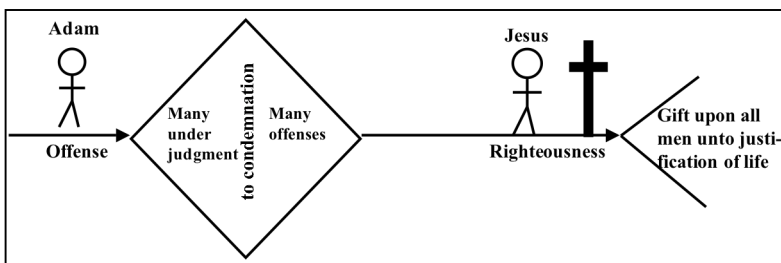
You can see how the Fall starts off with a single person and then opens up to include all (see the top diagram in Chart 5.5). The reversal of the Fall is the bringing of all unto the righteousness of a single person (see the middle figure in Chart 5.5). The third figure in Chart 5.5 is an expansion of the results of the middle diagram into an individuality within unity.

These three diagrams in Chart 5.5 can be put together, and you can then begin to see what is going on here with condemnation through Adam and justification through Jesus (Chart 5.6).

4. Law entered to make the offense abound or be magnified, but grace is magnified even more by guilt. Romans 5:20.

Romans

5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the

**Chart 5.6**

offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

See it is not the sin that magnifies grace. It is the guilt known by the Law that magnifies grace. When you see your guilt that is when you understand something about the forgiveness of justification. The sin that abounds into guilt magnifies the grace. That is why when you have been forgiven of much, you exalt the Lord's Grace. If you have been forgiven of nothing, it is no big deal. Guilt then magnifies grace, but it is the Law that magnifies the guilt. We need this Law in order to show others and ourselves that we are guilty and need to repent.

5. Sin reigns unto death, but grace through righteousness reigns unto life. Romans 5:21.

Romans

5:21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Chart 5.6, we put together all of the results of the "two Adams."⁸ In the first Adam, all mankind comes under judgment. All of the sinners achieve their individuality in the extent of their sinning. Thus, they will receive varying levels of punishment.

In the second Adam (Jesus Christ), all men come unto justification. Those who are

⁸ Also to be considered in the issue of the two Adams are their effecting ontological sin and righteousness and the Law's effecting sinful and righteous behavior.

in the second Adam, get their individuality expressed through obedience. Thus they will enjoy their new lives in eternity in heaven by receiving rewards in heaven that correspond to their obedience. The people who do not receive justification from the second Adam will go to the lake of fire for eternity and receive punishments corresponding to their deeds.

ROMANS 6: FREEDOM

What does baptism teach about salvation?

Romans 6:1-10.

Another way of stating this question would be: What was Paul's argument in Romans 6:1-10 where he uses baptism to illumine the Christian's experience of salvation?

1. You cannot continue in sin. Romans 6:1-4
 - a. Because you are baptized into the Lord's death. Romans 6:3
 - b. Because you are raised into His life. Romans 6:4

A dead man cannot sin. You know that a dead man cannot even be tempted. By being baptized into the Lord's death, your new man is no longer available to live the carnal life.

Concerning life in this world, you are to be unavailable for achieving your own goals and dreams as defined by the wisdom of this world. However, you are supposed to make yourself available for living a heavenly life in which the goals and dreams are those of the Lord's *Missio Dei*.⁹

We are to lay up treasure in heaven by pursuing the Lord's *Missio Dei*. We are not to lay up treasure in this world by pursuing our own goals. This simple truth is easy to say, but it is most difficult to do.

⁹ Luke 19:10.

2. Our old man has been crucified. Romans 6:6.

Romans

6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also [in the likeness] of [his] resurrection:

6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

3. We have been freed from sin and to righteousness because we have died with Christ and shall live with Him. Romans 6:7-8.

Romans

6:7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

6:8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

4. Since Christ died and arose from the dead, death no longer has dominion over Him. Romans 6:9.

Romans

6:9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

5. Christ died unto sin but lives unto God. Romans 6:10

Romans

6:10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

The Lord's death-unto-sin-and-life-unto-God model is for us too. That is what baptism teaches us. We are freed from sin because of

our going down into death. In baptism, our going down into the water symbolizes that you are identifying yourself with Christ in His death.

That baptismal rite is symbolic, you see, and it teaches you something. It is a proclamation. By going down into the water, you symbolize being buried with Christ in His death, and when you come up out of the water, you symbolize being raised into His resurrected life.

That symbol of baptism is a powerful proclamation that sin no longer has dominion over you. Instead of your own life of sin, you have proclaimed via your own baptism that you have chosen a new life in Him. That new choice is what we are going to look at next.

Romans 6:11-23: Can you choose your Lord?

Another way of expressing this question is: What does it mean to say, as Paul does in Romans 6, that the Christian is free from the power of sin and free to obey God?

1. Do not let sin reign in your mortality. Romans 6:11-12.

Roman

6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

This commandment says, "Do not let sin reign over you, and do not let sin be your boss by making you, while you are mortal, walk around under its control. Reckon yourself dead to sin."

The reason that you have the authority not to let sin control you is because you have been delivered from the power of sin. Redemption, the salvation received by going through the cross on Chart 5.6, provides a breaking of sin's dominion over you. In justi-

fication, the physical resurrection to eternal life in heaven has been assured. Physical death occurs only on this side of the resurrection. The resurrection that we experience in this life is that of being raised to a new spiritual life to walk in the sanctification period of salvation.

Sanctification is walking the resurrected life, and that is the reason for the words “shall be saved.” Salvation is past, present, and future. You are in the presence of God and His power when walking through your pilgrimage of sanctification. Sin does not have dominion over you because it has been broken through your death of the old man.

Your resurrection with Christ is to live in the same power of deliverance that broke death’s grip over Him. Sin and death have no dominion over Him. He conquered death when He arose up out of the grave. He conquered death, and He conquered sin and all of life’s lusts and temptations. He conquered all of that. When He rose up anew, He arose as Lord, Boss, Master, Owner of the Universe.

That powerful resurrection life of our Lord Jesus is the life that you have been given. Through justification, you pass into that kind of life through the resurrection of your new man. Your passage from the life of the old man into the life of the new man allows you to live a new spiritual life in which sin has no more dominion over you.

However, since our free wills have not been taken away, we can still choose whom to serve. “But,” He said, “do not let sin reign over you.” You have a will. Every one of you has a will. You can choose to let sin reign over you even though it has no authority or power to do so. When a Christian does this, it is an embarrassment to Jesus. He has paid with His life and bought for you this new life out from under sin’s dominion. When serving sin during your sanctification period, you are turning your back to your new life

and saying, “I would like to go back to the old way.”

2. Yield not your body as an instrument of sin. Romans 6:13a.

Romans

6:13 Neither yield ye your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: . . .

3. Yield yourself to God. Romans 6:13b.

Romans

6:13 . . . but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness unto God.

You have a choice. You can yield yourself to sin or you can yield yourself to God. Understand that you are going to yield either to sin or to righteousness. There is no neutral ground.

4. Sin has no dominion over the person who is under grace. Romans 6:14-15.

Romans

6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

6:15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

5. You are the servant of whom ye obey. Romans 6:16-23.

6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

6:18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

6:20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things [is] death.

6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

6:23 For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here are some additional scriptures referencing our slavery to one of two masters. Everybody chooses a master and is a slave to the master to whom he submits his will.

Matthew

6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

John 8:34

8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

1 John 3:7-11

3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

Galatians 4:9-11

4:9 But now, after that ye have known God,

or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

4:10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

4:11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

You see the whole Galatian church had turned from sound doctrine by changing the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith into a works doctrine. A whole church had changed to a doctrine that “seemed” more reasonable to their flesh!

Galatians 5:1

5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

You can imagine this: you come to the Lord while all bound up in sin whereby it has complete dominion over you. In that dominion, you are bound, your hands are chained, your legs are chained, and both chains are locked to a chain around your waist. You are also chained to a big, heavy iron ball that you have to drag along behind you. You can hardly even move. You come in this torment of bondage to the Lord, and He, in His wonderful mercy and grace, breaks all those chains loose, and you are free at last, and you are made to be able to follow Him. You have freedom.

While you are frolicking around in your freedom from the dominion of sin, you glance over at many of the saints in your church and see tired drudgery. They ask you why you are acting so wrongly and out of control. You try to explain that you are free in Christ. Then they say: “Well, you are acting strange. You need to get down here and act like us. Let us see, well, the first thing you need is some handcuffs of our expectations.” “Oh, yeah, get me some handcuffs.” “You now need some leg irons of traditions.” You get those and all the other religious entanglements, and

then here you are entangled once again in total bondage. Paul says, “Do not go back to re-entanglement. You have the free will to choose whom or what you are going to serve.

1 Corinthians 7:23.

7:23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

This verse is talking about traditions of men and all of the expectations that people can put on you. Dear friend, you are free to follow Jesus. Beware! The first thing that traditional saints will say to the newborn Christian is: “No, do not follow Him like that! Follow Him like we do over here.” The next thing you know you have re-entangled yourself. You are no longer following the Lord, you are following the traditions of men, and you are entangled therein once again. You cannot minister by denying yourself, picking up your cross, and following Jesus. You cannot do anything except what they tell you to do.

My friend, you must throw those shackles away and get up and **follow Jesus!** Jesus is Lord! Anybody that gets between you and the Lord is out of place. Follow Jesus personally and Him alone!

Mary: Can Jesus be your Savior without being your Lord?

V: Yes. You are choosing your Lord every minute of the day. You are supposed to be choosing to serve Jesus as your Lord. But who is your Lord? Whom or what do you serve? That is who or what your Lord is.

Mary: There must be action.

V: Yes, there will always be action in service. Remember, there is no such thing as neutrality.

Mary: You walk down the aisle, and you give your life to Jesus, and then you just go and serve Satan for the rest of your life?

V: That giving your life to Jesus was not a true gift. Your serving is your giving.

Mary: That answers my question.

Ted: Does not that fall into that strange category in which the new birth really happened, but the sanctification period went haywire? No question that the sanctification options are offered by the Lord to every newborn saint, but failure to choose the Lord's will often happens as well.

V: Yes, Ted. Class, never forget that there can be a spiral down for every Christian. In this case, Mary, there is a spiral down, and just because this saint is not spiraling up does not mean that he is not a saint. Remember that there was a bunch of Christians saved in Galatia who later bought into a false doctrine of circumcision's being the essential gateway to salvation. They led others the wrong way.

Two terrible things occurred in Galatia. First, the others were led away from true salvation and towards a salvation by works. Second, the Galatian Christians were spiraling downwards in their sanctification.

Jack: Then it is a question again of rewards. They are going to be there in heaven, but . . .

V: . . . there will be loss of rewards.

In sanctification there are some evidences of a true justification, primary of which is confession. The first evidence that is of the work category is baptism, but it is a passive work. It is not an active work in which you go and do it. Since you allow it to be done to you, it is a work of submission.

But then after true justification there is no guarantee that the saint will behave properly. A born-again person can always go in the wrong direction and make a fool of himself and embarrass the Lord. Peter did it in Ephesus.

Ted: And he repented.

V: And repentance is what we are all called to do when we stumble. It is my opinion that if a person can walk knowingly

and continuously in sin throughout his life and not come to repentance, then that person is not saved. He never was.

But many of us stumble and do all kinds of bad stuff for which we have to repent. If somebody should look at me at my lowest moment, they might say, “He is not even

saved.” The problem with all of us is that our behavior does not always match up with our justification. Sanctification is a span of time for making wise choices. It is the period in which we are free to choose whom we will serve

Chapter Questions

1. What are the characteristics of a saved person?
2. What is the chain of events that begins with tribulation?
3. What are the three “whens” of Christ’s death?
4. Describe the fall of man. Romans 5:12-14.
5. Describe the fall’s reversal. Romans 5:15-21.
6. What does baptism teach about salvation? Or, What was Paul’s argument in Romans 6:1-10 where he uses baptism to illumine the Christian’s experience of salvation?
7. Can you choose your Lord? Romans 6:11-23. Or, what does it mean to say, as Paul does in Romans 6, that the Christian is free from the power of sin and free to obey God?
8. What is the doctrine of imputation?

Chapter 6

THE LAW, THE FLESH, AND THE SPIRIT

ROMANS 7:
THE LAW OF DEATH

We will start off with the issue of death, how to die, and what you are freed from at the point of death. Paul uses death within the marriage analogy to teach us something here about death and the Law.

Roman

7:1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

Next, he connects death to the marriage analogy.

Roman

7:2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to [her] husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of [her] husband.

7:3 So then if, while [her] husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, [even] to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Justification: Death in Order to Live

At the point of justification (see Chart 6.1), we become dead to the Law, and we become married to Christ. In using the mar-

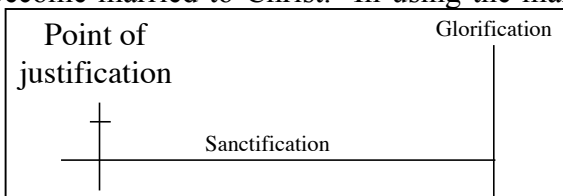


Chart 6.1

riage analogy, our connection to the Law is like being legally bound to a husband. Before death, you are bound to the law. When you die the Law ceases to have dominion over you. When the husband dies he ceases to have dominion over the bride.

However, Paul's analogy goes further than the end of the first marriage. It goes to a new marriage. By going through the point of justification, you become married to another husband, and the dominion, then, passes from the Law to the Lord. Having been justified you are no longer under the Law; you are under the Lord.

Sanctification: The Time for Fruit Bearing

The change of dominion from the Law to the Lord will cause you to produce a new kind of fruit. That fruit is described in verse 4 as fruit unto God. The Lord is going to use you to bring forth fruit unto God.

There are all kinds of fruit, you see, but if it is unto God, it is going to be a fruit that glorifies Him. Submission to the Lord will glorify God.

We have this misunderstanding about branches and fruit. We think that God wants many branches (see Chart 6.2 next page), and so as we remember from the book of John, God says that He prunes off fruitless branches and casts them away because they are unprofitable.

In our churches, you see, He prunes off the dead branches because they are fruitless, but we run over there, grab those fruitless branches, get some glue and tape, and bind them into our tree because we want a giant tree with lots of branches. For the local church of today, the name of the game is lots of branches. We get them all taped in there, just everywhere, all withered and hanging

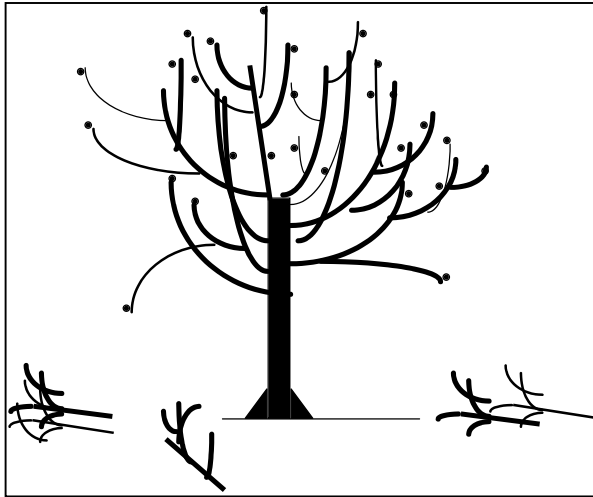


Chart 6.2

down. We just get busy trying to keep our branches. As soon as God throws them down, we are exhausting ourselves trying to put them back in place. When we get enough dead branches taped back on we say, “We have to get into a building program. We have more branches than our tree can hold. When you pastors get that giant tree, you can strut around and say, “Look at my big tree. Man! I need to teach a church growth seminar.”

God does not say anything about having all these branches. As a matter of fact He prunes branches.¹ Because you know what He wants? Fruit! Fruit! It is better to have two or three little branches laden down with fruit than it is to have a fruitless tree filled with branches. Pastors and Sunday school teachers and ministers need to understand that it is fruit, fruit unto God that is God’s focus, not branches at any cost.

I must warn you of something: when you start taping those dead branches on your tree, it will weigh down your trunk, and the original branches that would have borne fruit will become fruitless as well. What we need to do is get on the same wavelength with God.

¹ John 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast [them] into the fire, and they are burned.

When you go through justification, it is to spring forth as a new branch. When you go through sanctification, it is to produce fruit. Sanctification is the fruit-bearing time of life. Fruit bearing is what God desires of you and the whole tree—if you are under the Lord, you will bring forth fruit unto God.

Some Christians think, “I am bringing my fruit by going to church regularly. I already have the Lord’s approval because of my church attendance. However, when not in church, I am going to pursue the American dream of wealth, status, and power. I can do my own thing on my own time, because I am the priest of my family, and I know all this stuff. I am a perfect theologian.” That type of Christian can easily become a fruitless branch, a dead weight to the tree, needing to be pruned, to be cast away, and burned by men.

This is some serious stuff, my friends. We need to get off this business where we think that a giant tree is so much better than a fruitful tree. Our tendency is to pursue and pacify the Christian described above in order to keep him coming so that we can tap into his material resources. We make him a deacon and put him in charge of something in which all he has to do is come to a monthly meeting in order to discharge his responsibilities.

Jesus did something that very few of us have the courage to do. He put His whole life into 12 men. That means He focused on quality instead of quantity. Contrary to the Lord’s focus on quality, we would rather have quantity. Most pastors think that they are too valuable to put themselves into just 12. Sad to say, but what gets respect in the conventions is nickels and noses.

There is a huge and serious need for us to develop some real quality through discipleship in ourselves and in our people. We need to move toward fruit bearing, not just ear

tickling, not just entertainment, and not just a new Gnosticism.²

Carl: I am kind of confused. Are you saying that if you have members who are not producing and who when they get to where they are not regular, you are just letting them fall off? Are you saying that you should do that? Just put your energy into people that are working and serving the Lord?

V: Yes if certain circumstances are present. If they demonstrate a lack of commitment to the Lord, I am saying that when the Lord prunes the branches off, we should not use up too much of our energy and resources trying to get the dead branches to come back. Test their commitment. If it is there and extraordinary circumstances are preventing their assimilation into the fruit-bearing team, then keep on working with them. But if they are not committed, then issue a challenge and then leave them be.

Jesus simply asked the 12 whether they were going to leave off following Him when the multitudes left (the multitude was not committed to Jesus; they just wanted bread). Jesus did not beg anyone. He simply gave them God's Word with all its commandments in it and left it to the people to receive or reject it. Those who were receptive to the Word stayed with Him. Those who were not receptive to the Word because they wanted material bread instead of spiritual bread left Him. Those who wanted a political Messiah instead of a spiritual Messiah left Him. Those who already had the positions of religious and political power and wealth that they wanted rejected Him.

Oscar Thompson's pattern for growing a church was really good.³ He likened the church to a big vat of milk. He used the

Word of God as a paddle, not a spanking paddle but a stirring paddle. He would stir and stir and stir, and some of that milk just is not going to turn to cream, but some of it does. He would just stir and stir and stir, and after a while the cream would rise to the top. Then he would get another smaller pot, and he would scoop the cream over into that smaller pot. Then he would get two paddles, and he would stir both pots. Then as the cream began to refine in the smaller pot, he would fetch that cream of the cream out of the pot and give each of them a paddle and say, "Here is a paddle, there is a pot. Get over there and stir that one." Pots and stirrers are added as needed. Most of the pots would be outside the walls of the church and the stirrers would go to the different pots based on their spiritual gifts.

Oscar's whole focus, you see, was moving his church to changing the world by fruit bearing. There will always be some at the bottom of the vat that never become fruit bearers. He does not throw them out of the church because that is God's job. That is not our job. He makes the effort to bring over the cream, and then get the cream to go to work and do that same kind of stirring. They stir and stir and stir, then say, "Hey, I have some cream over here." He will respond, "Good, scoop it over here into this new pot," and they do. Then he has another pot and another stirrer. Everybody is just working away. By the time you get out to the third generation pots, you have some big-league Christians who can get out and do some fellowship of the Lord, lead some ministries, or even start another church, some missions, or all kinds of good stuff. That is the idea.

Fruit unto Death

Romans

7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

² The current emphasis on knowledge without its necessary application

³ Oscar taught me in my first course in Evangelism at Southwestern Seminary. His textbook which he wrote was the book on Concentric Circles of Evangelism.

Over against that good fruit which is unto God, there is fruit of the flesh unto death. The kinds of fruit correspond to the “law of the harvest”⁴ in which when you sow to the wind, you will reap a whirlwind, and when you sow to the flesh, you will reap death. The person outside justification has only one kind of fruit that he can bear, and that is a fruit of the flesh because that is all he is. He is in the flesh. Prior to justification he is under the Law, and if he is bringing fruit under the law, guess what that means—death. He is in a trap from which he needs to be rescued. Somebody needs to tell him that both an escape and also a new life are available to him under the Lord, not under the Law, but in the Spirit, and not in the flesh.

Law Provides Death, and Spirit Provides Life

Romans

7:6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not [in] the oldness of the letter.

Moving across the justification line is done in the spirit, not in the flesh because the Christian has been delivered from the Law. Once the Christian reaches the sanctification process, he will serve in the newness of Spirit, not the oldness of the letter. Now what does that mean?

Joe: The letter kills, and the Spirit gives life.

V: Okay, why does the letter kill?

Joe: Because nobody can keep the Law.

⁴ Hosea 8:7 For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up. Galatians 6:7-9 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

V: Okay, because the letter is a law, and the Law is for a person who is not in the Spirit. The Law restrains the flesh. Do you understand that the purpose of the Law is to promote the good and restrain the evil? That is what law does. That is what man-made civil and criminal laws are supposed to do as well. Here lately, our civil and criminal laws get upside down, and promote evil, and restrain good. If human law is going to line up with God’s Law, it is supposed to restrain evil and promote good.

The letter of the law is to restrain the flesh. Now you Christians are in the Spirit, and so that means that you should be under the Lordship of Jesus. In your cases it is the Spirit who guides you, not the letter if it so be that you are not in the flesh. The letter is for restraining evil. However, when you are walking after Jesus, guess what? You are not doing evil; you are doing good.

Sybil: I know that before I was saved, my heart broke over my condition when I was reading the Old Testament and thought, “Man, I am a jerk. I am doing this wrong.” That is what really convicted me. Now it is different for me because I want to do what the Lord does. I want to do what He wants me to do. I am still fighting, but the battle is not like it was.

V: It is not like it was because there was no winning while in the flesh.

Sybil: There was no way to win. I wanted to win.

V: So the letter convicts by bringing you to the knowledge of your enslavement to the flesh which leads to death. But the Spirit uplifts and frees you into doing what the Lord wants to do.

Romans

7:7 What shall we say then? [Is] the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: . . .

That verse describes what happened to you, Sybil. That is exactly what you said.

7:7 . . . for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

7:8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin [was] dead.

There are several ways to interpret this passage. One is that the Law created the coveting, but I do not particularly hold to this interpretation. I think that the Law reveals the coveting.

Creating the coveting may be seen at the child level. You know how that when you tell a child not to touch the stove, they run over and touch the stove anyway, right? The saying, "Do not do it," creates in him the idea to do it, and some how or other he will figure out how to do it. I can understand that concept at the child level, but I cannot understand that at the adult level where it says, "Thou shalt not covet."

If you have respect for the Law, and it says "thou shalt not covet," and you find yourself coveting, you will stop coveting. But what happened, you see, was that it revealed to you that you were already coveting, and you used that knowledge to correct yourself.

I suppose that there are some people outside of justification who would desire to do just the opposite of what the law prohibits. Thus if the Law says, "You should not covet," they are going to rebel and covet anyway. In this case, the prohibition of coveting creates coveting in them through their rebelliousness.

But after justification when you see the commandment: "Do not covet," you should say, "Oh, I do not want to covet." That is kind of the way I come down on this. I am not rigid; you can disagree with me very easily here.

Oscar: So, you think that what that verse is talking about here is about the Law's creat-

ing the desire for sin when you are outside of justification?

V: Well Oscar, I think that it might be possible, but there are varying opinions on that issue. Let us look first at verses 9 and 10, and perhaps we will come back to this question.

Romans

7:9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

7:10 And the commandment, which [was ordained] to life, I found [to be] unto death.

Let me suggest to you three ways of seeing that passage. Again, I am not rigid on this either.

One is that this passage could be pointing to the age of accountability where a child is alive, reaches the age of accountability, and then dies spiritually.

Another one is that this could be a description of Adam's fall, and he is using "I" as a generic form of man.

A third way of looking at this issue is that this is Paul's talking about himself after justification where he finds his spiritual life being dead because he is carnal, and that the Law has to come to kill the flesh so that his spirit will revive. Now I am not talking about total death kind of stuff here where you lose your salvation. I am talking about the effects of carnality. When the Law comes into your carnal state, it reveals sin to you.

Carnality Is Spiritual Death

When you are walking in sin in your justified state because of ignorance, deception or stumbling, your spiritual life is dead. You are not following Jesus when you are walking in sin, and you cannot please him when you are walking in sin. What happens to the carnal Christian when the Law comes?

The carnal Christian is justified but, for all practical purposes, he is also dead spiritually

and alive in the flesh. When the Law enters it kills the flesh by causing the Christian to repent of his sin and come back to life spiritually. Now I am not talking about life and death where you lose your salvation and go to hell kind of stuff. Many people will confuse that kind of meaning to what I said, but I want to be sure everybody understands where I am coming from.

Walking in the Spirit is spiritual life; however, the effect of walking in sin is spiritual death. I am going to tell you right now, I do not care who you are, when you are in sin you are a dead man spiritually. Again, this does not mean that you are going to hell, but it does mean that you cannot do one thing to please God when you are in sin. You need to be revived! Revival happens when God's Spirit communicates His commandments to you and says, "What are you doing?" You say, "Ohhh, noooo! Woe is me!" When you find out you are in sin, and repent, then, and only then, can you live unto God again.

We have many spiritually dead folks among us. Go into any church, and there will be people in there who cannot figure out right from wrong. They really cannot! There are dead Christians who have been in churches and Sunday schools for years and years and years. We have deacons who have been in church all of their lives, 50 or more years, and they cannot figure out whether homosexuality is good or homosexuality is bad. They cannot figure it out. They cannot figure out whether abortion is good or abortion is bad. I have even known of a seminary dean of theology who could not accept that abortion was murder. Well, what can you say about people like that? They are spiritually dead!

I have undergone the agony of having many Christians say to me, "This face-to-face witnessing thing that you do is wrong. You should not do that." What?!!! They cannot figure it out, because they are dead. What

they need is a good dose of Law so that sin will revive, and their carnality will die.

Romans

7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew [me].

Remember, this is an apostle who is speaking about himself. He is putting it out straight, laying it out there. He is not some kind of a super guy who is sinless and perfect and all this kind of thing. He is perfect in his justification. Therefore, his ontology is perfect, but he is still doing just like you and me. He is walking the walk, running his race, and he has to struggle with the sin nature in him, the old man, all of those hindrances, like pride and temptation. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a climber, and so he was going to be chief among the Pharisees. He was on his way. He had already studied under Gamaliel, one of the two top teachers in Judaism. He was on his way as a young man, and he lusted after position, power, and prestige.

It was by his seeing that coveting is a no-no that he began his process of repentance. He possibly rationalized to himself as we do: "Well, I am innocent of sin. I am not doing anything wrong. I just want to excel for God. I must get ahead of all the other Pharisees to excel. Is that coveting? Hmmm, dadgum, the Law declares that I am coveting! Uh, oh, I need to straighten this thing out. This coveting business is getting me . . . after looking at the Law and studying God's prohibition of coveting, I think of all the things I have thought and done . . . I have stepped on people to climb up . . . I am guilty of coveting!" Furthermore, he may have concluded, "The more I study this Law the worse I get! I have been coveting in many areas for all of my life!"

Through the Law, you see, you can come to know your concupiscence (*epithumia*). This word for sin means breathing hard, i.e. your desire is so strong that it makes your

heartbeat speed up and your breathing heavy. Paul wanted to excel to the point he was panting over it. Thus the coveting in him was manifested to him by his finally seeing the Law and meditating on it long enough to see that he was guilty. Furthermore, the vision of his sin got bigger and bigger until he saw that his whole life was consumed in it.

You are out here excelling, working, ministering, living, dying daily to self, and struggling through life. You must come to grips with these things. If you say that there is no sin in your life, you are lying and you are spiritually dead. That means, then, that all of us have sin in our lives. If you are content with yourself in your self-proclaimed innocence, then you are walking in sin. If, however, you are walking in a humble state of mind and are ready, willing, and able to confess your sin as soon as you know them, then and only then is ignorance of your sin not to be spiritually dead. However, the sin will put you into spiritual death as soon as you know it.

Some of us have thousands of sins; we just have not found them yet. We are going to be reading the Word, and, “Ohhh, look at this wonderful truth.” The first thing I do when I see something wonderful is run to my wife, “Look here! Look here! Look at this wonderful truth!” She says, “I am sorry, but that is not us because. . . .” I say, “Yeah, I believe that you are right.” Then I must repent of my discovered sin, and she must do the same.

Lack of knowing your sin may come from ignorance, or it may come from deception. Knowing your sin and continuing in it is rebellion. Ignorance and deception are why you have sin in your life that you have not ferreted out and gotten rid of.

Deception, by its very nature, means that you cannot know what it is. The minute you know what it is means that you are no longer deceived. At that very point, you must make a choice between repenting of the sin or con-

tinuing in it. After the deception is discovered or the ignorance is abolished by the knowing of the truth, the fork in your path reduces to either good-will repentance or evil-will rebellion.

Many of us have deception, and we have not figured out what it is. That is why you labor in studying your Bible. You listen to sermons, you teach, you learn, you dialogue with the saints, and as you do these things, your understanding of deceptions will begin to surface. Of course your first thought will be that the other person must be wrong. We always think that we are right. Because no one intentionally believes a lie, then the first thing we think is: “The other guy must be wrong.” Then you continue to think, in order to defend your position: “Well, the Bible cannot mean that because our culture contradicts it, or it must mean something other than what it is saying.” Then comes that fateful realization, “Oh, no! I am the one that is wrong.” Then it is time to repent!

Through the Law, Sin Kills

Romans

7:12 Wherefore the law [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

One of the things that I have noticed is that many people talk like the Law is evil. The Law is not evil. The Law is the character of God. It reflects Him. It came from Him. It is His Words, and it reflects His ontology. The Word is Jesus, and Jesus is God, and so the Word of God is an expression of Who He is. The Law is not in contradiction of Who He is. Anything lining up with the Law is good. When the Law is here to restrain the flesh, that too is good because it is characteristic of God. The Law is characteristic of God because He wants to suppress evil and promote good. The Law is holy and good and just.

Romans

7:13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid . . .

So you see, was it the Law that killed Paul? No, it was the sin that killed him.

Romans

7:13 . . . But sin, that it might appear sin, . .

How do you see sin? You must have some glasses on, and if your glasses are fitted with the lenses of the Law, then you can see sin. But if you do not have your glasses on, you cannot see it.

Romans

7:13 . . . working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

So the more you study the commandment, the worse the sin appears.

Romans

7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

This conclusion that the Law is spiritual and that it is in conflict with sinful man is now fully recognized by Paul. His effort now turns to helping the Christians in Rome to get a handle on the composition of the Christian walk, or pilgrimage. Plainly and simply, the Christian walk of sanctification has to do with a continuous battle with yourself and your flesh. The battle will rage in every step of the way. There is no magic formula that is going to extract you out of this conflict so that your life is as smooth as silk. You are engaged in a spiritual war, and you are going to use weapons that are spiritual, or you are going to lose. When you adopt carnal weapons to do spiritual war, you are going to be badly defeated.

Paul is making a statement here that this carnality does not get left behind at the gate (justification). This fight with carnality tags along with you the whole journey. It is going to dog your heels all the way to the end. Here is, then, a clear statement in which Paul is

confessing that he has this same fight that we are encountering.

Other Scriptures Which Describe Spiritual Warfare

Galatians

5:16 [This] I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

You would think that Paul would not need to tell us this obvious truth. You would think that we all would know something about walking in the Spirit, but there are many of us who are walking in the flesh instead of in the Spirit and who think that we are pleasing God. As you walk along your path, there is a warfare going on in your mind. One combatant is spirit (your new man), and the other combatant is flesh (your old man).

When you are walking in the Spirit, i.e. you are walking behind Jesus, you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. You cannot do two things at the same time. You cannot be walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh at the same time. In order to be walking in the Spirit, you have to get hold of the flesh, you have to get it wrestled down, get your foot on the neck of it, and hold it down, and do not let it get up. That struggle is how you deny yourself. Your flesh says, "Do not deny yourself." Your flesh says instead, "Indulge yourself." Because the church, in general,⁵ has lost this war, it can teach you how to baptize your self-indulgence and call it Christian so that you can be like the majority out there.

But contrary to what God's people are doing, God is saying, "Deny yourself, grab

⁵ This is not an accusation against every church. However, our country is in moral freefall because we who are called by God's Name are not humbling ourselves, praying, seeking God's Face, and turning from our wicked ways (2 Chronicles 7:14). There are probably some good churches somewhere. The churches are groups of people who call themselves Christians. If the Christians are carnal, then the churches are carnal. I am not specifically accusing you or your church, but **if the shoe fits, then man up to it and wear it!**

hold of that old man, throw him down, get your foot on his neck, and hang on, and keep him down there so that you can be in the Spirit.” If you should drop your guard, then your foot will come off his neck, he will get up and throw you down, and then you will be in the flesh, indulging the flesh, doing the opposite of the *kenosis*, getting the applause of men, pursuing the American dream and getting wealth and reputation and so forth. You will be doing just like Paul did. He found himself guilty of coveting, and here we are doing the same thing. It is a wrestling match that will not let you go, you must fight against the old man (the flesh/carnality) every minute of every hour of every day for the rest of your life.

Galatians

5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: . . .

This verse says that the flesh and the Spirit are fighting each other. In every person, the flesh and the Spirit are always fighting. The Christian is not one or the other. The person is both the flesh and the Spirit. Each Christian is composed of two natures. The two natures war and fight for supremacy. While the spiritual nature has the supremacy, the person is **in the Spirit**. When the fleshly nature has the supremacy, the person is **carnal, or in the flesh**.

Galatians

5:17 . . . and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

So, there will be times when you cannot do the things that you would. When we say, “would,” we are talking about the things that you would want to do or avoid if you could. If the proposition was put to you, “Do you want to covet?” You “would” say, “No, I do not want to covet.” You may even write down your intentions: “No, I would not covet.” However, the next thing you know is that you are coveting.

I once knew a preacher who sat with a man in the hospital, and he sat with him, prayed with him, ministered to him for several days. One day right after the pastor had left, a layman came to visit. The layman prayed one time for healing, and bam! the man was healed. The pastor came back the next day, and the guy in the bed said, “Guess what happened! I am healed and they are letting me go home. A friend of mine came in and prayed for my healing, and I could immediately feel myself healing.” The pastor thought to himself, “I have been praying, I have been sitting here all these days and done all this ministering, and I know the Word inside out. That layman does not know anything, comes one time, prays one time, and God answers his prayer. What kind of deal is this? I did the work, and he got the glory.”

You see, if you asked the pastor whether or not he wanted to be jealous like he was, of course he would say no. The minute he caught himself doing it, he would stop himself and repent. But that is how subtle the old nature is; it reaches up and gets you and has you involved in sin before you know that you have been had.

Jill: Been there.

V: We all have been there, done that, and took the pictures.

Romans

5:18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

We have been talking about these two purposes. The Spirit is for the spiritual saint, and the Law is for the carnal saint.

1 Corinthians

3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, . . .

Now these are Christians to whom Paul is talking. He says, “Now look here, I cannot even talk to you like you are saved. What I must do is talk down here at a level where your flesh can hear it.”

Flesh is *sarx* in Greek, but carnal is *sarchecos* and that means to have the nature of flesh. An unsaved person does not have to work at being carnal because that is what they are, flesh. But a saved person has to yield to one of two natures—spirit or flesh. When he yields to the old flesh nature so that he appears to be flesh, he is carnal. When the ruling nature of a Christian is the flesh, he looks like an unsaved person. Thus Paul says here, “I could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal and . . .”

1 Corinthians

3:1 . . . [even] as unto babes in Christ.

Paul says to the carnal Christians: “You guys do not even know how to say mama and daddy, yet. You just have to suck your milk from a baby bottle.” Here he is talking about milk in the very next verse.

1 Corinthians

3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: . . .

“You do not even have a set of teeth yet. You can just curl your lips around a nipple on a baby bottle. That is about all you can do.”

1 Corinthians

3:2 . . . and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able [to bear it], . . .

He says to this point that “if I were to tell you what suffering is and what the *kenosis* is and going down and sacrificing and dying, you guys could not hear that.”

Class, I have had people, even in my seminary classes, who could not hear this.

1 Corinthians

3:2 . . . neither yet now are ye able.

Boy, that is getting hard. Paul continues: “Even now you cannot even hear it, so I must talk to you as if you were a bunch of babies.”

1 Corinthians

3:3 For ye are yet carnal: . . .

How did Paul know they were carnal?

1 Corinthians

3:3 . . . for whereas [there is] among you envying, . . .

That envying is what Paul had found in himself in his own carnality. Therefore, he could easily recognize it in others.

1 Corinthians

3:3 . . . and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I [am] of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

He is pointing at the obvious. He is going down to their level to deal with them at their natural level, and talking to them, and pointing to some plain, obvious things, and saying, “You cannot even hear what I have to say. I have to come down here and talk about these divisions and strifes. We cannot even begin to talk about self-sacrifice.”

Another reference to this warfare is Galatians 5:1. You need to see that while you are walking the path of sanctification, you are dealing continuously with this battle between spirit and flesh. When you are walking in the flesh you cannot be spiritual, and when you are walking in the spirit, you cannot be fleshly. Those are mutually exclusive positions, and you cannot be on God’s path by keeping a foot on each side.⁶ If you are trying to keep a foot on each side, then you are all on the flesh side, and you are just pretending to have a foot in the spirit side.

Galatians

5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

There is a problem that comes with walking in the flesh for any length of time. That problem is a stronghold in your life. And so anytime that you do something that is wrong, against God, to step away from God, you run

⁶ Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13.

the risk of getting yourself entangled into a bondage. Christians are not immune to being re-entangled with bondage.

Let me tell you, when Judah sinned against God, they were put into captivity.⁷ God raised up an evil nation and brought them against His own nation. He let them go into captivity as a lesson against idolatry. Israel languished in that captivity until God was certain that they had learned their lesson.

The same thing will happen with you. You are the people of God. If you mess with sin, He will allow you to be put into captivity. He will allow Satan to wear you out with a stranglehold habit, and you are going to cry and weep just like the children of Israel⁸ did. They wept and they hollered, “Oh, God, get us out of this.” Only after you have learned your lesson, when you are ready to repent, will He pull you out of that bondage.

My friend, if you flirt around with this sin business, with flesh, with carnality, there are some serious repercussions that come with that flirtation. Please hear me: you do not want to suffer under the repercussions of a stronghold!

Tim: That is what killed our church. Many in our church are saved, but they do not think God means this warning. They do not fear any more.

V: There are many who no longer fear God. Even the devil trembles before God.

Joe: There are people in my church who think: “My God would not do that.”

V: Right, I understand.

Joe: That is what they actually say.

V: It seems like—is it possible to over-emphasize God’s love? I think that it is possible and that our overemphasis of God’s

love has marginalized His sovereignty and His holiness to the point where He is just a blessing God. He is thought to be so blessing that no matter what I do, I will be blessed because I am His child, and He is just going to swoon over me. There is something happening with our perspectives . . . it is almost like He is diminished and we are elevated. We pat Him on the head every once in a while in our religiosity, or something.

Mary: We have changed the definition of love. There is no discipline in our new definition of love.

V: Oh! Good point! And that change of definition is happening in our families. That is a point well taken.

Jack: It is like the nurturing without the admonishment aspect.

V: Yes. Love without discipline is not love. It is permissiveness.

SIN RESULTS FROM A DISCONNECTION OF THE MIND

Romans

7:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

7:16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that [it is] good.

This passage pictures a war going on between the mind and the will. If the mind says, “I do not want to do that,” then you are consenting that the Law is good. If the Law says, “Do not covet,” and you read that and say, “I do not want to covet. If I had my choice, I would not covet.” When you do that, you are consenting to the Law, i.e. in your mind you are saying that the Law is good and holy and just, just like God. But there is a conflict with your mind by your will.

Wanda: Is it a consenting, or an acknowledgment.

⁷ Jeremiah tells about what led up to their captivity.

⁸ The story of their crying out to God is in Exodus.

V: It is an acknowledgment followed by consent.

Steve: Consenting would be yielding.

V: You are acknowledging with your mind that you should yield. But what happens is that your will is swayed. I am going to draw this war, as I see it, in Chart 6.3. I cannot prove this scenario, but I am going to

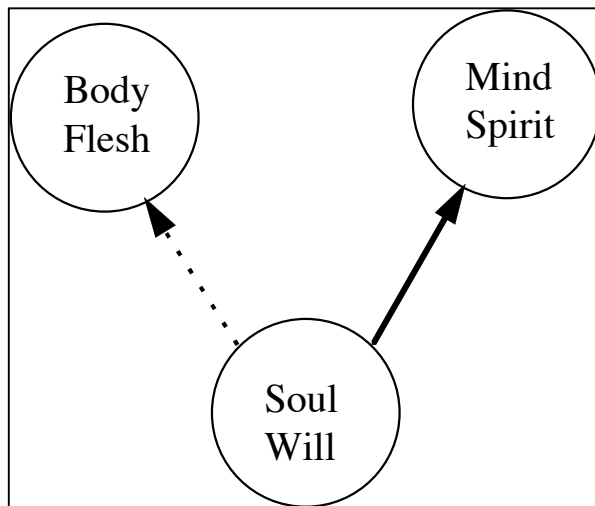


Chart 6.3

give my interpretation. This chart is just a drawing of my interpretation. You are free to discard it if you want to. We have the soul as the housing of the will. We have the mind as the housing of the spirit. We have the body as the housing of the flesh. The will, when it is following the mind, wants to do and yields to what the mind says. The mind, says, “You are a Christian. Therefore, deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow the Lord.” The soul says, “That sounds right, I am a Christian, I need to do this because the Lord said that those things are required of a disciple.” But then comes along an unguarded moment, and the old man (the flesh) gets out from under your foot, jumps up and throws you down, and the next thing you know, what are you doing? The will gets captured by the flesh. The line from Soul to Mind is dotted now, and the line from Soul to Body is solid (see Chart 6.4). The will now is obeying your

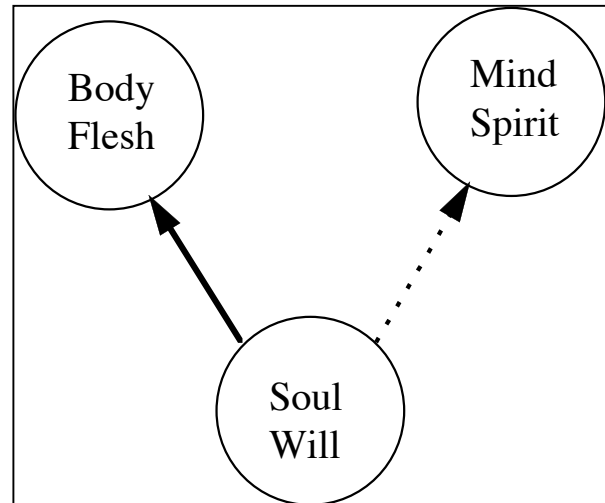


Chart 6.4

flesh. You are carnal, and when carnal, your action is going in a way contrary to that of your mind, which is saying, “No, do not do that.” But you end up doing it anyway.

Various Ways for the Mind to Become Disconnected

Now carnality can happen in several ways. Deception of the mind and consent to the flesh are the two primary things that can happen. Plus, there are many other things that can sway your will. For youth, a primary thing is music because I believe that music bypasses your rationality, where your mind is, and moves directly into your soul and looses your soul from your mind. A disconnect of mind and will occurs. Kids are getting into trouble because of that disconnect.

Drugs also disconnect the mind from the will. Alcohol can do the same thing. There is also a mob mentality that can disconnect your mind. Motorcycle Tom, one of my former students who became a close friend, was in the Watts riots of California. He recounts that he was standing on the sidewalk in Los Angeles away from where the riot was. He was just standing there minding his own business, and he said that a spirit came down that sidewalk and swept up all of the people and

began to move them towards the location of the riot. When they got there, their minds were not their own, and he found himself becoming part of the mob, and it was the mind of the mob that controlled what he did, not his own mind. After the riot was over, he sat there with others who had gotten swept up into the mob and said, “How could we have done those terrible things? What possessed us to make us do something like that?”

Can you see what happens when you disconnect your rational mind? You move into a mob spirit, a drug-induced ecstasy, or a musical ecstasy. When you are in ecstasy or in a fantasy, you become prey to an evil spirit because of the disconnect of your soul from your mind. Your mind is where the Lord is. In your mind is where your spirit resides. Get your soul connected with your mind, and do not get out of your mind. Get into your mind, and be rational. Anything that tempts you to disconnect your mind should be seen as an enemy. Do not let anything, no meditation, no strange rituals, no chanting, no music, no drugs, no mob mentality, no rage, nothing that would get you to let go of your mind because that is where the Lord deals with you.

Have the Mind of Christ

Word, *logos*, in the adjectival form, means rational. What you need to have is the mind of Christ,⁹ and to take every thought captive. This struggle in the mind to capture every thought is a spiritual warfare that is going on continuously.

We are losing many of our folks because what is passing now for spirituality is many times nothing but flesh, carnality. Many people have moved into emotionalism which is carnality. Emotionalism is a Christianity that is based on fleshly emotion rather than the mind. Christianity that is not rooted and based in the mind is wrong and will lead to all

manner of perversions. Emotions are in the flesh and impact the soul, and when the will capitulates to the flesh, you cannot be in the Spirit. To be in the Spirit is to have your will locked in on the spirit of your mind, alert, on target, and anything short of that, you see, leads to mindless slips, at the very least. During the disconnect of spirit and will, the old man has gotten up and gotten your will down and under control. You are being whipped and do not even know it.

There is much carnality in the form of music, chanting, emotionalism, and ministry methodology that is passing for Christianity today. Emotionalism and sentimentality, I am telling you, are of the flesh. They are carnal, and when they control you, they lead to no good. You cannot please God through them.

Homer: I whole-heartedly agree with you! I lead the worship in my church, and if we have something, you know, that brings a warm, fuzzy feeling, we all think that we have had an experience with God.

V: Right. This mountaintop sensationalism stuff with goose bumps all over appeals greatly to the flesh, and it tends to capture the mind. On the other hand, if your mind is in control, and the sensations are because someone got saved, and you are reasonably excited over that, that is one thing, but to disconnect and move into the flesh, that is a no-no.

The Danger of Some Church Camps

We have kids who get saved; they make a rational decision to follow the Lord, and they set out to do that. They are following the Lord, and they are stumbling around just like all the rest of us, but they are in their mind and planning and walking and fighting their battles. Then what do we do? We get them in a church camp, we drain them of all of their energy. We keep them up to all hours of the night until they are no longer alert. It is like a brainwash thing. Then we bring them into a sentimental gathering, and you bring in all the

⁹ Philippians 2:5.

emotionalism accompanied by breakdowns with tears of self pity and self incrimination, they get a mind disconnect, and they must get saved all over again. In effect, they are recanting as false all of their previous commitments.

As each kid relents to the sentimentalism of the moment, one after the other, a snow-balling effect takes place somewhat like the mob mentality. They are going into an ecstasy (meaning that they are out of their minds), and that is an embarrassment to the Lord who wants you always to be in control. That experience is going from the spirit into the flesh. How dare we take someone who is denying himself and carrying his cross and bringing glory to the Lord and make him an embarrassment to the Lord because he is recanting all of his prior actions as false. Now that we have moved him into a mountaintop, high-emotional ecstasy, we think that he is finally getting saved. That same person, a summer or two later, will be going through that same deal again, and getting saved again, and we have to baptize him over and over again to get him “truly, truly” saved.

Bob: Emotionalism is like quick sand.

V: It is! It sucks you right down.

Bob: I am reading a book called *Battle Fatigue*, and the guy who wrote it quoted a pastor’s sermon, and during the sermon the pastor said if you repent to a certain extent and believe in His Word, then you will be saved to a certain extent.

V: That way we can do it several times.

Jack: We do not want to offend anybody.

V: Because we do not want to offend anybody, we praise their ability to get saved again by recanting their prior commitments as artificial.

Jack: Look deep into that emotional commitment. It will amaze you how that one emotion can carry you through a month or

longer time period. That one emotional experience, that one disconnect, contains enough energy to carry you through weeks of mountaintop feelings.

V: Yes, mountaintop feelings are craved by every one, and they are the primary motivations for recanting our gut-wrenching *ke-notic* walks. It is amazing.

The Tug of War between Flesh and Spirit

Romans

7:17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; . . .

What Paul is saying here is that this tug of war is present with him all the time, even when the dotted line and the solid line are in correct positions (see Chart 6.3). That pull to the flesh is still there all the time.

Romans

7:18 . . . for to will is present with me; but [how] to perform that which is good I find not.

Paul says that he cannot make this determination with his will. He has not the ability to lock the correct position in and make that solid line from soul to mind, and make that dotted line from soul to body and hold to that position all the time. That is what he is saying. Neither can you. But there is an out.

Romans

7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

7:20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, . . .

It is the mind that would do the good,

Romans

7:20 . . . evil is present with me.

7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

He says, “This is where I live, the good is what I want. I delight in the good. Just let me live by doing the good all the time.”

Romans

7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

The terrible thing is that the person outside justification is wretched and does not know it! The man inside justification, however, is wretched and **knows it**. Every one of us struggle, repent, and get it right, and then stumble and say, “How could this have happened again?” You wonder whether or not it is schizophrenia. Sometimes, I am walking along as Dr. Good, and then a Dr. Bad comes out.

Beth: Jekyll and Hyde.

V: Yes, Jekyll and Hyde.

This struggle is always present in the process of sanctification that we are dealing with. The person in this struggle is the wretched man who asks: “Who is going to deliver me from this predicament?” The answer is in verse 25.

Romans

7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

You must sharpen your mind; you must be alert in your mind. You should beware of rampant emotionalism. Beware of anything that disconnects the mind. You must fight to hold on to your mind, and you should never allow this kind of ecstatic meditation where you disconnect from your mind. Watch out for chants. Musical chanting in the form of extensive repetition causes a disconnect of your mind.

Steve: What about the ocean waves and rainwater sounds that you can buy?

V: I am not sure about those sounds. You will have to evaluate those for yourself. You must not allow anything to disconnect your mind. You must live in your mind, not in your emotions. There are many well-meaning saints who live in their emotions. Many housewives will get CD's and tapes and all that kind of stuff, and from the moment they get up, they turn on that music, and they just float around. They just float on through their day on an emotional high. What they are doing is disconnecting their minds from their real purposes in God. Music runs past the mind, and will move you to be emotional which is the flesh's impact on the soul. You will become fleshly, carnal. Beware, that emotionalism may easily have a Christian look to it, a religious mask on it.

Please be aware that some things that pass for Christianity are nothing more than carnality. We could be right in the middle of sinful carnality when under deception, and we would not even know it. We need to be constantly alert.

You know when the Lord went into the garden to pray, and he took His inner circle of disciples in further with Him, He fell down and prayed. He was in His mind. He was talking to God about His looming death. Though He is wracked with emotions, He asks His Father, “Is there any other way?” You see, this is a rational process that the Lord is going through even though it was filled with emotion. It was a mind-driven prayer and commitment, not an emotionalism. Then He comes out of His prayers, He is drained, and His energy is gone. He comes out to seek comfort from His disciples, but they are asleep. He asks: “What is wrong with you? Can you not stay alert just a little while?” That is also His question to us. “Can you not stay alert by staying in your mind? Why do you want to kick out of gear? Every

time you turn around you are kicking out of gear and going to sleep. Stay in control.”

You are under attack, and you are being savaged even when you wake up in the morning and are supposedly alert and fresh and energetic. To what does your mind run? It runs to things that keep you away from being alert to Satan’s deceptions. Hopefully, during your prayer time, you are on guard.

Even when you are praying and ministering to another person, you should always know that there are more than two of you there. Certainly the Lord is there, but Satan is too. Wherever you go you have a bull’s eye on your back; Satan is just firing away at you. You must quench those fiery darts. But if you are not alert, a fiery dart may start a raging fire in you and cause much destruction.

IMPORTANT TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING ROMANS 7

1. Flesh:
 - (1) Unredeemed man dominated by sin.
 - (2) Redeemed man with a tendency to sin.
2. Sin:
 - (1) Rebellion against God
 - (2) An evil power that brings fruit unto death.
3. Law:
 - (1) Law of Moses
 - (2) God’s principles for good
 - (3) Gives knowledge of sin.
4. Mind: It is the residence of the Spirit of God and is man’s inner, thinking self that guides his actions. (This is an optimistic definition, because the flesh can guide your actions as well. The flesh competes with the mind’s resident Spirit for the possession of the will for guiding one’s actions. It seeks to influence the will to deny the fleshly desires of the soul and follow the sacrificial path of the Spirit.). It is:
 - (1) The thinking part of man.
 - (2) The spiritual self.
5. Body: It is the residence of the fleshly part of the human personality. The flesh seeks to gain control of the will through its appeal to the soul. It is:
 - (1) The physical body
 - (2) The carnal self
 - (3) The sinful self
 - (4) The church
6. Spirit: The Holy Spirit, God in His personal presence and power in man’s mind.

Chapter Questions

1. In Romans 7:6 it says: “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not [in] the oldness of the letter.” What does it mean “in newness of spirit and not in oldness of the letter” and why?
2. What happens to the fruit-bearing branches (Christians bearing fruit) when the church **focuses** on keeping the non-fruit bearing branches (members who do not bear fruit) within its membership?
3. What is the “law of the harvest”?
4. What do the following terms mean which are important for the understanding of Romans 7?
 - a. Flesh:
 - b. Sin:
 - c. Law:
 - d. Mind:
 - e. Body
 - f. Spirit:

Chapter 7

SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND SUFFERING**ROMANS 8:
SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

Romans

8:1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Sanctification is a stewardship process in which we are given opportunities to make choices, and our choice is supposed to be following the Spirit, and anytime that we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, then we are living out our “in Christ Jesus.” There is no condemnation, no ontological condemnation of personhood because that was taken care of at justification. There is no condemnation of our works either when you are following the Spirit, not the flesh. When you are following the Spirit you are doing what God wants you to do. You are behaving properly.

Romans

8:2 For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and death.

8:3 For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

8:4 That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The bottom of verse 4 is a repeat of the bottom of verse 1, i.e. walking after the Spirit.

Now there is some reconciliation that we need to do about this difference between the righteousness of the Law being fulfilled in us, and the freedom from the Law that is given to us.

If we are free, why should the Law be fulfilled in us? There needs to be some reconciliation of those two issues because there are

many people who believe that just because they are freed, the Law is of no account any more. They think that they do not have to think about the Law because it no longer has any relevance for them. So what is the purpose then of this verse about being free from the Law but yet having the Law fulfilled in us? How is the Law fulfilled in you? When is the Law fulfilled in you?

Joe: At justification.

V: Okay, at justification. Righteousness is imputed, you see, in you, but that has to do with your ontology, i.e. your personhood. What about your other part, i.e. your walk, function, or behavior? When is the Law fulfilled in you according to your walk?

Joe: In walking in the Spirit.

V: YES! When you are walking in the Spirit, you are fulfilling the Law! Only when walking in the Spirit is the Law fulfilled in you because then your actions agree with your ontology. Your new Christ-Nature, which has been imputed to you, agrees with your walk. Your behavior, your confession, and everything about you is then in complete alignment with who you are in Christ.

We become hypocrites when we do not walk according to the Spirit because we have been born again according to the Spirit. As we are now spiritually new creatures, we are to walk a new walk that corresponds to our new creaturehood.

Our new walk is a free walk after the Holy Spirit. It is not a Law walk. A Law walk is a code walk. When the code says to do a certain thing, then you do that certain thing. You see, that obedience of an objective code is a Law walk, and there is no freedom in that kind of walk because you are bound to a code.

A spiritual walk, on the other hand, is a free walk. However, the free walk has complete agreement with the Law. A spiritual walk is not an objective walk but a subjective walk which is not contrary to the Law. A spiritual walk will not violate the Law. Violation of the Law disqualifies the walk from being a spiritual walk.

It is important to have a free walk. A free walk is a walk in which you can follow the Lord, and you will not allow me or anyone else to get in your way and hinder your walk with the Lord. It is extremely important that I encourage you to follow the Spirit. That is the only way Jesus can be your Lord. If I should give you a code to follow or try to draw a box around your behavior and dictate to you what I think you ought to do, then I would be intruding into the Lord's business, and there is no place for me there.

I must give you freedom now, but with that freedom, I also want to give you knowledge. I can teach and teach and teach and exhort and encourage you, but at the same time I must back out of the way when you make your own application. If I should not get out of your way, then I would be impeding the Lordship of Jesus Christ over your life.

My not intruding into your freedom to walk after the Spirit should be very important to you because when you come to your judgment, it is going to be about **HOW YOU FOLLOWED JESUS**, not about how you followed my instructions. I need not to have been in the way during your life.

Any tradition of men can get in your way here. A charismatic leader may get between you and the Lord, and the next thing you know, you may find yourself following the charismatic leader rather than the Lord.

We saw the results of the indiscriminately following of a charismatic leader in Waco, Texas, but it happens to a much smaller de-

gree all around society. This freedom business is extremely important. As teachers and pastors and as leaders of the churches, we need to encourage a freedom for the Christian to walk after the Lord, but the freedom that we encourage should never countenance any violations of God's Law. It should always correlate to the Law because the Law and the Spirit are always in complete agreement. We are not given an exhaustive code of ethics or anything like that in the Bible, but we are given *principles of behavior* out of which our practical ethics can be extrapolated.

Carnality

Romans

8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

8:6 For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace.

8:7 Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.

8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

For my walk of sanctification, God lays out a specific path, and this path is designed just for me (see Chart 7.1). I must make every effort and take every precaution to be on this path. God has a specific path just for you too, and you are to make sure that you are on that path. The choices that you are free to make comprise that magnificent freedom

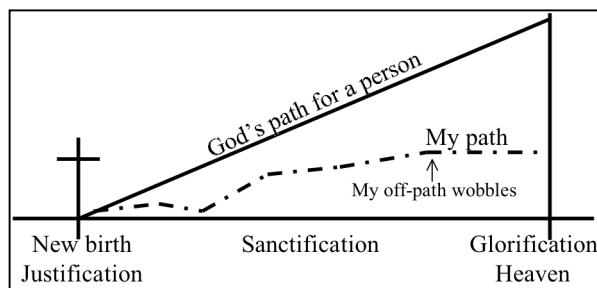


Chart 7.1

which was purchased by Jesus for you. You have the freedom to follow the Lord on the path He sets before you.

When I am on my assigned path, I have continuous choices to make, and wrong choices will take me off of my path. Those wrong choices follow after the flesh rather than the Spirit. During those carnal times I will be walking opposite of the *kenosis*. The carnal walk will be to pursue either mundane glory or short cuts of self-indulgence. When I yield to those carnal desires, I do not and cannot please God. As a matter of fact I am at enmity with God during the time of carnality.

Pursuing the upside down *kenosis* describes Peter's resistance to the Lord's following His Father's Plan for self-sacrifice. In Peter's well-meaning intentions, he was trying to stop the Lord from doing what the Lord came to do. He was called Satan by Jesus because at that very instant, Peter was a person at enmity with God.

Certainly, all of us were at enmity with God when He died for us. And that enmity continued for each one of us all the way to our time of justification at which time we gained peace with God. When He came knocking on the door of your heart, it was out of pure grace because He was loving someone who was despising Him and mocking Him. Your salvation came in spite of your enmity. You did not reform yourself and get to be a good person who started loving the Lord so much so that you deserved for Him to knock on your door. He knocked on your door while you were still at enmity with Him.

When we are walking after the flesh, we are acting just like we were when He knocked on the door of our hearts. When in the flesh, we are at enmity with Him, and we embarrass Him. We also impede others from following Him. There is nothing good to be said about carnality.

Walking after the Spirit

You are supposed to be walking every day on God's specific path for you. God designed

that path because He has an exact plan for your life, and His intention is for you to move along the path and accomplish the missions to be found thereon. He will enable you with Spiritual gifts, power, opportunities, and everything else that is needed in order for you to accomplish your missions and to get to the end of your sanctification journey.

Again, sanctification is by grace through faith, just like justification. He gives you salvation, a brand-new spirit, spiritual gifts, opportunities, and a cleared path. Then He also calls you, saying, "Hey, come on, I want you to go this way. Here is the path; get on it and go." He does all of that. All we have to do is put one foot in front of the other one, and go by faith on the path that He has designed just for us. He has given us road signs and counselors and teachers and great road map directions, i.e. all that we need in order to walk our paths. But every step I take has decision in it, and that decision either moves me along my path by faith or off of it by indulging my flesh.

When you wake up in the morning, you are to be on your path. When you put your feet on the floor, you are to be on the path. When you walk into the next room, you are to be on your path. When you come to this class, when you go to work, every minute, you see, you are to be on your path. However, you need to be on guard constantly because Satan is going to come to you and say, "Hey, you are not following the spirit because your life should not be this hard. Take it easy. What is all this sacrifice stuff? You know that God does not want you to suffer." He will try to deceive you and tempt you and try to draw you after the flesh.

As soon as you step off path, here is what is going to happen. You are going to feel good from a fleshly point of view because a load of responsibility will no longer be upon you, and you will be gaining fame and fortune: "Oh, yes, these gains for me are evi-

dences of God's blessings for my meritorious walk." But please realize that you are at war with God when you are off path, and He is saying to you, "Get behind me, Satan. You are taking shortcuts and indulging yourself. Have the mind of Christ and live the *kenosis*"

Self-indulgence is opposite of the *kenosis*, which is founded on the principle of self-sacrifice. Self-indulgence is just not blessed of God. His is a hard road, and it is a road of self-sacrifice. There is just no other way if you are going to be His disciple. Self-denial is the first requirement for a disciple. It will never be dispensed with. What do you want to do? Do not do it! Deny yourself, deny yourself, deny yourself! In every step, deny yourself. That is how you walk your path. You cannot be a disciple apart from that self-denial.

THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT

Romans

8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

8:10 And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness.

8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

"Indwells" (*oikei* in Greek), is the verbal form of *oikos* (house in Greek). The Holy Spirit is the owner of the house (*oikos*), and he dwells (*oikei*) in the house (*oikos*). It is His house, and He is the one that makes the rules for the house. You are the house. You

are the *oikos*, and Who lives in you? The Spirit dwells (*oikei*) within you, the Spirit's house (*oikos*).

I have explained in a prior class about the Law of the house, i.e. the Greek word *Oikonomia* from which we get our English word economy. The word *oikonomia* is a combination of two other Greek words. *Nomos* is Law, and *oikos* is house. Thus economy in Greek means the Law of the house. The Holy Spirit is the ruler of the house. He is the One Who makes the "rules for the house" (*oikonomia*).

You are the steward of the house because you are the one that implements the house rules established by its Owner. You are the manager of the Spirit's house. You thought you were the boss of the house, but you are not boss of the house. God is boss of the house. He lives in you, and He is the Boss. He makes the rules, and you put them into effect. So when we are talking about indwelling, we are talking about the Holy Spirit living **and ruling** in you as His house (*oikos*). That is the way indwelling (*oikei*) is used here.

Oikei is when God dwells in you. He does not come into you for a vacation or a motel room. He comes in to take over and live in you permanently as Owner. When you made your commitment in chapter 1, you turned over your whole house to Him. The title deed to your body, the house, has been legally transferred to the new Owner. The Holy Spirit owns you as His house, and He is boss of His house.

Now this understanding of not only living but also ruling in His house is what God is talking about in verse 9. We are not to be thinking about some rinky-dink stuff about His just kind of camping out there. It is not that at all because He is the Rule-maker in the house. He is the Owner of the house. He is the Boss of the house. You are the house-servant, and you are required to be self-denying.

God says, “I am taking over all of these rooms here, and you just deny yourself and obey Me instead of doing what you want to do.” He says, “I am taking over your legs” to which you respond, “Okay, here are my legs.” “I am taking over your mouth.” “Okay, here is my mouth.” He says, “Now I am going to make some new rules about your mouth. You are going to use your mouth to preach, to witness, to teach, to bless, and to counsel.” You see, it is His mouth now, His house. Your whole body belongs to Him. He is Boss. He lives in you, and your body is His castle.

You are at His disposal now because when you invited Him in as Savior, He came in as Lord of the manor. God does not sit in the unused corner. He comes in and takes over. “Okay,” He says, “We are going to have some new rules for My house. Here are the rules that I want you to implement.” That is why your life changes.

The transaction occurs when you invite Him in. I have seen some of the baddest guys in society change radically. There is one in the back row of this classroom right now. Most of you already know who it is. After the Lord came into his heart, He became Boss of that filthy house. All of a sudden changes began to occur in language, expressions, and demeanor. His violence was replaced by a new and wonderful gentleness. It is amazing what happens!

SANCTIFICATION IS YOUR TIME OF PRACTICING STEWARDSHIP

However, there is always the possibility of our making some choices that will reflect the flesh of the old man because God does not eliminate your will. He puts you in charge as a steward over the running of His new house. He leaves your will intact, and He says, “I am going to test you from this point on, all the way to the end of your life. How you deal

with your will is going to determine how close you will be to Me in Glory.”

When we are on our paths, we will be faced with those choices of how we will manage His house every step of the way. The Lord Who indwells us makes the rules, and He is the Owner of the house. We are His guests who are given the privilege of being His stewards, and our wills are to be submitted to Him in the same way that the Lord’s will was submitted to His Father. When Jesus won His victories, it was because His will was submitted to the Father. When we win our victories it will be because our wills are submitted to the Lord.

Oscar: You said that the Lord did not eliminate our wills. Having said so, does that result in greater glory for God when we push our own wills out of the way and keep His rules—when we deny ourselves?

V: Yes, it does.

Oscar: It brings Him more glory?

V: Yes! Yes! Yes! Think about the Lord Jesus. In His walk He had power to do things, e.g. He had the power to come off the cross, but He did not. He subjected His will. He denied Himself. Even when He prayed in the garden, He said, “If there is any way to get Me out of this terrible death, please get Me out, but nevertheless *not My will but Thine.*”¹

Submission of the will is the way that you glorify the Lord. God may call you to do something very difficult and far outside of your comfort level. Many of us are called to do little, easy tasks along the way. If the accomplishing of an easy task brings glory to God, how much greater will be the results from the task which requires some really deep and painful self-sacrifice?

We have seen how our forefathers died torturous deaths. They gave themselves and

¹ Matthew 26:39 and 42; Mark 14:36; and Luke 22:42.

denied themselves. Certainly, they were scared to death, weak in the knees, trembling, but yet they stayed the course. That kind of sacrifice is remarkable glorification for the Lord because the Lord can say, “Satan, look at My saint. You are going to kill him, you are going to torture him, he is going to die the most miserable death, but he is going to rule high in My Kingdom. He is going to be raised up because he is implementing the *kenosis*, the opposite of your way. He is going all the way down to a sacrificial death at the **bottom** for Me.” When you go all the way to the bottom for Jesus, you will be elevated, brought all the way to the **top** by Jesus.

But now if our life here is one of self-indulgence and climb to mundane glory and temporal exaltation, there is nothing to look forward to but a fall on the other side of the grave. That kind of self-indulgent life is the opposite of the *kenosis*. Why is that so hard to see? To me it is not hard to understand once I saw the concept, **but it is very hard to implement**.

The difficulty of the path of sanctification is extreme, but through it, God’s path for you becomes your maximum path to maximum glory. God is going to put before you the path designed with the maximum difficulty for your handling. It is not going to be an easy cakewalk. He is going to put before you the absolute maximum that you can handle with all of His help, all of His gifts, everything that He pours into you. Your path is going to be your maximum, but His goal here is for you to become just like Jesus. He is going to give you all of the tools, everything you need to get there.

All we have to do is get our wills right. When we do yield to the Spirit, we must go along on guard against the evil one. It is certain that he will come against us because he opposes the things of God. When you let your guard down, things will go so terribly wrong.

It is rare for a mature saint at your level to intentionally say, “I think that I will stop denying myself. I think that I am just going to take on the path of the opposite of the *kenosis*. I think that I am going to pursue self-glory.” But in spite of not thinking it, we end up doing it because our guard comes down, and we get tricked into it. You will be walking along in a path of self-denial, and the next thing you know is that you will have changed courses and are now climbing a ladder trying to get up to the top. It is not because you intentionally did that. It was because a carrot was dangled in front of you, and your attention wandered. The next thing you knew, you were off path and chasing the carrot.

Jill: Are these verses, like verses 5 through 8, contrasting two Christians? I have heard it said that we are contrasting the saved and the lost because of verse 9, the bottom end of it where it talks about that if we do not have the Spirit of God, then we are not His.

V: Right. They are speaking of two Christians. Possessing the Spirit of God and the Spirit’s indwelling you are two radically different types of Christians. Do not forget that indwelling means to own and rule the house.

Jill: You are saying it is a Christian who is walking in the flesh and another Christian who is walking in the Spirit.

V: Yes, I am most definitely saying that.

Jill: You know that some people say that this is about saved and lost.

V: Yes, I do, and here is the danger of that conclusion. If you go to the saved and lost conclusion, then all you have to do is have the Spirit of God, and then you are perfect, and you cannot improve upon it. You see the danger hidden in that conclusion?

DEATH VERSUS LIFE FOR THE JUSTIFIED

Jill: What do you do with the words of verse 6: “For the mind set on the flesh is death”?² What death are we talking about for the Christian?

V: Okay, before you are justified, you are walking in the flesh. You are spiritually dead. You are still walking, but you are walking in death. You are walking like the person who has not been quickened. You are walking just like Peter did when he was trying to divert the Lord from His appointed task. The Lord called him Satan and told him to get behind Him because he did not know and desire the things of the Spirit.

Jill: What do you mean by quickened?

V: Quickened is when you are justified *and walking in the Spirit*. It is to have the power of God in your walk. That is to be quickened. For the justified man to walk in the flesh instead of the Spirit, he is walking again in death. When I say death within the context of salvation, I am not talking about becoming unsaved. What I am talking about here is the justified person not walking on his path of sanctification. I am talking about saved people walking off path in death.

Many people take the other side of the coin than I take. That other side is what you have seen and are referring to. I do not hold to that. What you need to see is that it is not only possible but also likely to have the Holy Spirit in you while you follow the flesh because every Christian in the world is doing that some of the time. We do not intentionally follow the flesh sometimes but we end up doing it anyway because we let our guards down.

Therefore, we have to see then that there must be some accounting for that ability to follow the flesh after justification. That abil-

ity comes from a will that remains autonomous. We can choose to obey or disobey because we have a free will. We have the Spirit of Christ in us, but we use our own will to determine our walk and our decision-making stewardship. The way God lines up our tests of stewardship during our sanctification period is as good as you can get because victory is gained by simply submitting to Him.

Sometimes the weighty responsibility feels very uncomfortable to me, and I wish I could have comfort in it, but I would not change it, not a chance. We could all get together and work on a plan to substitute for His plan, and it just would not be of any worth at all. If we put together a Doctrine of Salvation, we would come up with some weird looking thing that would not be worth 2¢.

God has a plan, and it has pain, joy, power, opportunity, guidance, and accountability in it. But you are free, every one of you are free. Your will is intact, you are free indeed. Free! Absolutely, totally free! You can choose to walk or not walk on your path. Walking in the Spirit on your path is life. Walking in the flesh off path is death. You demonstrate your love for God by intentionally walking on your path, or you can let your guard down, and go off path in the flesh.

Do you understand that you can be in the flesh and still do good things because good things are sometimes sin? When is a good thing a sin?

Bob: When it is not God’s will.

V: Right, when it is not the best thing, i.e. God’s will for you. A good thing, when it is not the best thing, is a sin. You can determine to be another Billy Graham, get on his path and just go great guns, but you will be goofing it up because *your path* is being left undone.

There are hazards in the sanctification period that when mishandled lead to walking

² New American Standard Bible.

in death. We need to be submitted to the Lord's will in order to experience walking in life, i.e. walking in the Spirit.

Jack: Sometimes we realize that we are chasing a carrot, but we try to justify ourselves by claiming that it was God's will.

V: Oh, you are so right, Jack. That is following a carrot. I have been there. I saw that carrot dangling in front of me and said, "This is God's way for me over here. See the blessings in that carrot? Those blessings prove that it is God's will."

Possessing the Spirit

I want you to see that having the Spirit of Christ is not the same thing as the indwelling of the Spirit. The indwelling of the Spirit is *oikei*. The indwelling has to do with His making the rules and assigning us the task of implementing them. But the Greek verb for having the Spirit of Christ is *ekei*. *Ekei* means to have like I have this pencil. The difference between me having the Spirit, and it dwelling in me is that when I have the Spirit, I am boss. When it dwells in me, the Spirit is the Boss. That is a huge difference.

Sybil: Dr. Vinson, we would have a question then about the relative point in time in which a person begins his walk of sanctification. It would reflect back to their actual time of justification. Also we either receive the Spirit, or it dwells in us. So many Christians in the process of sanctification are going their own way, holding on to the Spirit, and taking the Spirit where they would like to go.

V: Yes. And that is a walk of death because it is a walk in the flesh.

Pete: This does not cancel the fact that the person is a true believer in reality. But the believer is walking in death because he is walking in the flesh.

V: Yes Pete. You are right on target. The believer's will is not canceled. The believer can have the Holy Spirit, but his will

could be to follow the carrot dangling in front of him. The believer could be in the period of time for his sanctification process to take place but not be going on his assigned path because he is too busy following the flesh.

Sybil: My question concerns the salvation experience. Could a person be thinking they are saved when they are walking and holding the Spirit?

V: Possession of the Holy Spirit occurs in the justification part of salvation. I mean, once you go through justification, the Spirit comes in to you. He initially comes in as an indwelling *oikei*, and He wants to set up some rules, so He sets up His economy (*oikonomia*), the rules for His house. Our position then is to walk in submission and implement His rules in His house (our bodies). That walk is walking the path. Then the carrot comes along, and when we chase after it, then we are no longer on the path. We have stepped off of the line. What we have done then is to have taken over the house and pushed the Spirit to the corner. Rather than His ruling over the house and making us His stewards of the house, we have made ourselves bosses and stewards because our wills are still intact. God does not squash the will. He continues to ask for you to demonstrate your love in free rational choices to obey Him.

Ted: The question I have for you though is about a definite distinction, or a line drawn, between death and life. If there is death, there will not be life. Is what we are talking about a true conversion?

V: Yes, we are talking about a true conversion.

Ted: I am saying that you can drag the Spirit with you everywhere you want to go. So it is like a two-fold reflection in a person. On the one hand, the Spirit leads the believer in the path that he needs to go, but the Spirit also precedes and shows non-believers

through your reaction that their results will be death. His question back here was about whether we have lost salvation. Your statement was . . .

V: . . . No, there is no losing salvation in terms of losing your justification. However, I think he was stating that they never got saved to begin with.

Ted: Okay, they never got saved. But still in reality, they were after the justification fact, and we are talking about death for the person who has been justified.

V: Yes, we are talking about death for the justified person, but we are not talking about eternal death. We are talking about death of the spiritual life within sanctification. Whenever you are following the flesh, you are dead to the Spirit.

Beth: You can have the Spirit and walk in the flesh, but if the Spirit is dwelling in you, you are walking in the Spirit.

V: Right, with the proper understanding of the word “dwelling” which means owning the house and establishing its rules.

Beth: If you are walking in the flesh, the Spirit is suppressed or . . .

V: You are spiritually dead when you are in the flesh. There is no life there for practical spiritual purposes. The Spirit is there in you but it no longer directing your will because you have suppressed the Spirit. You still have full volitional capability, and you can choose whether to obey your flesh or the Spirit. You can choose against Him, even when He says, “Do not, do not choose against Me!”

Mortify the Flesh in Order to Walk in the Spirit

I need for us to look at this mortify business in verse 13 because this is how you walk in the Spirit. You must mortify the deeds of the body. You are being forced to

make the choice of staying on your path or moving off it. There is a fork in the road (see Chart 7.2). Which one are you going to

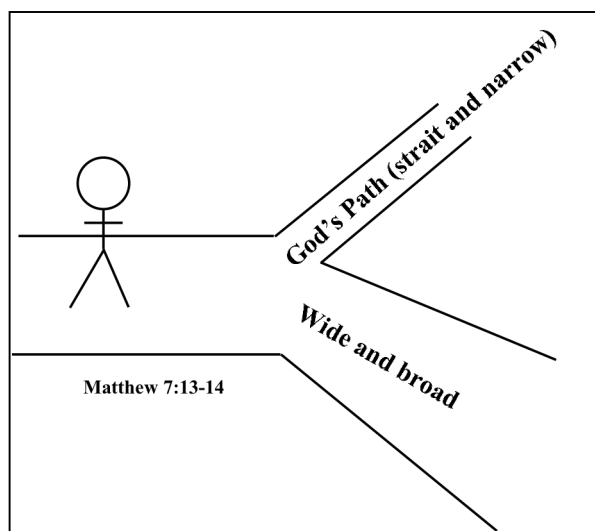


Chart 7.2

choose? Are you going to choose Spirit, or are you going to choose flesh. In order to choose Spirit, you must mortify the flesh. Mortify means to kill it. If you choose the flesh, you must suppress the Spirit. Are you going to enable the flesh to run with that ball, or you are going to enable the Spirit to run with that ball. But you are the key to the choice because you have free will.

God does not come along and say, “Okay, I am going to cancel out your will. You are going to follow the Spirit, and that is all there is to it.” Many people think that God does overrule the Christian’s will because of His sovereignty, and because of it, no matter what they do, it is right. No matter what they say, it is right. No matter where they go, it is right.

Well, I have some bad news for those folks. They are wrong. We need to mortify the deeds of the body by choosing to obey the Spirit. Obeying the Spirit is life. Obeying the flesh (doing the deeds of the body) is death. That is what he is saying in verse 13: “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye

through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Here are some more references:

Colossians

3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

He is saying, “Kill this stuff! Take captive every thought to the mind of Christ.”

Galatians

5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

We have crucified the flesh and been set free from its chains of bondage. We no longer have to obey the flesh.

Mark

9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

This verse is saying that if part of your body is going to stop you from walking God's path, mortify it. Mortify it!

I know that there is somebody sitting here on the front row that gets very little sleep. He falls asleep eating, and his head hits the table. He falls asleep and cannot keep his eyes open because he has been ministering day and night and studying for the classes that he is doing here. That student is mortifying his flesh.

You take that flesh, throw it down and hold it down so that the Spirit can reign and take you where He wants to go. But now your flesh is still present with you, and it can climb up at any time and influence you to be like all the other people and get lots of sleep and recreation. You see it will raise right up in self-indulgence, and the next thing you know the Spirit is suppressed. The Spirit is down there in a closet of the body, and the flesh is enjoying self and saying, “You know,

God likes for me to have the good life. He is blessing me. Can you not see it? Just look at how I am prospering.”

The battle between the flesh and the Spirit is a continuous wrestling match. The battle rages continuously and gets more difficult with the passing of time. You have to fight, fight, fight. It is a terrible struggle because the old nature sneaks up on you when you are least expecting it, and these ideas of self-indulgence grab hold of you and run rampant with you. The next thing you know, you are 40 miles down the wrong path thinking, “How did I get here?” You must turn around and go trudging all the way back to where you made the wrong turn, find that fork, get on the right path, and go again.

The battle is tough. I know somebody sitting in here that went down the wrong path for about five years. He recently came back to get back on his path. This business of mortification is really hard, really, really hard.

Mortification is the business of self-denial by telling yourself that you cannot do what you want to do. The Spirit will lead you where you do not want to go. The Spirit will call for you to do things you do not want to do. But if you wanted to go to the dangerous and uncomfortable places and do the hard and dangerous things, then it would be easy to be a disciple. Anybody could do it then in his own power. But if discipleship takes you to the cross where the nails start being driven in, and the pain sets in, then you will want to scream out, “Get me off of here!” In the middle of that pain is when it takes that self-denial, gutting it up, staying with it, and going the distance with no shortcuts. That is what mortification is talking about.

Benefits of Being Led by the Spirit?

Romans

8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of

bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The first benefit for the person who is being led by the Spirit is that he is a child of God. That Spirit is not one of bondage and fear, but it is of the adoption and the privilege to call on God as your own Father.

Concerning the negative side of this passage, we do not *necessarily* have the spirit of bondage which brings fear with it. Certainly, some of us do place ourselves into bondage to the flesh and have fears because of it. But by the rights pertaining to our new Spirits, we no longer are required to be in bondage.

Romans

8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

The witness of the Spirit is of our childhood. The Spirit witnesses to our spirit and says that we are children of God.

SUFFERING FOR GOD'S CHILDREN

Romans

8:17 And if children, . . .

We Christians are children of God. If we are children of God, then verse 17 applies to us, right?

Romans

8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together.

Please see that all are heirs of God. That inheritance which is the gaining of heaven comes with the free gift of eternal life at your point of justification. However, the joint-heirs with Christ is not given as a free gift at justification. That inheritance is only gained by jointly suffering with Him. That joint suffering occurs in the sanctification process. The person who walks his assigned path will

suffer jointly with Jesus and will receive a joint inheritance with Him. The person who walks after the flesh instead will still get to go to heaven, but he will not share in the Lord's rewards.

Perfected

There are some things here that often go overlooked. If you are going to get to this business of being glorified with the Lord, then you must understand something about how the Lord was glorified. The Lord got on His path and went the whole distance. He was perfected in suffering. Do you know what perfection means? It means to get to the end.

Tim: *Telos* in Greek.

V: Yes, *Telos* means perfected. We get our word tail from this word. The word, *telos*, means getting to the end, and it is translated "perfected" in the Bible. When you see someone dealing with perfection or being perfected, it means being taken to the end goal of his journey. It does not mean that it is fixing some inadequacies. When the Scriptures say that the Lord was perfected, it does not mean that He had inadequacies. When the Lord was perfected, it meant that He was taken on a trip that was designed by God, and Jesus stayed on His path all the way to the end.

Wanda: When it says in the Bible, You must be perfect,³ is that saying the same. . . ?

V: . . . yes, it means the same thing. It means that you must be brought to your proper end. To get to the end means that you are coming out here to glorification (see Chart 7.3 on the next page). Arriving to glorification is to have been perfected. This is bad news in a way, but good news in another way. To understand perfected, look at Chart 7.3 on the next page. There are two paths on this chart reaching out to perfected. Each of those

³ *i.e.* Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

paths reaches perfection because the people for whom those lines represent are all in glory.

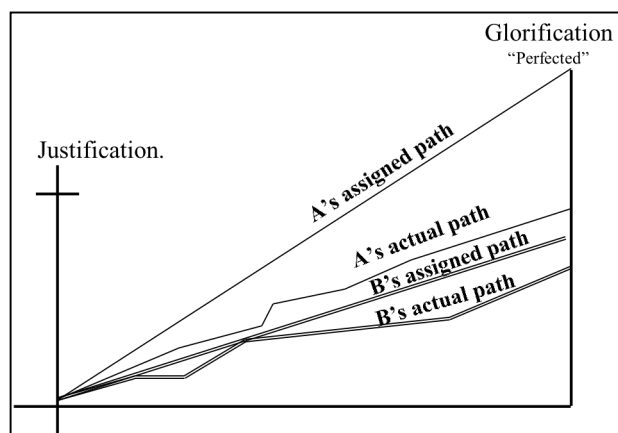


Chart 7.3

Different Glories in Perfection

Homer: Are not the glories different though?

V: You bet. There is a ton of difference between the glories. Watch this illustration. There are two light bulbs: a 60-watt bulb and a 100-watt bulb. Both are perfect, but one is brighter than the other. It is like that in heaven. Perfection for one saint may be brighter than perfection for another.

I think that I told you somewhere before about the differences between our sanctification paths, two different people on two different paths. Let us say that here is a guy on this highest path, path A on Chart 7.3. He is loaded down with gifts. He wobbles around below his path. There is another guy on a lower path, Path B on the chart, and he too wobbles around. Look at the differences in the two from hitting their designed paths from God.

This guy on path A may lord it over the second guy by saying: "You ought to be like me, look how I am doing. You ought to hit it like I am hitting it." Well the first guy is further off his path than the second guy. Proportionally the second guy did much better

that the first guy and is going to be the first guy's boss in heaven because to whom much is given, much is required.⁴ If the higher guy has been given all these gifts and he is performing perhaps at 50% and the other guy is performing at 75%, then the proportionately higher performing guy will be the boss rather than the one with the greater gifts. That is the way glorification works: "To whom much is given much is required."

Faithfulness is measured by proportionality. I have seen little nursery workers in the church who are so diligent and dependable. Children love them. They grow those children and nurture them. The children sometimes grow up to become good soul-winning saints. I think those nursery workers are going to be in the big leagues in heaven. During their lives, they are there doing what they are gifted to do. They are staying on their paths. They are consistent; they are right in there hitting it, and some of the flash-in-the-pan folks wobble all over far below their paths.

Henry: I have heard so many people say, "I wish I could be like so and so." Well, just prepare yourself to do your work, stay on your own path, and do not get on the other person's path.

V: Right you are. It would be like John here in the first row trying to get on Billy Graham's path. John needs to walk his own path just like I should walk my own path. I can help John along his path, and he can help me along mine, but we each have our own specific path to walk.

We are now looking at the suffering part of sanctification. Joint suffering is a prerequisite for joint glorification. There is a ton of suffering out here on your path of serving God. Many saints are suffering because of

⁴ Luke 12:48 ... For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

their obedience. So, note the following passages on suffering.

Luke

4:1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Just catch that for a second. The Spirit took him into the wilderness, not into the safety of the temple. All temptations and testings follow with your being in the wilderness.

Acts

14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

So he is saying there is *much* tribulation for us to go through.

2 Timothy

2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with [him]: if we deny [him], he also will deny us:

This verse refers back to staying on your path. When you do stay on path, you will also suffer, but you will also reign with Jesus.

Luke

24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

This verse is asking a question. Should Christ not have suffered and entered into His glory? Nobody in his right mind would say no because Peter once did that and was reprimanded for it. You also must say yes to this proposition when it is applied to you because your glory will outweigh your sufferings.

1 Peter

1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

There is the certainty of the future glory of heaven gained in justification. The justi-

fied saint can celebrate the future hope of heaven in the here and now.

However in sanctification, there is the certainty of suffering the *kenosis* for the rest of your life, and the glory comes at the end of life. Suffering occurs all the way down in the path of the *kenosis*. In the midst of that suffering, however, the saint who is walking his path of sanctification can celebrate the hope of future glory in the here and now. There is discomfort, sacrifice, and death to the body of flesh. However, the hope of future glory gives patience and perseverance in the midst of suffering and sacrifice. Sanctification's process is the middle part of salvation coming between justification and glorification.

1 Peter

5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

Philippians

1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Philippians

3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

2 Corinthians

1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

1:6 And whether we be afflicted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, [it is] for your consolation and salvation.

1:7 And our hope of you [is] stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so [shall ye be] also of the consolation.

1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure,

above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

1:9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

Colossians

1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

Grasping this idea of suffering is important. What you need to do here is realize that God is calling you to suffer for the church. You must suffer for the church. I am not talking about the bricks and mortar kind of church. I am not talking about the institutional kind of church. I am talking about the people who make up the church now and who will make it up later.

The Hope of Glory

2 Corinthians

4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory;

4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are] temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

Romans

8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

As you are going down this *kenotic* path (see Chart 7.4), you will be heading down this path to the cross, and every step of the way involves self-denial, i.e. choosing the Spirit, and mortifying the flesh. Those choices are going to create sufferings in you. There will be times when you are called to do things that you just slam do not want to do, but you are going to will (choose) to do them. You are

going to say, "I must follow God on this path. I am scared to death, but I must do this." As you make those tough choices, you see, there are going to be pain and suffering along those ways, but present with you in your pilgrimage is also the hope that when you come to the end of your path, the glory that you will receive in heaven will be greater than you can even imagine.

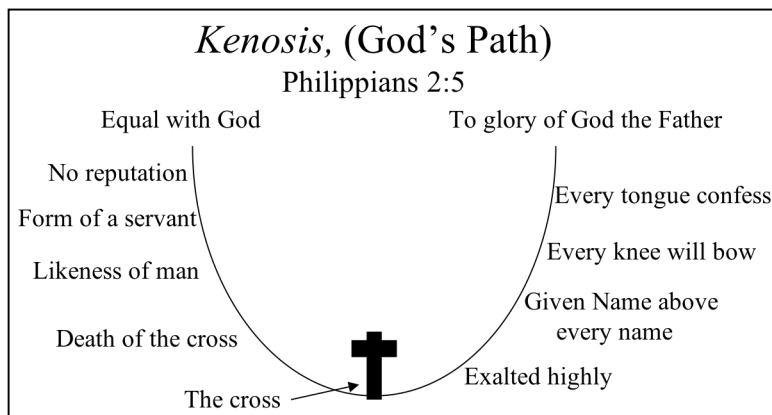


Chart 7.4

Your imaginations about the glory that you will receive will fall short of the awesome glory that God has for you. We could all brainstorm about what it is going to be like, and we would come up short. The glory in heaven is going to knock you out. When you get into glory and look back at your sufferings, you will say, "My suffering was nothing in comparison to all this." I mean, when you are put on a stake with a fire lit around you and is burning you up, the hope that you have is God's Word that says that this suffering is not even worth comparing to what is ahead for you. Count your short-term pain as nothing. Is that great hope not wonderful? It says right here, "It is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is going to be on the other side."

Verse 20 to verse 25 is all about hope. One of the things you need to see here about hope is in verse 24: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"

Hope is incompatible with present attainment. If hope were compatible with present attainment, a flat sanctification would be the path (see Chart 7.5). Thus, present attainment is not compatible with hope. The hope that we have is based on walking on God's *kenotic* path for us. You do not have your glory yet, and you are not going to have it until you get past sanctification and into glorification by dying.

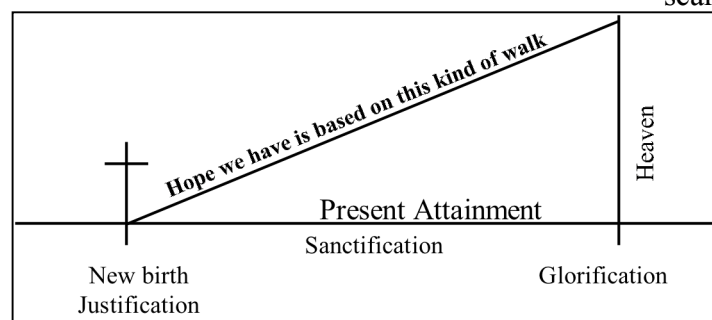


Chart 7.5

Romans

8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God.

Imagine this scenario of a guy walking on God's path (the upward line in Chart 7.5). He is taking one step at a time, just trudging along, keeping on keeping on. He is praying for help, but it is getting harder and harder with each step. He gets on out a good ways on his path, and he is now fighting giants.⁵ Big demonic enemies are coming after him with all manner of weapons, and here he is just quaking in his boots and saying, "I do not think that I am strong enough to beat these

giants." He will impulsively say, "Lord! Get me out of here!" But the Holy Spirit dwelling in him says instead, "Father, keep him in this fight. I want to grow him some more." That is what it says here. It says that we do not know how to pray as we ought.

Oscar: The word is "ought"?

V: Yes and I tell you that I am afraid of the implications of that word. That word scares me to death because here is the Spirit saying, "Father, We must get him on up the path of suffering. That is where he must go for maturity. We must keep him on this difficult path. He must fight his way through these giants. If he thinks that these giants here who are now coming against him are formidable, wait until he sees the next problem. Do not let him look down the path and see what is down there waiting on him."

Oscar: So that kind of goes back to Hebrews about staying under the burden.

V: Yes, it does. It is dealing with our fear of getting out into the deep water, which is described in the book of Hebrews.

So the Spirit wants to take us on our path of our own maximum difficulties. We pray, "Lord, get me out of this. Take away this burden, get this off me, get me out of this situation, make it better for me, Lord, bless me and make it well, just make it good for me." That is what we pray, and the Holy Spirit with groanings that cannot be uttered because you are unwilling to say them says just the opposite. You just cannot bring yourself to say, "Lord, keep me in this difficulty." You know that we all have a hard time saying something like that. But the Holy Spirit says, "Father, keep him in this difficulty. I am here to help him, I am going to knock this giant off his feet, I am going to kill this giant. Keep him on path so that I can grow him some more." At the same time that the Spirit is praying that, we are praying,

⁵ Remember that when you are just past justification, you are a milk baby, but as you get further up on your path, your battles will get bigger to the point of fighting some giants.

“Lord, get me out of here.” And God Himself is listening to His Own Spirit rather than to our flesh.

Carl: Intercession with the will of God.

V: Yes, because the will of God is to take us all the way to the max. He wants us to max out. He loves you so much that He wants you to be the very best that you can be because your eternity will be so full of rejoicing and glory that you cannot hold it all. Your cup will run over, and you will just be jumping up and down with joy for eternity. But, on the other hand, if you get what you presently want, then you get out of all your problems, get out of all your troubles, get out of all the hard choices of life, and get the rejoicing now. But then where is the future glory, where is the rejoicing for eternity? You rejoice now because you are out of the struggles, but it is a mundane glory to get the life of ease.

To stay in the struggles is to deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow the Lord. Glorification comes after death. It is tough, doggone tough, but there is no easy way.

Homer: We get to face that giant.

V: When we get through that giant, we start strutting. Man! You should have seen me! Bring that next one on. Then he shows up on the horizon, you take one look at what you are facing, and uh oh. “Lord, get me out of this.” That is us praying while the Spirit is praying for the Father to keep us in it.

Romans

8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.

I want you to see here that when the Lord maps out His path for us, it is fraught with falling boulders and pitfalls and all that kind of stuff. For His path that He lays out for you to walk, you must stay on guard and fight those battles in the strength of the Lord. His

path for you is filled with His very best for you.

Now hear this: the struggles that you are going through and having to fight are also filled with those fiery darts. You must quench those fiery darts and swing your sword at the enemy. Your arm is so tired that you can hardly pick up the sword, your feet are raw from treading on rocky soil, you are weary, you just want to lay down and let somebody else take over and fight your battles for you, you want to run back down the hill and get behind a tree somewhere and hide. Just remember that all of those boulders, all of those pitfalls, all of those testings, and all of those sufferings are designed to bless you by maximizing your glory. Your struggles are to maximize your glory.

God is not going to design a path for you for the purpose of minimizing your glory! Also He is not going to put a path in front of you that He has not enabled you to walk. So, we need to start making good choices of submitting and following right behind the Lord and realizing that what we are suffering is for our ultimate benefit.

CONFORMED TO JESUS' IMAGE

Romans

8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

He says, “I have predestinated, I have laid out your path, and this is where I want you to go, right here. I am predestinating you, and if you will come on this path that I have designed just for you, then you will get to this point right here in which you will have maximized your conformance to the image of Jesus Christ.”

Now some of us are not going to get very close to the image of Jesus Christ because we are in the business of indulging ourselves and seeking temporal glory. We say no to the

struggles and yes to self-indulgences. We do not intend to get out into battle. “God does not want me to fight these giants. God does not want me to go without a meal. God does not want me to suffer. God does not want . . . oh, this cannot be God’s will for me. I am His beloved child.” We will think like this because the great majority of Christians are over there living the life of luxury. So why do we not all get over there where we can just be loving life and having a good time?

Beth: Dr. Bill, can I read a verse? Hebrews 12:11, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

V: The struggle is painful, but it yields a righteous harvest to those who are trained in this way.

Beth: That is the kind of path that God designs.

V: It sure is. I want you to see it in the next verse.

Romans

8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

I want you to see that this kind of suffering is in complete harmony with verse 32.

Romans

8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Saints are being killed all the daylong when they are out here on their paths, well on their way toward glory. Some of the saints, in order to reach their path’s goal, must die a horrible death.

There are historical records of people who have given their lives because of their testimonies for Jesus. Reading those histories will break your heart. If any of you have not had

Church History with me, I wish you would take that with me. We will review some of those records. Encountering those records will change your life. If your life does not change, then there is something wrong with your soul. Those wonderful saints died, and they could have walked away. They could have come out from under the pressure and the heat. But they did not, they stayed in there, and they gave their lives to horrible deaths. Yet, their sufferings are in complete harmony with God’s giving all good things to His saints. The dying of horrible deaths is completely compatible with God’s plan in which He spared not His Son. Will He not give with Him all good gifts to you who suffer?

Let me tell you something, those people that died those horrible deaths proved their love for the Lord, and their love was extremely high. It was a love for the Lord that was tested to the maximum of giving one’s life. That is the kind of testing that God gives you. When He picks you out and says that He wants you to die for Him, you will be receiving the maximum honor of being trusted for passing the maximum test. That trust is a great and wondrous honor, and when you die for the Lord, you are going to be honored by God in glory beyond your wildest dreams.

PRACTICE SUFFERING IN THE *KENOSIS* NOW

What we need to do now is practice the daily crucifying of the self because there is going to come a time when every part of your being is going to cry out and scream, “No, I cannot do this!” When this happens, you are also going to have to say, “Not my will, God, but thine.” When you can do that, you will bring glory to your Lord. It costs you your life, it costs you your friends, it costs you your reputation, it costs you your money, it costs you your comforts, and it costs you everything. When you can make those kinds

of sacrifices, the Lord God will be up there saying, “Look at my saint who is glorifying Me in his self-sacrifice.” The one who sacrifices is the one that He points out. The one that is up on this hilltop, ascending into self-indulgence, about whom most of us say, “Look at that ‘great’ saint,” God is seeing as an embarrassment to Him.

It says here in verse 36: “As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” That is God’s wonderful and blessed gift. That is what his wonderful and blessed gift is to you because, you see, the payoff of the gift is not in mundane glory. The payoff of the gift is not in the now. The payoff of the gift is in glory after death, and it lasts forever. It is

going to be bigger and longer than you can imagine. It is going to be so big that the being killed and counted as sheep for the slaughter is not even worth saying in the same breath.

Yet in our walk, seeing with human eyes, our sufferings look huge. This dying and this suffering are huge. They look huge! You can hardly measure the sufferings. You try to measure them, but they are too big. “I cannot do it!” However, in contrast to heavenly measures, they are not even comparable of being measured in those terms. Temporal suffering amounts to nothing compared to eternal glory.

Chapter Questions

1. Explain the sanctification process.
2. What are the benefits of being led by the Spirit?
3. How do you glorify God?
4. When is doing a good thing a sin?
5. What is the difference between having the Spirit and the Spirit’s indwelling in you?

Chapter 8

ROMANS 9

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

THE BROKEN HEART

Romans

9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

9:2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

9:3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

We have been working with this model (Chart 8.1), and the people that have not been

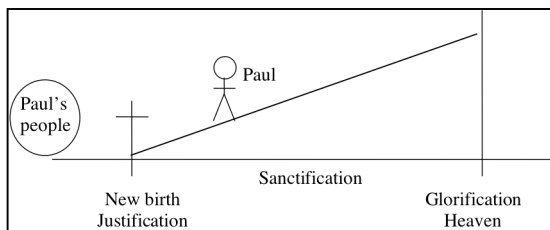


Chart 8.1

saved are outside justification while Paul is inside. Paul's heart is heavy because he knows his people are outside of justification.

The awesome thing is that the people outside of justification are deceived. They think that they are in the saved group and that they are okay. However, Paul is in a position where he can see more clearly. He can see both sides of the justification line of demarcation. Paul sees that his own people are in a position where they have to overcome a barrier to receive justification. In this chapter, we are going to examine this barrier that Paul calls a stumbling stone.

I marvel over what Paul says in verse 3. I do not think that I could say the same thing. I have looked at the cost of trading places, and I just do not measure up. I look at Paul's willingness to sacrifice his eternity and fall on my face helpless before God and wonder how

could somebody be willing to just give up their salvation. I am staggered at Paul's selflessness. I can hardly read this verse. We do not get very far in this chapter before I see my own shortcomings.

Henry: Moses also prayed that for his people.¹

V: Yes. I do not know how they did it. I too feel the heaviness and the continual sorrow. I have written in my Bible, "Me, too." But I made sure that the "Me, too" stayed on verse 2. So my love for the lost falls short of verse 3 right here.

Henry: He is saying that he is willing to go to hell for everybody else.

V: Man! Can you even hear it in your ear. I cannot even hear it in my ear. It does not even compute. This is heavy for me. It is too heavy for me. So just coming into this chapter, I stumble and fall on my face here at the beginning. So if I get anything out of the rest of this chapter, it must be gravy, right?

My New Strategy

I do feel in my heart the extreme heaviness and the continual sorrow for the lost, but I want to tell you where my heaviness is beginning to shift. I used to be a street preacher in Atlanta, and my heart's desire was to win the lost. It was not a multiplication effort; it was an addition effort. I hope you know what I am saying there. I came to see that the greatest need was not in my being able to reach more, the greatest need was for others to be raised up to reach those around them. The need was for multiplication in reaching the lost. So I could see that I needed to not

¹ Exodus 32:32

focus on the unsaved group but on the saved group. I needed to help the saints to get up on their feet and apply their gifts in the *Missio Dei*.

My new job would be not to get just me evangelizing in the streets but to get thousands more evangelizing in the streets, thousands more in the marketplace, thousands more in the homes, and thousands more in the churches. When somebody lost happens to come into a church, there should be more than just the staff to go after him. Everybody in the pews should be after the welfare of each visitor. There should be a multiplication of soul winners and ministers across the nation and across the world.

With this idea of the multiplication of ministers in mind, becoming a teacher to equip God's saints to meet their calling became my goal. As a preacher in a church, that should be your goal. As a staff person I want that to be your goal. Your goal is not to be a super minister before spectators; your goal is to be an equipper of the saints so that you have a multiplication of ministers.

Every member of a church should be a minister. The goal of a Sunday school teacher is not just to teach the lesson. The goal of a Sunday school teacher is to equip those saints who have been assigned to him, and help those saints to get out there and minister and to touch lives and bring others into the Kingdom of God.

Ted: When my wife and I surrendered to go into the ministry, one of the things that I tried to stress to my friends and that I now try to stress to my Sunday school class is that even though a pastor is set aside for his particular ministry, the day that you accept Christ is also the day that you accept the call into the ministry. Christians seem to make a distinction between Christians and ministers, but the day you accept Christ is the day you accept the call to ministry. That call may not be to

vocational ministry, but it is certainly ministry for God.

V: Yes, Ted!!! Yes!!! Yes!!! Yes!!!

The Misplaced Comma

Class, have I told you about the misplaced comma?

Pete: No.

V: Class, please go to Ephesians 4.

Ephesians

4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Some of you do not have the translation that I have, so I do not know what the punctuation is in your verses, but the King James translation is one that has set the tone for English-speaking Christianity around the world. The KJV has set the tone and established the milieu surrounding Christian ministry.

In verse 12 there is a comma after saints, and when you see a comma after saints it looks like the purpose of all of the professional ministers of verse 11 is to perfect the saints and also do the work of the ministry and do the edifying of the body of Christ. That means, then, that the clergy does the entire ministry, and the saints get it done to them.

The translators who developed this King James Authorized Version were all clergy on the king's payroll. Think about these guys on the payroll. They were of a mind set that only the paid ministers were to do the ministry: "If everybody should do the ministry, then what would the king need us for? What would happen to our pay?" So then there is a protection of the turf here that is put into place with the comma.

But the comma is not in the Greek New Testament. There is no punctuation at all in the Greek, so there is no comma there. The translator puts his own punctuation in his translation. When you translate it yourself, you put the commas and the periods and all other punctuation in there.

Take this comma out. Now what does it say? It then says that the professionals do the perfecting of the saints so that the saints can then do the work of the ministry. That is the way it is supposed to be. The professionals are the equippers. Their special ministry is to equip the saints so that the saints can do their own ministries for which they have been gifted and called by God.

Without the comma is the way it is supposed to be. So what we professionals have to do is to get our people equipped so that they can get on their paths assigned to them by God. We are to help them to run their race by giving them the tools they need so that when they are in the marketplace, they know what they are doing. That is what you are talking about, Ted.

Ted: The comma has set the mindset in the churches like you would not believe.

V: It is hard, almost impossible, to get rid of it. The comma is securely in place today, and I will tell you why—because the people want it there. That way they can be passive, and the responsibility for ministry is on to the guy in the pulpit.

ROMANS 9:4-5

THE PRIVILEGES OF ISRAEL

Romans

9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom [pertaineth] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service [of God], and the promises;

9:5 Whose [are] the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ [came], who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

The following seven privileges are listed in this passage:

1. They have the adoption.
2. They have the glory.
3. They have the covenants.
4. They have the Law.
5. They are in the service of God.
6. They have the promises of God.
7. They are in the lineage of Christ.

These are seven privileges that Israel has that the Gentiles do not have. That means, then, that you put those seven in that unsaved group that Paul is concerned about. Look at the privileges possessed by the unsaved group.

What Are Your Privileges?

Interpret your own privileges. Now Israel has all of these privileges, but yet they misinterpret their privileges. You know what? To whom much is given, much is required.² Now if you look at your privileges and elevate your status rather than your responsibilities, then you will have messed up just like Israel did.

Mary: 1 Corinthians 4:2 says: “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful (NIV).”

V: Now what if they have been given seven trusts? The number seven symbolizes a totality in the number of trusts given to the Jews. Now, you can begin to feel the hurt in Paul’s heart because he can see what they have been given. It is weighing heavy on him: “Look at what they have been given, and I cannot even communicate to them. There are barriers there, and I cannot get through the barriers. Oh, if I could just take their pain for them.” This is an awesome scenario.

² Luke 12:48 . . . For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Now apply this principle to your own personal experience. Many of us look at our blessings from God and celebrate them while asking for more. Israel looked at all of their blessings and celebrated them. Please see the parallel. This scenario is an attitudinal trap which can separate you from meeting your responsibilities. You could end up overlooking your responsibilities for ministry because you are focusing on possessing the very blessings that God has given to you to use to meet those responsibilities. Celebrating and protecting and holding your blessings to keep yourself safe from the world could stop you from doing the very things for which God gave you the blessings. This could be a terrible thing for you and others because to whom much is given, much is required.

It is easy for us to sit here in this nice environment, and look unsympathetically over to Israel at this time, and say, "Oh, yeah, Paul was hurting because his people could not see their responsibilities, even with all the privileges they had. What is wrong with them?" We tend to see history abstractly. We tend to exempt ourselves from any ancient condemnation by applying it only to "those people" back then.

I have seen it over and over and over again where today's Christians will read Isaiah and Jeremiah and say, "What was wrong with those people, could they not hear what the prophet said?" I want to say, "What is wrong with us? Why can we not hear what the prophet is saying?"

Sybil: When you are pointing your finger at them, you have three fingers pointing back at yourself.

V: That is good to remember.

ELECTION IS OF A SEED

Romans

9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they [are] not all Israel, which are of Israel:

9:7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, [are they] all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Here are some references for verse seven.

Genesis

17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Genesis

17:19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, [and] with his seed after him.

Genesis

17:21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

The gist of these passages is that there is a narrowing. From a multiplicity of streams, there is a narrowing to one person, Isaac. In this particular case there are just two in the multiplicity of streams. Ishmael and Isaac are the candidates for being the seed of the covenant, but the one to be chosen is Isaac.

Genesis

21:13 And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he [is] thy seed.

Because both Ishmael and Isaac come out of Abraham, there is going to be one that is going to be chosen from which the seed would come. However, because of the Covenant of Grace given to Abraham and all of his seed, all of his seed is going to be blessed. Whenever God chooses someone, he and his descendants will be blessed. God chose Abraham, and therefore, Abraham was blessed, and everyone descending from the "chosen one" is going to be blessed, i.e. Jacob and Ishmael are both blessed. However, of these two, God narrows His choice down to the one from which his seed, the lineage of

Jesus, will come. This process is called election.

Election Is a Narrowing

God is always narrowing down, narrowing down, narrowing down to one who will carry the seed out of which Jesus, the final One who will be both chosen and also blessed, will come as the final Child of Promise. God's Covenant of blessing to the world was chosen to go **through** Isaac's stream, not through Ishmael's stream. But blessing is going to apply also **to** Ishmael. This is illustrated in Chart 8.2.

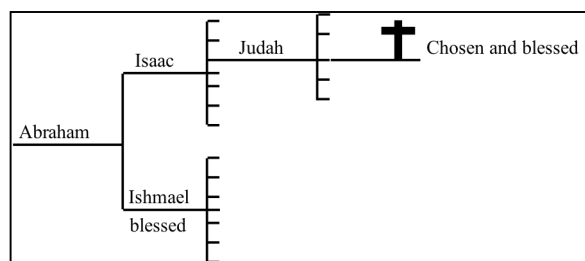


Chart 8.2

Romans

9:8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9:9 For this [is] the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

9:10 And not only [this]; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, [even] by our father Isaac;

9:11 (For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

9:12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

9:13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

References for verses 12 and 13 are Genesis 25:23 and Malachi 1:4.

Romans 9:8 contains the key word “promise,” and it can link back to Romans 4:3. You

need to see that the stream of generations that come out of Abraham just keeps on getting bigger and bigger. Further out in Chart 8.2, it just gets so big you cannot even illustrate it. But there are two more that I am showing to illustrate the chosen, i.e. Judah and then Jesus (the cross), you see.

Mary: That is all by election.

V: Yes, this is all by election. In this stream that is going forward, there is Judah that is both chosen and also blessed, but all the other eleven tribes are being blessed but not chosen. Judah was chosen to carry the Covenant of Promise, and out of him would come Christ eventually as the final One chosen, i.e. He is the Promised One.

The question of God's righteousness in choosing the lineage of His Covenant-carrying seed is brought up by Paul to be settled here. Paul answers by pointing to God's sovereignty. Somebody has to be chosen to carry the seed. It is not through personal merit that the choice is made. This choice is reserved by God to Himself. There is certainly no unrighteousness for God to bestow on someone of His Own choice the grace of being the one through whom the blessing will be passed on to future generations.

Calvinism Is Not God's Doctrine of Election

Calvinism's doctrine of double predestination falls apart when the doctrine of election is of the **seed** through whom the final blessing will pass. Calvinism says that the blessing of individual salvation, not the seed through whom the blessing of individual salvation will pass, is chosen by God's sovereignty. The fate of each individual is determined by God before their creation. In other words, God chooses the destination of heaven or hell for each person that He creates. In Calvinism's false doctrine of God, God specifically purposes to create each helpless and hapless individual to live without hope in hell for eternity. Furthermore, this evil descrip-

tion of God is used as evidence for His love for the individuals whom He created purposefully to go to heaven.

Let me make this straight for you now about Calvinism's claim that God shows His great love for some individuals by His ultimate and absolute hate for others. That conclusion cannot be tolerated, my dear friend, because it violates God's Word, His Character, and His Way of salvation. I know that some people do things that are so despicable that man's inclination would be to hate them, but God does not hate the individual person. He hates the sin of the individual. God loves all people and wants them all to be saved according to 2 Peter 3:9.

Calvinism's Two False Examples: Of Pharaoh and of the Potter

Contrary to Calvinism, the true doctrine of election is of the *seed*, and everyone who is in that final seed will go to heaven. Let us examine the two examples put forth here in Romans 9 that are used by Calvinists in an effort to prove their flawed theory. The two examples are of Pharaoh and of the potter.

Concerning Pharaoh (Romans 9:17), there was too much pride in him, and God used him as a suitable adversary to demonstrate His power to Israel and the world. Pharaoh hardened his own heart according to Ex. 7:22, 8:15, 32, 9:7. In the other places where the scriptures declare that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, it was through His bringing Pharaoh to a point of choosing whether or not to obey God. Every time that Pharaoh chose against obeying God, his heart was hardened. Each hardening was sometimes described as God doing the hardening and sometimes described as Pharaoh doing the hardening, but all of the hardenings resulted from ***Pharaoh's free choice*** to disobey. The same thing can happen to us once we start down the road of disobedience.

Concerning the potter who was shaping vessels from the clay (Romans 9:21-23), one was created for honor and another for dishonor. Calvinists jump to the conclusion of double predestination. In their view, God's sovereignty trumps man's free choice. However, God does not create with the purpose of dishonoring the creature whom He loves and with whom He wants to fellowship for eternity. So the question becomes: does God take away free choice from man so that God Himself can dictate the destiny of heaven or hell for each individual person whom He creates.

The answer comes with a closer scrutiny of the verb "fitted." The scripture says that the vessel was fitted for destruction. The verb is in the middle perfect tense. The meaning of that tense is that the vessel had fitted itself for destruction. Furthermore, free choice of men as vessels is emphasized in 2 Tim. 2:21-22.

2 Timothy

2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, [and] prepared unto every good work.

2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith,

The responsibility for becoming a vessel for honor or for dishonor is in the vessel's own hands. In fact, the promise is given to all vessels that if they will purge themselves of sin, they will be used for honor, sanctified for the Lord's use.

Free Will of Man versus God's Sovereignty

Free will of man is not trumped by God's sovereignty. The free will of man is completely compatible with God's sovereignty when its allowance to exist and operate is provided by God's sovereignty. The issue is not either God's sovereignty or man's free will, but both God's sovereignty and man's freewill. God is not the tyrannical dictator of

the Fall of man, the creator of man for hell, and the cause of all of the sin of man. God is the creator of man for good, righteousness, freedom, justice, and life. It is man who is in charge of his own will which fits him for either honor or dishonor.

Jesus Is the Final Seed Elected

Jesus is the last of the seeds chosen. Thus He is the last and only gateway through whom salvation is gained. Salvation, in this scenario, is a matter of individual choice by the individual to accept it by faith as a gift of Promise from God. Once Jesus, God's Covenant-carrying seed, is accepted by faith, then the individual is predestinated to participate in the blessings that is passed on to those generations coming out of Jesus. Those generations of blessings are not from a physical birth, but of a spiritual birth, thus the term "born again."

During the time before Christ, would come many generations and lineages out of the chosen person to carry the Promise forward toward Christ. But every time God makes a choice of one of those many, it is a narrowing by His sovereign choice to a particular lineage that He is doing. It is a focusing of His blessing-carrying seed. He is narrowing it down, narrowing it down, narrowing His choice of the seed down to one stream and eventually to the last single person in that lineage, i.e. Jesus. But the narrowing down is within those who believe the Word of Promise. Promise has to do with believing, and that was reemphasized in Romans 4:3.

Romans

4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Watch this! God makes a Promise of blessing. How do you receive that blessing? By believing God; if you believe Him, you will receive it. This means then that in order to have a part in the Promise, you do it by

believing God. Apart from belief, it does not matter into whom you were physically born. It does not matter what privileges of grace and all other wonderful things that you possess. None of that matters, because you must believe God's Word in order to receive His Promise.

Before Christ, God's Promise connects with believing God and being circumcised.³ That belief part is what separates Israel of the flesh who are not God's children from spiritual Israel who are God's children (Romans 9:6-8). Both natural Israel and spiritual Israel are circumcised, but only spiritual Israel believes the Promise.

After Christ, we receive the Promise of blessing by the same kind of faith. In Romans 10:10, it says that if you believe in your heart that Christ rose from the dead and confess it with your mouth, you will be saved. Thus the belief plus ***circumcision*** that was required before Christ is replaced with belief plus ***confession*** after Christ.

The Covenant of Faith is the Covenant of Promise. How do you get born into this seed that inherits the blessing? How do you get into this stream? Faith has been the doorway ever since the Promise's origination with Abraham. That faith in God's Promise of blessing in His final seed, Jesus, is the stumbling stone to the Jews.

³ In Genesis 17, God tells Abraham that those of his household, including purchased bond slaves, would inherit the blessing if they should seal their belief through the token of circumcision. That chapter goes on to show that Abraham and Ishmael were baptized on the same day. Genesis 21 records the baptism of Isaac through whom the chosen lineage for carrying the blessing will pass to Jacob (not Jacob's brother Esau, who is called Edom and who despised his spiritual birthright and sold it to Jacob for a temporal blessing). The covenant is confirmed to Isaac in chapter 22. Though Ishmael and his seed receive the blessing, they are not chosen to pass it on to the world. The next to be chosen was Jacob.

Tim: Hearing and believing and receiving.

V: Amen! And so the present-day Jews cannot get in because they think they are already in. They think they are in by being born in physically. However, they cannot receive the Promise because it is received by believing in Jesus, the Promised One; i.e. by being born again spiritually.

If entrance to the realm of salvation is through faith, then is there any threat or a scary part in this method for us? Yes, that scary part is: what if you do not believe? What if we turn to a page in God's Word, and we do not believe that page? What if we turn to a verse, and we do not believe that verse?

Tim: Tear that page out.

V: Right, and there are some people who have Bibles that are not very thick because they are tearing out many, many pages.

Tim: You are describing my church's Bible.

V: What would happen if someone convinced you that the Bible is not the Word of God. What if someone convinced you that the Bible is nothing more than a witness to God's Word but not God's Word Itself. Then you would be believing a witness and not being like Abraham and believing God. There is no righteousness in believing a witness. The only righteousness there is, is to believe God. It could be very tragic if we should reject God's Word. This business about promise, and this business about faith and believing are all tied together, and if we do not receive God's Promise of a Messiah through believing, we are left out just like the unbelieving Jews who were stumbling over the stumbling stone.

ROMANS 9:14-24: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

The following Characteristics of God's sovereignty do not pertain to God's selection of an individual for salvation. However, Calvinism's adherents apply all of these characteristics to the salvation and the condemnation of the individual:

1. There is no unrighteousness with God. Romans 9:14.
2. Mercy and compassion are at God's will. Romans 9:15.
3. Our will and efforts do not counteract God's will. Romans 9:16.
4. God has mercy on whomever He wills. Romans 9:18.
5. God hardens whomever He wills. Romans 9:18.
6. We cannot fault God because creatures do not judge the creator. Romans 9:20.
7. We are created for God's purposes. Romans 9:21.
8. God demonstrates His power and His wrath in judgment of some. Romans 9:22.
9. God demonstrates His glory and His mercy in the elect. Romans 9:23.

Romans

9:14 What shall we say then? [Is there] unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

9:16 So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will [have mercy], and whom he will he hardeneth.

9:19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his

will?

9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus?

9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

9:22 [What] if God, willing to shew [his] wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

9:24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

There are streams of generations illustrated in Chart 8.2 that are going forward through history. The chart is a very brief kind of a representation of that idea. You could multiply the lines in the chart by a million in your mind, and then you could begin to see what we are talking about.

God Elected Abraham as the Seed of the Covenant

Abraham did not choose to be elected to be the beginning of the streams of blessing for his seed; God chose Abraham. God elected Abraham to begin the lineage out of which the Messiah would come, and He blessed Abraham and called him. However, Abraham had to respond to God's call in order to accept the blessing and to be the chosen one through whom the blessing would go. God sovereignly chose Abraham because He had intentions of blessing the world through Abraham. That goal of blessing the entire world is the idea of election.

Election is to believe and receive the blessing and be the chosen lineage through whom the blessing would pass on to the world. Election is not to get a private individual blessing so that everybody can look at you and say, "Oh, you are elect. I wish we were all elect like you are." That is not the

idea. The idea of election is to bless the many through the one. The elected person is the vehicle of the Promise of blessing, and so Abraham is the elected vessel.

The purpose of the elect is to bless the world. Guess what God says about expanding the blessing? "I am going to pour out my blessings, I am going to pour them out on you and on your seed. I am going to bless all the people that bless you."⁴ God's method is to get narrow in order to broaden out. If He pours election blessings on an individual, His purpose is to bless many through that elected individual. Blessing many through the one is always the purpose of God.

Now as we come on down through the lineage of Abraham, we get this next choice of the seed carrier. That is a further narrowing. The purpose is to pass on the Covenant of Promise through that next stream, and then there is going to be another narrowing for the purpose of blessing the whole world through that stream.

What is not being heard today by the Jews is that the way to get into the lineage of blessing, into the seed, is to believe the Promise of God being carried by that seed, not to be born of flesh and blood in that lineage. The way to get into the elect of the promise, you see, is to believe. For the whole world to be blessed, guess what? All that the people, even the people on the other side of the world, have to do is believe the Promise, and they become part of the elect's spiritual seed (the seed of Jesus) to receive the blessing.

Jack: He is not leaving anyone out.

V: Nobody is left out. God's purpose is to bless the world, and the method for that level of expansion is in place. Because it is a spiritual birth, there are no physical limitations for your being included in the seed. From the get-go, the method is in place to

⁴ Genesis 12.

bless the world. That means, then, how did Ishmael get into the elect? He just believed and was circumcised, and then he was in. How does a man who is out here where we are in the present get in? He just believes and confesses, and he is in. It is easy because God did all the work.

Jack: Somebody at my church takes literally that all Israel will be saved as a nation. He holds to a physical lineage. Physical lineage really has nothing to do with salvation, does it?

V: Faith lineage rather than physical lineage is the key to salvation, i.e. receiving the Promise of blessing.

Carl: This is a difficult passage of scripture that we just read. Some people with whom I deal like to interpret it as double predestination. In their minds, some people are predestined to hell and some predestined to heaven. They see it as a fact that God created Pharaoh to go to hell and Moses to go to heaven. From what I am seeing on the board and the theology you are teaching, Pharaoh could have been one of the elect because all he had to do was believe.

V: Exactly, and he would have been in.

Carl: The same way with Judas.

V: That is right. The Gospel (Good News) is that whosoever will has the capability of getting in.

Mary: Pharaoh did not get in because God chose him for destruction.

V: No, that would be like creating somebody to go to hell. Now there are people who believe that, but that belief contradicts a loving God's desiring all to be saved.⁵

⁵ 2 Peter 3:9.

DOUBLE AND SINGLE PREDESTINATION

Do all of you know the difference between double predestination and single predestination of Calvinism?

Class: No (from several students).

V: Double predestination is when God creates John to go to hell, and he creates Jim to go to heaven. Before the person is created, God determines his destination. What the person wants is predetermined by God. There is no free will in the man because his choices are determined by God. God's sovereignty is absolute which allows no room for man to have freewill (see Chart 8.3).

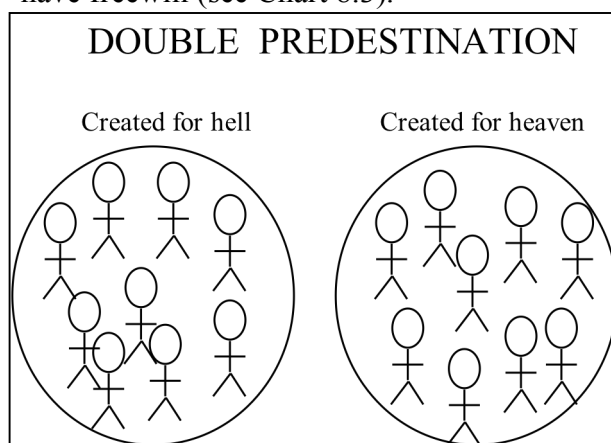
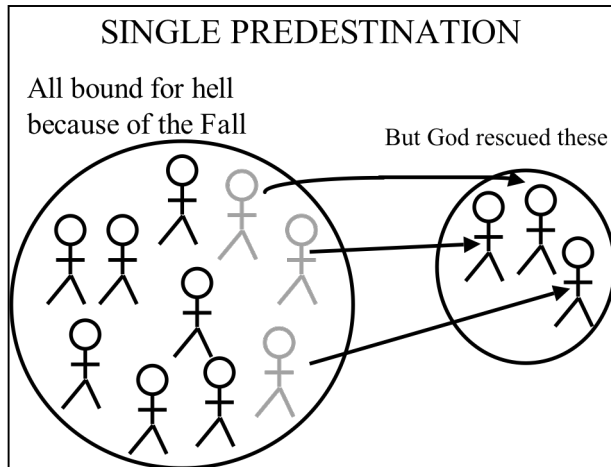


Chart 8.3

Single predestination portrays God as the rescuing God. In this scenario, everybody is going to hell because of the Fall of mankind, but God decides to rescue some out of the mass of the damned in order to bless them with the gift of heaven (see Chart 8.4 on the next page). In single predestination, God chooses individual by individual who is going to heaven. God also chooses individual by individual whom to leave behind in the mass of the damned who are headed for hell.

What has been done by the Calvinists, in the single-predestination theory is to moderate the absurdity of the double-predestination theory which portrays a God who takes joy in

**Chart 8.4**

creating a person with the express purpose of sending that person to hell. That hapless person will never have the opportunity to go to heaven. When he hears the Gospel, his desire has been predetermined to choose against heaven. It really does not matter where he wants to go; he is going to hell regardless.

However, the absurdity of Calvinism's double-predestination theory continues in its single-predestination scenario. In this latter scenario, God creates everyone to be hell-bound because of the Fall of Adam. Because of His loving nature, He chooses some to be rescued from the mass of the damned. In choosing the individuals to be rescued, the other choice remains as well, i.e. the individuals not chosen for salvation has been chosen to go to hell. Thus, the case can be made that single predestination has the same results for the same individuals as does double predestination.

The attempt to soften the view of the unloving, double-predestinating God is by portraying Him as the loving, single-predestinating God who, out of His great love and mercy, saves some from going to hell. God, in His mercy, chooses, on the basis of His Sovereignty, individuals to be rescued out of the mass of the damned. Single predestina-

tion is a compromise, a theological compromise, in order to reduce the criticism of God.

Jill: In single predestination, those whom he rescues then are the elect.

V: Right. Single predestination would be the election of those who were to be saved to be the vessels of honor. All others are damned as the vessels of dishonor.

Homer: So that makes it our free choice if we believe.

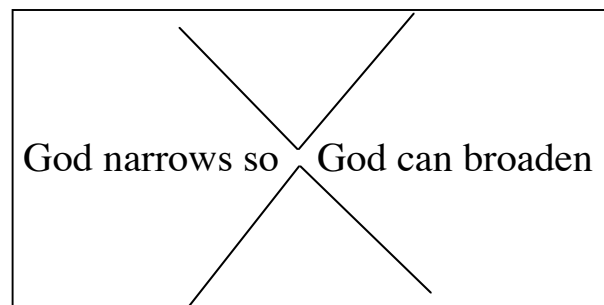
V: No, in single predestination, it does not matter about our choice of believing.

Joe: God does the choosing of who will believe.

V: That is right, Joe.

THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION

What I want to show you now is the true doctrine of predestination. Predestination is a corporate predestination. It is the predestination of a Seed. It comes on the right hand side of election. Election is the narrowing part, and predestination is the broadening part.

**Chart 8.5**

We are getting close to personal application now. This Chart 8.5 is what the model looks like. Election is narrowing the way and straitening the gate by choosing the One through whom salvation will come, i.e. the lineage of Jesus. That is what election is. The purpose of it is to arrive at the final gate-

way, God's Son Jesus, in order for God to bless the many forever. So God gets narrow, see the narrowing in Chart 8.5, in order to broaden the realm of salvation on the right hand side through the ever-continuing work of the eternal High Priest Jesus.

The repetitive choosing, from among the various lineages of a specific person through whom the blessing-carrying lineage began, continued all the way until Jesus. Jesus then began the final and eternal lineage. This continuous choosing of individuals for the lineage of Jesus is, then, the model of election. God narrowed down His choice to one person in the whole world through whom the blessing would come to all peoples. One person was picked through God's sovereign choice, and the Covenant of Promise was given to that person for the purpose of expanding God's gracious blessing to all people. God narrowed down to the one in order to broaden out to the many.

All the way through the generations, the narrowing, the narrowing, the narrowing, the narrowing, and the narrowing are reiterations of this model, and so you have election on the narrowing side, and you have predestination of all those in the elected person on the broadening side. Anybody who gets into the elected person by believing God is predestined to go to heaven and be like Jesus Christ. What a wonderful, glorious story this is. Everybody is eligible because salvation is a Covenant not of physical birth⁶ but a Covenant of Promise. It does not matter who your parents are. You will be able to get in through spiritual birth.

Anybody can get in! Admission is open, and it is not achieved by works. You cannot

merit it, you cannot run far enough, you cannot keep enough laws, you cannot get physically born into it, you cannot do anything to achieve it. The only way you can get in is through believing God! What a stumbling stone this is. You must believe God. If you do not believe God, you cannot get in. You can believe traditions of man, but that will not get you in. You can do the traditions of men, but that does not get you in. You can join the biggest church in the world, but that does not get you in. You can be absolutely right in your denominational stance, but that does not get you in. The only thing that gets you in is to believe God. That is why the proclamation of God's Word is absolutely essential. Not story telling, not any of this rinky-dink stuff that is passed off sometimes as preaching.

Beth: Have you quit preaching and gone to . . .

V: . . . Yep. I have gone to meddling. God's Word gets on my toes too.

But here is the way that this doctrine of predestination works. God elected Jesus and predestinated Him to be the Lord of the Universe. He predestinated everybody who is in Jesus through belief and confession to be eternally blessed, and they are predestinated to go where He goes, to do what He does, to be with Him, to share in His inheritance, and to be called a child of God just like He was. I mean, we get the whole deal. How do you get it? Just believe God.

This final election from among all the streams of Abraham's seed is what election is all about. Election is the narrowing down to a point. It may look like the gate is so strait that it is a barrier to salvation. But that is not the case because Jesus is the "Way" through whom whosoever will believe in Him may enter. Jesus is the elected "way of salvation."

Beth: Individually we must believe.

⁶ The physical blessings for the lineage born physically to the seed are still in effect however. These blessings are not for salvation unless there is the essential companion of belief in the Promise, but there are always the continuation of temporal physical blessings that go with the physical lineage.

V: Yes, we must individually believe God's Gospel in order to enter the gate with humility.

PERSONAL RELEVANCE

We are going to get serious now for a minute because I want to talk to you about your status. Every one of you is enjoying vicariously the status of the elect because you are in Jesus. Because of your status, you are in here (see Chart 8.6). You are in this group with me. You are blessed. God has given you special graces and blessings like He did Israel. As a member of the elected-in-Jesus group, the model of broadened blessings holds true through you.

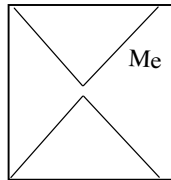


Chart 8.6

Your status, however, means that you have a high responsibility because God is going to bless the multitudes through you, and if you fail in this understanding, there are going to be people who are going to be hurting for eternity because you failed. If you see yourself as being a special person and the blessings and graces of God are given to you merely for you to enjoy and to celebrate, and you do not perform the function that God has for you as an elected-in-Jesus person, then some people are going to be hurting throughout eternity. In effect you will have narrowed God's realm of blessing by your own lack of discipleship (see Chart 8.7).

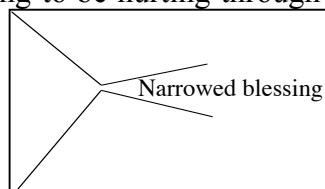


Chart 8.7

Some of you have been given a ton of gifts. Some of you have been chosen to teach a Sunday school class, and I dare say that there are people in here who have been teaching without the existential application, without the gut wrenching preparation, without the weeping and praying

over the people, and without the ache in the heart and the heaviness that Paul experienced with his own countrymen. When you fail in these areas, you are narrowing the realm of blessings.

Now let us just suppose that Abraham had not believed God or that he had just gone half way. Let us suppose that Isaac had failed. Let us suppose that Judah had failed. Let us suppose that Jesus had not done His work, but He had chosen instead to take the shortcut offered to Him by Satan in His temptations in the wilderness. What if He had chosen to be a great orator instead of a teacher. What if He had yielded to the clamor of the multitudes for food instead giving Himself into the teaching of twelve. What if He had yielded to the clamor to make Him king instead of staying low and keeping on investing in the lives of a select group. He was tempted. I am here to tell you that the narrowed blessing could have occurred at many points, and you could have ended up outside of that realm of blessing.

Every one of us has come through a specific lineage, our inheritance. Some of us just barely got into the realm of the blessed because some saint came along at the last minute and faithfully met his responsibility for keeping the realm of blessing wide by witnessing.⁷ Your responsibility is to keep the realm of blessing wide as a faithful minister every step of your way. Every minute of your life you are either broadening or you are narrowing. When you leave this room, you are going out to make decisions, and as you make your decisions, you are going to be broadening to bring more into the Kingdom to be blessed, or you are going to be narrowing

⁷ Now in the experiences of this class, we have testimonies of three persons saved during this past week, and all of them were miracles. David⁷ (a homeless man ministered to by two of the class members) was within days of his death, and if it had not been for your faithful classmate to reach out to him right there when the time was ripe and bring him in, this fellow would be in hell right now.

to condemn people to be outside of the Kingdom of blessing for an eternity of hopelessness and pain. There is a ton at risk here.

I just cannot explain the greatness of the responsibility to you enough except by Paul's heart that was sorrowing to the point that he could give up his own eternal life for these people outside of the realm of blessing who were misled and deceived. I have a hard time seeing my responsibility at that level, but the level at which I do see is breaking my heart now.

You are at this crossroads of Chart 8.6. We are here at the "me," every one of you is here with me. That means that God has saved you for His purposes—**YOU!** What are you resisting? Is there something that God is calling for you to do to which you have said, "No, I cannot do that." And as a result of your refusal, of your not believing God, there is a narrowing, and people are going to be outside of the realm of blessing that you are supposed to be holding wide.

Every one of us is making life-changing decisions on a daily basis, and much of it goes unrecognized. Our life choices just whiz on by. We, then, become like the fool in Romans 1 who was dull of perception. As such, we do not see what is going on around us. We are just trucking along. We are in the realm of the blessed-people-in-Jesus, but we are acting like people who do not have a clue.

Ted: I am under major conviction right now, this moment. I have gotten to the point where I cannot stand to go to work on Sundays. Did you hear what I just said? I said work. Pastoring is not work. It is the Lord's Day, but I am looking at as a workday. When I go to work, I cannot wait to get away. When the second service is over, I immediately leave. I do not want anybody talking to me. I am so frustrated with those people! I am continually galled by their church-religion game. I have slipped into an apathetic performance of pastoral duties to appease the

church people rather than doing what God is asking me to do. That major conviction has just come over me.

V: Amen. I hear you. There are many pastors and other kinds of ministers in the same boat.

Ted: I am so frustrated with what I think God's people should be like.

V: Amen. You see, that frustration is what Paul is describing. Paul is feeling the same pain and the same hurt, except to a much higher degree.

Ted: A person says, "Oh, I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe God, and my belief is credited to be my righteousness." But then this same person is walking in unrighteousness. The church is mandating that we have to give him his right. To me, that is not faith. Do you see what I am saying?

V: Walking in unrighteousness is not faith.

Ted: If I believe that a bridge will hold me, but I do not walk on it. Instead, I walk around it. There is no faith in that kind of belief.

V: In that situation, there is no faith in the bridge. Faith without its matching works is dead.

Steve: If you are a Sunday school teacher believing that way, you are narrowing the realm of blessings.

V: That is right, Steve. I do not know whether you know it or not, but the Sunday school teachers have to step up. It is the Sunday school teachers who, I believe, are going to make a difference in the discipleship impact in this country. If the Sunday school teachers step up and begin to teach with their lives, pouring their souls out in prayer, preparing by laboring in the Word, and not teaching an intellectual history lesson, there will be revival. The little history lesson about seeing a nice little map where Paul went and

what he did is not what we are talking about. We are talking about changing lives, getting your people to fall on their faces in repentance, and leaving class as changed persons to go out and make a difference in their communities and families. I think that the Sunday school teachers have it within their grasps to make that difference.

Concerning pastors, it is so difficult to get the good pastors to hear because they are so covered up with the problems of the world, the problems of the churches, the problems of this, and the problems of that. They are prevented by those many church problems to focus on the existential applications of the Word by the individual members of the church. The bad pastors are more concerned with nickels and noses and the welfare of their institutional church than with the welfare and discipleship of the individual members. The value of the institutional church is supreme in their minds. Their lives are spent on an institution rather than on the brethren.

We need the Sunday school teachers to step up. Every Sunday school teacher is a pastor of a small congregation, and they have tremendous responsibilities. Jesus was pastor of 12 members. It is the Sunday school teacher that duplicates the model of Christ. They have the opportunity to lead by example, to have fellowship with their members, and to go on missionary journeys with their members.

GENTILES INCLUDED IN THE ABRAHAMIC BLESSING

Romans

9:25 As he saith also in Osee,⁸ I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

Hosea is talking about the Gentiles who are the people outside of Jacob's physical

lineage. He is saying, "God is going to call them His people even though they did not get born into the nationality or the lineage of Israel. However, the good news is that they may become a member of the spiritual lineage of Israel by believing the promise."

Romans

9:26 And it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was said unto them, Ye [are] not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

9:27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

9:28 For he will finish the work, and cut [it] short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

9:29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

9:30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

9:31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

9:32 Wherefore? Because [they sought it] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

9:33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Christ is the strait gate and narrow way of salvation.⁹ Christ is the final and only way through whom you can become a member of the elect, and anybody can become a member of the elect by believing in Him, by believing God, the Gospel of God. Gentiles, as well as Jews, become a member of the elect when they are in Christ. When in Him, you, too, become a member of the elect because Christ

⁸ Hosea

⁹ Matthew 7:14

is elect. If you are in Christ, you are elected through Him. That is an undeniable fact.

Furthermore, as a result of being in Christ, God appoints you to bless the multitudes by broadening the realm of blessing in the same way as Jesus did as a seed. The way of the seed is death. The seed dies in order to bring forth a great harvest. Your faithfulness is to follow that *kenotic* model by denying yourself, picking up your cross, and following Jesus.

PERSONAL COMMITMENT

I want you to think with me for a minute. What is it that God has blessed you with? Do you know what God has given you besides your salvation? He has given you a parentage. He has given you a language. He has given you opportunity for theological education. He has given you a network of family, friends, and co-workers. He has given you secular education. You have been raised up and given values by your parents. You were born in a free country. You have been given much.

Knowing your blessings, which came to you inside and outside of salvation, what does God want you to do in order to be a blessing to the multitudes? There is ministry ahead for you, and there are choices to be made concerning that ministry.

Some of you are shrinking back from choices right now. God has been talking to you about obedience, He has been dealing with you, and you are saying, "Well, I will wait a while. It is not yet the time for me to make that kind of decision; there must be somebody else who is more qualified." You are fearful, and you are not believing God. What if Abraham had said, "Me? Leave my family and friends and go out there in the wilderness? No way!"

The pathway is the *kenosis*! The *kenosis* is the opposite of self-exaltation, celebrating

your own status, and self-indulgence. *Kenosis* is self-denial, self-sacrifice, humility, and servant hood. The pathway is full of hard stuff. I fell down on my face because of the first three verses. I have been crawling around ever since, and I do not know what to do about it. I hope all of you feel some of the pain that I am feeling. Discipleship is hard. The issue of election is not one that has this typical and popular idea of self-exaltation: "I am elect. Look at me! I am elect." Self-exaltation is the wrong way to look at election. God has chosen to use you to be a blessing to others. We are to broaden the realm of blessing. I do not know why God has entrusted me with such a heavy responsibility.

In closing I would like to pray for you. Some of you need to change some of the things you are doing right now. Your ministry needs to change. It needs to become gut wrenching and sacrificial. It needs to be where you are pouring your life into someone else by helping him to get on his feet and then to become all that he can be for the Lord.

Some of you need to change your lifestyle. I do not know whether the change is to be from self-indulgence to self-denial. There may be some things that you are doing that God is saying, "That is enough of that. Quit it, and do something else."

"Lord God, I come to You as a wretch saved by grace. I just do not understand all that You mean concerning discipleship, Lord, and I confess my weakness to You. I look at Paul and his commitment here, and God, I just cannot even stand up in front of him. This much care by Paul for others seems humanly impossible, Lord. How can he be that heavy hearted? I feel the pain over my lost countrymen too, Lord, but I do not feel it like that. I ask, God, that You just grow me up, please. I surrender to You. I pray, God, as a spokesman for all of us in this class. I surrender my all to You, and I am asking

for every one of these students to surrender their all as well. If there is something that needs to be surrendered to You, I ask that they do that now. If there is something that they need to change from doing for themselves, I ask for that too. Lord, if there is something that You are trying to communicate to one of us, and we are not hearing it, I ask for that communication to come through. Lord, I pray that the *kenosis* will be taken by everyone of us from this lesson along with the real understanding of election in which we are to give blessings to others

and broaden the realm of blessing to the world. I pray, Lord, that there will be blessings spread out through our community because of our study of this chapter of Romans. Lord, I love these students, and You have heard my prayers for them. Lord, I pray right now that You will seal these teachings to all of our hearts as we leave this room. I pray that we will leave changed and convicted to the glory of Jesus, our Lord, our Master, our Savior, and our God. We bless You and love You, Lord Jesus. Amen."

Chapter Questions

1. What are the privileges of Israel? Romans 9:4-5.
2. What are the characteristics of the sovereignty of God? Romans 9:14-24.
3. Illustrate and describe double predestination.
4. Illustrate and describe single predestination.
5. What is the true doctrine of election?
6. What is the true doctrine of predestination?

Chapter 9

ISRAEL'S SALVATION

ROMANS 10:1-3

ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

Romans

10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

10:2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

In the prior chapter, we were discussing how the Israelites were out side of the realm of justification and how much Paul was in agony over their lostness. Even while lost, the Israelites felt secure in their using the Law (verse 3) to establish their own righteousness. But you can see in verse 2 the reason for their security, i.e. they had a zeal without knowledge.

Have you ever experienced anybody in your Christian circles having zeal but without knowledge? That type of person is like a rocket heading in the wrong direction. He is just basically ignorant even though he has very good intentions, a good heart, great zeal, the ability to really ignite the church but igniting it and taking it the wrong way. In these cases where there is great zeal but without knowledge, it is almost impossible to get the Word into them.

In trying to teach that kind of person who is locked in to a dedicated purpose, do you teachers remember how difficult it is to get them on track and get them pointed into the right direction and to give them knowledge? Most of the time there is a wall there, a barrier to any knowledge that is contrary to their purpose, and it is difficult, if not impossible,

to get through those barriers in order to give the proper knowledge.

Zeal with False Knowledge

The Jews clearly have a mindset, but it is without knowledge of the Truth. They instead have a substitute knowledge, a deception, a falsehood. Class, we can fall into this exact kind of trap by believing the wrong thing, and applying the zeal that wells up in your soul. You know how the Holy Spirit is all the time urging you to move forward with the truth? Well, the devil does the same thing with the lie. It is up to us to get some decent knowledge of the truth in us to guide our zealous moves. We also need truth in order to help others to move in the right direction.

Beth: Do you not think that Jewish people are so wrapped up in sacrificial ceremonies that they kept thinking they had to keep sacrificing? They stumble over the idea that God would make and accept one sacrifice for everybody. They were totally wrapped up in their ceremonies.

V: Okay, Beth, that is a very good point. Is there any correlation of that point with the Christian church?

Ted: What I recognize the most about the Christian church having zeal without knowledge is that we are really wrapped up in our traditional religious practices so much so that we are intolerant of others.

V: So then, our zeal for ceremonies out of tradition, rather than knowledge, would be one of our own problems. What does your criticism of the traditions of others do for you?

Beth: It lifts you up.

V: Yes, it makes you feel very, very secure when you can find fault in the other person. However, we must remember Romans 1 where it said that just the knowing what is wrong in the other person is no advantage for the Jew? It is the same with Christianity. Just knowing that there is something wrong with the other person has no benefit for you whatsoever unless you know the truth, and you are doing the truth. I do not care how much you respect your traditions, there is no substitute for doing the truth. Knowing the truth without doing it, to him it is sin.¹

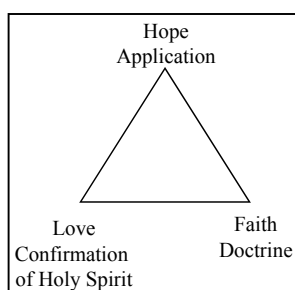


Chart 9.1

Let us look at the triangle (Chart 9.1) again: know, do, and feel which interpret faith (doctrine), hope (application), and love (confirmation). When you know the truth, it is incumbent on you to do the truth. If you do not

do the truth that you know, a defiling of the mind will result. Then that defiling of the mind starts a domino process. With the defiling of the mind comes a defiling of the body through the actions, and then there is the defilement of the sentiment or your feelings and discernment of what is right and wrong. The spiral begins, and you spiral down, down, down, all the way to reprobation. It is extremely important, then, that we do the truth that we know.

The situation with the Jews, however, is that they are doers of untruth because they either have a false knowledge or are without knowledge.

Jill: They can see things only their own way.

V: That is right, Jill. Please remember that you either go God's way or you do not go

with Him because you are going your own way.

Just because you believe something with all of your soul does not make it right or does not make it the truth. There is a movement today called Existentialism whose adherents think that truth is constructed in the believing. The effects of this movement are pervasive in our society and also our churches. Since one's feelings are the criteria for truth in this movement, then one's truth becomes an individual thing which may not be shared by all. Each individual may create his own truth.

The proper way that you are supposed to believe God is that you, as a subject, receive and understand God's objective Words and believe them. Your belief should be rational, not sentimental. God's Word is composed of objective words. Your subjectivity of Existentialism enters as you place your faith in your faith. In other words, you believe that you believe God when you actually believe what you want to believe. That subjective believing is the new substitute faith in today's culture. There are many zealots in this substitute faith, and this kind of faith will lead you to hell.

Jill: Just like that cult that was in Garland. The leader's prophecy has already been proven wrong, and yet he has come out with another one now. Without using their minds, his followers are just following along with complete dedication and zeal without knowledge.

V: That is a good illustration, Jill, of a zeal without knowledge. Sometimes it is a zeal with a false knowledge. Zeal without knowledge is a faith in faith, a belief in what you want to do.

Jill: I was just going to add a little something about the beliefs of that cult. They are moving to Michigan to wait for God to deliver a flying saucer there to take them to Gary, Indiana.

¹ James 4:17

V: A zeal without knowledge is a faith in their faith. They could move directly to Gary without going to Michigan. Zeal without knowledge is a terrible thing. When we see it, our hearts break.

Paul was up against the problem of a zeal without knowledge among the Jews. The problem got started by the Jewish leaders' rejecting the evidence of Christ as the Messiah. As a corporate body, the nation has followed its leaders and also rejected the evidence, and they are filled with zeal, but their knowledge is all skewed. Now Paul is preaching to his people, but they cannot hear it because the barriers are there.

Salvation by Confession of Belief

Romans

10:4 For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

10:5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

10:6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down [from above]:)

10:7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

10:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Under the New Covenant, the conditions for salvation have changed. Instead of belief in God's Promise of a Messiah with the sealing of that belief via circumcision, the new conditions are belief in Jesus as the resurrected Savior with the sealing of that belief with confession.

God, a Respector of Persons?

Please see in these verses that the picture that Paul is trying to project is that he himself is now in the process of sanctification. Because he has been outside the realm of justification but now is inside it and fully within the sanctification process, he knows both sides of the fence.

The people to whom he is preaching cannot know both sides of the fence because they have never been justified (see Jews in Chart 9.2). The Jews think that they are justified

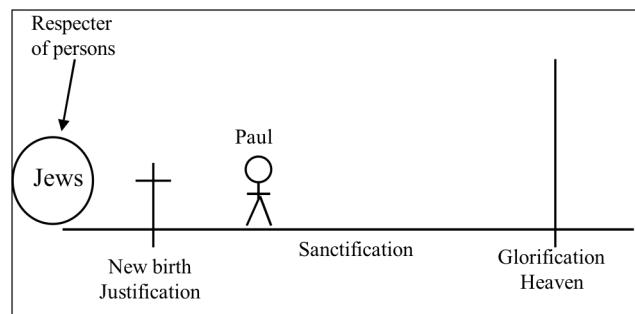


Chart 9.2

because of who they are, because of their personhoods. They think that God is a respector of persons. Their zeal is based on God's being a respector of persons. They think that because they are Jews, because they are God's chosen people, they are safe. They have ignored the knowledge that belief in God's Messiah and circumcision before Christ and confession after Christ as objective significations of that belief are both required by God's Promise.

For the current Jews, their belief in the Promise of a Messiah and their sealing that belief with circumcision have always sufficed. They will not allow that combination to change before the coming of their still anticipated Messiah. Since they have rejected the Messiah when He came, they are stuck in their continuing to believe God's Promise of a future Messiah. Thus they have adopted a zeal without knowledge.

In the church today we can see a parallel to the Jewish problem. Some Christians think that they are sanctified solely because of their personhoods, not because of God's work through them, not because they are serving the Lord in His work in the world, but rather because of some kind of elevated view of themselves based solely on their justification. They think that they are special to the point that God is swooning over them. Under this distorted view, God would be a respecter of persons. To the contrary, the Bible says clearly that God is no respecter of persons.²

Israel Thinks That It Is in the Sanctification Process

The Israelites of Paul's time thought that because of who they were and because they possessed the temple, and because they had the Ark of the Covenant, they were the special people of God: "We are God's people, we are the chosen ones, and so therefore we are in the process of being blessed by God." Thus, they thought that they were going to glory, that they were being sanctified all on the basis of their physical lineage, and the proof of it was in their zeal for their ceremonies. That zeal was their sanctification. Their justification was believed to be achieved through physical birth, thus making God a respecter of persons.

Joe: The Pharisee prayed, "Thank God, I am not made like this person."

V: That is right, Joe. The Pharisee had an elevated view of his personhood. Respect of persons filters through the entire problem with the Israelites, not just their thinking of God as a respecter of persons, but they themselves were respecters of persons.

To all of God's people, there is issued the scriptural warning about not seeking the chief seats³ when you are invited to a meeting

because people tend to elevate themselves in their own eyes. Because we have this flaw ourselves, if there is a chief seat, then certainly every one of us tend to think that we should have it.

So, this is the scene that we see in Israel and in some of today's Christians. This scene is of a false salvation because justification and spirituality are contained in the event of physical birth and who the person is and how much power and wealth he has and things like that.

A Current Example of Zeal without Knowledge

I met a man today who declared that he was on his sanctification trip (chart 9.3). He

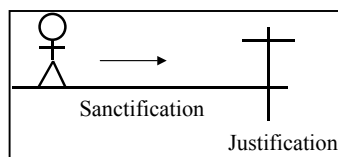


Chart 9.3

was just chugging along in his sanctification and heading towards his justification. He was planning to spend the rest of his life achieving justification. This man was at least my age, and maybe a little older. He had joined church after church in his long pilgrimage of seeking righteousness. He thought that you achieved salvation only at the end of life.

I explained the doctrine of salvation to him. However, no matter what I told him, he would not budge off of his rigid belief of achieving justification at the end of life. His deception is deeper than the deception of the Israelites about whom Paul was talking.

The man had been working with a great deal of zeal, and working hard, probably shaming a lot of us with his zeal. But when your whole eternal life is thought to depend on your works, I guess you would tend to chug along hard.

² Acts 10:34

³ Matthew 23:6; Mark 12:39; Luke 11:43 and 20:48

Jesus Was Born in Righteousness and Fulfilled the Law in His Sanctification

Look back at verse 4, “For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness” This means that it is not because of Christ that the Law is discarded; it is instead that Christ is the end point of the Law, the *telos*. Christ has fulfilled the Law. The Law of righteousness is in Christ, and He is then the source of righteousness, and the source of righteousness is described by God as “if he who keeps the law is righteous,” then Christ is righteous and all the rest of us are unrighteous.

If we are going to have righteousness, then it must come from God, and that is what is in verse 3 concerning the Jews. They are not willing to submit to the righteousness of Christ. They are trying to achieve their own righteousness through their zealotry and their ceremonies and all of the trappings of religion. They are not going to get to justification via works of sanctification. They are going to come up short. Jesus is the only source of righteousness.

The Law is for Unrighteousness

Even though righteousness (justification) cannot be obtained through our keeping of the Law, the Law has not been discarded. We have talked at length about the purpose of the Law to restrain evil in those persons who cannot restrain the evil in themselves. But everywhere I go there is always somebody who wants to throw the Law out or castigate it or denigrate it with some kind of verbal abuse. The Law is still in effect for everyone except the spiritual Christian. It reflects the Character of God. It is an outward restraint for anyone who is not restrained from within.

WHEN THE WORD IS SALVIFIC

Romans

10:8 . . . The word is nigh thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

Belief without Confession and Vice Versa

Now the Word alone is not salvific. Just because it is in your ears, you are hearing it, it is in your mouth, it is near you, and it is being preached all around you, that Word is still not salvific. There are some more things required. Those requirements are explained in verse 9:

Romans

10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Two things that I would like to differentiate here are mouth and heart. What part does the heart have in salvation, and what part does the mouth have? Are both required?

Jack: Yes, both are required. The mouth is for confession, and the heart is for believing.

V: Okay, what if you do not have the heart, but you have the mouth? What do you have then?

Jack: Lip service. That is what Jeremiah said. Your lips are confessing faith but your hearts are far from God.

V: Okay, let us say that you have the heart, but you do not have the mouth. What do you have then?

Betty: A bashful person.

Beth: You have a person without any corresponding action with his belief.

Steve: Belief will gradually get weaker if you do not ever confess it. After a while you forget what you believed.

V: Knowing and doing increase understanding and spiral up. Knowing (believing) without application spirals down and is actually a dead faith.

Carl: Would that be like having the Spirit but without truth? You know where it talks about how you can only worship God in Spirit and in truth. Some people have Spirit and some people have truth, but the heart in the believing would be Spirit and out of the mouth confession which would be truth?

V: That is a good correlation, Carl. I think somebody ought to study on that one. Correlating the Spirit with the subjective and the truth with the objective sounds good to me.

Bob: Belief without confession would be the opposite of what was being said earlier about the Israelites. The Jewish people had a zeal without knowledge. This combination sounds like knowledge without zeal.

Mary: It is disobedience. The Bible says that obedience is required.

V: Okay. Now let us describe it on the triangle in Chart 9.4.

Sybil: I think that if salvation is confined to believing, then it becomes a kind of self-righteousness. The person is a believer, but he has not crossed over to make the confession: "I am a sinner who has been saved by Jesus." People like this are basing their righteousness then on their belief alone. They believe in God, but they are not at the point of being honest with themselves before God. That is more like their thinking: "Well, I know God, He is my pal."

Beth: That person would be setting the requirement for his own righteousness and establishing his own traditions.

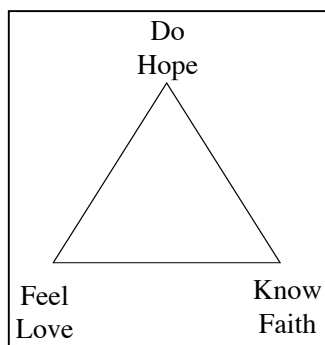


Chart 9.4

Jack: I was thinking last night while studying 1 John 1:9. We must confess our sins before God forgives us of our sins. That order of belief, confession, and then forgiveness is the same in both places.

V: That is a very good point, Jack.

Pete: On the triangle (Chart 9.4), you would have faith on the know corner which is the believing heart, but you do not have confession on the do corner which is the confessing mouth. There would be no Covenant of Salvation established because there would be no proper response to the offered covenant. The response by the believer just stops. So, you have that broken line in Chart 9.5.

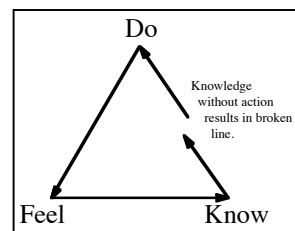


Chart 9.5

V: That is a very good analysis, Pete.

Homer: I saw a diagram one time of a kind of a two-part step in the sanctification. The first part, justification, occurred just when you said you believed, and the second part, your sanctification, actually started when you confessed Christ as Lord.

V: Okay, that is good thinking, Homer. In the area of sanctification, believing begins the two-part process. Confession transitions to the application part. Justification is the first event of sanctification. In other words, sanctification spans the whole salvation process. Thus all parts must have the same formula represented by belief and confession.

Confession has to cover both the negative aspect and the positive aspect. The negative is what Jack was talking about, and that is confession of sin. But there is a positive aspect as well that we need to confess, and that is the saving power of Jesus. There has to be the connecting of a heart belief to an outward act. Now, we are back to making faith alive.

Faith without works is dead.⁴ The minimal act for a lively faith, therefore, is just a word of confession.

Bob: In New Testament theology, we were talking about the Jews and Christians who had to light the candle to Caesar so that the Romans could know that they were worshipping Caesar. That is why the Romans required it. It was so that the Romans had an objective sign that the Jews and Christians were worshipping Caesar. Even though the Christians later said that they did not do the worship of Caesar in their hearts, it was the outward sign that consummated the act of worship.

Bob continued: We likewise must have an outward sign because other people need to know what our beliefs are. If we keep it to ourselves, it never goes anywhere because it is dead faith. Just as man demands an outward sign of belief, God demands it, too.

V: Amen. Where is that passage that specifies the necessity of confession before men?

Pete: "If you do not confess me before men, I will not confess you before my Father."⁵

V: Yes, that is the passage. All right, that passage tells me that private, closeted faith is ineffectual. And that kind of closeted faith would be described as the heart's believing, but without the mouth's confessing.

Mary: Does that parallel with monasticism? The people wanting to run, you know, to a monastery and be . . .

⁴ James 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

⁵ Matthew 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Luke 12:8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

12:9 But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

V: I think there might be something of a parallel to the desire for a private faith there, but not much if any.

Beth: The heart's believing and mouth's confession, even though that is what happens at the moment of justification, it continues all through sanctification.

V: Amen!!!

Beth: And we tend to leave off the mouth's confession when we accept the deception that says knowledge and belief are enough. In that deception, we keep going to classes like this, we keep going to Bible studies, we build our knowledge, and somehow we believe that we attain some sort of maturity. But in fact, we have not attained maturity because all along there has been no zeal, there has been no mouth confession, and there has been no objective application. In some way our deception is opposite of the deception of the Israelites who are zealously pursuing justification.

V: That is right on target, Beth.

Homer: A scripture that has been working on me for a long time is: "To know the truth and the truth will set you free."⁶ We can oversimplify that verse because until you believe the truth and apply it, it is ineffectual.

V: That is right because to know the truth and not do it is sin.⁷

Jack: Knowing the truth alone does nothing. To the people who confess that knowledge of the truth will set you free, I want to say, "Not until you believe it in your heart and apply it, will it be effective."

V: That is good. You have to take the truth into you in such a way that it changes you. It has to be a lively faith, and apart from that it is just a head knowledge, and there is nothing to that when it is alone. Faith without

⁶ John 8:32.

⁷ James 4:17.

works is dead. You are right, Jack. You can know the truth, but unless you act upon it, then you actually **know about** the truth rather than **know** the truth.

Oscar: John 15:8 is the scripture about the vine and the branches, and my true disciples produce much fruit. That is the action on our belief. That is Jesus' words. He said, "My true disciples will produce much fruit."⁸ If we are not producing much fruit, then what does that say?

V: If you take this triangle in Chart 9.6 and were to look at it in terms of today's Christianity, including Southern Baptists and others, we would probably tend to be located in the faith corner where we specialize in knowing, but we do not do much applying. We study the Bible in Sunday School, we can hardly wait for the sermon, we clamor for someone to teach us something more, and we get all swelled out to here (Dr. Vinson's hand was being held at arm's length from the belly) with knowledge.

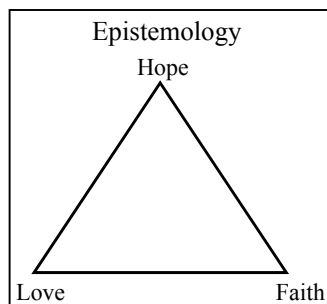


Chart 9.6

However, unless the known truth is done (is applied), there is a spiral downward and a defilement of the mind. Failure to apply the known truth is why there are Christians today who just about have the Bible memorized, who have degrees and PhD's that stack up as high as your head, and who still believe and do stupid things that are irrational and evil.

Ted: We need to remember that the Truth is a person, which means that you must have a relationship with the Truth, and not just knowledge or information **about** the Truth. If you have a relationship, activity is implied.

V: Exactly. The majority of Southern Baptists reside over in the Faith corner. However, there are a goodly number of Southern Baptists as well as Christians of other denominations who reside over here in the Love corner. Rather than doing the truth, they just go around feeling good: "Oh, I felt the Spirit. I am even dancing in the Spirit."

But besides the Jews, where is the Christian group that hangs out in the Hope corner?

Lacking a balanced piety, which results in not spiraling upward, is a terrible thing. The ones with the zeal without knowledge reside in the hope corner. They are consumed with ritualistic, religious busy-work. They too are not even in the race.

Those in the hope corner have zeal without knowledge. Those in the faith corner have knowledge without zeal. Those in the love corner have neither knowledge nor zeal. Instead they have nothing more than introverted subjective feelings. Every Christian must have a balanced piety. An unbalanced piety is a terrible thing because it is erroneous in its incompleteness.

Ted: It is almost like everyone trying to omit part of the triangle in his/her sanctification.

V: Yes, it is. I am beginning to think that the people who reside in the love corner may also be another version of zeal without knowledge. They do not miss any ceremonies because ceremonies make them feel emotionally good about themselves. They feel that they alone have it right and that everybody else in the whole world that does not feel what they feel is wrong. Without the doing part, they are not in the race. In fact, they do not even know that there is a race. If they should happen to know of the race, they will be spending their time celebrating the end of the race rather than running the race.

Besides the group in the love corner, the other group of Christian zealots without

⁸ John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

knowledge focus on religious activity rather than on feelings. They reside in the hope corner. They are in a race, but it is the wrong race because they have no idea of the direction in which to run.

Those in the faith corner are not in the race because they have not yet heard the starter's gunfire. They are still studying the rules of the race.

Wanda: Would you comment on verses 6 and 7? I have often wondered about those two scriptures.

Romans

10:6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down [from above]:)

10:7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

V: These verses speak to our trying to achieve our own salvation, and that is what these Israelites were doing through their zeal without knowledge.

Salvation Is by Faith in Jesus

Romans

10:11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

10:12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

10:15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

In verse 11 there is the promise that whoever believes on Him will not be ashamed.

That means, then, that whoever gets inside of justification by faith in Jesus will not be ashamed. You will get to the end of the salvation process. You are not going to fall short, you will get to the end, and you are not going to be ashamed of your faith in Jesus.

The next verse says that both the Jew and the Greek receive salvation the same way. God is no respecter of persons. It says that the way of salvation is to call upon the name of the Lord. The calling upon the name of the Lord is the confession. There must be the objective calling upon the Lord's Name to go with the subjective belief in the heart. You could believe and be silent, sit there in the pew and just believe, but unless you call upon the name of the Lord, you will not be saved because your belief is a dead faith if it is not acted upon. Your calling upon the Lord's Name quickens your faith, and once it is quickened, you are quickened, and inside the realm of justification you go, "bang," just like that.

Pete: I think that you will not call unless you believe it.

V: That is correct for the most part. There are some, however, who might call without believing, but I think that they would be conforming to a religion or a tradition.

Mileposts in the Saving Process

There is a series of events that are now delineated here. The first one is saved, and the second is called. You help me out.

Sybil: Heard.

V: Heard, or is it believe next?

Tim: Believed, heard, preached, sent.

V: Oh good. So, in this series of events, faithfulness starts way down here with us and is present throughout the process (see Chart 9.7 on the next page). Faithfulness, at our level right here at the bottom of the chart, is

the only way that those people out there at the top of the chart are going to get saved.

Our faithfulness down here at the sent and preached activities is essential for the salvation of the unsaved. We are sent. Every one of us is sent. We preach. Every one of us is supposed to preach. The people will hear, they will believe and call, and they will be saved. But the process starts way down here with us. So faithfulness among us who are in the race is required for that salvation to happen. If we are faithful, then that final salvation will happen to those out there, outside the realm of justification.

Beautiful Feet

The scripture says something about the feet of these that are sent and who go do all of this preaching. It says that their feet are beautiful. Why do you think they are beautiful?

Tim: They are walking the walk.

V: Okay, they are walking the walk on this path up here that we have been put on (see Chart 9.8). The saint that does the preaching is walking the walk. That walk is through the fire that burns off the dross from the feet. These purified feet are beautiful.

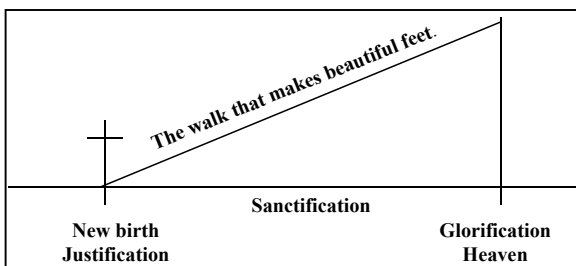


Chart 9.8

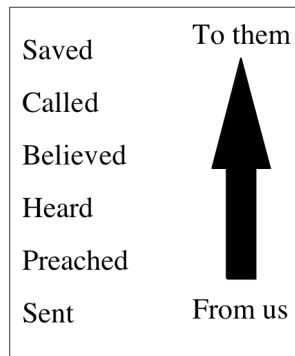


Chart 9.7

You remember how our *kenosis*, the path that we walk in Chart 9.8 has the pattern of the *kenosis* in Chart 9.9 to it, and you are going down, down, down to submission, humility, sacrifice, death. So, our walk is a very costly walk. It is a painful walk.

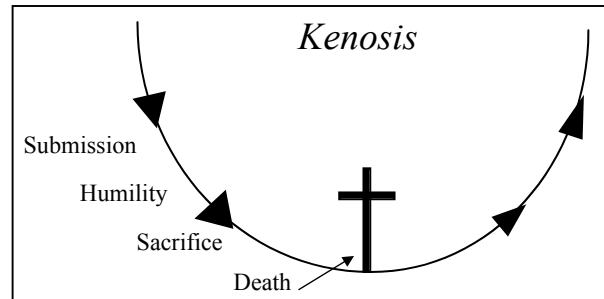


Chart 9.9

The Lord Jesus, when He appears to one of the churches in the book of Revelation, is described as having burnished feet of brass. Burnished feet of brass are brassen feet that went through the fire and had all the impurities burned away so that there remains nothing but a shiny, beautiful brass. Now those kind of feet only come when you are on your path, walking through the difficulties, keeping on pressing through sacrifices and pain. Walking that *kenotic* walk through the fire is how the feet become beautiful.

We are fortunate in this class to have some people who are connected with Beautiful Feet Ministries. Mike Myers, the head of that ministry has been so faithful to stay with it. There is no glory, no glory at all in Beautiful Feet Ministries, and if you have ever met Mike, you would say that he is a down-to-earth kind of guy who does not expect or get any glory. I think that they have a good name for their ministry. They take the gospel to where it is not normally taken, and it costs them greatly. They walk the *kenosis*, and they have beautiful feet because of it. Their name is well taken.

THE SOURCE OF FAITH

Let us look now at the rest of the chapter and see what God has done to answer the various questions about Faith.

Romans

10:17 So then faith [cometh] by hearing,
and hearing by the word of God.

One of the things that I want you to hear is that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. This is the faith part right here in verse 17a, and here is the Word part in verse 17b. The Word of God is the objective part that is to be believed subjectively by you, but it has to come by this point here in 17a, i.e. it has to be heard and understood. If there is no hearing of the Word of God, then there cannot be a *true* faith. God's Word is essential.

Faith is embedded in the Word of God, and when you hear the Word, the faith for you to accept or reject, is embedded in the Word. If you should say, "No, I am not going to believe this," then you shall be rejecting the gift of faith that is provided for you in the Word that you just heard, but if you should believe that Word, then you would receive the capability of exercising the faith that is embedded in the Word. Once the Word is believed, there is no power on earth that can stop you from achieving the purpose of that Word. No power on earth can overcome the power of God unto salvation embedded in the Gospel. All you have to do is be willing. If you are willing, you can pull the trigger of your will to accept the faith that is embedded in the Word. Pow!! you will ignite salvation in your soul by just being willing.

It is wrong to think that there are those who already have some kind of super faith inside of them apart from the Word. No, their faith comes in their hearing of the Word. They do not apply some kind of super faith to achieve miracle-working power for their walk without receiving the faith which is embedded in the Word.

A divine faith that is intrinsic to the individual is not the deal. Divine faith is from outside of the individual such as described in the following scenario: You are standing here without any faith. You are standing here helpless in a pit, lost forever, with no hope. You cannot get out of the pit. You cannot save yourself. There you stand when the Word of God that has all of His Power unto salvation comes to your hearing. And when it does, embedded in that Word is that dynamite power. You have through your free will the ability to say "No," or "Yes" to that Word. If you say yes, then **BOOM!** All of its power explodes inside of you giving you all of its miracle-working faith. It is an unstoppable power, and it will bring you into the Kingdom.

What you need to see here is that first of all you cannot get saved without the hearing of the Word. You have to have the Word of God. The Word has to be there, and it has to come into you, and once it comes into you, embedded in it is the power of God unto salvation which is ready to be released upon belief.

You are not saving yourself by conjuring up some great wealth of faith. If that were the case there would not be many of us saved, would there? We would still just be standing there waiting for something to happen. For even when we hear the Word, and it has the power of God in it, we still do not do the Word because we have learned how to quench the Holy Spirit by drowning Him in our religious idolatries of churchiness. We have become a faithless generation because of our refusal to believe and apply the Word.

Homer: The thing where the Word has the faith in it that makes the Power of God come exploding out is like the Word creating something from nothing just like where the creation happened.

V: Exactly. It is the divine power to create something out of nothing, and it will

create you to be a new creature. It will take this old person who is nothing but a vile wretch who is without hope, and, **BANG!** make you something decent like Ray, your miracle classmate. I am glad Ray is in here. It makes me feel good!

ROMANS 11 THE REMNANT IN THE MIDST OF UNBELIEF

Romans

11:1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, [of] the tribe of Benjamin.

11:2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

11:3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

Wow! I see a lot of myself right there in those three verses. Then God responds:

Romans

11:4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to [the image of] Baal.

Bowing the knee is an outward act which is an objective sign.

Romans

11:5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

We talked last week about the election and the various streams of blessing coming out of the one who is elected. The election is still in place unto this day. The election that started with Abraham and Isaac is still in place. And I am in the stream of blessing part by grace through faith. Mark me in!

Romans

11:6 And if by grace, then [is it] no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.

But if [it be] of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

If salvation were by works, then the guy doing his sanctification first in order to be justified would eventually earn his salvation (see Chart 9.10), and I would be in trouble. Also the Israelites of whom Paul was writing

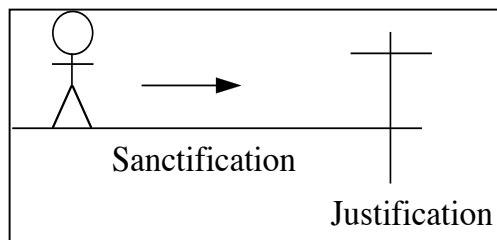


Chart 9.10

would have been saved while Paul would have been in trouble. No, salvation is not of works. We need grace through faith to take care of our salvation.

The Saved Jewish Remnant

Romans

11:7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

Now there are some Jewish people who have been saved, and Paul is a representative of that elected group to which he refers in verse 17. There is a remnant of Israel that is saved. Paul is in it, Peter is in it, John is in it, and all of the disciples are in that remnant.

Henry: The three thousand who were baptized at Pentecost were probably Jews.

V: Yes, the three thousand.

Ted: Stephen.

V: And Stephen. There is a remnant even to this present time, and Paul would have been a part of that remnant at the time of this letter to the Romans.

Blindness Through Lack of Belief

There is a remnant even today. God has saved out a remnant for Himself. But the rest,

it says here, were blinded. Now watch in verse 8. I am going back to the triangle in Chart 9.4.

Romans

11:8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

You see rejecters are hardened. There is no lack of penalty for not believing God. When you willfully do not believe, there is a negative thing that happens. You do not stay neutral, there is something bad that happens for willfully not believing, and the bad thing is that they are being blinded. Blinding means that the faith corner is disabled, and one's ability to know the truth is eliminated (see Chart 9.4). They get the spirit of slumber, the eyes that cannot see, and ears that cannot hear.

Going back to chapter 1, Paul said that when you reject the truth that comes to you, then you will become a person who is perverted. Your behavior is going to reflect the opposite of the truth. Whatever falsehood that you hold to be the truth will be reflected in your behavior, and your mind will be defiled. Your behavior is going to reflect your irrational emotions and sentiments rather than a rational understanding of the objective Word. That wrong behavior will then create in you a craving for additional knowledge along the same lines that reinforce where you are. You will spiral and spiral and spiral downwards to where you even get to the point where you become a person who endorses and confirms others in their bad moral behavior, in their perversion. Pretty soon you become something that God said is an abomination.

Blindness Through Lack of Application

Yes, there is a severe penalty for rejecting the truth, but there is also a penalty for accepting the truth and not doing it. There is a penalty for lack of faith and the actions that

go with it. You see, there are penalties all through the area of not believing or not obeying God. The only way that you can come out better is when you know the truth, believe the truth, and do the truth. When doing this, you are being confirmed and given new discernment by the Spirit of Truth.

The only time that good spiritual things and not bad spiritual things are happening to you is when you are spiraling up. At all other times, bad spiritual things are happening to you. So, we have to be on guard all the time. The one thing that will hit you fastest, the most hurtful thing for the saved person is what Homer said a while ago: to know the truth and not do it, or faith without works. That is a huge problem for the church in general. The church just knows, knows, knows, and knows, but its doing focuses on getting nickels and noses in the church. When that happens, our words, the words of the ministers, become lies, and Malachi said that our blessings for the people will become curses.⁹

In light of Malachi, if I were to fall into this knowing the truth and not doing it and preaching it, my blessing voiced to you would become a curse. Do you know that God will reverse that blessing and make it a curse? That is some serious stuff there in Malachi. Any pastor who is not a doer of the Word and preaching the same is cursing his church members. That is tough! That is so serious it will make you ministers quake in your boots. There is no neutrality with God, there is no middle ground, there is no neutral belief, and there is no home base or "kings-X" or any of that stuff. Your spiraling piety is either going up or going down. There is no middle, nice, safety zone.

⁹ Malachi 2:2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay [it] to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay [it] to heart.

False Security of Salvation

Romans

11:9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them:

You need to see that this sense of security in the long-held ceremonies of the Law is being turned into the road to ruin. In this stumbling block pronouncement, you can add some of our own church traditions, i.e. church attendance on prescribed days at prescribed times with prescribed orders of service, rituals, and ceremonies. Many things can become a snare, a trap, and a stumbling block. We are talking about snares, stumbling blocks, and traps to be placed in our paths to pull us off path. That is our problem—our paths going awry. If our path should become perverted by a snare and a trap and a stumbling block, then we will end up creating problems for those coming into salvation.

Problems with our paths are seen as barriers for those who want to get into sanctification. We block them out because we have demonstrated to the world that we say one thing and do another. We are the biggest hypocrites, you see, when we are not on our paths. Being on that true path from God is very important. The cycle of going from knowledge to doing is so important that you cannot overestimate the negative influence for our failing to do the truth.

Failure to Agree on the Truth

We saw in a prior chapter that God was blasphemed because of the Jews not going from their knowledge to their doing. God is being blasphemed today by the pagans and the nations because of the churches' rigidity on keeping man-made traditions but allowing the abominations of divorce, homosexuality, and abortion. Instead of the whole Church rallying around what God says about sins, we start getting into debates among ourselves. One group says that those sins are not abomi-

nations, and another group says that they are. The first group says, "God loves those sinners, and anyone who condemns those sinners is mean-spirited." The second group says that God loves the sinner but hates the sin, and that they are saying nothing more than what the Bible says. The first group claims that the second group is composed of nothing but fundamentalist literalists who are spreading hate. They further claim that God will give everyone a chance as they are. Because He loves them, He would not exclude them.

You see how the outside world sees how that we who are in the churches cannot get it together. Our paths are skewed with tolerance of sin for the sake of nickels and noses, lack of a clear Gospel message, lack of self-discipline in a *kenotic* lifestyle, and behavior in the world that cannot be distinguished from that of the world.

Failure to Agree on Minor Things

My uncle was driving from Florida into the mountains of north Georgia. He said that he never wants to go back to the Georgia mountains because he thinks that those mountain people are crazy. I have lived a significant part of my life in Georgia, and I think he might be right. He tells of his experience when he was gassing up in a small mountain town on a crossroad that had only a gas station and a store and a church. As he was pumping his gas, he looked over at the church just in time to see a fistfight to come boiling out of the church. There were about a half dozen people fighting like crazy out in the parking lot and into the street. When he went to pay the attendant, he asked about the fight at the church. The attendant's reply was that fights were normal for those Baptists. He said that they were having another business meeting, and the issue this time was whether to build a replacement for the steeple that had been broken in a recent storm. The issue of building another steeple had been approved

the day before, but the new contention was about whether they would put a bell in it.

Our Hypocrisy Hurts People

When the world sees strife, worldliness, and hypocrisy in the church, there is a judgment that is brought down upon God by the world because of our crazy kind of behavior. Our hypocrisy blasphemes God.

Tim: I have a prayer request for something similar. This couple came to church two weeks ago. After the service, the young man lingered behind and shook everybody's hand. We tried to be nice to the woman, but she would not stay inside to talk. When he said that he wanted to talk to us, we went into the office. The lady came into the office too, but she would not even accept a chair. She chose to sit on the floor. She said, "The church is full of hypocrites. I have been in church, and I have seen the way they act." It was heart breaking. She was hurt badly.

V: Yes, Tim, we will pray for that couple. We will pray for ourselves too. If one of us gets off of our path, we can become the one to bring in the negative part that can destroy the fellowship. All it takes is one. One bad apple will spoil the bunch, and so each one of us has to guard against being ruled by our flesh. The temptation is to turn the *kenosis* upside down. Once you start climbing, you will surely step on somebody as you climb. We must be on guard all the time. You cannot rest or sleep when you are on guard.

Spiritual Blindness Results from Apostasy

Romans

11:10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back away.

If the situation as described in verse 9 is present, then there is going to be a darkening and a slide into apostasy. Apostasy means to stand away from. Let us illustrate by saying that when you are lined up with the Lord,

right behind Him, that is the position of greatest light and understanding. When He moves you move. You follow right behind Him. But apostasy is when you stand back away from Him. *Apo* is from; *stasis* is to stand.

When you stand away from Jesus, you will have less light, less understanding. The farther away you stand from Him, the more your light and understanding decrease. When that apostasy gets great enough, you will lose the ability to figure out what the truth is. Right will become wrong, and wrong will become right. Your reason becomes skewed because your mind has been defiled. You cannot figure out what to do because you will have adopted a *teleological* ethic. That is an ethic that generates results, i.e. the ends justify the means.

Belief and Behavior Based on the Objective Word

Class, your ethic must follow the truth (we call this kind of ethic *deontological* because it is based on the commands of Scripture). Our ethic is to be objective regardless of results. You may get stones hurled at you as did Stephen in Acts. You may get thrown out of the church. You may lose your reputation, or you may lose your property, but your ethic must implement an objective truth from scripture even if it should cost you dearly. That is what we are supposed to do.

Our ethical troubles surface in our subjectivity when our sense of right and wrong originates in what we "feel" to be right and wrong. As soon as we start thinking about what kind of message from our behavior that we want to send, then anything goes. That is an ends-oriented (*teleological*) ethic.

To illustrate this ethical problem of *teleological* ethics, look at our Supreme Court that vacillates from day to day. One day capital punishment is bad, and the next day it is good. Then they swap back again. It vacillates

because they use a *teleological* ethic to determine what message they want to send.

Another example of the court's subjectivity is in the issue of killing babies. If the mother kills her own unborn baby, it is okay because in that situation, the fetus is not a person. However when someone kills a pregnant woman, then that person is charged with double homicide.

Interpretation of the Constitution by the court has moved from the objective content of the Constitution to the behavior the court wants from the citizens. The court begins to make up its own laws to force the culturally-desired behavior.

REDEMPTION IN ISRAEL'S FALL

Romans

11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but [rather] through their fall salvation [is come] unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

This is a redemptive statement; when Israel fell, there is something good beyond the fall that is purposed. That good purpose is redemptive. When God takes disciplinary action on us, it always has a redemptive purpose. It is disciplinary and redemptive. God does not discipline the way that we do. We mostly do it punitively, but He does it redemptively. He does it to get you out of the pit that you are in. Sure it hurts! But it yields the peaceable fruits afterwards when you come out of the pit. When you come out of the pit, you may be bearing some stripes from your discipline, but He will have lifted you out of the pit, i.e. redeemed you from sin.

Romans

11:12 Now if the fall of them [be] the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inas-

much as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

11:14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation [them which are] my flesh, and might save some of them.

Paul is magnifying his apostolic office to the Jews and to the Gentiles, but his purpose is not for self-elevation. His purpose is for these folks to emulate him in order that more might be saved. Paul's methodology is not the reversal of the *kenosis*. Paul is actually going down, giving his life in sacrifice.

Romans

11:15 For if the casting away of them [be] the reconciling of the world, what [shall] the receiving [of them be], but life from the dead?

11:16 For if the firstfruit [be] holy, the lump [is] also [holy]: and if the root [be] holy, so [are] the branches.

11:17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

11:18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

This passage serves as a precaution to us. We are in sanctification, and I see many of our number involved in self-elevation at the expense of the Jews. When I teach Old Testament courses, like Jeremiah and Isaiah, there is a tendency for Christians or Gentiles like us to say, "Why can the Jews not understand the problem with idolatry? Idolatry is so simple to understand." And as a result of this self-elevation, we come at those studies as nothing more than history lessons about Jewish idolatry.

On the one hand, we consider ourselves to be elite and blessed Christians who are safe from idolatry, but on the other hand, we look down on the Jews who were condemned in their idolatry.

We criticize them, never ourselves, by saying, "What is wrong with them?" What we must do is watch out for our boasting because we are supported by that Jewish root. We do not support them; they support us. We are wild olive branches that have been grafted into the Abrahamic tree, and we get our life sustenance from the root that we did not plant. We are sustained by it. Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, paid the price, and his Jewish Apostles and Disciples continued the payment. Those great Jews are the ones that got this ball to rolling. We are beneficiaries of their work.

As beneficiaries of the work of the earlier Christians who were also Jews and part of the original tree, we esteem ourselves as being innocent and elite while looking down on those Jews. That attitude is wrong, and we should not do that. That is wrongful boasting. It elevates and exempts us from being self-critical and introspective in our walks. That lack of self-criticism makes us feel that we are great, that we are better than they, and that God is swooning over us. Whereas we think of ourselves as the apple of God's eye, we also think that our forebears should have had all manner of punishment strapped on them.

Romans

11:19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

11:20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear:

11:21 For if God spared not the natural branches, [take heed] lest he also spare not thee.

11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in [his] goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

When you are inside sanctification, it is not a guaranteed deal that you are going to

achieve the ultimate goal that God has for you. Certainly, it is guaranteed that you are going to achieve glorification, but it is not guaranteed that you are going to achieve maximum rewards. In order to achieve maximum rewards requires total submission in sanctification. During sanctification is where you must fear, where you must walk the walk, and where your feet get burnished, brassen feet, i.e. your feet become beautiful feet.

There are no unconditional guarantees for you to achieve rewards in glorification. You can be cut off from all rewards because of your behavior. When God is talking about His saints being cut off, I want you to understand that He is talking about sanctification, not justification. He is not talking about losing your justification. He is talking about you losing your rewards.

If you should walk along below your prescribed path down here on the dashed line (see Chart 9.11), you will land here where the dashed line hits the glorification line. All of those rewards above your landing point will be cut off (see the lost rewards on Chart 9.11). Even though you will lose much of what was all set up for you, you did not lose your justification.

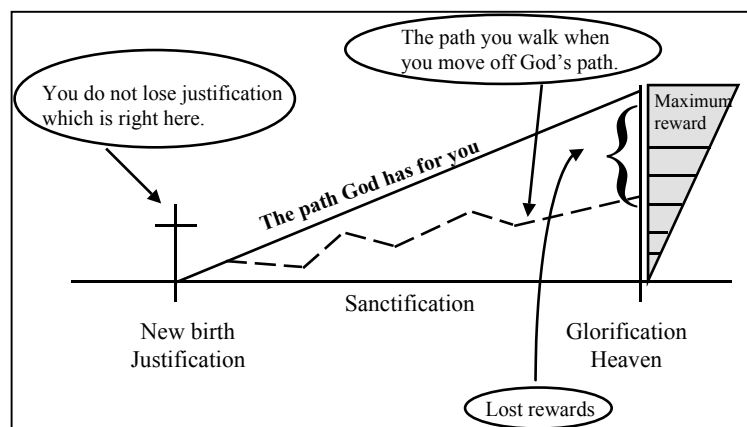


Chart 9.11

The plan is there, the power is there, the opportunity is there, the gifts are there, everything is there for you, and all you have to do

is be submissive. For the Jews to get justification, all they had to do was submit to God's plan of salvation, but they would not do it.

As the Jews were cut off from glorification because of their mishandling of justification, we are in danger of being cut off from glorification because of our mishandling of sanctification. Your danger could derive from an elevated self-esteem, self-righteousness, lack of submission, or an upside down *kenosis*. Beware! You too could be cut off. The guarantee is that we will reap what we sow!¹⁰

You may lose rewards because of wasted opportunities during your time of sanctification, but you do not lose your justification. Praise God! That security for your justification is a miracle from God's grace! We do not deserve it!

Romans

11:23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.

All that these Jews have to do in order to be saved is to do what we are doing, believe. Then POW! they become justified, and they are on their paths of sanctification, grafted in again.

Romans

11:24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural [branches], be grafted into their own olive tree?

God is ready to move on the Jews, and those who are alive in the last days are going to see a major revival of the Jews. There is going to be a huge movement toward salvation in Israel like you have never even dreamed. There is going to be 144,000 set aside, marked with the mark of God, and they

are going to walk the *kenosis* like that walked by John the Baptist. When they start preaching, people are going to start getting saved right and left and as quick as they are saved, they will be targeted for destruction by Antichrist. They are still going to get saved. This revival among the Jews is coming, and it is coming soon. Mark it down. I think that the 144,000 may even be in the process of being born and marked already.

Romans

11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved . . .

All Israel shall be saved! Is this at the *parousia*¹¹ or is this in the great tribulation? Or is this a salvation apart from faith? All Israel shall be saved?

Jill: My understanding in what I have studied this week is that Israel is the seed that believes, and the seed that believes will be saved.

Carl: I believe it is at the *parousia*.

Betty: Are you saying literal Israel, or national Israel, or faith Israel or church Israel or Israel Israel?

V: I am going to leave you with the question. I want to ask the question because I think you ought to hear the question. I am not going to answer it because I think you ought to try to struggle with it. But if it is at the *parousia*, then you are faced with an issue of live human beings there in the realm of salvation while still in their natural bodies, and we have at the *parousia* the issuing in of the millennium if you think of Christ coming back before the millennium and living through the millennium with the saints running that. Then

¹⁰ Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

¹¹ *Parousia*: the second coming of the Lord to be with His people.

we are talking about either the Lord glorifying all the Jews at that moment so they can live in glorified bodies in the millennium, or we are talking about the Jews getting entrance into the millennium in their human, ordinary bodies. If we are talking about the *parousia*, then the Deliverer can take away all of the evil coming against Jacob. But does He take it away because He takes the saints, and says, "Saints (that is you), go out here and establish my rule over my world." Or does he take it away by converting the Jews into spiritual beings rather than being flesh and blood be-

ings. We are going to have the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the millennium. Will there be flesh and blood people coming into that judgment as well as people coming up out of the graves and out of hell? Will those flesh and blood people be Israel that got saved a thousand years ago in their carnal beings, not spiritually saved, but given another thousand years? I do not know the answer to these things, but they are questions that you need to work on.

Chapter Questions

1. What are the two aspects of orientation for confession?
2. According to Romans 10:9-10 two things are required for salvation. What are they?
3. Romans 11:22 says "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in [his] goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." What does "cut off" mean?
4. Draw the triangle of piety showing the effect of not applying what you know.
5. Draw the chart that shows the mileposts in the salvation process.

Chapter 10

BESEECHING THE ROMANS TO THE *KENOSIS***ROMANS 12:
BESEECHING**

12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

Beseech is a serious word for requesting action. When Paul says, “I beseech you,” he is getting serious almost to the point of begging, not for his benefit but for yours. He will come and get you by the arm and drag you into what he wants you to do. He is not just going to give the Roman Christians a song and a dance and then say it might be a good thing to apply. No, he is exhorting them with the strong word “beseech.”

Beseech implies that Paul will come along beside you, link arms with you, and give you some motivation to get into the program. Without the strong motivation given by Paul, many of us would just be standing around after this study. We would say, “Yeah, yeah, I will do it.” Certainly, you would feel the urge to apply this book, but you may never actually overcome your inertia. You need a beseecher in your life. You need somebody to come along and link arms with you right when you are saying, “Yeah, yeah.” Paul is that beseecher.

Doctrine in the First Eleven Chapters of Romans

We have been talking about the full scope of salvation in this class. In Romans 1, we talked about condemnation because of defiling the mind, defiling the body, and defiling the sentiments. We spent a lot of time on justification, Romans 3 through 5. We then talked at length about sanctification’s leading us to a goal or an end-point. Then we talked

about election, which brought us all the way up to chapters 10 and 11. You should now be able to see the organization, the pattern, in Romans.

Romans 12: Transition to Application

Basically, all that we have done up through the last chapter were doctrinal studies. The first eleven chapters are Paul’s Doctrine of Salvation. At this point in chapter 12 of Romans, Paul makes a transition to application with the word “Therefore.” Given all this knowledge, all that we have been studying, the full Doctrine of Salvation, there is something else to be done. Teaching without application is like faith without works. It is dead!

“I beseech you therefore.” Paul is saying that if God permitted him to come to Rome, he would grab you and drag you into service because you must do something with the doctrine you have learned. Ted’s opening prayer for this class tonight was based on applying our learning when he said, “Let us leave this room changed.” We need to change in order to spiral upwards. If there is no change, then we have started to spiral downwards, and I do not want to be involved in that kind of spiral. I want to grow, and I want to step out into new adventures.

I want to make sure, though, that in my new adventures, I know the doctrine that God wants for me to apply. I think it was last week that we studied about a zeal without knowledge. I do not want that. I am a zealous type anyway, and when I am wrong, I am big-time wrong, KAPOW! way out there. When that happens, I have to repent a lot to get back to where I am supposed to be. I have to say I am sorry a whole bunch of times.

I must know right doctrine, I want this knowledge, I want my knowledge to be right, and then I want that corresponding zeal to apply that knowledge so that I can get on out there in the right direction. That is what I want for me, and I want it for you too. This is what Paul is saying to all of us.

Paul's "therefore" is based on all the foregoing doctrinal study. His "beseech" is for you to sacrifice yourselves. If you can feel the heat right now, then his beseeching is taking place. But these are not lip-service words. This is not an "I urge you." This is *paracaleo*, which means that the Holy Spirit has been called to come to your side.

The Holy Spirit empowers you to do God's work. Whenever you feel convicted by the Word, it is the Holy Spirit Who has come to you and grabbed you by the heart and is shaking you back and forth. You quake, you tremble, you sweat, and you say, "God has hold of me, and I need to do His bidding in order to get some relief." That is the heat that I am talking about.

Paracaleo is the activity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is actually called the *Paraclete*. *Para* is alongside of, *caleo* is to call. Therefore He is called alongside of. So when a saint gets saved and is walking in his sanctification, he is on his path, the *Paraclete* comes alongside of him, and hooks arms with him in order to help him to stay on path.

This scenario with the *Paraclete* is why strange things happen to me. I will be walking along and say, "I want to go this way." Jerk! I end up going a different way because the Holy Spirit is there saying, "NO! You are not going to go that way." Then, I will be going along not seeing something, and He will open my eyes and behold! "Golly, I see that." Then I will be reading something that I do not understand, and all of a sudden, He will open my mind, BANG! You see, that is the work of the *Paraclete*, *paracaleo*, the beseecher, the exhorter.

Ted: In the beginning, as we begin this journey of living this Christian life, is that help what the Spirit does from the very beginning? He comes alongside? I ask because in my early training, I learned that there are two schools of thought about this help. One says that you have to ask for the Spirit's assistance specifically, and the other says that it is automatically provided. I tend to believe the latter to be true.

V: Yes, God provides all the help that you need. However, to ask for help is an act of faith and should be done as often as possible. However, once you become the child of God, you become the property of God, and God Himself gives guidance. There is a lot of guidance that He gives that you never even know from where it is coming.

Ted: That guidance is the rule of the house, the *oikonomia*, the law of the house.

V: That is correct, and it is put inside of you. It is put BANG! into your heart. You wonder where did you learn this? You will think: "I did not even know this, but now I know it. How did I know it?"

Ted: The Holy Spirit is active until you quench Him.

V: No, He is still active, but the quenching is a rejecting of His beseeching. It is a "no" to Him through exercising your own will. You still retain your own will, even when He is still wooing you, saying, "No, do not go that way. Come this way." You are saying no to Him by insisting that you are going your own way. You always have the power and right to be wrong by rejecting and quenching the Holy Spirit, but He is still active within you. Be warned, however, that continuous rejection of His urgings, will harden you and decrease your ability to hear His voice. There is a point that can be

reached in which He will stop striving with the spirit of man.¹

What you need to see here is that this first verse starts with a strong clause. There is not a stronger clause that you can use right here than “I beseech you therefore, brethren.” Additional weight is added to this clause with the words, “by the mercies of God.” Thus the total weight of Paul’s exhortation changes suddenly into that of a voice, as it were, from heaven.

God is beseeching you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice. “Living” is a present participle. It means that it is a linear process. Anytime you see a present tense verb in the Bible, we are looking at something indicating unending process. It is linear, and so a living sacrifice means then that He wants you to have a sacrificial walk in your path of sanctification. It is not an event, a feel good and then it is over with. It is a life-long, continuous sacrifice. Living is processional. Walking on the path is to be a processional, living sacrifice of the body that has the look of the *kenosis* to it (see Chart 10.1). This walk goes the whole distance of sanctification, and it involves the sacrifice of the body every step of the way.

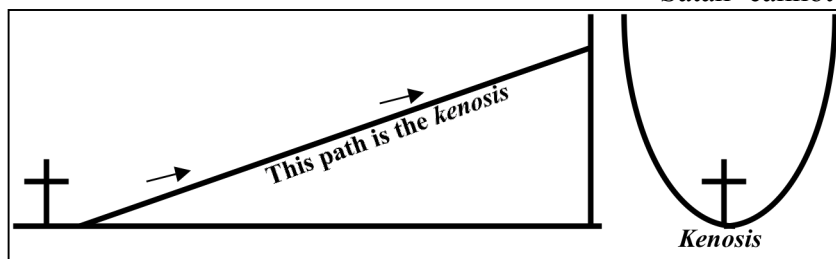


Chart 10.1

Reasonable Service

The *kenosis* means that you cannot indulge the flesh in your walk. It is a spiritual walk, and when you are in a spiritual walk, there is sacrifice, both physical and material. Furthermore, Paul says that the *kenotic* walk

of sacrifice is a reasonable service. Reasonable is the translation for *logikos*. Please recall that the word *logos* is Greek for word. *Logikos* is built from the word *logos*. If *logos* is word, and Jesus Christ is the *Logos*,² then *Logikos*, i.e. reasonable, has some connection to being Christ-like. Reasonableness, therefore, contains rationality (the mind of Christ) in its meaning.

The opposite of reasonable would be unreasonable or irrational. “A” on the front of the adjective reverses the meaning, and in this case means irrational. Where *Logikos* means rational, or in this case reasonable, the opposite of reasonable is *alogikos* with the “a” of privation.

Where Jesus is the Word (*logos*), Anti-christ would be the *alogos*, the antiword. Thus antichrist links to irrational or unreasonable while Christ links to rational or reasonable. The two, then, are opposites.

Here, Paul is beseeching us to present our bodies as living sacrifices, which is our reasonable service. What would be an unreasonable sacrifice? It would be doing something that is not in the mind of Christ. If Satan cannot keep you off of your path, if Satan cannot get you to forget about your sanctification walk because you are determined to stay on your path and deny yourself via sacrificing continuously, then the next thing he is going to hit you with is something that would be a service of the unreasonable sort.

If the devil cannot knock you off your path, and he cannot get the *kenosis* out of your mind, then what he is going to do is one of two unreasonable things. One is that he will take you to an extreme in the *kenosis*, which will get you to sacrifice your life by doing something stupid. The

¹ Genesis 6:3; Romans 1:28.

² John 1:1 and 14.

other is that he will get you to focus on doing a good thing rather than the best thing.

Bob: The extreme type of thing would be like the guy that chained himself in a tree to deprive himself.

V: Yes, it would be something stupid, or unreasonable. We are going on to see here that what God wants us to do is to discern what is that good and perfect will of God. Only that perfect will of God is the service that is reasonable.

Romans

12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

You need to see here how much that being a good Christian, being a mature warrior, and receiving a “well done” from your master are going to be dependent upon rational thinking. We are not to be conformed to this world. Instead, we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we may discern what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.³

Let us say that you are in the upper 2% of Christians who know something about a *kenotic* path, who are on your paths, and who are dedicated. Then Satan must come at you in your thought processes to give you an alternative that is subtly and cunningly unreasonable. That is how Satan is going to come at you because otherwise he is going to suffer another defeat and be put to flight by you.

The 2% are going to be tempted to do something that is either extreme or good but not the best in this picture. He will tempt you to do something that is stupid. For Satan to be successful, the 2% must suffer a mental lapse.

What God is saying to us is “gird up the loins of your mind,” stay alert, study, renew your mind so that you can be transformed. “Trans” means beyond the limits of something. You are going to be formed by the Holy Spirit beyond the world’s purview.

You are a pilgrim who is walking in the world, but you are not of the world. You are the church (*ekklesia*), the “called out ones” (*ek* is outside, and *klessia*, which is derived from *caleo* is called, thus the called out ones), and the Holy Spirit is going to transform you through your mind.

You must think with the Holy Spirit, you must read the Words of God, i.e. you must study, work, and labor over the Words of God, you must think on the Words of God, you must meditate on the Words of God, you must read and reread the same verse over and over again and meditate on it day and night. That is how you renew your mind.

In that scenario of renewing your mind, Satan will try to throw the switch (as in a railroad track switch) so that you will take off on a tangent. The way you are going to catch that switch is because you are alert, because your mind is sharp, and you are going to pick up on that subtle temptation by using the Word of God like Jesus did in His wilderness temptations. To that subtle switch, you are going to say, “No.”

You are going to keep on toeing that straight and narrow path, but then Satan will lay out another subtle switch. Pretty soon you will begin to expect his subtle temptations. When is it coming? When is it coming? You start looking around because you know it is coming, and you are moving in a rational process diligently discerning the perfect and good will of God by saturating your mind with the Word of God. This is important that you begin to know that you are accountable, and your accountability is to be right there on your specific path, right there!

³ Romans 12:2.

My dear Brother, you have to get with it! You cannot drop into the 98th percentile of Christians seeking fame and fortune through self-indulgence.

The 98% are quite good at quoting clichés. Clichés knock your mind out of gear. Clichés are simple guideposts, but they will not stand you in good stead when the problem is bigger than what the cliché answers. And a cliché will just make your mind idle if you just quote cliché, cliché, cliché. Then when you come out where the big boys play, you will be presented with a problem which you cannot answer with a cliché. That is when you are going to be in trouble because you will not have learned how to think with the Mind of Christ.

We must learn how to think when we are together in a safe environment. When you say something that is not well thought out, or something that you do not yet have all together, and it does not fit, then you will not be tarred and feathered by someone in here. In this environment here in this class, we are loving and very patient with each other because we are in pursuit of the Mind of Christ.

I do not care how little you know, there has been a time in my life when I knew less. Somebody was patient with me to get me to the place where I know something and am able to think. We must be patient with one another. That is what we do in these discipleship classes. We need to practice our thinking by asking open-ended questions. Do not let somebody close the discussion with a cliché. This cliché business is just cutting us out of our theological training and education.

CONFORM VERSUS TRANSFORM

What is the difference between conform and transform? Conformed is like this Chart 10.2. The forming comes from that which surrounds you. For example, in building something out of concrete, you build a form

to keep the shape of the concrete until it hardens. Like the concrete, when you are in the world, the world's pressures are coming at you to shape and harden you into the world's image. The world is busy cloning you into its idea of a good citizen by applying pressures from every dimension of life around you. Political correctness is an example of this kind of conforming.

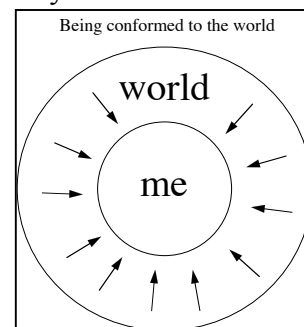


Chart 10:2

In this world, you see, a person begins to look like the world, act like the world, think like the world, and that then means that the person is being conformed by the world. When that conformation begins to happen, the world says, "This sacrifice business is irrational. What you need to do is climb up." So the *kenosis* is soon reversed, and the next thing you know is that the Christian is climbing.

Pride soon becomes a problem for the climbing saint. Career, the applause of men, and all the various things that God tells us to look out for become problems too because they are parts of the world-system to which we are being conformed. "Con" of conformed means "with," thus conformed means "formed with." The world is conforming us.

Paul said no to the world's conforming us. He says instead that we are to be transformed. Transformed means forming by something other than the world. As part of the church, you are to transition over to the realm of the Spirit and allow the Spirit to give you the wisdom by the renewing of your mind.

Transforming should be a work of the Spirit from within (see Chart 10.3 on the next page). So, in order to achieve that transformation, we come into classes like this one, read and study Romans over and over again,

meditating on it, and then take tests on it which force you to memorize some of the Scripture. You also hear some of the stories and testimonies of your peers and classmates.

All of these spiritual things begin to assimilate into your mind, i.e. you are being transformed by the renewing of your mind to be full of God's Word which expresses His mind. When you leave this class and go into another environment, these things of God will come back out in your behavior which will be Christ-like.

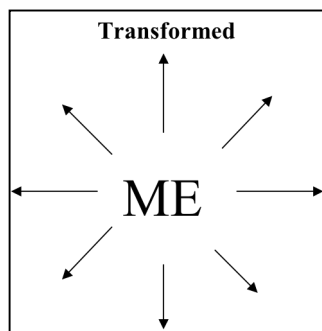


Chart 10.3

The things you have had to memorize for a test will stay with you for a long time. After a while the words that you have read in chapter 1 will drift and get colder and colder, but when you have had to memorize a list of things for the test, those stay with you. Even if you cannot, in a year from now, say what the list of things were, the principles are assimilated. They are in you, and God can call them out at critical times.

My experience in teaching is that God calls out of my mind those bits of information that I have put in before. Guess what He does not call out. He does not call out that which I have never put in. I have to be diligent and study to get that Scripture in there so that God has something to call out.

Sometimes I will be talking about a spiritual truth, and some critical connecting truth will come out of nowhere. I want to turn around and see who said that because it seems to come from somewhere else. I did not know that I even knew that connected truth. It is coming from God's Word that I had studied in the distant past. God's great, wonderful, wise Words just link up and come out

at critical times, and it is because I have had to memorize and do all the things that I am asking you to do.

Tom: I was thinking about how we say wrong things that we do not think about, and somebody jumps up to take us to task. Connected with that, I was thinking about that passage where Satan goes about like a roaring lion,⁴ and I thought about the world and how they cannot wait for us to say something wrong so that they can rip us. Clichés will not work.

V: That is right. That is so very true, Tom, because clichés do not teach you to think analytically.

In a short philosophy seminar in the students' wives program a month ago, a student-husband who had not had my philosophy course went to that seminar for the wives to get a condensed, birds-eye view of philosophy.

Then he went on Pioneer Penetration, which is that spring evangelism practicum we have. At the airport on his way back from his practicum, he met a businessman who was just like what the philosophy seminar described as humanistic. He had a humanistic worldview that had to be dealt with in order to communicate the Gospel to him. He was not hearing anything that the student had to say. He did not have ears to hear from the Christian point of view.

In order to witness to some of these folks in the world, you have to deal with them where they are, just like Jesus had to deal with us where we were. We did not have to go to heaven to get saved. Heaven came to us. This student was armed with the ability to think. He remembered all the principles which the seminar had laid out for him. He

⁴ 1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

knew that this encounter was a divine appointment.

After returning home, the student-husband came to me and said that the thing he learned is that when you are dealing with businessmen who have these philosophical viewpoints that are contrary to our way of thinking, we have to be concise and able to go right to the critical point in their value system within their strange worldview. We cannot lollygag around and tell about our various church experiences and about our religious heritage because they are not going to listen to that. We must be ready to go right to them, where they live, where their life values are, and then at that point establish a connection for beginning our communications of the Bible. They will listen to the Bible if you will just go to them, but you have to go to them, hear them, analyze their position, and then build the bridge for them to hear from God.

Sybil: You must talk to them as one that is listening to them.

V: That is right, Sybil!

That was a good testimony that the student brought back because it just so happened that I had another student that was kicking against the pricks on philosophy. I was trying and urging and beseeching him to take my philosophy course, and he was saying, “No deal, no deal.”

He just happened to land in a situation that was very similar to that of the student-husband, and the businessman ate him alive. He came back and told me about it. I told him about the successful witness of this other student-husband, and he could then see the value of philosophy’s contribution to analytical thinking. So class, there is value in this old hard stuff that we have to learn.

Romans

12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he

ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

There are several times in this one verse that Paul says “think.” We are dealing with the mind, and this business on discipleship and getting on our path and staying on the path and being sacrificial instead of being conformed to the world all has to do with your thinking. We are to be guarding the mind and being alert and sober in our thinking. Be sure to get your spiritual information from God’s source of spiritual information—His Word.

God has given you a measure of faith in your new creaturehood which came at the time of your new birth. And there is also available a kernel of faith in the Word of God. When you read and receive the Word of God, there is some faith-power in that Word of God. All you have to do is exercise that seed of faith that God has embedded in His Word and provided to you as a free gift.

THE BODY ANALOGY

Romans

12:4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

In this verse, Paul is going to try to show us how we link together. He is using the human body as an analogy to show that we make up the different parts of the body. We form a body, and in being a body there has to be some hands and feet and toes and fingers and mouth and ears and torso and all kinds of things. In order for us to function we have to function as a body, and each part of the body has to do the function that that part is supposed to do.

In this body analogy, Paul is going to talk about the functions of the body parts. He is going to delineate seven ministry-functions right here. These are not all of the functions in Christianity, these are just some of them,

but he is going to show that the body is supposed to function as a body fitly joined together so that we work as a team and are able to perform tasks.

Let me illustrate it this way. We can drop something on the floor here (Dr. Vinson dropped his pencil on the floor), and let us just say that as a body, we are supposed to pick that pencil up. The process goes thusly: the head says, "Walk over there to the pencil." Next, my legs and feet move me over to the pencil. Then the head says, "Bend down." So I start bending down. Then the head says, "Reach down with your right hand to the pencil," but my right hand moves up instead of down. That is a contrary hand. It is not working cooperatively in order to accomplish the task. You will not be able to pick up that pencil with your right hand if your right hand goes up. Then the body is left with compensating for the contrary body part.

The head compensates by saying, "Get the pencil with the left hand." The left hand reaches and gets the left leg instead. Here you are trying to pick up the pencil, your right hand goes up, and the left hand moves to grasp the leg. A simple task becomes impossible if, as shown here, two members of the body reject the command. The body, then, is incapacitated.

God expects us to work as a team. He does not want all hands because if all were hands, there would be no walking function. There must be a team effort, and that means each one of us has a function to perform as a part in the body. It is very important that each part be and do the function of that part. If it is not done, the body becomes crippled, and we cannot accomplish God's good and perfect will.

Paul will use that body analogy now, and he is going to use repetition to hammer this teaching home.

Romans

12:5 So we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

We participate in Christ, but we also participate in each other as members one of another. That participation means that I am incomplete without you, and you are incomplete without me. I need you, and you need me. You all need each other, and the body is going to be broken when one of you becomes rebellious and does not do what God is calling you to do. Or you may even rebel by reversing the *kenosis* and choosing an easier path by thinking: "I think God messed up on my path. I think I will make me a new path." When that happens it hurts the body because we are members one of another.

Just think about breaking off a finger or breaking off a hand. We have a lady student that has lost two hands, and she must compensate and use prosthetics in order to do what she would be able to do naturally and easily if she had her hands. The Lord's body is a complete and beautiful and strong and capable body if we all cooperate with submissive wills. If we are stiff-necked, however, and prone to do our own thing, the Lord's body becomes dysfunctional.

Too often we do our own thing and call it God's will and ask Him to bless our rebellion. As a result, the body becomes dysfunctional, less complete, and less beautiful. It is a hard lesson, but Paul is hammering it home.

Use Gifts for Their Stated Purpose

Romans

12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, . . .

To get this lesson across, Paul is going to start his repetition. "If you have the gift of prophecy, then prophesy." Please see how he is teaching this simple, but forgotten, lesson? "If you have the gift of ministry, then minis-

ter.” “If you have the gift of teaching, then teach.”

What we tend to do instead of doing what we have been gifted to do is to receive a particular gift and devalue it by thinking that it is not glamorous enough. So, we do not want to do what we are gifted and called to do. We do what we are not gifted to do while hoping for the applause of men. We might get the applause of men because most of the time the applause of men is over things that are not spiritual anyway. That applause just exhorts us to keep on going down the wrong path.

Prophecy According to the Proportion of Faith

Paul is hammering on this lesson. If you are a finger, do the work of a finger. Do not do the work of the foot or an ear or an eye if you are a finger. Notice, now, the prophecy part:

Romans

12:6 . . . whether prophecy, [let us prophecy] according to the proportion of faith;

That Greek word translated as proportion is *analogia* (analogy). Analogy looks like Chart 10.4. The things of God are represented as all of the things in this upper realm of the chart that is open ended. God’s realm is so large that you cannot put a circle around it. It is infinite. When we are dealing with things in the human realm, we are dealing with the finite. It is within this gray circle. But via analogy, there is an overlap (the lighter shade of gray) of God’s realm with the human realm.

On Chart 10.4, the overlap occurs right where the things of God penetrate the human realm. So analogy is using the words and understandings of men to say something about the infinite, something about that of which we know nothing or very little. Everything we say about God is basically

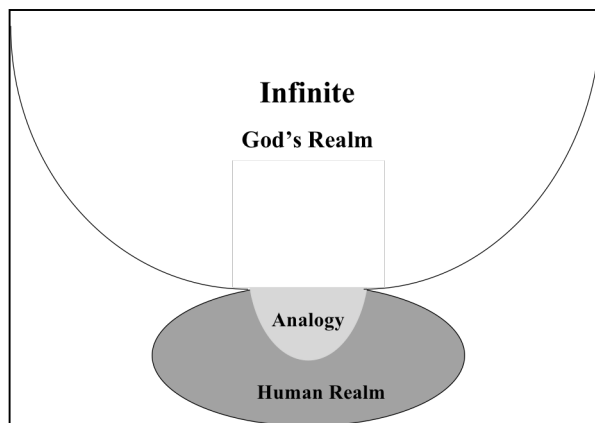


Chart 10.4

analogy because the infinite is too big for us to say with human finite words. Thus when Paul says to prophecy according to the “proportion of faith,” he is saying to use the finite part to explain something of the infinite to the saints.

There are two things that I want you to see. First is that there is a proportion of faith where some have studied the Word and lived the Word and been tested in their walk. Those who have stood the test and passed it have burnished feet. Those saints with burnished feet have a larger proportion of faith than a brand-new Christian. They are to be the ones who are doing this prophecy part in this verse because they have been down the road and around the block. They know something about the enemy because they have been under attack and they have passed a lot of tests. They ought to be the ones exhorting the brethren to get up and get after their own walks on their respective paths. The prophet should prophecy according to his proportion of faith.

A phenomenon that I have seen is that this principle does not seem to apply if the prophet is a football player. In the case of a football player, it is automatically assumed that the instant he is reborn he has a much greater proportion of faith than just normal human beings. When I was in Atlanta there

was a linebacker who just got saved, and the next thing I know he was in our church preaching. He did not know anything. What was he doing up there in the pulpit preaching? Certainly he could testify about what had happened to him, and that would be legitimate. But to put him up there preaching instructions to his elders bordered on the ridiculous. Because he was a well-known, all-pro football player for the Atlanta Falcons, he was assumed to be a Christian of the same level.

There is something definitely wrong with this kind of crossover into the spiritual realm by a newly saved football player. Yes, his feet were burnished when it came to football, but when it came to walking this *kenotic* path, he had no experience and knew nothing about what he was talking about. So this business about prophesying according to the proportion of faith has something to do with your spiritual experiences, knowledge, and testings. There ought to be some valid overlap between your finite and infinite there somewhere for you to prophesy accordingly.

The second thing that I want you to see about prophecy is the need for relevance. When you are prophesying, prophecy as the person that you are. The person who is sitting where you are is who you are. We are who we are and where we are. Therefore, we need to prophesy using words that are pertinent, words that are relevant to who we are. Our prophecies not only ought to give hope because there is overlap and linkage with Who God is, but also they ought to be relevant to who we are in our earthly walks.

When you are prophesying, you do not just preach earthly stuff. Certainly prophecy must connect to the earthly, but it also has to overlap and link with the divine. The Word of God accomplishes this dual connection. We must preach God's Word.

If your preaching does not overlap and link to the divine, then it becomes secular junk. In order to have value, the prophecy

must point to God. It has to have overlap in both arenas, and if it does not have that, then there is no analogy of faith. But at the same time it has to connect with who we are, i.e. it must be relevant to us, or else you are missing your targeted audience, and they are not being lifted up. Without the human relevance, your audience is being pitched to but missed.

Other Ministries

Now, let us go on to the other words. Ministry (*diakonia*) means to serve. Teaching is *didache*. This is what I am doing in this class. Exhorting is the word in verse 1, beseeching, that we have already discussed. Along with teaching, exhorting is something that I do. I try to get people to do something. My main thing in life is to get people to do the ministry for which they are equipped but do not want to do. After I get them to do it a little while, then they like doing it. At that point then, I can let go of them, and they will then in turn become beseechers. That is what exhorting is in verse 8.

Next comes giving with simplicity or singleness of mind. It is not a dishonest approach to give for your self-betterment, but it is just giving under the umbrella of *eros*, or self-love. Giving with simplicity is giving under the umbrella of *agape*, sacrificial love for another.

Ruling, the next item, means to stand in front of (*proistomai*). To stand in front of is not ruling like a man of authority exercising his authority downward. A person who stands in front of the group and giving leadership is what he is talking about there. Many times you may be called to stand in front as a leader of the group and give a correcting word as a prophet or an encouraging word as a pastor or an understanding of the Word as a teacher. You may be called to exercise your gift of administration for example as you stand in a business meeting and give direction to the group as a leader not as a commander.

Mercy is to be done with *hilarity* or cheerfulness. Giving mercy with cheerfulness is where I score the lowest. For one thing, when I am dealing with the afflicted, I identify so quickly and closely that I collapse in grief with them. So I am not good at this ministry. I need somebody else to do the majority of that kind of work because I cannot do it efficiently.

However, we all have to do ministries that we are not good at in cases where we are the only ones available. It does not matter whether you are gifted in this area or not. When you are the only one available, then you have to do it. When you find yourselves doing ministry in a non-gifted area, just remember that you are the Lord's representative for that time and place. Like it or not, you simply have to do it. However, in those cases, we have the Spirit of the Lord to help us to accomplish that ministry. I need a lot of that help in this particular ministry because this is where I am extremely weak.

Do not be conformed to the world but be transformed. We are each transformed parts of the Lord's body. The body does many ministries, and you are a part, and you are to do your part by doing your ministry. Do not try to do somebody else's part—do your part.

Attitudinal Exhortations

The rest of this chapter is additional exhortations which are attitudinal. They are going to tell us how to behave.

Romans

12:9 [Let] love be without dissimulation . . .

. . . or without hypocrisy.

Romans

12:9 . . . Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

You almost do not need to hear this stuff, but it is to remind you of what you already know.

Romans

12:10 [Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

When we looked over at the *kenosis* in Philippians 2, he said to esteem the other more than yourself. Here he is saying preferring one another in honor. That means, then, that we are to honor the other above ourselves. Giving honor to the other is commanded in the *kenosis* passage, and it is repeated right here in verse 10.

Romans

12:11 Not slothful in business; . . .

I think I talked about the judgment of the saints in this class, and one of the things he accused the one-talent servant of was slothfulness. Slothful is when you are not diligent. As a representative of God, you must do your work whether it is in the marketplace, in the home, in the church, or wherever it might be. You are to do your work as fervently as you can because you are a servant of the Lord. You are not to be a slothful servant who is prone to self-indulgence.

Romans

12:11 . . . fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

12:12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; . . .

You remember my picture (Chart 10.5) on patience, which pictures you supporting the big burden? To be patient is to stay under that burden, not to try to get out from under it, but to stand in there. That is the idea of patience.

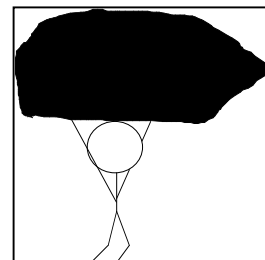


Chart 10.5

Romans

12:12 . . . continuing instant in prayer;

There are times when Satan will come at you and say, "It is hopeless, do not pray. Do not pray, it is hopeless." In that situation,

Satan is contradicting this verse. How are you going to defeat Satan? Catch him when he is coming at you, recognize him, and say, "I caught you. God's Word says that I am to continue and be instant in prayer." Then be fervent, instant, and continuing in your prayers.

Romans

12:13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

If we are connected one to another, then we have common welfare. Your welfare is good for me, and my welfare is good for you. It is mutual welfare, and that is why we are supposed to distribute to the necessity of the saints and be hospitable to the saints.

Romans

12:14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

12:15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

12:16 [Be] of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

"Condescend to men of low estate," means to go down to them at their level. When you are operating in this mode, you are going down, you are humbling yourself, doing the same thing that the Lord did when He left heaven to come to earth as a man to become a servant. He continued His descent by being obedient all the way unto death, sacrificing Himself. You are also to go down to those of low estate.

What about the servants who are already down here at the sacrificial level? Imagine a servant who is not achieving any renown or anything like that. He is just a person way down near the bottom of the *kenosis*. If he is going to follow the world's way, he is going to reverse directions and climb (see Chart 10.6). If that should be you who are already ministering to those of low estate, then the

world's way is that you would climb up and away from that person.

In adopting the world's way, you would see somebody way up at the top, and you would say, "Wow, that is who I want to associate with." That kind of minister is like being a groupie. A groupie wants to go and be around the main people, you see, and get up there with them. A groupie thinks that by their associating with popular and successful people, some of that popularity and success will be attributed to themselves. Something about the star person's climb is thought to rub off on the groupie somehow, and now the success of the climb, and the applause of men spreads over to apply to the groupie.

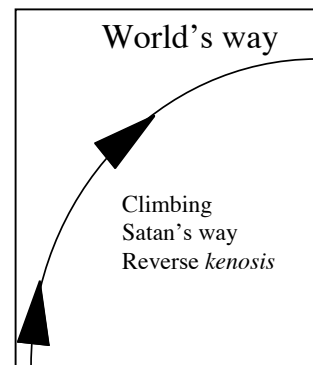


Chart 10.6

It says right here in verse 16 that we are to go down to the people of low estate. We are not to be climbing up to be groupies, but we are to do just the opposite. We are to go down to minister to and fellowship with the people of low estate because they are servants who are doing the work and not getting any applause. You are going down, and you are going to be just like them. But you are going down for an additional reason, and that is because you are on your *kenotic* path, and you cannot do what you want to do.

You are going to do what the Lord wants to do. You have renewed your mind so that you can discern the good and perfect will of God, and that means that you are going to be like Jesus. Jesus went down, and He went in and ate with the sinners and met and socialized with the sinners. All the groupie Pharisees who esteemed themselves so highly gathered around and said accusingly, "What is

He doing over there eating with those wicked people?” Jesus went down to the people of low estate, and He is telling us to do the same thing. “Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Go down. Be not wise in your own conceits.”

Romans

12:17 Recompense to no man evil for evil.
Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

Do not do this behind-the-scenes and under-the-table kinds of stuff, but do honest things in the sight of all men.

Romans

12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

I have found it to be impossible for me to have peace with all men, no matter how much I have tried. As a matter of fact most of the time when I have been rejected, it was because the other people did not want to get along. I can get along with just about anybody as long as I do not have to approve and accompany them in their sin. However, they must be willing to get along, and unfortunately there are many who are not willing to do so.

Ted: Light will have no fellowship with darkness.

V: Yes. Now let's continue.

Romans

12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but [rather] give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance [is] mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

V: Did you hear about that lady that was in marriage counseling with her pastor. She was talking about how terribly her husband

was treating her. She claimed that he was totally unreasonable, and rigid, and mean. He was not beating her up or anything, but he was just being a tyrannical kind of person. The preacher said, “Well, have you tried heaping coals of fire on his head?”⁵ She said, “No, but I did throw some hot coffee on him.”

Ted: You noticed that when you were saying you had a problem with not getting along? Did you notice how I answered that with a biblical cliché. It just took care of it and closed the discussion.

V: Yes, Ted. That was a perfect illustration how further-thinking shuts off in the presence of a simple, short-sentence cliché.

APPLICATION OF TRUTH IS ESSENTIAL

Chapter twelve is a transition point in the book of Romans, and so think about Paul. He was trying to get one thing written to Rome. He wants to go to Rome, but he cannot go. He must take the offering back to Jerusalem. He is going to write one letter. What is he going to write? He is going to pump it full of theology. But then he is not going to let it stay right there. There has to be application, or else he sets up a predicament where the people could know theology and not make that transition to the application. The strongest phrase in the book is reserved for this transition—I beseech you.

Ted: That urgency had a lot to do with where he was when he was writing the book.

V: Yes. Absolutely.

Ted: Paul was conflicted because he felt torn by the urgent needs of the saints of Corinth, the saints of Jerusalem, and the saints of Rome. He had learned a lot about the need for teaching, equipping, and exhorting the saints by being there among them in Corinth.

⁵ Romans 12:20.

V: Now when you are teaching your people, and when you are preaching and helping your people to understand this book, you need to do some beseeching also. I do not know what kind of church staff positions you might have, but you need to beseech your people. Beseeching is not lip service. It is linking arms with them, getting them off of dead center, and getting them out there plying their ministry gifts.

You have a responsibility to exhort the saints. Sometimes you will have people who resist and say, “No.” They have that right. Their will is inviolate, but if you discern that someone is under conviction by God, you grab hold of that person and get them moving into service. If you do not do it, and they do not end up in service, there is going to be a problem on you because you have heard and know the “beseech” of this book. So you must get those people into ministry out there.

Do not listen to their puny excuses that they are going to generate. I have never been able to just get them to comply from the git-go unless they were newly saved Christians. I have had to wrestle the older saints out there. You must do the same. They will thank you forever. For eternity they will thank you.

These words of transition are strong words. We are coming now out of the doctrinal part into the application or the practical part of Romans. We have made that big step tonight.

It does not take as much *thinking* power in the application. It takes more *doing* power.

If we were to look at the triangle (Chart 10.7), in the corner of faith we could put the doctrine of chapters one through eleven of Romans. In the corner of hope, we could put the application of chapters 12 to the end of Romans. In the corner of love we can put the

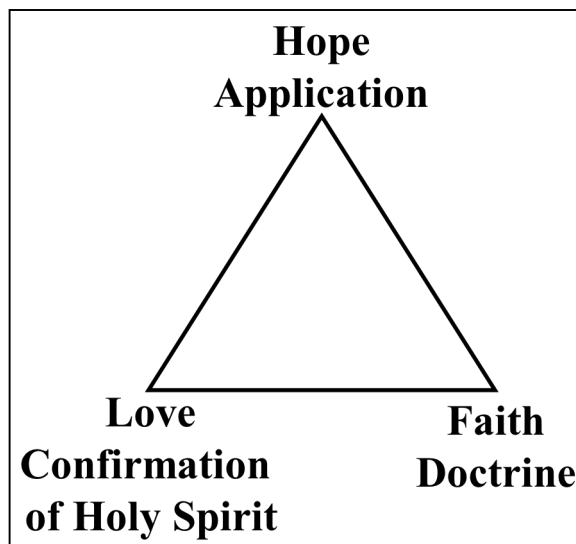


Chart 10.7

confirmation from the Holy Spirit.

We spent eleven chapters studying the extremely deep theology that Paul wants as a minimal foundation for the Roman saints. Tonight we have moved to the beseeching of the church by Paul to apply their knowledge. Paul is grabbing the entire church of Rome, and he is dragging them from the doctrine into the application. He is going to get that church to put their Christianity into practice.

Chapter Questions

1. Compare the words conformed and transformed as used in Romans 12:2: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
2. Illustrate (draw) the chart of being conformed to the world.
3. Illustrate (draw) the chart about being transformed by the Holy Spirit who dwells within you.
4. The Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete because He is the One Who is _____ the saint.

5. In Romans 12:1 we are “beseeched” to be a living sacrifice. This is a *kenotic* process, and it means an _____ for every saint.
6. Reasonable is the translation for *logikos*. The opposite or unreasonable in Greek is _____. Jesus is the Word (Logos); Antichrist, the opposite of Jesus is the _____.

Chapter 11

CHRISTIANS AND THE GOVERNMENT**ROMANS 13
WHAT DOES PAUL TEACH
ABOUT THE STATE?**

I am going to show you some eye-opening things about government which I taught to an agency of the Federal Government. My opportunity to teach was provided when the federal employees were having after-hours Bible studies. The way that they avoided violations of all the stupid laws of separation of church and state and all the other oppressive government regulations is that they did it during their lunch hours. The employees bid on and got rooms for club affairs and other social kinds of things. One of the rooms was designated for employee luncheon Bible studies for just one day each week. The employees could not teach the Bible studies because of government regulations, so they obtained guest teachers from the outside. The Christian employees would drop into that room as time permitted to eat their lunches and be taught a short Bible lesson.

I was truly surprised and honored when I was invited to provide a lesson in that environment. This chapter in Romans is the chapter that I chose to teach because it has to do with church and state and how we relate to the government. These people that I was to teach were part of the government, and they needed to see what God expected of them and all government workers in their relationships with the public.

I did not know whether or not all the students would be Christians. However, the man who had invited me and explained my limitations was a Christian. But the people who came to the study were not introduced and were all strangers to me. However, by the time they left the room, they knew what they were to do because I came down hard on

defining their joint responsibilities to God and to the state.

The relevance for the employees was very high because I came at the lesson from the government's point of view to show them what their responsibilities were. I want to do the same for you too, because some of you are in government service. When you are a government employee, and I do not care how low on the totem pole you are, you are included in the responsibilities delineated in these verses right here. God is talking about you. There are some big responsibilities for you right here.

The other side of this coin is the responsibility for us who are not government workers. Our responsibility is to be submissive to the powers that God has ordained above us.

1. *All power comes from God. Romans 13:1*

Since all government authority comes from God, we are responsible for obeying the government. This statement really needs no explanation because it is quite simple. When we resist the government, we are resisting powers which are ordained of God.

Romans

13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

13:2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

13:4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in

vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil.

13:5 Wherefore [ye] must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

13:6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

13:7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute [is due]; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

2. *All government is ordained by God.* ***Romans 13:1***

I want you to think back with me for a minute. God, at one time, was head of the people of the world, and especially of His people, His children, Israel. As such, He was the King. He was God, He gave justice, He gave knowledge, He gave direction and guidance and everything that had to do with the conduct of their national affairs. But there came a time when His people decided that they did not like following the guidance of an unseen God. They wanted somebody they could see, somebody they could hear in the ear, somebody with whom they could have a relationship at the human level.

So Israel demanded a human king. And they based that demand on the conduct of other nations. They saw other nations having a king, and here they were without a king. They were fighting against other nations, and all they had to rely on was God. That was not good enough for them. They said, "Give us a king."

Samuel was the priest at that time, and he was distraught with the idea of Israel's unseating God and requiring a king in His place. So Samuel went to God and said, "The people want a king." And God said, "Give them a king." To Samuel's amazement, God said to

him, "Samuel, they are not rejecting you; they are rejecting Me."¹

In wanting a king, Israel was not trusting the invisible God, and how He had managed all of their affairs in history. So, God reiterated, "I brought Israel out of Egypt, I worked all of those miracles, I have sustained them in the Holy Land, the land that I gave them, and now they say, 'No, we do not want that anymore. We want a human king to take care of us.'" So God has been offended, and Samuel had been offended, but Samuel was offended because he thought they were rejecting him instead of God. However, God set him in his place by letting him know that Israel was not rejecting him. Instead, they were rejecting God.

God told Samuel that when you go to my people with the message that I am going to give them a king, you solemnly declare to them what it is going to cost them. God told Samuel to tell them very solemnly that if they should follow through with their desire for a king, then their king is going to start taking the first fruits from their gardens, he will take your sons and put them in the army, he will take your daughters and make them as servants to his household, and he is going to take the profit, that you would normally have for yourself, to support his kingdom. God told Samuel that He wanted him to make sure that Israel was walking into this bad decision with their eyes wide open.²

God wanted His people to know that if they are going to do this terrible thing, then they should know what they are going to get. They are going to get a king, but they are also going to get all the trappings that come with a king. Israel decided in the face of all those warnings, "Okay, that is cool. A king is what we want. We need one of those." God said, "So be it."

¹ 1 Samuel 8:7.

² 1 Samuel 8:11-19.

When God said, “So be it,” human government was ordained. We have human government today, and it was ordained by God at this ancient time in history, and the apostle, at this point, is saying, “Now that you have government, let us deal with it as God requires. You must submit to your government. Government is ordained by God, and it has purpose in this life. That purpose is to carry out the ordinances of God.

Government is not to supply some other set of ordinances to put in the place of God’s ordinances. You see, prior to God’s ordination of government, God Himself was in place as the King Who was the Lawgiver, the Judge, the Creator of the Law, the Enforcer of the Law, the Defender, the Everything. When you take God away, and put a human in His place, what do you have? You are supposed to have the same purposes and principles. The king is supposed to give righteous laws, righteous judgment, righteous enforcement, righteous defense, and righteous direction for human affairs. In short, the human king should, to the best of his abilities, provide all the things that God would give to His people if they had had any ears to hear God.

Here today, we have a situation that was started way back in Samuel’s time. It has progressed through history to be present in our situation today. So all of this Scripture that we are reading here about our relationship with the state applies as much today to you and me as it did to those guys back in the First Century with the Roman government over Israel.

3. *To resist the government is to resist God.* *Romans 13:2.*

During his take over of Germany, Hitler needed to bring the Lutheran Church in line with his philosophy, and he accomplished his plans, in part, because the church followed this command as if it were an absolute. The

Lutheran Church came in line partly because they were afraid of resisting God.

Hitler, as the head of state, became the primary proponent for the Word of God to support him. He was like a prophet. As a ruler, he was establishing God’s Word which was speaking in support of his desired outcome. The Lutheran Church actually came under that government’s rule and submitted. That submission to Hitler is why the Christians were impotent in the Holocaust, and all the Jews died while the church stood silent. The passivity was bred right here in this verse.

The Barmen Confession arose as a group of Christians who said that God’s Word comes from above in a mystical encounter, not from below in the objective written Words of Scripture as expressed by Hitler. Out of that confession came the Christian resistance to Hitler. Bonhoeffer who wrote the book *The Cost of Discipleship* was one of the Barmen Confessors resisting Hitler. Bonhoeffer was hanged for his resistance. There were others, e.g. Tillich, who ran for their lives, escaped Hitler, and came to America for refuge.

However, out of that concept of God’s speaking from above, there came a new emphasis on the transcendence of God. In this new emphasis, God spoke as a subject, or person, in real time. We lost the concept of God’s speaking objectively in the Scriptures because the Scriptures are considered from below rather than from above. That loss of objectivity then led to the Neo-orthodoxy movement, and that is where you “feel” the Word of God in a mystical encounter from above rather than “know” the objective Words of Scripture.

In Neo-orthodoxy, revelation is not the Words of Scripture; Revelation is the encounter, the experiential, person-to-person encounter that you have as a subject (person) with God Who Himself is also subject (Person).

Furthermore in this scenario, God speaks *in the encounter* rather than in the Words of Scripture. There is a lot of history's impact on our current theological currents of subjectivity that goes with the birth of Neo-orthodoxy of which you really need to be aware. I am just exposing you to the tip of it. The course on Systematic Theology is where you will get a good understanding of Neo-orthodoxy.

You need to understand that there is responsibility for each of us to answer individually to God in all cases. For that to happen, every institution above you must line up under God (see Chart 11.1).

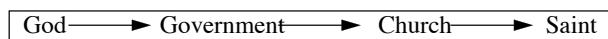


Chart 11.1

Let us say, for example, that you have God, and you have government, and you have church, and you have saint. If all of that is in a direct line, then you have a responsibility to obey the church, the government, and God. If all of those things in Chart 11.1 line up, if God's perfect laws come all the way through the string of institutions in the line, then you have a responsibility to obey because God's Word is what you are ultimately obeying. You are not obeying the institutions alone as long as they all line up with God.

Let us take this situation: You have God in one place, but the government is out of line (see Chart 11.2). You are supposed to obey God always. If the government commands you to do something that is contrary to God's

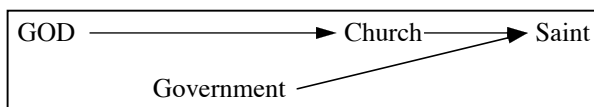


Chart 11.2

requirements for you, then you cannot use this verse to pacify God for moving out from under Him to get under government. You have a responsibility to stand under God even

if they kill you like the Nazi's killed the Barmen.

Because we are coming to a time when the government is going to be headed up by the beast, the beast is going to execute the Christians who will not submit to the government and take his mark. That is coming. You might as well start gearing up for it. The push is for you to become politically correct even now so that you will more readily line up under the terrible government of the beast in the future.

Chart 11.3 depicts a person underneath God. The pressure on this person is coming from the government and the church as it was in Germany. The person is being pulled over towards the government and the politically-correct church. If this should be you, then you must resist and pull back under God. When you do this, the pressure will intensify to the point of torture and death. There is going to be much pain and loneliness for you, and you are going to have great social incentive to move under the government and the church to get some relief from the pain and the suffering and the persecution. But you cannot gain relief by submitting. You must stand under God no matter what!

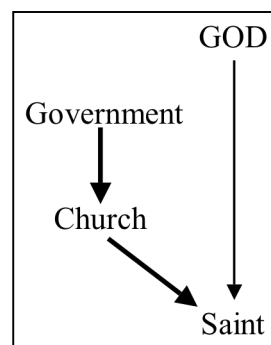


Chart 11.3

Here are some associated verses about equating the resisting of government to the resisting of God: Acts 5:29; 1 Peter 2:13-14 and 4:15-16; Acts 4:19.

Acts
5:29 Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We

ought to obey God rather than men.

1 Peter
2:13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to

the king, as supreme;

2:14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

There is a purpose statement there by God in 1 Peter 2:14 and Romans 13:4 that says that the government is supposed to line up under God to punish evildoers and praise doers of good. This purpose statement is laid out explicitly by God. The purpose of government is simply to promote good and restrain evil, but if it steps away from that purpose, then we have a serious problem. That problem is the misalignment of government out from under God.

1 Peter

4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or [as] a thief, or [as] an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

4:16 Yet if [any man suffer] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

So God is saying that there is going to be some suffering of his saints for doing good. How can doing good be punished with the endorsement of government? When the government is complicit in evil, then the role of the government will have reversed. Suffering for God's saints will then occur at the hands of the government or at the hands of others with the government's endorsement. Expect it. Be ready to pay the price for doing good, stand in there, and do not cease doing your ministry because of it. Stay with doing good.

Acts

4:19 But Peter and John . . .

This is another episode of the saints' obeying God instead of a misaligned government.

Acts

4:19 . . . answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

Peter tells the authorities to just make their best judgment because he is going to obey God at every turn. This obedience means that when you line up under God, and the person in authority is over you, and they line up away from God, and they begin to give you direction or orders or anything that is going to cause you to move out from under God, you cannot do it. You must resist that command to disobey God. Stay under God! But please know that you will pay a price for obeying God. Jesus Christ paid with His life. Peter was beaten and put in jail at the time of these verses. From Peter's time, government persecution of the saints has continuously increased. From the first Century of the Church through the Reformation, persecution goes through the roof. Our forefathers died by the thousands, tragic kinds of deaths, torturous deaths.

Jack: My particular church got started because the government provided the environment and the parameters for ethical behavior. Our denomination followed those parameters. This same thing has happened a whole lot in certain other denominations. The Supreme Court set the morality, and the whole church moved over to that new morality. This misalignment of the church occurred because there were a few people who said, "Well, you know, the church must align with the government's laws."

V: See, while the battles are small right now, they are getting bigger. It is not far, it is not far at all, until we are going to look at the total reversal of right and wrong. It is not long before the battles for the saints are going to be life or death. We need to go to school on these little battles right now. If you do not learn now, you could very well end up losing a lot more than just your life in the future.

4. Whoever resists the government receives condemnation. Romans 13:2

I will use the raising of my children in order to give you an illustration of how this

resistance works. I can remember all that changing of diapers and all that feeding. I can remember how they disobeyed me in every way possible, and I would have to apply the rod of discipline repeatedly. I can remember all of the mistakes and the carryings on, and I wondered if they were ever going to get to the point where they could control themselves. I began to wonder if they would ever grow up.

Given those memories of raising my babies, I had an unusual experience when my oldest son was still in college. He had become a jailer and worked sometimes as a deputy, but I still thought of him as my baby. Once when I went to see him in Huntsville, he got a call to a burglary in an apartment complex. I jumped into the car with him, and we took off. When we got there, I was getting ready to go into the scene, but he said, "Dad, I want you to stand right over here, and do not move!" I thought: "Now wait a minute! Who is the daddy around this dadgum place?!" But there was some new authoritative power in what he said to me. He said, "Dad, you cannot go with me. Stay here." "Yes, sir!" I stood over there where he had indicated.

So, what occurred in this story? In this scenario our roles reversed, and he had authority that I had to obey or else God was going to be mad at me. This episode was a new experience for me. There is authority in the words of a police officer. There is power from God's authority in a policeman. When we disobey a policeman, we are not only disobeying this human figure which is really not very much, but we are disobeying God and all of the power from heaven that comes down through government. You see, all that power comes from God, and the source of government comes from God. Remember, He said to Samuel, "Give them a king." All of the subdivisions that come with that king come from God. Now the king can misuse and

abuse his power, but God is standing behind all of that power. When you disobey a government person who is standing directly under God, you have disobeyed God. But if that same government person who is carrying the responsibility of executing God's purpose in law steps out from under God, then you have to disobey that very same person. If he is under God, you obey. If he is out from under God, you disobey because you have a responsibility to always stay directly under God. To resist that person who is aligned with God is to invite condemnation from God.

You have a responsibility to discern the truth to obey. Many people are very casually deciding which laws to obey and which laws not to obey, and they do not have the discernment to figure out whether the laws are of God or not. There is need now for us to teach the church how to get the discernment and knowledge and understanding so that they can walk under God. The Lordship of God is important, and each individual has to understand that.

When Antichrist comes on the scene, you will be asked, "Do you recant your faith in Jesus?" You are not going to be able to run back to the church and say, "Let us figure out what we are to do." That will not work. You will get nailed right there. You must stand up and take your hit. You had better start practicing on standing with the Lord right now while it is still easy. It is going to get hard, and I believe it is coming fast. I will show you why later.

5. *Government is not a terror to good, but to evil. Romans 13:3*

This statement corresponds to the statement that we read in Peter that said that the purpose of government is to suppress evil and promote good. Therefore, rightly aligned government is a terror to evil but not a terror to good.

**6. *Government praises those who do good.*
*Romans 13:3***

Not only is rightly aligned government not a terror to those who do good, but it actually praises them.

Sam: Is that going to become more prevalent when the beast comes?

V: Yes, but good is going to be redefined by the beast. That is why we need to have our churches filled with people who know how to discern God's good, how to read His Word, how to understand His principles of good, and how to make life's applications of what is read in the Bible.

As some supposed Christians read the Bible today, they still live their lives the way they want to. When things go wrong, they blame God or someone else, never themselves. What do they think about the fact that they went against what was declared in the Bible? They think that what is read in the Bible is to be compartmentalized in their religious-knowledge closet. They live their lives out of their private-life compartment. The two compartments have a wall of separation between them and do not meet up: "Oh, well, that is just the Bible, and that is just what we read in Sunday school."

There are people in our Christian churches today who can go to Sunday school and study deeply in the Word of God and walk right out of the room and behave like they are in hell because there is a wall of separation between their knowledge and their doing, between their "religion" and their lives in reality. Amazingly, in Islam and Mormonism, that wall is torn down, and the adherents of those religions actually live their religions.

Satan knows exactly what he is doing. He promotes living the false religions because those religions lead to death and destruction, and he restrains living your true religion because it leads to life.

We have such a terrible problem with Christians who know the truth and then do not do it. Just look at the number of Christians who do not do the truth in the ballot box. We actually have many, many, many Christians who vote for abortion, homosexuality, pornography, and removing the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness which God Himself gave mankind. These Christians know that Jesus Christ is all about life. He is the author of life, He gives eternal life because He defeated death. He is not about death; He actually calls it our enemy. Yet there are Christians who think that it is good to vote for death through abortion. Remember, he that knows the truth and does not do it, to him it is sin.³

Wanda: Lip service.

V: Lip service Christians. They draw near to the Lord with their lips (religion) but their hearts (lives) are far from the Lord.⁴ They worship and sing praises to God in church, but they vote for the devil in elections. They read the Bible in Sunday School, but they lie, steal, divorce, practice pornography, take drugs, and have abortions the other six days of the week, and sometimes on the same day after church.

7. *Government is a deacon of God for our good.* *Romans 13:4*

Let us refer to verse 4:

Romans

13:4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil.

There are two times in which the phrase "minister of God" is used in this verse. That

³ James 4:17

⁴ Matthew 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me.

word in the Greek means deacon (*diakonos*) of God. The government rulers, people working in the government, all the way down to the lowest person in the government on the public payroll, are divinely ordained as deacons of God. A government employee is a deacon of God. When I told that to the Bible-study group in their luncheon, they nearly fell out of their chairs. But I told them further, “You have not heard anything yet.”

The indication of that verse is that government service is a high responsibility. Many of you are deacons of the church, and as such, you each have a high responsibility to the people of the church. You have a high responsibility to bring help to God’s people because you are a servant of God ministering to them. You become a channel of God’s blessings to the people. Your job is to minister to the needs of the people of the church.

But the deacon of God, the employee of the government, is to minister to everybody, to bring promotion of peace and harmony and good, and the suppression of evil and crime and all of that kind of stuff. I told those people who have that kind of responsibility, “I have gone into a government agency and waited in lines for a long time to finally get up to the counter. When I told the clerk what I was there for, the deacon of God (the government clerk) on the other side of the counter, laughs and says: ‘You got in the wrong line. You are supposed to be in that line over there.’” They made me feel like a blooming idiot when they and the people within hearing distance all laughed at my expense because I had waited so long in the wrong line. Those deacons of God are going to report to God for their lack of ministry. Even though they do not know what their responsibility is, ignorance is no excuse because their responsibilities are clearly written here in Romans.

To have that little widow woman finally get up to the counter, and lay her life’s prob-

lem on the counter and hear, “Oh, no, we cannot help you with that,” and see the “no” box checked off on her form, and see the body language of God’s deacon say: “Go away! I do not want to be bothered with your problem,” is a travesty of ministry to be done by a deacon of God!

To have a criminal come to the court’s bench, and hear God’s deacon, the judge, tell the criminal that he is tired of seeing him on trial for repetitive offenses and to go on out of the court and do not do it any more is another example of false ministry by God’s deacon.

To have all manner of things that are being reversed by judges who are promoting evil and suppressing the good is another example.

I had a friend who went to jail for being in a pro-life picket line. When he finally got out of jail, he thought the whole jail house experience was absurd. He made his point when he said, “The only people worse than the pro-life people were the murderers.” He said that the going jail-house joke is that you can do anything but do not stand in a pro-life picket line because if you do, then you are going to go down to the bottom of the prison.

My friend, this business about government employees being the deacons of God is extremely important. They are to promote the good and suppress the evil. In this day, the definitions of good and evil are in transition. It is very important that government workers know the proper definitions because they will answer to God for their deacon ministries.

8. *Evildoers should fear government.*

Romans 13:4

Certainly, one would think that evildoers should fear the government’s punishment for their evil deeds. However, we are in a new age of shifting definitions and responsibilities. Evildoers are getting more governmental protection than ever before.

9. *Government is a deacon of God wielding the sword against evildoers. Romans 13:4*

Acts 25:11 is an associated verse for Item #9 which has to do with the sword and with capital punishment. This is Paul speaking in this verse:

Acts

25:11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

Paul is saying that if God and government are directly aligned, and he has stepped out of that alignment with a deed that is worthy of death, then he refuses not to die. He is okay with the death penalty in that situation. But Paul is saying that he is lined up with God and that the government or his accusers are the ones out of alignment. His only recourse is to appeal to Caesar in hopes that Caesar will stand in alignment with God and execute God's righteous justice on him. Paul was declaring simply that if God's justice is for Paul to die, then so be it.

I think the same way as Paul. If I, or any member of my family, did something that is justly worthy of death, I say that we pay the penalty. That is where I stand. You must have the integrity to take the hits for what you deserve.

The hard part is taking the hits for what you do not deserve. That is when you must stand in there on doing the good. That is when the people come gnashing their teeth at you and want you to be put to death because you are one of those radical Christians who desire to pollute the world with unwanted babies, who bring such a mean spirit against the "nice homosexuals who are normal and good," and who oppose "the harmless people who practice innocent and private pornography."

Because you are becoming an increasing irritation and disruption of a "good and normal and orderly" society that is at peace with evil when it can exclude your influences, that society will want you to be punished and your voice quieted. Society's punishment for you will escalate in the near future to the point of putting you to death for your lack of political correctness. That is when it is really going to get tough. It is coming! It is coming! Mark it down, because it is coming! And you are going to suffer. Every one of us is going to suffer. The spirit of Antichrist is here, folks, and it is progressing rapidly!

10. *Be subject for conscience sake also. Romans 13:5-7*

- a. Pay tribute or taxes. Romans 13:6.
- b. Government people are God's worship leaders. Romans 13:6.
- c. Render all dues. Romans 13:7.

This expression of worship leaders in verse 6 caused the Bible study group to gasp and almost swallow their tongues.

In my Bible it says in verse 6, that they are God's ministers. Again, the word is minister in the English, whereas in that prior verse that had the two deacon words, the word minister was used there too. But in this particular case in verse 6, the Greek word is *leitourgoi* which is the plural of *leitourgos*. *Leitourgos* is one of the five functions of Christianity or of the church, and that is worship. Are you telling me that the governor and the president are the worship leaders of the state? of the country? Yes! In God's ordained government, that is exactly what I am telling you.

God is the Lord of His people, and he is over the nation. God gives the judgment, and He gives the laws. He gives knowledge and direction, and He gives providential care. He suppresses evil, and He promotes good. In government, the king takes over for Him, and the king does the same thing. If God is going

to step aside and hand the baton to the king, the king is to do what the Lord would want to do. The king has a responsibility. If God was going to lead the nation in worship, then the king now has that responsibility. The governor has that responsibility. The magistrate has that responsibility. Worship leader! Can you imagine that? Why do not the people understand that?

Why do we insist upon separation of church and state? I think that one reason is so that the king can do whatever he wants to do. However, is it also that we can hide and do what we want to do? I think that we like it that way. If we keep the church and state separated, then we do not have to listen to God when we are out in the market place outside of the church. Plus the king does not have to listen to us because our voices are silenced in the marketplace outside of the church. Therefore his laws are not salted down with the salt of Christianity. We suffer under those unsalted laws because the next thing you hear is, "I want some taxes to help promote the evil and suppress the good." A couple of examples of tax-supported evils are Planned Parenthood and the ACLU. We, as impotent Christians, say, "Okay, here is some money. We will give you everything you need. We will even not speak about your evil deeds in our churches if you will just not remove our tax exemption." The king, instead of leading in worship, destroys worship in this age of compartmentalization via the wall of separation. We, in turn, destroy the Lord's Kingdom by compartmentalizing our selves into that pertaining to religion and that pertaining to our own private lives.

This leading of worship by the government is high responsibility. Why do we not preach it? There it is in God's Word—read it and weep. The world is going to hell, and America is on a slide to destruction. What is the church doing? Sometimes I wonder if there is a more impotent people in the whole world.

The Battle over Home Schooling

Early in my days of teaching in Texas, the issue about home schooling arose. The state of Texas was about to make a law banning home schooling. Some of my students were home schoolers. As a matter of fact, one of my students was the one who brought the case against the state when the state shut him down and said you cannot teach your child at home.

I do not know how many of you are home schooling now, but sweat and tears and prayer by some of my students and me paid for the privilege that you have. I was reeling from the assault on something that was so obviously good. I thought everybody in America was for the right of home schooling, certainly everybody that had any sense. So, I joined with the home schoolers to fight for their rights to continue teaching their own children.

In praying to get ready to go to the hearing in Austin, I heard that the church to which I belonged was going to send busloads of protesters to the meeting. The problem was that my church was on the wrong side of the protest. My church was fighting for the elimination of home schooling! Why? Why? How could this be? It was baffling to me how Christians could vote for political correctness. How can today's Christians vote for abortion, homosexuality, pornography, higher taxes, and the elimination of home schooling, prayer and Bibles in public schools, etc. etc.?

The ending to the story about home schooling was miraculously wonderful. My student and his little band of nobodies defeated the huge teachers' lobby which was opposing home schooling. The teachers' lobby opposed home schooling on the basis of the lack of training in citizenship for students in home schools.

The academic achievements of the students schooled at home could not be debated. The home-schooled children have always

achieved much higher in their academic skills than public-schooled children.

However, the claims by the proponents of public schools (opponents of home schools) always turn to unmeasurables, such as citizenship and socialization. Political correctness in one's citizenship and socialization is the primary desire of public education, and it is going to trump academic achievement in the near future if it has not already done so by the time you read this.

America's Treaty with the United Nations

Our senate has ratified a treaty that puts the welfare of the "world's children" into the hands of the United Nations. International treaties trump constitutional law in America. This means that soon to come will be UN mandates that children be not home schooled. In connection with concerns for socialization, the UN will also enforce their mandate that children no longer be made to go to church with their parents. These mandates will be exempt from our courts because they come from a treaty, and all trials concerning treaties will be decided in the World Court. These terrible things are coming, my dear friends, and the church is just going along its merry way into destruction.

Love Fulfills the Law

Romans

13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

13:9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if [there be] any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law.

How is love the fulfillment of the Law?

Oscar: Jesus said that the two greatest commandments were to love God and to love each other. Then everything else will fall into place.

Joe: Love does not hurt.

Oscar: The Word says that to show love to the Father is to be obedient to his Word. So, love is obedience to what God says. Thus, love fulfills the Law.

Tim: Obviously, I do not do this all the time, but if we ever love the way God loves, then we would not have to worry about breaking a commandment. We would not have to worry about stepping outside of the Law. We would be fulfilling the Law, through that very act of loving, the way Jesus loves.

Mary: Love is not self-serving.

Jill: If you love God, then you do not have any other gods before Him. If you love your neighbor, then you are not going to steal, kill, bear false witness against him, and you are not going to covet his possessions.

V: Those are good results of love.

So then, it looks to me like the response there of what Paul is saying is that love is the fulfillment of the Law. The Law is for people's good, and to love them is to want their good. That desire for the people's good via human laws falls right in line with promoting the good and suppressing the evil. If God loves the people, then His judging and ruling over the people would be an act of love, which is suppressing the evil and promoting the good. The king should do the same thing.

Anybody that has any power over people should do the same thing as God and the king, and that is why a parent is to love their children, promote their welfare, and suppress the evil or keep the evil from their children. The same thing should occur with a husband and a wife, i.e. the same principle should work in a marriage. It is the same principle with your

neighbor. Love for your neighbor should result in the same desire for his good.

IT IS TIME FOR CHRISTIANS TO WAKE UP

Romans

13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now [it is] high time to awake out of sleep: for now [is] our salvation nearer than when we believed.

13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13:13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof].

Paul says that it is high time for us to awaken. This is more current right now than it was back then in his own days. The Church is a sleeping giant in the land. Do you know that nobody could be elected to government unless the church supports his/her election? The Church is the people who are called by God's Name! If they will humble themselves and pray and seek God's Face and turn from their wicked ways, God will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.⁵ Do you know why our land is not healed? The Church is the reason! It is time for us to awaken; it is high time to awaken out of our sleep.

It is not time for those not in the church to awaken. They cannot awaken because they have to become alive first by getting saved. But if they should get saved, they will be put to sleep right away because that is where the

⁵ 2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

church in general is. If anybody gets saved, we get him in our churches and rock that cradle of nickels and noses in the accepted context of compartmentalization, which, in turn, is loved and accepted and even promoted by institutionalism.

Our Salvation is Nearer?

Paul says that our salvation is nearer than when we believed. What does that mean?

Carl: Glory.

V: Okay, glory, as in glorification, is what he is pointing to (see the end point in Chart 11.4). Glorification is getting closer.

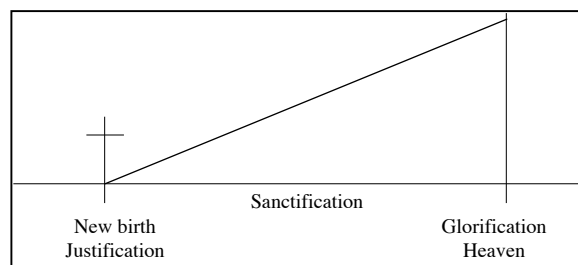


Chart 11.4

“The day is far spent, and the night is at hand.”⁶ We are in the day. When you get saved, you are born into lightness, and when you walk close to the Lord you walk in the brightness of His light. You can see clearly, but there is an apostasy upon us, and this world is moving further and further into darkness.

We go into great details about the darkness in the study of the book of Revelation. This darkness is going to get so dark that good is going to become bad, and bad is going to become good. When that happens we are going to be real close to daybreak in glorification. We can already see that we are in the beginnings of darkness. If you have eyes to see, then you see right now where good is already becoming bad, and bad is becoming good.

⁶ Romans 13:12.

The Final Apostasy

2 Thessalonians

2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [by] our gathering together unto him,

2:2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first,

The day of Christ is coming, and it is already at hand. The day of Christ is the time of judgment that follows the period of maximum darkness. I believe the day of Christ is at hand, I believe that the dark is already upon us, and I believe it is getting darker and darker with each passing day. And unlike the thinking of today's church, I believe that the church is first in line for judgment for its self-centered-indulgence while the world, nation, and family are in moral freefall.

The church is looking for a great revival. Many preachers are saying there is a great revival coming, a great wonderful revival. The kind of revival that everyone is expecting, however, is one in which the church becomes blessed without any humbling, praying, seeking of God's Face, and turning from our wicked ways (God's formula for revival as stated in 2 Chronicles 7:14). The coming revival will be a false revival.

Yes, the institutional church is expecting sweeping increases in nickels and noses apart from God's formula. That expectation will be fulfilled under Antichrist. Political correctness in our religion will produce further institutionalism which will be outright idolatry and a compartmentalism which will make every church member into nothing more than a pure hypocrite espousing love and faith for Jesus Christ while devoting themselves to outright hedonism. The churchmen will claim that they are in the midst of the greatest revival ever recorded, but in fact, they will be

in the greatest apostasy. However, God says that the day of Christ will not come except there be a falling away first.⁷ Well friend, we are already experiencing that falling away by the church.

The Man of Sin

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 speaks to the coming apostasy.

2 Thessalonians

2:3 . . . and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

I am going to stop here for a moment because I want you to see the word that God chose to designate sin in verse 3. The word, sin, is *anomia* or lawlessness. We started talking today about lining up under God, and government lining up under God, and all of human law lining up under God, and when all those authorities line up under God you have to obey them. That obedience is lawfulness. Obedience of governmental authorities would be "just" in this case because the obedience would be of God ultimately.

When God's Law rules, it will be expressed in the laws of the land. God's Law is supposed to be expressed in civil laws, in criminal laws, and in corporate laws. All human laws are supposed to be lining up under God, have its source in God, and should be to promote the good and suppress the evil. But the man of sin is going to be the man of lawlessness. That means he is not going to line up under God; he is going to stand out away from the proper alignment. He is going to execute his own brand of laws. That is why the true Christians are going to get into trouble because they will not be able to submit to his laws. His laws will actually be like him, i.e. lawlessness.

⁷ 2 Thessalonians 2.3.

The Historical Worship of Caesar

There is going to be that great temptation for Christians to yield and buckle under Antichrist just like many did under the Roman persecution in the first century. Let me tell you, many of the first-century saints under Roman rule worshiped Caesar by burning incense to him when it was demanded of them. In order to save their lives, they recanted their faith in Jesus, bowed down, and burnt incense to Caesar. Those Christians who refused to do likewise were tortured, maimed, or killed.

After the persecution was over, then those who recanted their faith in Jesus wanted to rejoin the church with the surviving martyrs. On one hand, there were those who were unscathed because they obeyed Roman law, and on the other hand, there were those with no arms, or their eyes were out, or they had no legs because they refused to obey and burn incense to Caesar.

Those who had betrayed the faith were whole, healthy and wealthy. Some of them wanted to be pastors of new churches and even of old established churches whose pastors had been fed to the lions. The surviving martyrs resisted the idea that betrayers could be admitted to the clergy or even readmitted into church membership in perfect standing after their public betrayal of the faith. These guys who had no legs, arms, or eyes said, "Hey, hold it. What is the deal here? My love for the Lord caused me to lose my legs, but your love for yourself caused you to forsake the Lord and bring disgrace to him. You think that you are supposed to walk back into the church unscathed? There is something wrong with this idea."

Taking the Mark of Antichrist

I too believe that there is something wrong with recanting one's faith in Jesus and expecting to be received back into the church in good standing. The same temptation is

going to come around again, and that means that you are going to be tempted to capitulate to political correctness. There is this historical idea that capitulation to a coerced recanting of one's faith in Jesus is benign. The first-century saints said that they withheld their heart's worship and only worshiped Caesar externally.

To those holding the same idea as was held by the first-century betrayers, I want you to know that God said, "If you take the mark, you will go to the lake of fire, period." He did not say, "It is okay if you withhold your worship of Antichrist in your heart when you take his mark as an outside event." He said, "If you take the mark, you will go to the lake of fire." That declaration means then that there are no internal versus external games with the Lord, i.e. no wall of separation and no compartmentalization.

You must stand up and let your outside actions reflect your inside heart. Be warned that if you do not make your external actions agree with your internal heart, there will be no excuses allowed. You will stand before God, and you will be judged on your outside actions. You cannot hide behind some good intentions. This tough test is coming, and the man of sin will be revealed on that day as the son of perdition of destruction . . .

2 Thessalonians

2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

That exalting of oneself to a declaration of deity and demanding of worship are what Rome's caesars did. We are going to have a repeat of history when the Antichrist does it also.

The Restrainer

2 Thessalonians

2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet

with you, I told you these things?
 2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth
 that he might be revealed in his time.

So there is something restraining the rise
 of Antichrist right now.

2 Thessalonians
 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already
 work: only he who now letteth [will let],
 until he be taken out of the way.

Who is the “he” that restrains? There are several theories. One is the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit is not going to be taken out of the way. There are going to be people saved on earth during Antichrist’s time of great persecution of the saints. During the great time of tribulation, the Holy Spirit is going to be here empowering the witnesses and adding new people to salvation.

The restrainer is a “he.” The restrainer is a masculine something. It is not a feminine restrainer. So the restrainer is not the church because the church is a feminine noun. The restrainer is a “he.”

My guess is that it is *nomos*, the law. After all, the Law from God restrains evil. The purpose of all laws and government which are ordained by God is to restrain evil and promote the good. *Nomos* is masculine, *ho nomos* is made up of an article and a noun (*ho* = the, *nomos* = law), and both the article and the noun are masculine. In Greek all nouns are masculine or feminine or neuter. Inanimate objects are not always classified neuter as they are in the English “it.” Thus the pronoun for law is “he” in Greek whereas it would be “it” in English.

Who is the beast? The man of *anomos*, the opposite of law, the man of lawlessness. Law is what restrains lawlessness. Thus when the codified laws of the land are replaced by the subjective laws of an evil man, then anything and everything will be allowed which promotes evil and suppresses good because his is the scenario of lawlessness.

This is my strong personal opinion: I believe that we are going through a perversion right now that is ushering in Antichrist. Just laws are being taken away on a daily basis. They are being replaced by unjust laws, or lawlessness. *Anomos* is lawlessness.

We are seeing this transition to perverted laws happen in our own generation. If you have eyes to see, then you are watching this very thing happening in front of you. You are living on the stage of history, and you are watching while the just laws are slipping away. It is happening all around you. You are the last line of defense.

The Problems for Our Grandchildren

I have some grandchildren, and one is not yet old enough to walk. The way things are going, they do not have a chance to live their lives in a country of constitutional laws. What do they have to look forward to? Soon, we are not even going to be able to discipline our children. We are not even going to be able to shame them about abortion or homosexuality. You know what? The government will take those babies away from us because we will be considered bad influences on them. You are going to experience evil disasters worked upon your own children while you look on helplessly.

Today, many children do not know right from wrong. They have not the foggiest idea what is right and what is wrong. When I was growing up, right versus wrong was plain and clear to me and my peers. I remember one time in elementary school when I got caught flipping pennies and matching odds and evens to win a penny. I was punished for a week. I remember getting caught chewing gum. I had to erase all the pencil writings on the bathroom walls.

Now children get caught carrying guns and knives, raping, stealing, blowing up buildings, burning buildings. That is a far cry

from talking in line or chewing gum during my youth.

In my hometown when I was growing up, if you piled all the crime for my entire school life (all 12 grades) all together in a town of 20,000 into a package, it would not even match one day in a typical school today.

You are living to see this removing of the restrainer! The day of codified laws under a stable constitution is slipping away. It is changing before your eyes. I think that law is going to be continually replaced by the whims of men, and lawlessness is going to slide right into the place of law, and the man of lawlessness is going to ascend to the throne.

2 Thessalonians

2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

2:9 [Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The lawless people will take pleasure in unrighteousness. Pleasure in unrighteousness connects back to spiraling down in the triangle of piety as described in Romans 1. In the triangle of piety, knowing the truth and not doing it, leads to defiling the body and your actions. Defiling your body and your actions leads to defiled sentiments. You will take pleasure in evil and in those who do evil. What was the last verse?

2 Thessalonians

2:12 That they all might be damned who

believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Pleasure in unrighteousness is the downward spiral. The most hurtful thing to my heart is that the church is spiraling downward, and we all are going to be judged on our actions. However, the great miracle is that once you get justified, you are going to make it to heaven. We do not deserve heaven! Even when you are spiraling down, you are going to make it to heaven. You do not deserve it!

There is much parallel between the church and society today. Society is spiraling down, and the church says, "Oh, this looks like harmless fun. I will get on board with you and spiral down, too." Those who spiral down without having been justified by God's grace are going to hell. You, if you spiral down, are going to heaven, but you are going without rewards. You are going to hurt in your works judgment in which your rewards will be given to another. You are also going to hurt in the final great white throne judgment when your loved ones, friends, and neighbors are cast into the lake of fire. You are going to weep and gnash your teeth and quake in your boots because you had a hand in those tragedies.

You took pleasure in unrighteousness. Taking pleasure in unrighteousness is the same as promoting lawlessness. Thus your external behaviors will serve to usher in Antichrist.

Preachers, you preach the truth! You get out there and do the truth, and then you preach the truth! If the politically correct government comes at you, and they come to cut your head off, you must still preach the truth! You, who live on the present stage of history, are following some good examples. Our forefathers and Jesus died for preaching the truth. You do that too!

Sunday school teachers, you teach the truth! You teach your people to apply the truth by example! Know the truth, and then do the truth.

You government workers, you are deacons of God. You serve the people! You bring righteous judgment to this land! We all have responsibilities—do not forsake them! Awaken! It is high time. Wake up!

Chapter Questions

1. What does Paul teach in Romans 13 about the state?
2. When the people in King Saul's time wanted an earthly king, God told Samuel to tell the people what the price would be for them to have an earthly king instead of having God as their king. What were those costs to be?
3. When the government is lined up with God, the Christian is supposed to obey the government; when the government makes demands that are counter to God's, a Christian must obey God rather than the government. What is that choice called?
4. Define neo-orthodoxy.
5. What is the purpose of government?
6. Who is the restrainer and why do you think so? (Your opinion).

Chapter 12

Christian Freedom and Relationships

ROMANS 14 CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

It is important that we have the freedom that was purchased at great expense by Christ, but we are not to abuse that freedom. These first Scriptures have to do with freedom in our eating.

Freedom in Eating

Romans

14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, [but] not to doubtful disputations.

14:2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

14:3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

The exhortation is that when you have an immature Christian coming into the church, we are to receive that person, but we are not to debate personal preferences even if that new person wants to do so. If you have a clear commandment that God has given in the Scriptures, then it is not up for debate as to whether you ought to follow or not follow that commandment. That issue is not the one being discussed in verse 1. The issue in verse 1 is about personal preferences.

I want to tell you right now that personal preferences can tear a church apart. I have heard things that are so absurd that they should never have been spoken. Yet they were spoken, and great dissension was resulted.

He is telling us clearly not to do this disputing back and forth about whether you eat or not eat. Those are personal preferences, and we are not to judge on personal preferences.

Jesus Is Your Judge

I marked verse 4 because I just love that verse. It not only gives me confidence and courage, but it tells me to look out because I stand before my Master, and He will judge me.

Romans

14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Knowing that Jesus is the One to please is a confidence builder. Your personal preferences, you see, need to be submitted to the Lord even though the Word may not speak to your personal preferences. When there is no explicit direction in the Scriptures concerning an issue of personal preference, you can get your guidance from the Lord.

I seek guidance even when I am in a grocery store, and if I do not know what kind of beans to buy, I ask God. I am just dumb enough to believe this stuff. Somebody else might come in there and buy the other kind. I am not going to say in my heart, "He is sinning." That is not for me to judge. We each stand or fall before our Master.

Freedom to Respect Days

Then the observation of days is in the next couple of verses.

Romans

14:5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day [alike]. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

14:6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth [it] unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard [it]. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not,

to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

There are people who will be ready to throw you out of the fellowship if you do not regard the same day that they regard. Please note that there was a worldwide split in the Church over when Easter should be celebrated. One-half of the church decided Easter should be based on using the equinox to find the exact day of the resurrection. The other group said that it has to be on Sunday even though Sunday may not be on the exact day. The Church split over that debate concerning Easter. You have the Eastern church which preferred the exact day and the Western church which preferred Sunday.

That dispute over when to celebrate the day of Easter caused a worldwide split of the Church even though, it says right here, "Do not do that." The one universal Church in the world at that time did just that. Every Christian in the world fell under this dispute.

There is always a problem in going against God's explicit Word. We are not supposed to do that. The next three verses tell us that we are not our own boss.

Jesus Is Boss

Romans

14:7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

14:8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

14:9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

No matter what you do, whether you eat or not eat, whether you celebrate a day or you do not celebrate a day, whatever you do, you do it unto the Lord. You do not even die to your own, and you do not even get born to your own. Everything is to the Lord.

We had on the first day of this course an invitation about giving yourself to the Lord as a slave. You were to turn the papers of your life over to the Lord. When you do that, you do not have a right to opinions about things of personal preferences any more. You belong to the Lord, and all that you are going to do and all that you are going to think and all that you are going to value has to be submitted to the Lord. He is the owner, He is the boss, and it is His choice not ours that is important now in your life.

No Catering to Ignorance or Prejudice

When we get to verses 10 through 13, we are dealing with:

(1) Ignorance and prejudice is never corrected by catering to them. Ignorance and prejudice need to be confronted.

(2) Horizontal judgment is overruled by the vertical judgment. If there is horizontal judgment (let us just say that I am judging you), I am out of place doing that. It does not matter where I am in my station in life or in my pilgrimage or any other thing because it is overruled by the vertical judgment.

There is another side of that judgment coin. Most people think that judging is always negative. It could be that we look at someone and declare that his personal preference is *right*. That too is not for us to judge. That slave stands or falls unto his own Master. When we look at someone and say that he is doing it right or wrong, let me tell you that our judgment is going to be overruled by the vertical judgment (see Chart 12.1 on the next page). Just because you have the agreement of the majority, does not mean that you are right. Whether you are judged right or wrong by the horizontal majority, that judgment is going to be overruled in the vertical because Jesus is the judge, and He is the one that has the righteous judgment. The rest of us are sinners, and we mess up and stumble all over everything when we get cli-

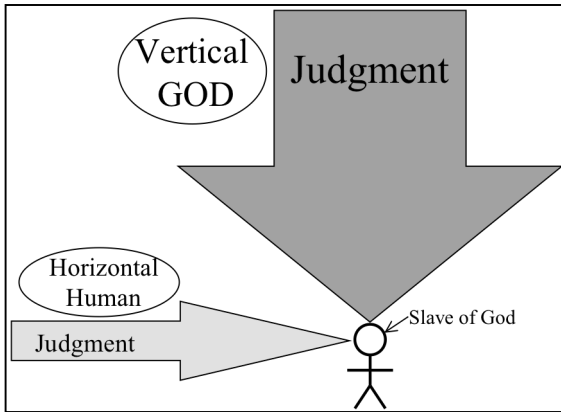


Chart 12.1

chés and tradition mixed in with our theology. We short circuit God's theology, and the next thing you know is that you become deluded and start to think that *everybody is wrong except the members of your particular church*. Class, I have been there. I know what the people do. I made the pictures and have the tee shirt.

Romans

14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

14:11 For it is written, [As] I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in [his] brother's way.

Verse 13 prohibits our judging one another, and the purpose for that prohibition is for stopping the limitation of Christian freedom. Do not judge another because that limits freedom.

Baby Christians will limit a warrior's freedom. The limitation is similar to the limitations of natural babies. When I am alone with my two grandbabies, I cannot do anything that I want to do. I have to watch those babies with total concentration. Both have

learned to walk now. I will have one in my arms, and there the other one goes, ptoom! I set down the one in my arms and chase the other one. As soon as I get that one, then the other one has to be chased. It is tough to handle just two babies.

I do not know how my wife handles caring for two babies at the same time. She is good at it. But she has trouble going to the grocery store with them in tow. When she goes shopping, she cannot get both into and out of the car and keep control of both without putting the first one in a stroller so he cannot run off. I told her that the next time that I take them shopping, I am using leashes. I can only hope that the observers will not get all upset about my leashing the kids.

Babies will limit your freedom. The foregoing is a real-life parable that will teach you something about a church. A church that has those Christian babies will limit your freedom. To the immature, Paul is saying, "You are not to judge the other because that will limit freedom." Some of us are not as mature as some of the elders in the church, and when we baby Christians start saying, "I do not think you ought to do this or this or this," the elders become confined to the path that is established by the immature Christians. Judgment of personal preferences by baby Christians really does limit freedom.

Do Not Abuse Your Freedom

However, in the same verse 13, it says, "but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in [his] brother's way." The mature man, then, has to be very cautious about how much he may exercise the freedoms that he has been given. Because, if he insists on his own personal freedoms, it would be like my doing my own thing while being in charge of my two grandbabies. My friend, that will not work.

Sybil: How do you consider the paganistic holidays and things like crafts?

V: I have a great deal of internal resistance to paganized holidays. For example, commercializing Christmas gives me an internal problem because it is a pagan approach to Christmas. Christians should resist making spiritual or holy things vain.

Certainly, Halloween and satanic celebrations like that are no-no's which are prohibited by Scripture. Glorifying anything in Satan's realm would not come under Christian freedom.

It is easy to understand this business about eating meat. I have encountered this issue in the church. I have witnessed some "super spiritual" church members criticizing other members about the eating of meat. The next thing you know in these situations is that you will have a fight or at least an argument, and the non-issue then becomes a serious issue.

Many years ago, I was helping a committee to set up a child-care function in my former church, and all of the elders had worked out a good plan, and it looked like it was ready to go. Then this one lady said at the last minute on the day before implementation, "I object. I think we need to do this and this and this." That whole church had to follow her in order to keep the church together.

There was no freedom in that church because of the outspokenness of baby Christians who dominated every issue. It was disastrous. Infantile sentiments ruled the church. The whole church was pulled in all directions by personal opinions concerning issues that were not specified by the Scriptures. Class, out of those strange self-righteous sentiments came my taking a turn in the nursery. I was the pastor! I am not good at childcare! However, because of the demands of some sentimental and outspoken ladies, I had to do what I was not good at, and the ministry of teaching and preaching the Word, at which I was good, had to be done by someone else.

Instead of using our gifts and walking in our paths to which we have been called, all that was thrown out because of personal opinion. When personal opinions rule, you get factions of the church on each side of every issue. The battles go from there.

Legalism: Restriction of Freedom

We need to be aware of problems of this kind. I had a problem in Atlanta one time when I was street witnessing. The Fishers of Men, our little group of 12 men, were having a weeklong, soul-winning crusade. It happened to be a Wednesday night, and I was down in a bad section of town. I ran across an elderly churchman who pulled me aside and told me that we needed to get our whole kit and caboodle, all of our team, out of there because we were sinning. The issue for him was concerning what could and could not be done on Wednesday nights. Since most all churches met on Wednesday nights, we had no business being on mission down in the streets. We should all be in church. Even though people were getting saved, that person was just

Do not do any work on the Sabbath. The people in Jesus' time would rather have the lame and blind and sick remain that way than allow Jesus to heal them on the Sabbath Day. The love for restrictions of the Sabbath was higher than the love for suffering people in a religion that had gone astray into legalism.

Abuse of Freedoms

In contrast to the Jewish legal restrictions, you see, there is in Christianity the problem of abusing freedom. You must have wisdom from God in order to bring proper balance into how you exercise your freedoms and how you restrain your freedom. You will be surrounded by immature Christians no matter where you go. You are going to have immature Christians who are going to impinge on your freedoms with their opinions of how you

should follow the Lord. They are going to set up rules and traditions to box you in to their ideas on the content allowable to you in your fellowship of the Lord. If you violate their rules, you will be judged to be not a real Christian. Just get ready for it because if you have not encountered the bondages of traditions, you soon will.

No Unclean Foods Unless You Think Them To Be

Romans

14:14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that [there is] nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him [it is] unclean.

14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with [thy] meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

14:16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

I try to use this verse 14 at home, but it does not work. My wife thinks that steak and other things that I like are unclean. I say that God said that they are not unclean, and she says that she esteems them to be unclean, therefore they are unclean. Because of that thinking, I get deprived of some of these foods.

Beth: Cannot you sprinkle it with something to make it clean? (Laughter)

V: That is what I have been trying to do. I even tried sprinkling it with salt one time, but she said that salt was forbidden also. (Laughter all around the room).

Seriously, the real lesson here in verse 14 is that if you think something is unclean and then eat it anyway, you have violated your own conscience. You should not do that. As soon as you think something is unclean, it is unclean for you even though it may not actually be unclean. Because God said something is not unclean, it is not unclean.

But once you think that it is unclean, it is unclean *to you*.

There Are No Unclean Foods Unless Someone Else Thinks Them To Be

This freedom of eating can be lost to you if someone alerts you to his thinking that something is unclean. If they point out that something was purchased from a questionable source or that it was leftover from a pagan feast or something indicating a question as to right and wrong, then you cannot eat it.

Sometimes someone will clue you into their thinking that something is unclean by asking you a question. They will ask, "Is such and such a sin?" Your answer is, "For you it is." Whenever there is a question about something being unclean, then that something must be avoided.

The Kingdom of God Is Not Food and Drink

Romans

14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

14:18 For he that in these things serveth Christ [is] acceptable to God, and approved of men.

14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

It is very good to pursue righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost because these things are truly worthy of pursuit. The Kingdom of God is not just mere externals like food and drink. The Kingdom of God is of wonderful internals of character, e.g. peace and joy, which produce externals of righteousness.

Personal Opinions Start Wars

Your immature church members normally will not jump down your throat because you like and practice peace, joy, and righteousness. But, on the other hand, if you were to

open up your mouth and say, “I prefer this version of the Bible more than that one,” then you will have a fight on your hands. You will hear someone respond to your opinion by saying: “Well, I think. . . .” As soon as you hear that, start ducking because war is about to break out.

Tim: Boy, are you right. You have that concept down pat.

V: I have heard those words many times! When I hear those words, I know that a war is going to break out, and people are going to get hurt. People will begin to leave the church and the pain and suffering will spread. The things of the Kingdom of God will be lost in the fray.

Do Not Allow Your Freedom to Offend Another

Romans

14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed [are] pure; but [it is] evil for that man who eateth with offence.

Your personal freedom can cause a brother to stumble. If that occurs, then your exercise of a God-given freedom has become sin.

Romans

14:21 [It is] good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor [any thing] whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

14:22 Hast thou faith? have [it] to thyself before God. Happy [is] he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith: for whatsoever [is] not of faith is sin.

We must refrain from doing anything that is allowed by God whenever it may cause a brother to stumble, or hurt his faith. Anything that has to do with a lack of faith is sin. That means that whether we do the act or refrain from doing it, we must be acting in faith. Therefore, whether it is what you eat or drink

or the day that you observe, you must be acting in faith. You must believe in your heart that God is pleased with your act. If there is any inkling of a doubt that God is not pleased with your act, then you need to refrain from that act.

One thing that God is always pleased with is a strict adherence to His well-understood precepts. When He states a command clearly understandable, observe that command, and do not do mental tricks of rationalizing your omission or even of reversing its meaning.

The Hermeneutical Culture Screen

There is a current hermeneutical trick which I call a culture screen. This trick is used when a *thou shalt* or a *thou shalt not* is found in the Bible today which corresponds to what was observed in the culture of the first century church. The trick is to say that the commandment is “culturally derived.” So, how do you interpret it today? Using the culture screen, you find out what the culture of today is, then change the commandment to fit the culture because it is culturally derived. That is a hermeneutical trick being used currently to say that God wants women to teach the Bible and theology to men.

Pete: Is that related to politically correct?

V: Yes, **IF** the commandment was politically correct in the first century, then it may be reinterpreted by liberals today through the culture screen to be politically correct again.

Pete: The big thing today is being politically correct. You need to be politically correct by being everything to everybody.

V: No, being politically correct is not always the same thing as using the culture screen. Political correctness is being in the world and of the world. But what I am talking about in the culture screen is using culture as a present-day hermeneutic because the commandment that you read fits the culture of the prior time. That means, then, that the

clear commandment of God may be reversed or adjusted to fit the culture.

Homer: Would that be the same as dispensation?

V: No, it would not be that.

Homer: Give us an example.

V: It is a hermeneutical trick. It is a hermeneutical principle that is in place today that we should **not** practice. For example: One of the issues that comes to my mind is that of husband and wife relationships. The Scripture says that the man is the head of the wife. Since that relationship was the culture of the first century, and the biblical principle matched the culture of the first century, then that God-given precept may be culturally interpreted in today's culture.

The women's liberation movement in today's culture sees that statement by God to be offensive to women. Therefore to reverse its meaning, or to neuter the commandment in this case, the culture screen is used to adjust God's specified family order to fit today's culture. That is a culturally-screened hermeneutic.

Steve: You could use this scheme to change many things in the Bible.

V: You sure can. There is another trick for devaluing God's Word that is based on who wrote the passage in question. Take for instance, the fact that the Babylonians had a flood narrative which ran along quite parallel with the Christian version of the flood in our Bible. The natural conclusion by those who want to reduce the authenticity of the particular book of the Bible in question (in this case it is Genesis which also tells of the divine account of creation) is then that the author of Genesis copied the Babylonians. This trick discards the idea of divine origins for the book of Genesis and replaces it with pagan origins. It then becomes a simple and short step from rejecting the divine flood account to

rejecting the creation account in the same book of the Bible. The remaining vacuum created by the discarding of God's creation of the universe is filled with evolutionary projections.

You can read this kind of stuff in various Old Testament commentaries. Hermeneutical tricks like these cause people to evaluate not only the words but the source of the words in scripture and come to some strange conclusions. Just beware of practicing these kinds of hermeneutical tricks yourselves.

Betty: I had a friend who was once a student here, a girl who was too involved with playing instead of studying. She was telling me the other night about her Sunday school lesson this past Sunday which had a lot to do with what we are talking about here.

Betty continued: The lesson told a story about two Christian friends witnessing to another girl. The girl began to bring up her issues about why she could not accept the new life in Christ. My friend agreed with one of the Christian witnesses who began to bend the scripture by saying, "The God I serve, my God, understands the pressures of today, and He know the pressures I have. He knows I like to do this, and this, and this. God knows my needs and thinks it is okay." However, the other Christian friend said, "No, your God is the same today, yesterday, and tomorrow. The precepts and laws do not change with pressures and customs."

V: Thank you for that good example of a modern, right now, in-Sunday-school lesson dealing with what we are talking about.

Be Prepared to Bear the Reproaches of Weak Christians

Romans

15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

15:2 Let every one of us please [his] neighbour for [his] good to edification.

15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

This passage describes a model now by which we are going to have to walk. You will find that no matter what good work that you do to please others and not yourself, it will be considered wrong by someone. Just mark it down. There are going to be people from every walk of life that are going to bring reproaches against you.

There is no escape from reproaches for the Christian. They did it to the Lord. If He drank, He was a wine bibber. If He did not drink, then He was an antisocial stick in the mud. If He ate with the tax collectors, He was a sinner. If he healed the sick on the Sabbath, He was a sinner. If He forgave sin, He was the greatest of sinners. Whatever He did was wrong in someone's estimation. He was reproached for all of His good deeds by all manner of people.

You are going to be reproached as well. It just seems like some of us are reproached more than others. I predict that you will preach a sermon that is the best thing you have ever heard in your life, and there will be people who will hate you for it.

Henry: I have preached six or seven of those.

V: I have preached one at every church that I have been asked to preach for. I have preached one in the morning service to be then disinvited for the evening service.

I filled the pulpit one Sunday morning at a church in which I was booked for a weeklong revival which was scheduled for the following month. It was Mother's day, and I was preaching on the evils of abortion. Since the sermon was being broadcast live on the radio, their phones began ringing while I was still preaching and rang all day long with the callers objecting to anything condemning their rights of choice. The people of the

church did not know how to answer the complaints, and they were not brave enough to stand strong. They could not take the heat and just wanted the complaints to go away. So, they decided to get rid of the instigator. After that one sermon, they disinvited me for the revival.

You might as well just face up, guys. It does not matter what you do, it is going to be considered wrong by someone. No matter how well you raise your children, it is going to be considered wrong by someone. It does not matter how well you keep your house, it is going to be considered to be wrong by someone. It does not matter how well you prepare a meal, it is going to be considered to be wrong by someone. It does not matter how well you study, it is going to be considered to be wrong, too. It does not matter what you do, it is going to be wrong in someone's estimation.

If you are going to follow Christ, then you are going to find the same reproaches on you as He did. Your liberties are going to be restrained by some people, and then your restraints will cause the libertarians to quake and gnash their teeth at you.

It does not matter what you do, it will be wrong to someone. No matter how far out on the right you are, you will be reproached by both those to your left and also those who are further out to your right.

It does not matter how you walk that straight and narrow path which was customized just for you by God Himself, there will be somebody to say that you are on the wrong path. That is just the way life is, especially for the Christian. As those reproaches fell on Jesus, they will also fall on you because you are the Body of Christ.

Certainly, it matters what you do. It must be of faith. Look up, and get your confirmation from God. Do not look at the horizontal because if you do, then you are going to be

walking a path that is wobbling all over the place because it is being designed on the fly by the people around you, not by God. You must choose to please God rather than people.

Where possible you must not offend others with your personal freedoms. However, you cannot offend God by either abusing your personal freedoms and offending your brother or by neglecting His clear precepts in order to please your neighbors. If you choose to avoid the reproaches of men, then you are going to be looking for the right path for the rest of your life. You will never find that path.

THE SCRIPTURES PROVIDE PATIENCE, COMFORT, AND HOPE

Romans

15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Patience

We have talked about patience in here. Patience is that ability to stand in there when it gets difficult. Patience is to persevere when the going is hard and the burden is heavy.

There is a significant burden on you. That burden is the burden of Jesus Christ. You are to carry that burden, but the only way for you to accomplish that impossible task is to be in yoke with Jesus.

Standing in there and not giving up and not running away from what He is calling you to do requires patience. Patience is to keep on going when you are hurting. When others fall away and criticize you, you must keep on going. Patience is a remarkable thing. I admire patience.

My wife used to talk about my lack of patience. What she was always talking about was the new version of patience, which is losing your cool and stuff like that. Sure, I

can lose my cool, but I stand in there under the burden.

I never got the credit for the patience that I am talking about here until we came to seminary. After observing my plowing continuously through the studies, never quitting, staying with it, memorizing, studying, reading, taking my hits and going back for more, my wife began to admit that she never knew anyone who could stay under the burden like I could.

I would set my books up in all the rooms in my house. No matter where I was in my house, I had a book laying there open to the current place. If I were in the restroom, right there would be a book that I would be into while shaving or whatever. I would learn something or stimulate my thinking on it right there wherever I was. If I was in the bedroom, there was my Bible. My books were all around. Everywhere I went in my house, there was where my studying was.

Some days I would read right up to time to get to class. I had it timed out. If it took me four minutes to walk and jog to class, I would read up to the 4.5 minute mark before I would come out of the door. Invariably somebody would call me at the 5-minute mark. I would have 30 seconds to get off of the phone because my timing was tight. Every one of my minutes was planned out. Somebody would call me, and they could not understand that I could not just sit around and talk and carry on because that is the way they conducted their own lives. They could not understand me, and I could not understand them.

My wife knows now what classical patience is because I have demonstrated it throughout my Christian life. My children do not know it yet, but they are going to learn it. They have their own babies now, and they are going to learn it. I kind of feel sorry for them because that learning part is hard.

Besides patience, comfort and encouragement are also available through the Word. They reflect the word, consolation, in verse 5. Comfort, consolation, and encouragement are all about the same thing.

The Scriptures put you in your path so that you know what you must do. As you do your ministry, patience will be created in you. Keeping your hand on the plow and your eye on the Lord who is leading you will create the ability to stand in there.

Comfort

The Scriptures also comfort me. When you are constantly standing in there, and it gets to hurting, then you go and lay down in the bed, and you think, “Well, maybe I am wrong. I am in agony, and I am alone. No one understands what I am having to do.” Then you read the scriptures like these and conclude, “I am not wrong. I must stay with it. It does not matter who criticizes me, I must stay with it!” So, the Scriptures give you not only patience but also comfort.

Hope

Out of the process of obeying the Scriptures and applying them to your following of the Lord, will grow hope. You remember how we have in our glorification, the hope of glory? That hope of glory will drive you. It will keep you going.

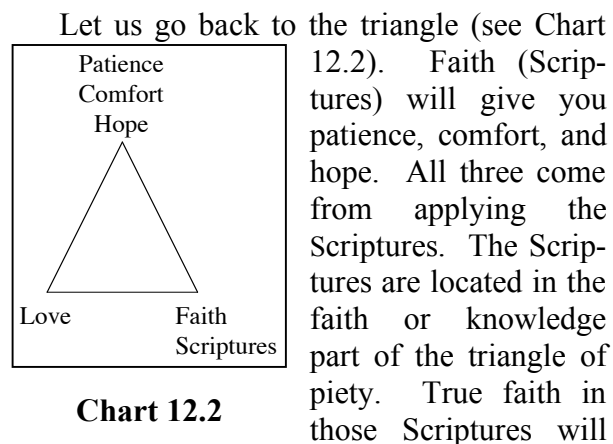


Chart 12.2

drive you to the hope corner, which is the actual doing of the truth that you know.

Verse 4 describes the derivation of patience, comfort, and hope as coming from the learning provided by the Scriptures. However, verse 5 describes them as coming from God. Those two sources are the same ultimately because the Scriptures also come from God. The parallel verses emphasize that God is the source of patience, comfort, and hope.

God's Purpose Is for Us to Be Likeminded

The purpose being stated in these two verses harkens back to the *kenosis*. That purpose is to “grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.” God wants us to have the mind of Christ. In fact He commands us to have the mind of Christ in Phil. 2:5-11. And when we are building ourselves by reading the Scriptures and studying the Scriptures, and then practicing what we know with dedicated obedience, we will be getting this patience, comfort and hope in the middle of our sufferings. In the doing of our ministries with perseverance, we get the mind of Christ.¹

Bob: Verses four through seven are very telling, are they not?

V: Yes, they are. Are they not good? What I like here in verse 5, which is the purpose of the whole passage, is to be likeminded. Now if the Christians could be likeminded, all this warfare and turmoil that goes on, and the factions that grow out of one preference not agreeing with another preference would disappear.

¹ “The mind of Christ is not explained in detail right here in this course. The book of Hebrews talks about the mind of Christ in detail and how it is to be applied in our sanctification journey. Even though Romans contains a heavy emphasis here on the mind of Christ, I must defer its detailed teaching to our study of Hebrews.

We need to be able to have the mind of Christ which does not let personal preferences destroy the harmony and the peace and the contentment of the fellowship. What we need is a mind like the Lord's mind, and when we have it, then we all will be likeminded. But if you have the mind of Vinson or the mind of Bob or the mind of Ted, and so forth, then three kinds of minds with their personal preferences will create competing personal preferences that will destroy harmony. On the other hand like-mindedness with each other because of each having the mind of Christ will create harmony.

You know how you can love someone whom you do not even know very well? Have you had the experience of just meeting someone, and you just want to hug them right there on the spot because you can observe the Spirit of Christ right there in them? When you see that Spirit of Christ, you just want to grab a hold of them. You want to be with them, and you want to relish the fellowship that comes with that Spirit there in them. That is what he is talking about here. It should be like that with every Christian.

In a church, however, wherever Christians are gathered, carnal minds, which are enmity against Christ, will be present in the gathering. When you are on your path and trying to follow the Lord, a carnal Christian will throw a stumbling block in front of you, and say, "No, no, that is not what you should be doing. You need to follow this tradition like I am doing. Do what I think you ought to do. If you do not do what I think you ought to do, you are wrong."

Use Your Mouth to Glorify God

Romans

15:6 That ye may with one mind [and] one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us say that you have several men gathered to solve a problem, and you should

hear several of them say, "Well, I think" You are going to have competing ideas. Class, we need to say what God thinks, and when you do that, then harmony suddenly replaces all that factioning that goes on. Use your mouth to glorify God: "That ye may with one mind [and] one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans

15:7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Paul is about to give an illustration now of how the worst kinds of differences are going to be bridged. The differences, the barriers are going to be brought down. We need to bring these barriers down as well.

Jack: Verse 6 just throws our committees right out the window, does it not?

V: Maybe sometimes. You can help the situation of differences in personal preferences, and that help can come from the mouth.

Let us say that personal preferences start surfacing in your group. Do not join in by expressing your own personal preference. Just shut up. Just close your mouth, and do not participate in the melee. Stop it because the goal is one mind **and** one mouth both to glorify God. You might have the mind of Christ, but if you start talking about personal preferences, you will be violating the mouthpart. Just do not say it. Only speak to what Scripture says about the mind of Christ and the mouth of Christ. Remember that ignorance and prejudice are not corrected by catering to them. Also know the absurdity of thinking that it is not catering to personal preference if we do it my way; it is only catering if we do it your way.

Homer: I have heard that.

V: Right. This business about catering to prejudice should extend to yourself as well. Shut up. Just refrain from asserting anything about your personal preferences. Do not

create a war over personal opinions. Also remember that catering goes both ways just as does judging.

PREVENT BARRIERS TO RELATIONSHIPS

Let us talk about how prevention of barriers is applied. It is applied in a far deeper way than we are anticipating. The illustration that Paul gives is that the barrier between the Gentile and the Jew is brought down. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither male nor female.

You see how those barriers are being broken down? There is the ability to shut the mouth, and have one mind together for the purpose of harmony which is based on the Scriptures. If it can be done between the Gentiles and the Jews, it ought to be done very well between Christians because our differences are nothing like as severe as those between the Jews and the Gentiles. That Jew-Gentile distinction is such that there are still barriers today between those two groups. He goes on in verse 8 . . .

Romans

15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises [made] unto the fathers:

15:9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for [his] mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

15:10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

The word circumcision designates the Jews.

Romans

15:11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

15:12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

15:13 Now the God of hope . . .

We have talked about hope already.

Romans

15:13 . . . fill you with all joy and peace . . .

We have talked about joy and peace, i.e. the Kingdom of God is not of meat and drink but of joy and peace and righteousness.

Romans

15:13 . . . with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

At the beginning of this passage, patience and comfort and hope came through the Scriptures. But down here these same characteristics come through the Holy Spirit.

Spirit and Scriptures work together in tandem. You must have the Spirit in order to understand the Word and actualize it in your life. You see, to even understand the mind of Christ requires not only the Word but also the Spirit. To move up onto your path requires not only an understanding of the Word and what it is telling you to do, but it also requires the power of the Spirit.

There is both the illumination of the Spirit and also the empowering of the Spirit which work together in the understanding and in the application. Word and Spirit work together. They are like two arms working together to accomplish the purpose of God.

I do not know whether or not there were problems in the church of Rome. I do not know exactly why Paul wrote this part in here because its purpose is to gain harmony and peace and joy and righteousness within the church instead of infighting and carrying on with a bunch of personal preferences and everybody splattering and running in 40 different directions. I do not know why he is dealing with these kinds of issues in his only letter to Rome.

Beth: You said in the beginning that he wanted to be there because he hears the good things that are happening.

V: That is right, but I really do not know if there was something that Paul had heard about Rome that indicated that factioning was happening. This much I do know: he has been around enough to know the nature of churches. There is a problem wherever Paul goes because he is all the time writing letters to the churches to calm the waters both before he arrives and after he leaves. Certainly, he is addressing Rome about issues that he knows are very real.

Issues of personal preferences are still dividing us today. I want to caution every one of us to take serious this business about calming the turmoils within our churches, within our families, within all of our gatherings. The way we are going to do this is by having the mind of Christ, and that then means that the reproaches are going to come your way. You will be reproached! There is no escape from it, but then in the midst of those reproaches, you are going to lock up your mouth. You are not going to criticize or express personal preferences, and you are going to take the reproaches like Jesus did. You will keep on following Jesus just like He

kept submitting to the Father. To keep on following after Jesus in the midst of reproaches from the brethren is going to require patience and standing in there when you do not want to be there.

Jill: It is tough.

V: Yes. But you need to be comforted because Jesus did it. If you will do it too, if you will go through these bitter travails, He is going to say, "Well done."

You are going to know something about His sufferings by suffering yourself for righteousness sake. He says, "Leap for joy when your righteousness is evil spoken of."

This is good stuff here. Painful? Yes, it is painful. I wish I could eliminate the pain for you. But I cannot. Go through it, do it, stay with it, do not give up, hang in there, and shut your mouth on things not commanded or prohibited implicitly or explicitly by Scripture!

Jill: That is hard to do.

V: It surely is.

Chapter Questions

1. Analyze Romans 14:1-13. Summarize the overall lessons taught.
2. Summarize Romans 14:14-23.
3. How does present day "patience" differ from the patience (longsuffering) as used in the Bible?
4. What are the two specific freedoms given to us in the 14th chapter of Romans?
5. Describe the hermeneutical culture screen. Give some examples of that.

Chapter 13

CHRISTIANITY IS MORE THAN JUST BEING, IT IS ALSO DOING

MUTUAL ADMONISHMENT

Romans

15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

Paul is saying to the church of Rome that he has a high confidence in their goodness and their knowledge to be able to conduct mutual admonishment. But what is admonishment? Admonishment is where you are giving gentle reminders. It is a call to mind.¹

Paul is discussing piety again (see Chart 13.1). The triangle of Paul's piety begins at the faith corner and emphasizes knowledge. Paul addressed the Romans at the point of knowledge. From knowledge, he began to move them toward an understanding that knowing is not enough. You must do something with the knowledge or else you will have a broken piety. So he is now acknowledging that the Roman Christians have enough knowledge to begin their spiral upwards towards Christian maturity via admonishment.

It is the same with you. You too have the capability to admonish one another. However, many church people think that admonishment is that you really slam each other down, that you beat each other down. One thing about us is that we have a tendency to sledgehammer people with our knowledge. A

beat down is not what God means when He says admonish. It is a gentle, encouragement to remember what is already known.

Admonishment is a very good thing. If you are admonished, it builds you up, makes you want to take that next step up. When you are admonished in a negative way that is not real admonishment, because it makes you want to shrink away. It makes you want to get away from the person admonishing you, but if you are admonished in the way of Christ, it makes you want to embrace the person admonishing you. There is a difference in the way we do these things, and that is what Paul is talking about here.

The word admonishment has a characteristic similar to beseeching. It is not the exact same word, but it has a similar approach. A person who is a beseecher is a person who has the gift of exhortation. He is one of those people who can get you to do things that you never thought you would ever do in your whole life. You end up doing something which was before thought by you to be impossible. You do the impossible because you are around the beseecher.

An admonisher, on the other hand, is a person who can bring you to remember things that you already know. They are not lording it over you, and they are not strapping it on you and giving you whole new knowledge and all this kind of thing. Their work is something that is very beneficial. It is uplifting and encouraging, and it will get you to rethinking. Hopefully, there is a change of life that results from the rethinking.

Admonishment is very wholesome, and it works both ways. So it is not where you are doing battle with one another. You are actu-

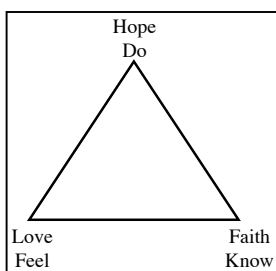


Chart 13.1

¹ *Admonere* is a French word that means to call to mind.

ally stroking one another, saying, “Remember what God said. Why not go for it?”

Paul is saying that based on what he has heard about the Roman Christians, they are not only full of all goodness, but also they have much knowledge. They are able to admonish one another.

I would say the exact same thing about this class. There ought to be an admonishment within this class, an admonishment within the churches represented in this class, and admonishment within the families represented in this class. If it is done the way Paul is talking about here, it will be uplifting and very beneficial for everyone involved. It will not be that hurtful, crushing, soul breaking kind of humiliation that most people consider admonishment to be.

Many times our efforts at admonishment becomes nothing but an effort of pride, to climb up at someone else's expense. This understanding of admonishment is just not good. Do not do that. Instead, do this gentle encouragement that is based on recalling to mind. That is what he is saying to the Romans, but you know more than the Romans. So I am saying it to you as well. Practice mutual admonishment.

DULLNESS OF HEARING

A reference that goes with the idea of admonishment is Hebrews 5:11-14.

Hebrews

5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

You know also that in the book of Revelation, God says . . .

Revelation

2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;

That command is a refrain that repeats over and over again. Each time he addresses another church, the refrain comes back around

again: “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Dullness of hearing is this ability to hear something from God without really hearing it. It is to hear God's Word as noise or to hear without its penetrating into your soul. What comes after that dullness is a slide into deafness.

Your hearing is dependent upon your doing. You remember how we talked about the spiral process in the triangle of piety? It starts with faith, and if you apply the faith, you will go up to the hope corner in that triangle. Then you come back around to the love corner where your discernment is confirmed and increased. And then the cycle starts over again for an upward spiral (see Chart 13.2).

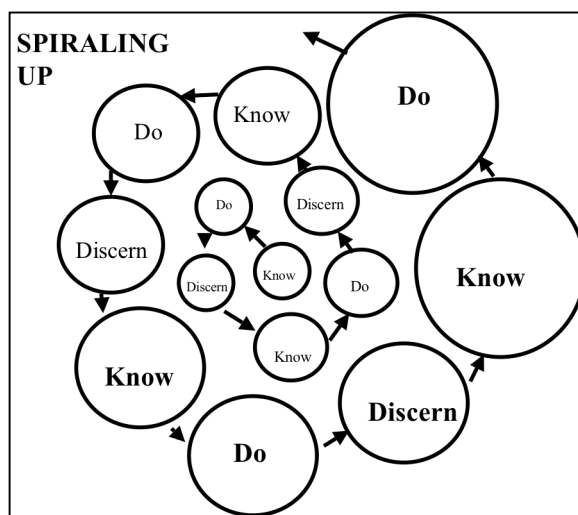


Chart 13.2

You will spiral upwards as long as you are doing what you know because you will learn and discern more. You are going to be tuned in to God. You are going to hear much more, and you will not be dull of hearing. Instead, you will be very perceptive. You will pick up on subtleties that are invisible to others. That is what Paul is talking about here.

When you spiral downwards, you will become dull of hearing. If you keep on

spiraling, you become deaf. Then when the Holy Spirit talks to you, you will not even hear Him. He can be telling you all manner of important things and even calling you to an important task, but you will no longer have ears to hear.

An Example of Spiritual Deafness

I have had students to come into my office who no longer had ears to hear what the Spirit was saying to the churches. One particular guy who was about my age was sitting in my office when the bell signaled the change in classes. When he looked out of my window, he saw the students as they were coming in and out of the building in order to get to their next class. This man had ventured into one course like Romans and had gotten a taste of what you guys are tasting. Tears started pouring down his face, and he was quaking all over, trembling. This man was an insurance agent, and owned his own firm. He had a large staff of office personnel and other insurance men working for him. He was a wealthy man who had obtained everything that he had ever wanted. But there he sat with the tears pouring down. He said, as he looked at the students, "Most of those students are as poor as church mice, but they do not know how lucky they are. They are blessed. I wish there was some way I could tell all of them how blessed they are because my life has been wasted."

The man could not hear the Spirit any longer. He had become perceptually dull. Early on when he got the call, he walked forward and somebody counseled him. They advised him not to surrender to full-time ministry if he could live with doing otherwise. He went through his whole life from a teenager to his late 50's by not responding to God's call.

The man still had life, and I was trying to take him from where he was at this point in his life forward, but he just wept and wept as

he continued to reject. He had become rich, and now he was caught on the hook of wealth and power and prestige, and he could not let go of them.

The man just sat there weeping over his impotence. He had become perceptually dull and then deaf through those years. Then he came into a class like this, and he got some holes bored into his head, and all of a sudden he could hear new things. The next thing you know, he was seeing what the great adventure of answering God's call could be like, and was suddenly struck with the realization, "Oh, what have I done! I must tell others not to do what I have done!"

Class, do the truth that you know so that you can know some more, and do that too so that you will grow in perception, discernment, and understanding. Know some more and do it, know some more and do it. That is how you grow, but the minute you start not doing what you know, you are going to regress, and you are going to become impotent. You will become perceptually dull, then you will become deaf, and eventually you will become reprobate. Do not do that! Grab hold of everything that comes your way from God because there is no guarantee that it will come around again after being rejected. You get it when it is offered! Do not let go! Run with it, and do not let go because you will be just like that man. Every one of us has already lost tons. Do not lose any more. Grab it and do it with all your might!

Growth Is Built upon Practice

Hebrews

5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [be] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

5:13 For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that

are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Do you see those words “by reason of use”? This business about knowing stuff will become a haunt to you, and you will be judged by your knowledge unless you apply it. If you will apply it, your discernment will skyrocket. Your knowledge will increase, and the Holy Spirit will confirm you in it at the point of the love corner of the triangular process. As long as the doing is there, there will be an increase in knowledge. God will see to it that your knowledge grows.

Even if you are not studying academic things like theology, hermeneutics, and other things that you need to study, if you will do the little things that you know, God will expand the depth of those verses that you are applying, and they will explode in your mind, and there will be deeper meaning than you ever dreamed about. The mere doing of what you learn in Scripture is the key to spiraling upwards.

Knowledge without doing just will not work. It is sin! To know the truth and not do it, to him it is sin.² It brings a reversal in your life. But just doing the little bit that you know will make you grow. It will grow your discernment, and it will grow additional knowledge. When you add some study in your process, you really start growing. A word to the wise . . . hear it, and do it. Hear it, and do it!

Another reference to doing what you know is John 7:17.

John

7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself.

This verse is a promise from God. He gives you understanding. He gives you dis-

cernment of right and wrong, but it only comes when you do the truth that you know. If you do not do all the truth that you know, then you will not have the knowledge and discernment. That is why we have so many people in the church today that cannot figure out right from wrong. It is because they are not doing all the truth that they know.

7:18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

Ted: That is the *kenosis* both ways!

V: It sure is! There is both the up and also the down in the same verse (see Charts 13.3 & 4).

John 8:12 is another promise on discernment. The previous one was on knowledge.

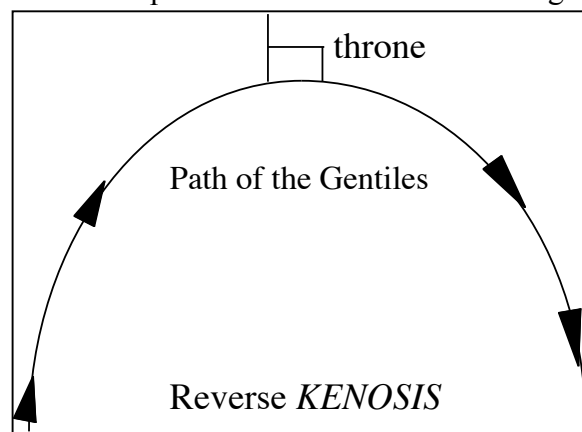


Chart 13.3

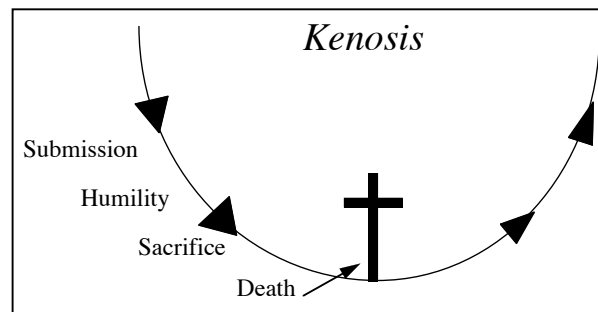


Chart 13.4

To be sure, you are going to know something, and now then you are going to have some

² James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth [it] not, to him it is sin.

discernment here to go with your doing what you know.

John

8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Here is another promise for those who are following the Lord. Following the Lord means that you are doing something. You must “go after” the Lord in order to “follow” the Lord. You cannot just know. You cannot just sit there and study the Lord, and study the Lord, and study the Lord and expect to receive this promise of light. That does not work. After you study God’s Word, then get up and follow the Lord. If you follow the Lord, you will have the light of the Lord. If you do not follow the Lord, all of the knowledge in the world will not give you the light. You must follow Jesus! If He is walking, and you are staying behind, then you are getting darker and darker and darker. The place of light is right behind Him. Get right behind Him. When He goes, you go.

John 4:34 points out that divine sustenance comes to those who do the will of God.

John

4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Guess who else’s meat that is. That is your meat. Let us link this back over to Hebrews where God said that the Hebrews were dull of hearing. He said further that when they should be teachers, they had to have someone come in and teach them the fundamental principles again because they were only capable of drinking milk and could not take meat. Class, the meat is the doing, and the milk is the knowing.

Brad was telling us in our prayer time at the beginning of class about a found kitten that needed a bit of milk to gain enough strength to eat. When you have people dying

in their sins, you do not tell them to come and do, you give them some milk. When they get the milk of salvation, then after they gain a little strength, you should say, “Come and do.” With the doing, they become meat eaters. Feed on the milk, and then grow on the meat. If you do not have the meat, then all you have is the milk of knowledge. If you are not eating meat by doing what you know, then you are not building muscle.

My friend, you may be ready to implement your doing, but you still have not done it if you are still sitting there. When you ought to be teaching others, you are not teaching others. You are still sitting there, and since you have lost your discernment, you must learn the first principles again. That is why the churches have to teach over and over and over again the Doctrine of Justification, and most Christians have to get “saved” multiple times and baptized multiple times because they are still on first principles. They do not know anything about denying themselves, picking up their crosses, and following the Lord by doing His work and applying theology. Most Christians spend their whole lives by thinking that theology is to “know,” not to “do.”

The pervasive stalling of Christian growth because of a milk-only diet is driving me crazy. Milk is the knowing of the Word; meat is the doing of the Word. Your meat is doing. If you do not do the Word, then you are on milk alone. The milk of the Word gives you sustenance for surviving, but the meat from the doing builds muscle. It turns you into a full-grown warrior.

The Plight of Many Senior Citizens

If you do not do the doing, you will remain a little baby. That is why we have seventy-year old babies in the church. They have been saved for fifty, sixty years, and they are still being rocked in their cradles. Nobody even dares ask them to do anything.

Every church has senior citizens, the golden agers, but what do they do? Instead of being the best warriors of the church, the wise people of the church who counsel and train others, what do they do? They go on little entertainment junkets. The church dedicates staff and resources to bring the seniors down to the church in order to provide entertainment for them. Sometimes, they will be taken via busses on more elaborate and expensive entertainment junkets.

What is wrong with the picture above? Those old “should-be” warriors are the ones we ought to be asking for advice and counsel. They should be the prayer warriors of the church, the trainers of other warriors, the examples for others to follow, and the wizened old beseechers to lead others into tackling and accomplishing those things that were previously thought to be impossible.

When you are going through some terrible grief that all of us must go through, the older warriors ought to be the sought-out ones on whose shoulders you can weep. They ought to be able to hold you and tell you that they have been through that before and to take comfort because God is there, and He will bring you through the trial. But instead we younger are caring for the seniors because they are ignorant and untried babies who have never done anything more for the Lord than attend church and give it their money.

Our senior citizens should be great warriors like the Apostle John who was as an ancient warrior on the Isle of Patmos, and who required to have handholds cut into the wall of his cave in order to get out of his bed because he was so old and rickety. He was a warrior who impacted the entire world with his ministry which continued with the writing of the last book of the Bible when he was 100 years old! That is what we want to be, not rinky-dink little old people who cannot do anything but suck on a bottle. We have to get

this principle in our minds, and then we must get it into our churches!

ROMANS 16

AVOID THOSE WHO TEACH CONTRARY DOCTRINE

I am going to skip over to chapter 16 because I want to talk about verses 17 and 18.

Romans

16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, . . .

Now here is a beseeching by Paul for something that he sees as extremely important and urgent.

Romans

16:17... mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Here we are introduced to something that needs to be heard right now by all of us. Paul is saying to the Roman Christians and to us to mark those people who are teaching contrary doctrine. When you depart from the Truth, it is not sound doctrine that you will be teaching. We are supposed to teach the Bible, and teach it inerrantly, teach it with pride, teach it as if you will stand on it until you die.

The Bible is what you are going to teach. Anyone that is not teaching this (Dr. Bill is holding the Bible up in his right hand), you mark them. You say, “That is one right there.” Then, when you have marked that person, it says here, “Avoid him.” This avoid is present tense. It is linear. While you are on your sanctification path and you mark one of these, then do not allow him to influence you or your path. Not only do you not turn from your path, but also you are to avoid them.

Avoidance is much like a stiff-arm approach. In football if someone is trying to tackle you, you put your arm out in a stiff

fashion with your hand on his helmet, then they miss tackling you because that stiff-arm keeps them from getting their arms around you. Stiff-arming is the word that describes the avoidance of those you have marked. Here comes a tackler, you are on your path, you stiff-arm that tackler. You stop him from knocking you off your path or tackling you or stopping you in your tracks. You stop him instead. You mark him and stiff-arm him, and you stay on your path. You know who he is, and you avoid him in order to stay on your path. When you look back—he is still down from his failed attempt to bring you to his way of thinking. You stay on your path . . . oh, oh, here he comes again.

Since the command is in the present tense, it means for you to do this for the rest of your walk. Your whole walk is to avoid, shun, push away, and stiff-arm the teacher of false doctrine. Why? It is simple. It says here that this guy is serving his own belly, and the word serving indicates that he is a slave to his own belly.

You remember in the first chapter how we had an invitation to become a *doulos*, a slave? We were asked to give the papers of our lives over to the Lord, in order to become His slaves. I did that. I am, then, a slave of the Lord Jesus. I have done my business with God. I am marked as His slave.

This person who teaches wrong doctrine is a slave as well, and it says here that he “serves not our Lord Jesus Christ, but his own belly.” That phrase about serving one’s own belly is sort of like a slang expression. It means that the person is a slave to his carnal desires. Instead of denying himself, picking up his cross, and following the Lord, he seeks to indulge himself by throwing down his cross and not following the Lord.

The people who are teaching false doctrine are following their own self-desires. In order for them to be accomplished in the doing of their own thing, they seek to persuade

you that what they are doing is the right thing. They are going to come at you with all manner of words. You are to mark them, stiff-arm them, or else you are going to hear those words and be deceived. The scripture says “by good words and fair speeches, they will deceive the hearts of the simple.”³

Deception into believing false doctrine will destroy you! You have one shot at getting your life’s work right, one shot in this life.

Let us say that you are walking on your path, and if you have not marked the guy to be avoided, and you are not stiff arming him, and he tells you that you are going the wrong way because you are suffering, and God does not want you to suffer. You may end up believing him because of your agonies. Furthermore, he may tell you that you ought to have all of the available riches and things over here in the world that are being enjoyed by the majority of your Christian brethren because after all, you are a child of the King. You can hear this kind of argument, especially when you are in agony. The next thing you know you will be off your path of self-denial, you will be off your path of the *kenosis* because you will have been convinced into climbing up in a new quest for the things of this world. You will have been deceived.

The thing about deception is that you cannot know that you are deceived because to know it would mean that you are no longer deceived. Nobody can know his deception. You must be able to mark those people who do not teach the *kenosis*. What is going to give you discernment to mark those people? Doing what you know of God’s Word will give you the ability to discern good doctrine.

When you are walking on your path of sanctification, you will gain discernment. If you are just studying, memorizing, and getting all this knowledge to be able even to

³ Romans 16:18.

quote the whole Bible, and you are not applying your known truth to your walk, then so what? The doer of one verse is better off than some body that knows the whole Bible but does not do it.

To know the truth, especially great amounts of the truth, and not do it is . . . Oooh! How great is that sin? That is a ton of sin! It would be comparable to Judas' walking with Jesus Himself and then betraying Him. Not applying the Truth will get you in deep trouble in a New York minute, will it not?

Paul is telling the Roman Christians to protect themselves from the teachers of false doctrine because he has confidence in what they are already doing. That confidence is stated in verse 19,

Romans
16:19 For your obedience is come abroad
unto all [men]

The Romans are a bunch of obedient doers. The Roman church is a gung-ho, doing church.

You know how you hear of people doing strange but great things. You know why they do those strange but great things? They read God's Word and believe it. They are just crazy enough to believe it and obey it. We are supposed to do that truth which we believe. That is what sanctification is all about.

STUDENT TESTIMONIES

The rest of the class was given over to the students who wanted to say some things. The following paragraphs are student testimonies.

Tom: I really thank God for this class, my second with Dr. Vinson. I really appreciate that he is an exhorter whom I need in my ear constantly because I want to do what God would have me do. I want to do His will, and I want to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Tom continued: There are times when I do His Word, but there are also times when conditions, happenings, and circumstances come into my life that cause me to step back and say why me? I do not have to do this. I do not have to take this pain. Why should this walk be so difficult? But I thank God through this class, particularly on Romans, God has opened up my eyes and heart, and I have learned a great deal. I have learned especially tonight how doing is so much more important than just saying it and having the knowledge.

Tom continued: I am a minister, and there is an old lady in my church that used to say a long time ago, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one." I want to live a life where my life is a sermon, not for me, but for the people who look on from the world, who do not know the Lord, and who are not concerned with the way they are living and the road they are on. I thank God for this class; it has been a tremendous help to me. It is not the end. It is just the beginning for me.

* * *

Brad: About ten or fifteen years ago, God restored me to fellowship with Him, and I spent the next several years learning what I was supposed to do. I learned real good how to thump on the Bible and point my finger at people. I discovered that I was not doing what I should have been doing. I needed to reach out in mercy to people, but I was afraid to do it by myself. I cried to God for a couple of years asking Him to set me up with some people who wanted to serve Him like I did but who were not afraid. He was gracious enough to set me up with the Beautiful Feet Ministry, and I got to do some ministry that was more in line with my call.

Brad continued: I receive a disability check, and I said, "God, you are giving me all of this money, and I keep hearing this over and over again that you do not deserve to eat if you do not work. God, if you will just give me a job, I will work. I just need somebody

who is going to be understanding about my health needs, and be flexible with the hours. I will even work for less than minimum wage. He gave me all of that. I got a voluntary position there at Beautiful Feet. Sometimes I felt like it was putting too much stress on me, but I needed it to build perseverance. While I was there, the devil beat me up almost every day. I thought I had some faith. However, I discovered that I did not have as much faith as I thought I had because when the devil put a little pressure on me, I would just bust. I would just break down and make a fool of myself. I let the devil beat up on me for a while, and my attitude was shot, and my health was getting messed up, and I was facing another surgery. I had a whole bunch of problems, and I decided that I just needed to have some time off.

Brad continued: I was going to take as much time off as I wanted because I believed the devil's lie. He was saying, "Man, you put too much effort into this, you put too much work into this, you are just giving too much." I wanted to pump up myself. I wanted to feed my flesh, and I wanted to take it easy, kick back, and rest some instead of pressing forward like this class has been teaching us that we have to do. Now I am stuck at home, and my truck is not even legal to drive. I have trouble getting out of the house now. I am also having some other health problems. Now I realize the urgency of serving the Lord diligently, and not letting the devil tell me that I am not doing any good, that I am wasting my time, and that I need some rest. I am just trying to get some direction and some help from God so that I can get out of the house again and get well so that I can serve Him again. I learned that from taking this class.

* * *

Sid: First of all, I give praise to my Father in heaven and Jesus Christ, and I would like to honor you, Dr. Vinson, and my brothers and sisters in Christ. God has opened up

some doors here in this seminary for me. I never thought doors like these would ever be opened to allow me to study in this class. I have studied things in this class to which my eyes were closed. My wrong beliefs had caused me not to be a doer. The first thing that I did not understand was what a servant really means. When it was brought to my attention, and the meaning was told to me, it created a lot of push in my life. I teach Sunday school, and every time I went to teach class, all I could bring up was what I learned here.

Sid continued: I learned a new word today, admonish. I learned it and the way it works through you. When I came into class, I would see how you care for other people, your prayers and everything. Admonishment has pushed me into a new life. It did something I cannot explain. I like to thank the class and thank the Lord for the opportunity to be here.

* * *

Jack: I have been praying the last couple of years about God's direction in my life. I just desire to follow Him. I went through a period of time when I was thinking, "Should I take some kind of Bible school or Bible training, and just commit to the Lord?" About that time I took *Experiencing God*, and through that, God challenged me to just follow Him one day at a time. If I really do that, then He will lead me where I need to be. Brad kind of kicked around the idea with me about whether or not I should take a Bible class. We both prayed about it.

Jack continued: Another thing I learned in *Experiencing God* is that God speaks to and through the church. Brad came to me one day at church and said, "Hey, man, we are thinking about taking this Roman's class." I thought, "Okay, I will take it. I will check it out. Maybe this will be a test of the waters to see what Seminary is like." So I enrolled.

Jack continued: I had never been to school like this or anything. I wanted to see if Bible training were something that God would want me to do. So I took this class. I can just say that after the first two nights of being here, I give God the praise. I mean I felt like I was ready to run a sprint out of here, do some laps around the track or something. I was punked, and God just really, genuinely exhorted me and encouraged me. It challenged me. It was so good because God had been dealing with me on a lot of these things anyway, and everything that was being taught was just like nailing it down. I am just so thankful for that, and especially tonight.

Jack continued: I want to share this exact answer to prayer. One night I was studying during the week before one of the classes. As I was studying just on my own, I ran across the parable of the talents. I have heard that preached so many different ways, but I did not understand what it really meant. Some people say that talents are one thing, and others say that talents mean something else. I just kind of dropped what I was doing and went to praying. "Lord, it said if I lacked wisdom, to ask, and You would give it to me." I said, "Lord, I really do not understand this, and it looks important. I do not understand what this means, so I am asking that You give me wisdom."

Jack continued: Lo and behold, Thursday I come in class, and about half-way through the lesson, Dr. Vinson stops and says, "I asked the Lord what I need to share, and God told me I need to share this parable of the talents." I said, "No way! Wow, could this be really happening?" Dr. Vinson just opened up and explained that parable so clearly, and so on-target. It just really encouraged me. God really spoke to me that night through that teaching, and I am just thankful that Dr. Vinson was sensitive to the Lord. I was humbled that God would, you know, answer a prayer like that. I am grateful for that answered prayer.

Jack continued: The challenge that I am taking out of this class is to remember that I am a slave. I am the Lord's slave, and that is not a burden. Being His slave is a privilege. No one has forced me to do this. The Lord has drawn me to Himself, and I am willing to say yes. I am just thankful that God is patient.

Jack continued: Angels of God must have carried me through high school because I was such a bonehead. I was a fool because I was just doing a bunch of stupid stuff. I am so grateful that God is patient with us. He does not want any to perish. Instead, He wants all to come to repentance.⁴ I desire to redeem the time because I know the days are evil. God has given me a vision to walk with Him, and not do my thing. I must lose my life so that I can find real life in Jesus. Pray for me that I will keep that fire and keep that vision.

* * *

Jerry: Well, there are so many things that I am grateful for in this class. I am always reminded that according to Hebrews, we are gathered together to encourage one another, and I am truly encouraged by being in this class. I did not come to know the Lord until I was 50. That is most unusual because they tell me that if you are over 18, you will rarely come to know the Lord. I want to thank the Lord tonight and praise Him for what He has done in my life.

Jerry continued: I can break the rules and brag on Dr. Vinson because I am an auditor and am not even going to take the test, so I can say anything I want. I think the greatest thing that I have learned in this class is something that we all have learned, and that is to love him dearly, and appreciate him. I tell people in Denton, "You ought to come down here and take some of these courses. He will really press you on." And as Alberto said earlier tonight, "Well, we are going to get

⁴ 2 Peter 3:9

beat up again this Thursday night, and we are going to love him for it.”

Jerry continued: The greatest thing is that there is much more to salvation than just being saved. It is forever impressed on my mind the vision of Dr. Vinson up here drawing the world on the board and all these people in it. Out of the world comes one over here into the realm of justification. Then there is something called sanctification that goes upwards and outwards and continues on for the rest of our lives. That huge all-important process of sanctification is what we are talking about.

Jerry continued: A lot of people talk about justification, but not many want to talk about sanctification. I think that one of the things that impressed me is that if I do not get into that sanctification process, then I am going to miss the joy of my salvation. I am not going to have fellowship with the Lord, and I am not going to express my opportunity to witness to people. I am not going to be able to do all those things to which God is calling me. I think that those all-important issues of sanctification are what Dr. Vinson has been teaching us here. There is much, much more to salvation than just being saved. I really appreciate just the opportunity of being with Christians and especially with you here who love the Lord in such dedicated ways. It encourages me.

* * *

Doug: First I would like to give honor and praise to my heavenly Father for allowing me to have health and strength to be standing here. I would like to say that this class has done a lot for me. I joined the church and became saved when I was very young, but I was not always active in a church. Recently I became active in a church, and I was kind of fearful because, I was afraid for people to see my ignorance of the Bible. But the Bible

says, “Do not be afraid of their faces.”⁵ So, as I stood and looked at the people, I began to think about why was I standing there? Why has the Lord chosen me? He put me out here, but when He put me out here, He also gave me knowledge in order for me to be able to do His job. It is a blessing to be the vessel, and I submit myself as a vessel.

Doug continued: I want to thank Dr. Vinson for what he has taught in this class because it has helped me in my brotherhood class. I teach a brotherhood class at my church, and it is just like lights going on in those members and myself. It is like the gentleman who spoke a few minutes ago about the parable of the talents. When you hear how the third guy was a non-doer and the results of not applying what you know, then these things begin to become clear. With that clarity comes a new confidence for me when I stand before God’s people to tell them what it is that He wants me to tell His people.

Doug continued: I just want to praise the Lord because the Lord has really strengthened me in this class. I know that I have been strengthened because a few months ago I would have been shaking at the knees while standing up here. I want to thank the Lord for His help through Dr. Vinson and this class.

* * *

Pete: By God’s grace I am not that guy who was sitting across from Dr. Vinson and looking out the window. I came real close, though.

Pete continued: I was saved as a teenager, but I was never disciplined. As a result I did not grow. I knew what milk was, but I did not know what meat was, and it was not until about nine years ago that I really started to grow as a Christian. There was a lot of wasted time there. God started to work in my

⁵ Jeremiah 1:8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I [am] with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

life, started to grow me, and then two years ago He started a process of leading me to a be a full-time servant of His. I did not know what that meant, but He led me to a process that I pray will be concluded this Sunday. That process is leading to the start of another journey, which is for me to serve as a servant in a church.

Pete continued: God's ways are mysterious because He could have put me in that church position two years ago. The church had even voted for me to be put in that position. However, after thinking it through, the personnel committee, the pastor, and myself decided that the time was not right because God's endorsement should have been stronger in the vote.

Pete continued: As a result of that decision, I enrolled in Seminary, and have been coming part time since then. My first class was in the course on Jeremiah with Dr. Vinson. I got beat up pretty good in that one. I said I do not need to do this alone, so I got my brother Rob to come with me to the course on Revelation. I could easily see that we really needed this education, so I got my other brother Ben and good friend Fred. Now there are four of us in this Romans course. I guess I will have to try to figure out how to get eight down here for the next course.

Pete continued: I took Jeremiah and Revelation, and you know, God's Word is so amazing. People say that they do not get anything out of studying God's Word, or that they do not understand the excitement of being a Christian, but I think that part of the reason is because they are not available, they are not willing, and they are not in the Word. The Word cannot speak to you if you are not in it. But it did not matter where I was in my walk with the Lord because Jeremiah spoke to me, and Revelation spoke to me, and now Romans speaks to me and answers my questions every day. The reasons we do not get answers to our questions is that we are not

giving God an opportunity to answer those questions.

Pete continued: I think part of my challenge, as a servant leader, will be to exhort people to be in the Word, to be in a relationship with the Lord, and to be able to know the excitement of being a Christian who is being sanctified. Yes, we do have many seniors in our churches who are too weak and docile in their Christian walk. I pray God will use me to change some of that.

Pete continued: If we just change a couple of people, it will pay rich dividends. I have seen God bless us in our church already because of the four that have been changed by this class. I pray God will use me, and will continue to use these other men in our church to grow the saints.

Pete continued: I kept looking for the class that would not beat up on me. I want to know when that class is coming up. When are you going to do something easy? (A chorus of "Amen's" and raucous laughter around the room) Finally, I say: "Thank you, Dr. Vinson."

* * *

James: This class has been a real item for me. About a year ago in February, I was sitting in ICU, 90% blockage. About 4 o'clock in the morning, I woke up to a national prayer breakfast being broadcast on TV in ICU. Whoever heard of a TV in ICU? I had not, but there it was, and it was on. It got through to me. I am sorry that it took that situation for me to realize my need of salvation, but suddenly a calm just came over me, and I knew that what I was doing before was over and that I was beginning a new and different path. My journey has been heart wrenching; it has been eye opening; I thought that I knew a lot, but I did not. I did not know anything.

James continued: It has been joyous to get to meet all of you people and to hear and

see what you are doing in your ministries. All of this just bolsters me up because I am still searching for that ministry. I need to know more. So if nothing else, I am getting that knowledge which is needed for ministry while I am here, but I am also getting an idea of some of the ministries out there that are available to me.

James continued: Where does the Lord want me to go? I want to thank Dr. Vinson because he has asked me to help out with his e-mail class. I would like to thank you publicly for a chance to improve my grade-point average (Dr. Vinson laughed and said in response: “Nice try, James, but it didn’t work” much laughter around the room). No, seriously, I thank you for opening the door for me to help you with that class. I am looking forward to helping you out with that and any other thing that I can do. I also want to thank all of you for being a part of this class and making it come alive to me.

* * *

Vance: I do not know whether I am a glutton for punishment or whether he is a really good beseecher, but this is my course number four with Dr. Vinson. I am in the diploma studies program, and because of my lack of finances, Dr. Smith advised me to go see Dr. Vinson who put me immediately into Systematic Theology. Wow, theology was the first one! I did not do so well on the final exam, as I did not know those charts. So I decided that I was not coming back. I knew obviously that this level of study was not for me. I decided that it was the wrong thing for me to attempt, and I just was not coming back to get beaten up again. But down deep, I just loved it. I hated his tests but loved his teaching.

Vance continued: The day class was supposed to start last year, I went to Dr. Smith and said, “I just really did bad,” and he said, “What did you make in the class?” I said that it has nothing to do with the class, but I just

really did bad on the final test. He said, “Well, what did you make in the class?” “Well, I made an ‘A,’ but I did bad on the test.” He was shaking his head, and said, “Go back to see Dr. Vinson.” So I go tromping across campus with a scowl on my face, and I signed up again!

Vance continued: Check out this contradiction in me. While I did not want to sign up for another class, I would tell my dad every time that I would get to see him, “Dad, you would just love this guy, you would really love him because he is real black or white.” There are no gray areas in his teachings. If I have learned anything from this man, it is that there are no gray areas in theology.

Vance continued: I grew up in a Christian home, and I always thought, “There is God, there is Satan, and there is me, and I am that gray area,” you know. There is not a gray area of neutrality! I am either on God’s side, or I am not. The alternative to being on God’s side is no good. Dr. Vinson has been the most wonderful encourager to me, and I have not admitted to my dad yet about my thinking that I was in the gray area. I am working up to that because I will have to take that “I told you so” part.

Vance continued: Dr. Vinson, you have been a wonderful encourager, and as you all know, it has been tough with my son, and I thank you for your prayers. Also, I have not had a headache since the night that this class laid hands on me. Instead of a charismatic, showy, and pretended answer to prayer, I received a dramatic and solid answer. These real kinds of answers to prayers are something that I did not believe in until this class.

Vance continued: As I said, I grew up in a Christian home, and my parents prayed always, and I never understood why they were on their knees. You know, you can pray while you are in bed or on the couch. In the first class I took with Dr. Bill, he said that we all had to change our postures to pray, I

thought, “Oh, gosh; here we go. Okay, I will stand up. I will do that. Out of respect for this man, I am going to stand up.” I did. There were nights that I really felt like I had to be on my knees, but I just could not bring myself to do that. It was a real “will” thing.

Vance continued: This year I cannot think of a night or a morning during my devotional time that I have not been on my knees. I can hardly sit in church now. It just does not seem right. I feel like I should be on my knees even there. I thank you for that. In all those years of growing up, to have missed real prayer, to have missed being before God, I cannot tell you how much pain there is from missing those years of deep reverence. I thank you for that.

Vance continued: My favorite verse came out of Romans. It is talking about Abraham, and it says, “Yet with respect to the promise of God he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith giving glory to God and being fully assured that what He had promised He was able to perform (NASV).”⁶ I read that in

the midst of going through everything with my son, and if I have not gotten anything out of this course, that verse has kept me going and going because I believe the promises of God. I grew up knowing the promises, but that verse has just sealed them.

Vance continued: I am so thankful for your being sensitive to God. In my very first course, one of the things you said, “If your gift is to pray, and you are not praying, then you are messing up things for me.” I think of that statement very often because I do not want to mess up anything for anybody by not praying. I am so thankful that you are always so sensitive to God. I think that my praying is a perfect fit to your teaching of the talents. Wow! Was not that awesome? Thank you, dear Sir.

⁶ Romans 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 4:21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Chapter Questions

1. Explain what is meant by the word “admonishment.”
2. Explain “dullness of hearing.”
3. What does Paul mean when he says “mark those people that are teaching contrary to sound doctrine” in Romans 16:17-18?
4. What is the “milk” of the Word? Give a Bible reference to support your meaning.
5. What is the “meat” of the Word? Give a Bible reference to support your meaning.

CONCLUSION

You might ask: “Is there really a cost for discipleship?” Like so many other Christians, you probably thought that the costs had already been paid in total and that all you had to do was to be saved by Jesus. Salvation is a free gift, right?

Dear friend, salvation is truly a free gift, but discipleship requires a life of sacrifice. Salvation is made up of justification, sanctification, and glorification. All of these are free gifts from Jesus to the person who believes. Discipleship, however, reverses the emphasis of Jesus’ giving to you. The emphasis in discipleship becomes more about your giving to Jesus. It is what you do with the free gift of salvation. Will you just possess your salvation as an addition to your own life? Or will you use your salvation in service to the Lord by your life?

In order to follow Jesus in discipleship, you must deny yourself by being a slave to the Lord. Slavery is self-denial and submission of self to another Master, i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ. Discipleship costs something. It costs you your desires. You cannot do your own thing and follow Jesus. You must sacrifice your own thing. In the place of your own thing will be the Lord’s thing. The Lord’s thing will consume all of your time, energy, talents, and resources. You must become a slave to the Lord Jesus Christ by surrendering the papers of your life to Him.

Not only is there sacrifice of your own thing in becoming a disciple, but also there are continuing sacrifices which are beyond just the turning away from your own desires. Those sacrifices required in continuing a life of discipleship will all be in the material and physical realm. Counted among those physical sacrifices will be money, reputation, rest, worldly acceptance, loneliness, family com-

forts, the applause of men, and perhaps even your physical life.

In the first chapter of this book, we saw that Paul pronounced himself as being a slave, and his call to the Romans was to join him in that status. In Philippians, God commands us to have the mind of Christ who sacrificed all as a slave to God, the Father, for His Mission of saving mankind through His Own sacrifice of His Life. If we are to obey this divine command, it must occur in the area of sanctification which is all of our earthly life after justification.

Chapter two of this book declares that there will be a judgment of our works at the point of glorification in which we will be rewarded spiritually for our service to Jesus as His slave. This service requires more than knowledge. It requires the *application* of our knowledge. There is a downward slide into reprobation for the Christian who refuses to apply his knowledge of the truth. On the other hand, there is growth into spiritual maturity which results from the application of our known truth. Since God is not a respecter of persons, he will judge your works and determine your rewards strictly on what you did with what you had. Your battle is with your will. Will you deny yourself and serve the Lord, or will you deny the Lord and serve yourself?

You are not being asked to earn your salvation. You are being told to earn your rewards by choosing glory in heaven rather than glory on earth. You are being told to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ by following Him in His model of walk. The model that Jesus provided is filled with tribulation and sacrifice in this present life. However, the rewards in the heavenly life are so great that all our tribulations and sacrifices pale into insignificance in comparison.

Your salvation has already been earned by the Lord Jesus, and He is offering it to you as a free gift on the basis of your faith in Him. Thus all of salvation is a free gift to be used by you to not only reap the benefit of going to heaven to be with Him, but to be used via your service to Him as a slave in the sanctification period in order to earn rewards in heaven.

Carnality will rob you of your rewards. Carnality is serving your **self** by living your own life. Spirituality is allowing Jesus to live through you. Spirituality is only available to true disciples who are denying themselves, taking up their crosses of self-sacrifice, and following Jesus. Spiritual warfare is your lot in life. Which will you choose? Will you crucify your flesh, or will you crucify your spirit? You cannot serve two masters. You must choose one or the other. The choice takes place in your mind. Be alert, my dear friend, and do not let the certainty of suffering stop you from choosing to crucify your flesh.

All of us need true knowledge to go with our zeal. Zeal without knowledge is not only the problem within present-day Judaism, but it is also the problem in the present-day Christian church. In Judaism, there is a great lack of understanding of the Messiah. In the Christian church, there is a great lack of understanding of discipleship. It must be remembered that a lack of understanding of Christian discipleship derives from several causes. One prominent cause is the lack of implementing the truth that you know. My friend, do not rest on the laurels of your justification. Invest your life into the good works and ministries of sanctification.

Paul is beseeching you to the *kenosis*. The first eleven chapters of Romans give you a ton of truth. Now will you apply it in self-sacrificial service to the Lord? If you will, please pray with me now:

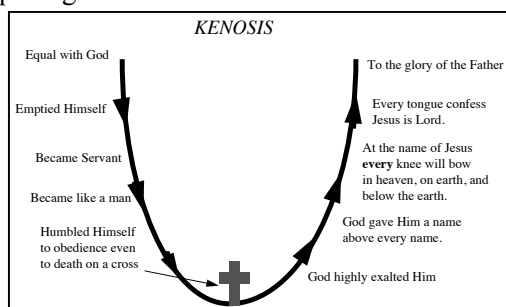
Dear Lord Jesus, here I am. I hear by Your Word in the book of Romans that You are beseeching me to present my self as a living sacrifice to You. I do not know what You want me to do, but I surrender all. I give myself to You. Please use me to bring honor and glory to You. I love You and thank You for paying the supreme price for my sins. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer, please sign your name below and pass this book on to someone else:

ANSWERS TO CHAPTER QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

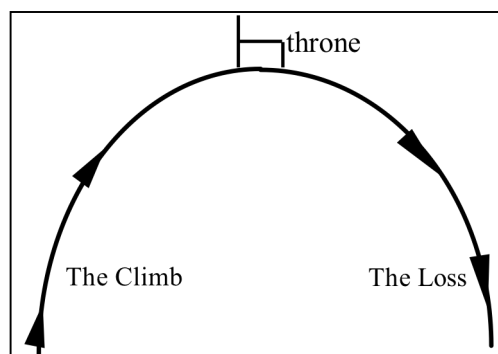
- Briefly describe each of Paul's missionary journeys: where he went, when he went, what significant events happened during or afterwards and which book(s) he wrote following or during those journeys.
 - Missionary Journey #1: around present-day Turkey; most of it was in Galatia. He wrote the book of Galatians after his journey and before Missionary Journey #2. This journey occurred around A.D. 45. The Council of Jerusalem was held between Missionary Journey #1 and #2.
 - Missionary Journey #2: AD 49. He has gone through Thessalonica, and he was in Corinth. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth.
 - Missionary Journey #3: Paul wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians from Ephesus. Then, while still on the third missionary journey, Paul wrote the Book of Romans from Corinth.
- What are the Pastoral Epistles?
 - 1 Timothy: a personal and pastoral letter written from prison.
 - 2 Timothy: a personal and pastoral letter written from prison.
 - Titus: a personal and pastoral letter written from prison.
- Describe what being a slave means.
To be a slave is to not be your own owner. A slave is not being in charge of your own life. To be a slave means that you are at the disposal of someone else, your owner.
- Draw or illustrate the *kenosis*; give the major passage that describes the *kenosis*.



The descriptive passage for the reverse *kenosis* is Philippians 2:5-11.

- Draw or illustrate the reverse *kenosis* and give the Scripture reference.

The descriptive passage for the reverse *kenosis* is Isaiah 14:13-15.



- Define the following:

Apostle: A "sent one" with a message from God.

Saint: A person who has been made holy (righteous and separated for God's use).

Ecclesia: The called-out ones.

Holy: Righteous people who have been separated from the world and set-aside for God's use.

Priest: A saint who takes the burdens of the people to God to plead for them. Physical sacrifice is also a requirement for this function.

Prophet: A saint who speaks for God. He stands with his back to God and faces the people as he speaks to them for God.
- Explain the three tenses of salvation.
 - Justification: When a person gave up the world and gave his life to Jesus Christ, to become a slave to the Lord. Past Tense.
 - Sanctification: The walk that begins immediately after justification and lasts until glorification. It is the time the saints learn obedience by denying themselves, taking up their crosses, and following Jesus. Where Jesus goes, they go. Present Tense.
 - Glorification: That event that will happen at death when the Lord will reward the saint for his good works of sacrificial ministry during sanctification. Future tense.
- What are the new things of Romans?
 - New position: slave. Matthew 20:25-28.

2. New call: obedience.
3. New title: saint.
4. New location: out of the world. John 15:18-20
5. New direction: down, i.e. the *kenosis*. Philippians 2:5-11
6. New values: self-denial. Matthew 16:21-27.
7. New greatness: the loss of things and becoming last. Matthew 19:27-30
8. New orientation: to lay up treasure in heaven, not treasure on earth. Matthew 6:19-24.
9. New results: fishers of men. Matthew 4:19.

Chapter 2

1. What can be seen from general revelation?
 - a. You can know the **power** of God by looking at nature.
 - b. You can see the **deity** of God, the Godhead.
2. Distinguish between Existentialism and existential.

Existentialism is a 20th century philosophical movement that denies objectivity. All is subjective and you are the supreme subject, and your decisions create your reality. By your own actions you shape your own destinies.

Existential is when your knowledge is so important to your life that it has a direct bearing on your very existence.
3. What are the basic emphases of the introduction? Romans 1:1-15.
 - a. Providence. V. 1.
 - b. Old Testament roots of Christianity. V. 2.
 - c. Incarnation of Christ. V. 3.
 - d. Resurrection of Christ. V. 4.
 - e. The Holy Spirit. V. 4.
 - f. Faith. Vv. 5-8.
 - g. God's gifts of grace and peace. V. 7.
4. What are the key words in the theme of Romans? Romans 1:16-17.
 - a. Gospel.
 - b. Power.
 - c. Salvation.
 - d. All or everyone.
 - e. Righteousness.
 - f. Faith.
5. How does Bruce summarize Romans and the Pauline Gospel?
 - a. Justification comes by the work of Christ.
 - b. Our verdict concerning our justification on that great day can be had in this present life.
 - c. If it were possible for us to be justified by keeping the Law, what was the purpose of Christ's death?
 - d. We are saved by faith in Christ, not by works.
 - e. Abraham was accepted by faith, and so are we.
 - f. If we choose justification by the Law by making circumcision a legal requirement, we fall under its curse because we have already failed. The same principle applies to baptism.
 - g. Jesus underwent the curse of the Law and nullified its curse on me.
 - h. The just shall live by faith.

Chapter 3

1. In Romans 3:1, Paul gives the advantages of being a Jew. What are they?

They were the chosen ones. They have the Oracles (Law) of God. They have been set aside to do the work of God.
2. What are the two judgments that all people must face?

The judgment of personhood and the judgment of works.
3. Compare the judgment of the saints with the judgment of the unsaved (natural man).

The saints are first judged at their point of justification. That is the judgment of personhood. They agree with God that they are sinners who deserve death or eternal separation

from God. God then gives them the gift of eternal life, the gift of spending eternity with Him. The saints' works will also be judged at the Judgment seat of Christ. If they have been obedient to Christ and brought to Him fruit, i.e. profit, they will receive rewards. Their works will be tried by fire, and if they are proper works (gold, silver, and precious jewels), their works will not burn up. If their works are not the works that God wants them to do (wood, hay, and stubble), their works will be burned up, and they will not have rewards.

Those who reject Christ will also be judged twice: their personhood at death will send them to hell, and then their works will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. Their works will be judged to be good or evil, and they will be punished accordingly in the lake of fire. The Bible is not explicit about this judgment, but the unsaved can do good works, and thus have their punishment mollified in some way. Their personhood judgment though will be one that determines their eternity of separation from God in the lake of fire.

4. Describe the unprofitable man. Romans 3:12-18.

See page 46 for the answer

5. Describe the process of a person who is becoming a good steward.
 - a. Awake
 - b. Arise from the dead
 - c. Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise
 - d. Redeem the time
 - e. Be not unwise, but understand the will of the Lord.
6. Describe how to redeem the time (1 Timothy 4:13-16).
 - a. Read, exhort, and apply doctrine
 - b. Do not neglect the gift given to you by prophecy

- c. Meditate upon all the above things that others may see your good works of application
- d. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine, continuing in them for your profit and for the profit of those who observe your profit.

7. Describe the difference between our witnessing and our failure to witness at the Great White Throne judgment (judgment of the unsaved persons) as described in Ezekiel 3.

When the unsaved person is judged, if he has been warned of the coming judgment and has failed to respond, his blood will not be on the hands of that Christian who was designated to warn him. If, however, he has not been warned by the Christian with that responsibility, then the unsaved person's blood will be required at that Christian's hand.

8. What has the Gentile done to evoke the wrath of God?
 - a. The knowledge of the true God was accessible to them via general revelation and conscience.
 - b. They have chosen a deliberate ignorance by suppressing the truth in unrighteousness.
 - c. God's wrath is the response of His holiness to wickedness.
 - d. End-time wrath is anticipated by the wrath principle displayed in the ongoing life of the world.
 - e. The lost have to endure the freedom that they demanded by being self-enslaved.
 - f. Those who have chosen rebellion are filled with all manner of wickedness.
9. Is Paul able to ascribe a common condition to both Jew and Gentile?

Yes, they are both guilty of sin (in both their personhood and works).

Chapter 4

1. Explain the difference between God's glory and mundane glory.

Mundane glory is the glory or exaltation you receive here in your present time on earth, and that glory comes from the result of human success. Mundane glory is temporal in nature.

God's glory is that glory received upon the passing from human life on earth into the life after death. God's glory is eternal, and is based upon the judgment of works. God's glory is the rewards received from following Jesus Christ and doing His works. It is given

to those who have denied themselves, taken up their crosses, and followed Jesus.

2. Compare the meaning of propitiation and expiation.

The meaning comes from the two goats in the Passover. In the Passover there was a blood offering and a scapegoat. The blood offering is the goat that is killed, and the Lord takes that sacrifice as payment for sin. That payment is called propitiation. It fulfills God's Law by appeasing its requirement of death for the sinner. The other goat is the scapegoat. In the ceremony of the scapegoat, the priest puts his hands on the goat and transfers all the sins of the people to the goat. The goat, then, is loosed into the wilderness. That sending away of the goat which is laden down with the sins of the people accomplishes the removal of sin or the forgiveness of sin. Jesus is the *hilasterion*, a propitiation in some translations and an expiation in others, but the word contains both meanings. You could put propitiation on one side of the coin because of the death of the goat of sacrifice that sin requires. On the other side of the coin is expiation because the scapegoat symbolizes the forgiveness of sin through the removal of the sin from the people by transferring it onto the goat and sending it away into the wilderness. So then, you see, when the translation has just the one word, then it looks like the emphasis is all on one side or the other, i.e. sacrifice or forgiveness. So propitiation doesn't tell the whole story, nor does expiation. You have to go back to the two goats in the Passover in order to understand the whole story.

3. What is the Abrahamic Covenant?

Genesis 12:1-4: It is the covenant of promise.

- a. It is of faith. Genesis 15:6.
 - b. Isaac is the instrument of fulfillment, Genesis 17:19.
 - c. It results in works (the sacrifice of Isaac), Genesis 22:1-2, 15-18, and Genesis 26:5.
 - d. Circumcision is the sign. Genesis 17:9-11.
 - e. The Law came 430 years later. Galatians 3:17.
4. Discuss the different points of view about salvation through faith and through works as described by Paul and then by James.

James and Paul are addressing issues from different perspectives. It would be like you and me standing back to back fighting off our enemies. Our enemies have surrounded us. We stand back to back. I watch your back while I fight the enemies that I face, and you watch my back while you fight your enemies that you face. We are fighting two different sets of enemies. James and Paul are standing back to back fighting off enemies in like manner.

One set of those enemies says, "You do not need any works. Once you are saved, just cool it, and the good times come rolling in." The other set of enemies says, "Man, you must have some works to get into salvation. You cannot get in without works." Paul is fighting against those people who are saying that you need works to get in. James is fighting against those saying that works are not needed at all for salvation.

You see, we have enemies on every front, and we need people to stand against them. It is not a conflict in God's plan. We need these instructions. We must have these words of instruction. Here is James fighting for the sanctification part of salvation and saying, "Faith without works is dead. If you come through justification, you ought to be changed. You ought to live differently. There ought to be some works in your process of sanctification that validate your faith." And here is Paul fighting for the justification part of salvation by saying, "We are not going to allow an invasion of works into the precious doctrine of justification by grace through faith. The works to provide justification is a done-deal. Jesus did all of those works required for our justification."

This issue of a seeming contradiction derives from two different sets of enemies of a true doctrine of salvation. It is not a real contradiction in the doctrine. It is the need to deal with works in the right way. If we do not deal rightly with works in regard to their proper place in the overall doctrine of salvation, we are going to have some very serious problems. Against these problems are what Paul and James are fighting.

5. What does the Law do?

The Law defines transgression. Apart from the Law there is no transgression. If the Law is removed, there is no definition of wrong. Then you cannot know you are in the

wrong and in need of salvation. The law establishes the knowledge of transgression and its deadly penalty.

Chapter 5

1. What are the characteristics of a saved person?
 - a. He rejoices in his hope. Romans 5:2.
 - b. He rejoices in the tribulations. Romans 5:3.
 - c. He joys in God. Romans 5:11.
2. What is the chain of events that begins with tribulation?

Tribulation works patience; patience works experience/character; experience/character works hope; hope eliminates shame. Romans 5:3-5.
3. What are the three “whens” of Christ’s death.
 - a. Verse 6: While we were yet without strength.
 - b. Verse 8: While we were yet sinners.
 - c. Verse 10: When we were enemies.
4. Describe the fall of man. Romans 5:12-14.
 - a. By one man sin entered, and death by sin. Romans 5:12.
 - b. Death passed upon all because all sinned. Romans 5:12.
 - c. Prior to the Law sin was in the world, but it was not imputed. Romans 5:13.
 - d. However, death reigned prior to the Law. Romans 5:14.
5. Describe the fall’s reversal. Romans 5:15-21.
 - a. Death came to all by the offense of Adam; therefore grace came to all by the righteousness of Jesus. Romans 5:18.
 - b. The offense of one brought many under judgment and to condemnation. Romans 5:18.
 - c. Many offenses were brought unto justification. Romans 5:16.
 - d. The righteousness of one brought many unto justification. Romans 5:18.
 - e. Law entered to make the offense abound unto guilt, and grace is magnified by that guilt. Romans 5:20.
 - f. Sin reigns unto death, but grace through righteousness reigns unto life. Romans 5:21.
6. What does baptism teach about salvation? Or, What was Paul’s argument in Romans 6:1-10 where he uses baptism to illumine the Christian’s experience of salvation?
 - a. You cannot continue in sin. Romans 6:1-4.
 - (1) Because you are baptized into the Lord’s death. Romans 6:3.
 - (2) You are raised into His life. Romans 6:4.
 - b. Our old man is crucified. Romans 6:6.
 - c. We have been freed from sin. Romans 6:7-8.
 - d. Since Christ died, death no longer has dominion. Romans 6:9.
 - e. Christ died unto sin, and lives unto God. Romans 6:10.
7. Can you choose your Lord? Romans 6:11-23. Or, what does it mean to say, as Paul does in Romans 6, that the Christian is free from the power of sin and free to obey God?
 - a. Do not let reign in your mortality. Romans 6:11-12.
 - b. Yield not your body as an instrument of sin. Romans 6:13a.
 - c. Yield yourself to God. Romans 6:13b.
 - d. Sin has no dominion under grace. Romans 6:14-15.
 - e. You are the servant of whom ye choose to obey. Romans 6:16-23.
8. What is the doctrine of imputation?

Death is imputed from Adam because Adam passed his sin’s consequences to his descendants. Righteousness and life is imputed because Christ took our sinfulness from us onto Himself and suffered the consequence of dying in our places. Imputation is when we receive (not earn) salvation because it is given to us by the One who paid the price. Christ’s righteousness is imputed (or given) to us by grace through faith.

Chapter 6

1. In Romans 7:6 it says: "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not [in] the oldness of the letter." What does it mean "in newness of spirit and not in oldness of the letter" and why?
The spirit gives life where the letter gives death because the letter is Law and the Law applies to the unsaved and/or carnal person.
2. What happens to the fruit-bearing branches (Christians bearing fruit) when the church **focuses** on keeping the non-fruit bearing branches (members who do not bear fruit) within its membership?
The fruit-bearing branches stop bearing much fruit (the church moves toward non-fruit-bearing). The church focuses on the size of its membership instead of preaching the Word to the lost and growing the Kingdom of God. When **God** prunes the church, we should not try to reverse that action.
3. What is the "law of the harvest"?
The "law of the harvest" is that you will reap what you sow. If you sow to the flesh, you will reap corruption; if you sow to the Spirit, "you shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
4. What do the following terms mean which are important for the understanding of Romans 7?
 - a. Flesh:
 - (1) Unredeemed man dominated by sin.
 - (2) Redeemed man with a tendency to sin.
 - b. Sin:
 - (1) Rebellion against God
 - (2) An evil power that brings fruit unto death.
 - c. Law:
 - (1) Law of Moses
 - (2) God's principles for good
 - (3) Gives knowledge of sin.
 - d. Mind: It is the residence of the Spirit of God and is man's inner, thinking self that guides his actions. (This is an optimistic definition, because the flesh can guide your actions as well. The flesh competes with the mind's resident Spirit for the possession of the will for guiding one's actions. It seeks to influence the will to deny the fleshly desires of the soul and follow the sacrificial path of the Spirit.). It is:
 - (1) The thinking part of man.
 - (2) The spiritual self.
 - e. Body: It is the residence of the fleshly part of the human personality. The flesh seeks to gain control of the will through its appeal to the soul.
 - (1) The physical body
 - (2) The self
 - (3) The sinful self
 - (4) The church
 - f. Spirit: The Holy Spirit, God in His personal presence and power in man's mind.

Chapter 7

1. Explain the sanctification process.
It is the Christian's stewardship process in which we are given opportunities to make choices, and your choice is to follow the Spirit, and anytime that we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, then we are living out our "in Christ Jesus." There is no condemnation, no ontological condemnation because that was taken care of at justification. There is no works condemnation either because you are following the Spirit, not the flesh. When you are following the Spirit you are doing what God wants you to do. You are behaving properly.
2. What are the benefits of being led by the Spirit?
 - a. You don't have the spirit of bondage that brings fear with it.
 - b. The witness of the Spirit is of your childhood. The Spirit witnesses with our spirit, and says you are a child of God.
3. How do you glorify God?
Through submission of the will.
4. When is doing a good thing a sin?

When it is not the Lord's will, which is the best thing.

5. What is the difference between having the Spirit and the Spirit's indwelling in you?

When you are justified, you receive the Spirit. All saved people have the Spirit. The saved person has the Spirit indwelling him when he submits his life to the control of the Spirit.

Chapter 8

1. What are the privileges of Israel? Romans 9:4-5.
 - a. They have the adoption.
 - b. They have the glory.
 - c. They have the covenants.
 - d. They have the Law.
 - e. They are in the service of God.
 - f. They have the promises of God.
 - g. They are in the lineage of Christ.
2. What are the characteristics of the sovereignty of God? Romans 9:14-24.
 - a. There is no unrighteousness with God. Romans 9:14.
 - b. Mercy and compassion are at God's will. Romans 9:15.
 - c. Our will and efforts do not counteract God's will. Romans 9:16.
 - d. God has mercy on whomever He wills. Romans 9:18.
 - e. God hardens whomever He wills. Romans 9:18.
 - f. We cannot fault God because creatures do not judge the creator. Romans 9:20.
 - g. We are created for God's purposes. Romans 9:21.
 - h. God demonstrates His power and His wrath in judgment of some. Romans 9:22.

- i. God demonstrates His glory and His mercy in the elect. Romans 9:23.
3. Illustrate and describe double predestination.

Double predestination is when God creates some to go to heaven and some to go to hell. The individuals created do not have a choice. For the illustration, see page 142.
4. Illustrate and describe single predestination.

After Adam's Fall, all men are headed for hell. God then chooses some to be removed from the mass of the damned and predestinates them to heaven. The individuals do not have a choice. For the illustration see page 143.
5. What is the true doctrine of election?

The true doctrine of election is of the seed, and everyone who is in that seed by faith will go to heaven.
6. What is the true doctrine of predestination?

Predestination is a corporate predestination. It is the predestination of a Seed. It comes on the right hand side of election. Election is the narrowing part, and predestination is the broadening part.

Chapter 9

1. What are the two parts to confession?

Confession has to cover both the negative aspect and the positive aspect. The negative is the confessing of sin, the positive is that we need to confess the saving power of Jesus accomplished in us.
2. According to Romans 10:9-10 two things are required for salvation. What are they?

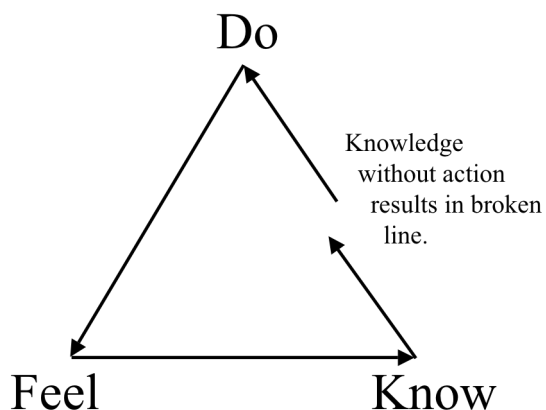
The heart to believe and the mouth to confess. The mouth without the heart gives lip service, and the heart without the mouth gives incomplete salvation because it derives from a dead faith.

3. Romans 11:22 says "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in [his] goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." What does "cut off" mean?

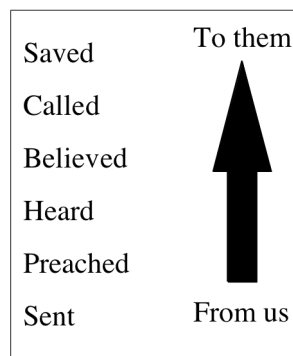
Cut off does not mean that saved persons lose their salvation/justification. It means that a saved person can lose his/her rewards. When a person does not walk God's path of sanctification, the rewards promised for obedience will not be there at the judgment.

4. Draw the triangle of piety showing the effect of not applying what you know.

Not doing what you know starts a spiral downwards as described in Romans 1.



5. Draw the chart that shows the mileposts in the salvation process.

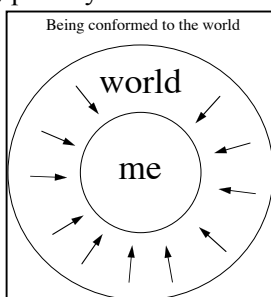


Chapter 10

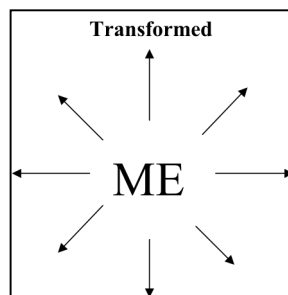
1. Compare the words conformed and transformed as used in Romans 12:2: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Conformed is when outside pressures cause you to behave differently from that which you would like to do. In this verse it means that the world tells you how you should behave. Transformed is when the Holy Spirit directs your activities from within. The world would have your priorities to be money and power, etc., but the transforming of the Holy Spirit would have you put God as your top (and only) priority.

2. Illustrate (draw) the chart of being conformed to the world.



3. Illustrate (draw) the chart about being transformed by the Holy Spirit who dwells within you.



4. The Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete because He is the One Who is (called along side of) the saint.
5. In Romans 12:1 we are "beseeched" to be a living sacrifice. This is a *kenotic* process, and it means an (unending process of self sacrifice) for every saint.
6. Reasonable is the translation for *logikos*. The opposite or unreasonable in Greek is (alogikos). Jesus is the Word (Logos); Antichrist, the opposite of Jesus is the (alogos).

Chapter 11

1. What does Paul teach in Romans 13 about the state?
 - a. All power comes from God. Romans 13:1
 - b. All government is ordained by God. Romans 13:1.
 - c. To resist the government is to resist God. Romans 13:2.
 - d. Whoever resists receives condemnation. Romans 13:2.
 - e. Government is not a terror to good. Romans 13:3.
 - f. Government is a terror to evil. Romans 13:3.
 - g. Government praises those who do good. Romans 13:3.
 - h. Government is a deacon of God for our good. Romans 13:4.
 - i. Evil-doers should fear government. Romans 13:4.
 - j. Government is a deacon of God wielding the sword against evil-doers. Romans 13:4.
 - k. Be subject for conscience sake also. Romans 13:5-7
 - (1) Pay tribute or taxes. Romans 13:6.
 - (2) Governors are God's worship leaders. Romans 13:6.
 - (3) Render all dues. Romans 13:7.
2. When the people in King Saul's time wanted an earthly king, God told Samuel to tell the people what the price would be for them to have an earthly king instead of having God as their king. What were those costs to be?
 - a. first fruits from your gardens
 - b. he will take your sons and put them in the army
 - c. he will take your daughters and make them as servants to his household
 - d. he is going to take the profit you would normally have for yourself to support his kingdom
3. When the government is lined up with God, the Christian is supposed to obey the government; when the government makes demands that are counter to God's, a Christian must obey God rather than the government. What is that choice called?

Civil disobedience.
4. Define neo-orthodoxy:

Feeling the Word of God in a mystical encounter from above. Revelation, in this situation, is not the objective words of scripture; revelation is the encounter, the experiential, person-to-person encounter that you have as a subject (person) with God Who Himself is also subject (Person). Revelation is therefore totally subjective.
5. What is the purpose of government?

To suppress evil and promote good. Government is a terror to evil but not a terror to good.
6. Who is the restrainer and why do you think so? (Your opinion).

Chapter 12

1. Analyze Romans 14:1-13. Summarize the overall lessons taught.
 - a. Vs 1-3: Receive the new person but do not debate personal preferences with him.
 - b. Vs. 4: Do not judge another person; leave that to his Master.
 - c. Vs. 5-6: Personal preferences are between an individual and his Lord for all things are to be in regard to our Lord.
 - d. Vs. 7-9: Whether we are living or dying, we are the Lord's.
 - e. Vs. 10-13: Ignorance and prejudice are not to be served; they must be confronted. Horizontal judgment is overruled by vertical judgment (God's judgment overrules man's judgment). We are not to be a stumbling block to our brothers.
2. Summarize Romans 14:14-23.

Whatever actions we do, we must not offend or cause our fellow Christian to sin. If our action would do that, then we must refrain from that action, whatever the cost.

We must always be careful that we do not fail to reflect our Lord in all our actions. A slip might cause someone to reject Christ as his Savior. The key phrase is “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

3. How does present-day “patience” differ from the patience (longsuffering) as used in the Bible?

Present-day patience is not losing your cool and taking life easy rather than getting upset when events do not happen as you like. Biblical patience has to do with staying under the burden when life beckons to an easier path.

4. What are the two specific freedoms given to us in the 14th chapter of Romans?
 - a. Freedom in eating
 - b. Freedom to respect days
5. Describe the hermeneutical culture screen. Give some examples of that.

This trick is used when a *thou shalt* or a *thou shalt not* is found in the Bible today which corresponds to what was observed in the culture of the first century church. The trick is to say that the commandment is “culturally derived.” So, how do you interpret it today? Using the culture screen, you find out what the culture of today is, then change the commandment to fit the culture because it is culturally derived.

Some examples are:

- a. Claiming that the husband is no longer head of the wife.
- b. The flood narrative in Genesis being a copy of the Babylonian flood narrative.
- c. To excuse sinful behavior on the basis of today’s culture.
- d. Claiming that women can now teach men and have authority over men.

Chapter 13

1. Explain what is meant by the word “admonishment.”

Admonishment is where you are giving gentle reminders, and it is a call to mind. It is a gentle, encouragement to remember what you already know. It is a very good thing. If you are admonished, it builds you up, makes you want to take that next step up. It is uplifting, encouraging, and it will get you to think. Then there is a change of life that goes with that thinking. It is very wholesome, and it works both ways.

2. Explain “dullness of hearing.”

Dull of hearing is this ability to hear something from God without hearing it. It is to hear it as noise or to hear without it striking into your soul. What comes after that dullness is a slide into deafness. Your hearing is dependent upon your doing.

3. What does Paul mean when he says “mark those people that are teaching contrary to sound doctrine” in Romans 16:17-18?

When you have identified that person, it says here, “Avoid him.” This avoid is present tense. It is linear. While you are in this sanctification path and you mark one of these false teachers, you not only stay on your path but you avoid that person. You stop him from knocking you off your path or tackling you or stopping you in your tracks. You mark him, you avoid him, and you stay on your path. You know who he is. So, avoid him so that you will not be knocked off path.

4. What is the “milk” of the Word? Give a Bible reference.

The “milk” of the Word is the reading of Scripture. Hebrews 5:12-14

5. What is the “meat” of the Word. Give a Bible reference.

The “meat” of the Word is the doing of the Word. John 4:34

GLOSSARY

Abomination: the term in English signifies that which is exceptionally loathsome, hateful, wicked, or vile.

Alogos: the opposite of *logos*. *Logos* means word, and in biblical terms refers to Jesus. *Alogos* is the opposite of *logos*, so in Biblical terms it means the opposite of Word (Jesus) and means antichrist. In the eschaton, the *Alogos* is the Antichrist.

Amanuensis: somebody employed by an individual to write from his or her dictation or to copy manuscripts; a writer's assistant with research and secretarial duties (dictionary). An amanuensis is the person whose hand actually writes the manuscript.

Analogy: a comparison between two things, typically on the basis of their structure and for the purpose of explanation or clarification; a correspondence or partial similarity; a thing that is comparable to something else in significant respects; a process of arguing from similarity in known respects to similarity in other respects (dictionary).

Apostasy: the abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief (dictionary).

Apostle: a sent one with a message, in Greek—*Apostelo*. *Apo* is from, *stelo* is sent—a sent-from person. One of the 12 followers of Jesus Christ chosen by Him to preach the news about Christianity (dictionary).

Autonomous: having self-government, at least to a significant degree; acting independently or having the freedom to do so.

The Barmen Confession: arose as a group of Christians who said that God's Word comes from above in a mystical encounter, not from below in the objective written words of Scripture.

Baton: as used in this context a message or mission passed by each runner in a relay team to the next runner.

Beseech: implore, beg, entreat, importune, plead with, appeal to, exhort, call on, supplicate, ask, request, petition. It is getting serious almost to the point of begging for your benefit.

Capitulates: ceases to resist an opponent or an unwelcome demand; surrenders (dictionary).

Carnal (carnality): relating to somebody's physical needs or appetites, especially as contrasted with spiritual or intellectual qualities (*formal*); sensual or sexual; relating to or consisting of the body (*formal*) (dictionary). For a Christian it is a life lived for self rather than for God. A life lived for God is spiritual and is devoted to obeying God's commands rather than meeting life's needs.

Christendom: all realms where Christianity is accepted as the main religion; all Christian people considered as a group (*archaic* or *formal*) (dictionary).

Chronology: the order in which events occur, or their arrangement according to this order.

Circumcision: the removal of the foreskin (prepuce) from the penis; the word "circumcision" comes from Latin *circum* (meaning "around") and *caedere* (meaning "to cut") (dictionary).

Cliché: a phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought.

Commitment: something that takes up time or energy, especially an obligation; devotion or dedication for example, to a cause, person or relationship; a planned arrangement or activity that cannot be avoided (dictionary).

Comprehend: to grasp the meaning or nature of something.

Concupiscence: sin with powerful feelings of physical desire (dictionary).

Conform: comply with rules, standards, or laws; behave according to socially acceptable conventions or standards; be similar in form or type; agree (dictionary).

Connotation: an additional sense or senses associated with or suggested by a word or phrase. Connotations are sometimes, but not always, fixed, and are often subjective; the implying or suggesting of an additional meaning for a word or phrase apart from the explicit meaning; in logic, the characteristic or set of characteristics that makes up the meaning of a term and thus defines the objects to which a term can be applied (dictionary).

Contentious: This is the opposite of those who are patient in their well doing. It is a fighting of the circumstances or thought.

Covenant: an agreement that brings about a rela-

- relationship of commitment between God and his people (dictionary).
- Covet: yearn to possess or have something (dictionary).
- Covetous: a strong desire to possess something that belongs to somebody else; want to have something very much (dictionary).
- Cult: a system of religious veneration and devotion directed toward a particular figure or object; a relatively small group of people having religious beliefs or practices regarded by others as strange or sinister; a misplaced or excessive admiration for a particular person or thing (dictionary).
- Deception: the practice of deliberately making somebody believe things that are not true; an act, trick, or device intended to deceive somebody (dictionary). If you are deceived, you cannot know the truth. We sin sometimes because we are deceived, and by its nature, then, we cannot know that we are in sin. The minute you know what a Scripture means, you are no longer deceived. Continuing in that error means that you are in rebellion.
- Defiled: something corrupted or ruined; to make a holy or sacred thing or place no longer fit for God's use; to make something dirty or polluted (dictionary).
- Defilement: the process of corrupting or ruining something; a holy or sacred thing or place made no longer fit for God's use; to dirty or pollute something.
- Deleterious: with a harmful or damaging effect on somebody or something (dictionary).
- Deontological*: your ethic must follow the truth regardless of the outcome because it is based on the commands of scripture.
- Destitution: Lack of the necessary means of subsistence (dictionary).
- Dilemma: a situation in which somebody must choose one of two or more unsatisfactory alternatives.
- Diligently: Diligent means showing persistent and hardworking effort in doing something (dictionary).
- Discernment: enablement by the Spirit to see something that is not very clear or obvious; understanding something that is not immediately obvious; telling the difference between good and bad.
- Discipleship: commitment and ability to following and being used by the Lord Jesus in His mission on earth. The requirements are self-denial, cross bearing, and actually following Jesus in submissive service to Him on His mission.
- Dominion: ruling power, authority, or control; somebody's area of influence or control (dictionary).
- Dwelling: when the Spirit dwells, it means He owns the house and establishes the rules for the house.
- Ecclesia*: a Greek word meaning the called out ones (*ek* = out of; *cllesia* = called). The church is the called-out ones.
- Election: God's sovereign choice of a seed through which He will bestow His Covenant and blessings. He will bless all of the generations coming through that seed, but He will narrow His choice of the seed for the next generation via His sovereignty.
- Eliminate: completely remove or get rid of something (dictionary).
- Emotionalism: a Christianity that is based on emotion rather than the rational mind.
- Emulate: match or surpass (a person or achievement), typically by imitation; imitate (dictionary).
- Enmity: the state of being actively opposed or hostile to someone or something (dictionary).
- Entanglements: involved with somebody or something in a problem that will be difficult to escape from (dictionary).
- Epithumia*: Concupiscence that is particularly strong; it is a sin so strong as to cause hard breathing.
- Equinox: the time or date (twice each year) at which the sun crosses the celestial equator, when day and night are of equal length (about September 22 and March 20) (dictionary).
- Esteem: respect and admiration, typically for a person (dictionary).
- Exaltation: the action of elevating someone in rank, power, or character; the action of praising someone or something highly (dictionary).
- Exhortation: urging somebody strongly and earnestly to do something; to give somebody urgent or earnest advice (dictionary).
- Existential: existential is not the modern philosophy of Existentialism in which all knowledge becomes subjective. I am using the word in the adjectival sense, which means, then, that

- your knowledge has a direct bearing on your very existence.
- Existentialism:** a 20th-century philosophical movement that denies that the universe has any intrinsic meaning or purpose under God and requires individuals to take responsibility for their own actions and shape their own destinies by handling all truth subjectively according to their own subjective feelings and perceptions.
- Expiation:** the removal of sins by placing them on the scapegoat which is loosed into the wilderness. The other goat signifies the payment for sins by being sacrificed for propitiation. Christ fulfilled both roles, expiation and propitiation.
- Factions:** subgroups which have specific interests or beliefs that are not always in harmony with the larger group or other subgroups.
- Faith:** belief in, devotion to, or trust in somebody or something that will impact one's life, values, and behavior.
- Fornication:** sexual intercourse outside of marriage (dictionary).
- Gamaliel:** a top teacher of Judaism, one who taught Paul.
- Glorification:** This part of salvation occurs at the end of a Christian's physical life or when death occurs. It is punctiliar in nature: you are alive and then you are in heaven. When a Christian dies he is immediately in the presence of the Lord Who evaluates and rewards him based on how he exercised his stewardship choices during sanctification.
- Gospel:** the teachings of Jesus Christ and the story of His life; any of one of the biblical books Matthew, Mark, Luke or John; an extract from one of the Gospels read as part of a Christian religious service (dictionary).
- Grace:** the infinite love, mercy, favor and goodwill shown to humankind by God. Grace is unmerited. It comes strictly on the basis of the Character of God.
- Hermeneutic:** the method and rules of interpreting the Bible.
- Hilasterion:** a Greek word translated as either expiation (removal/forgiveness of sin) or propitiation (payment of sin). Sometimes, the word "reconciliation" will be used in order to capture both meanings.
- Holiness:** separated and set-aside for God's use. It all comes back to slavery.
- Holocaust:** the mass murder of Jews under the German Nazi regime during the period 1941–45. More than 6 million European Jews, as well as members of other persecuted groups, such as gypsies and homosexuals, were murdered at concentration camps such as Auschwitz.
- Hypocrisy:** the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform; pretense (dictionary).
- Hypocrite:** a person who says he is a Christian but does not adhere to Christian behavior.
- Immortal:** to have eternal life or existence.
- Impenitent:** unable to repent or to turn away from the sin or error.
- Impinge:** have an effect or impact, esp. a negative one; advance over an area belonging to someone or something else; encroach (dictionary).
- Implementation:** the act of putting a course of action into action or accomplishment.
- Impotency:** a condition without the strength or power to do anything effective or helpful.
- Impotent:** unable to take effective action; helpless or powerless (dictionary).
- Impute:** to make something true in another person without their causing it by their own actions.
- Incarnation:** the birth of Jesus as a man and God's own Son. Jesus "became flesh" when he was miraculously conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary. In the Incarnation, the divine nature of the Son was united with human nature in one divine Person Jesus Christ, who was both "truly God and truly man".
- Incompatible:** so opposed in character as to be incapable of existing together; not consistent or able to coexist with another (dictionary).
- Indictment:** a formal accusation of a serious crime, a statement or indication that something is wrong or somebody is to blame.
- Infirmities:** lack of strength and vitality; weaknesses or failings in somebody's character; any medical conditions that causes a lack of strength or vitality (dictionary).
- Irrationality:** the state of being contrary to or lacking in reason or logic; unable to think logically; lacking the normal ability to think clearly and objectively without the intrusion of subjective feelings.

Justification: the beginning point of salvation. We are justified by Christ's death on the cross at the point of accepting Christ as our Savior. It is the beginning point of salvation, which is a three-part process. Justification is punctiliar or a dot (.) in time.

Kenosis: emptying oneself. Christ emptied Himself of his deity when He came to earth to demonstrate to man how God desires man to behave—Philippians 2:5-8. Christ did not stop at lowering Himself to become a man, but continued that downward walk by giving up His reputation, by humbling Himself, by become a servant (slave), and becoming obedient to God by dying on the cross to be the perfect sacrifice required of men in order to enter heaven. For further understanding of man's natural resistance to this, see Opposite the *kenosis*. The result of living the *kenosis* is to be glorified to a higher level as explained in Philippians 2:9-11.

King: We are not all "kings" in title as in the sense of secular rule, but we function as kings when we use the things God has given to us for His Glory. Everything we have belongs to God. He has given us "rule" over them, and we function as a king when we do that.

Law walk: a walk that follows a code.

Laxness: a condition of not being strict or careful enough; not tight or tense (dictionary).

Lethargy: a state of physical slowness and mental dullness as a result of tiredness, disease, or drugs; a lack of energy, activity, or enthusiasm (dictionary).

Lineage: lineal descent from an ancestor; a social group tracing its descent from a single ancestor (dictionary).

Maliciousness: a desire to cause harm or pain to others.

Maligned: bad or unpleasant things said about somebody or something, especially untrue things that are potentially damaging; harmful or evil in nature, effect, or intention; had or shown a desire to cause harm or pain to others (dictionary).

Martyrs: persons who are killed because of religious or other beliefs (dictionary).

Millennium: an anniversary of a thousand years; the point at which one period of a thousand years ends and another begins; the prophesied thousand-year reign of Christ at the end of the

age (Rev. 20:1-5) (dictionary).

Missio Dei: The Mission of God that Jesus performed as the Son of God. Now it is the mission that the Church is to perform as the Body of Christ. It is defined as seeking to save that which is lost (Luke 19:10).

Mortify: to kill. If you mortify the flesh, you have killed it and put the Spirit in its place. Obeying the Spirit is life; obeying the flesh is death. Mortifying is the business of self-denial.

Neo-orthodoxy: a modern theological movement which considers revelation to be not the objective words of scripture but the encounter, the experiential, person-to-person encounter that you have as a subject (person) with God Who Himself is also subject (Person).

Nullified: made of no legal validity, no value or importance.

Objective: free of any bias or prejudice caused by personal feelings; based on facts rather than thoughts or opinions; existing independently of the individual mind or perception (dictionary).

Ontological: dealing with the personhood.

Opposite the *kenosis*: rather than humbling himself and sacrificing himself, man seeks to elevate himself, to become better than his fellowman, to earn temporal riches, glory, and power. That attitude is demonstrated by Satan in Isaiah 14:12-14. The result of this attitude for saved people is loss of rewards.

Orientation: the positioning of something or the position or direction in which something stands (dictionary).

Pacify: to calm somebody who is angry or agitated, to soothe violent or angry feelings by doing something to bring about peace.

Parousia: the second coming of the Lord to be with His people.

Patience: that ability to stand in there when it gets difficult; to persevere when the going is hard and the burden is heavy; to abide under. *Hupomeno* is the Greek word most often translated as patience. To abide under the burden of the Lord, to not throw it off.

Perception: understand something in your own particular way.

Perfection: *Telos* in Greek means perfected; it means getting to the end, and it is translated "perfected" in the Bible. It means being taken

- to the end. We are all perfected when we reach glorification.
- Permeate: to enter something and spread throughout it, so that every part or aspect of it is affected.
- Perversion: the changing of something good true, or correct into something bad or wrong.
- Pharisee: a member of an ancient Jewish religious group who followed the Oral Law in addition to the Torah and attempted to live in a constant state of purity; somebody who is self-righteous or hypocritical especially with regard to adherence to rules and formalities.
- Phenomenon: an object, action, fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen.
- Predestine: determine an outcome or course of events in advance by divine will.
- Predicament: a difficult, unpleasant, or embarrassing situation (dictionary)
- Priest: the person who takes the needs of the people to God in intercession. As Christians we are not all priests in title, but we should all take on the function of priest as we go about our ministries.
- Prophet: a prophet of God is one who speaks for God; he tells the people God's message.
- Prosperous: to minister in such a way that God is honored, the people are blessed, and rewards for the minister are laid up in heaven.
- Providence: the wisdom, care, and guidance provided by God through His omniscient foresight (pro = before, videre = seeing); via providence God is perceived as a caring force guiding humankind.
- Prunes: (verb) to cut branches away from a plant in order to encourage more fruitfulness.
- Quench: to extinguish the motivation provided by the Holy Spirit. In this text it is a rejecting of Paul's beseeching.
- Ratified: formal approval given to an agreement in order to make it valid and legally binding.
- Recompense: to compensate someone for their bad behavior.
- Reconciliation: the peace and harmonious relationship occurring between the sinner and God when salvation occurs; it is also necessary when the Christian has been walking in carnality and desires to repent and turn back to God.
- Redemption (redemptive): the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil; the action of being lifted out of sin's bondage.
- Rejoice: to feel very happy or show great happiness about something.
- Remnant: a small minority of people who will remain faithful to God and so be saved.
- Repentance: agreeing with God about your sin and turning away from that sin or error and going in a different direction.
- Reprobation: the mind can no longer discern right from wrong. Reprobates think that good is bad and bad is good.
- Revelation: the manifestation, inspiration, and illumination by God about Himself and His creation. First, He manifests Himself and information about Himself and His creation. Then He inspires His meaning of His manifestation for proper recording. Lastly He illuminates our minds about the meaning and gives us conviction about our need to agree with Him.
- Revelation, General: revelation to which all men are given, i.e. nature, history, and experience. Because of this revelation, no man has an excuse to deny that God exists.
- Revelation: Special: revelation given to those who are willing to accept it, i.e. salvation history, Jesus, and the Bible.
- Righteousness: the making of the believer to be in legally good standing with God by God's giving the person the righteousness of Jesus. The Christian is a person who has been recreated (reborn) in his personhood into a new person who is perfectly righteous and going to heaven after death. Concerning works, righteousness is doing the works that God wants the righteous person to do after his rebirth.
- Salvation, Doctrine of: The process of a person being saved that includes justification, sanctification, and glorification. Justification and glorification are punctiliar or events, but sanctification is the stewardship of life during the time between justification and glorification.
- Sanctification: a stewardship process in which we are given opportunities to make choices. Our choice should be to follow the Spirit, and anytime that we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, then we are living out our "in Christ Jesus." There will be no ontological condemnation because that was taken care of at justification. There will be no condem-

- nation of our works either if you are following the Spirit and not the flesh.
- Scapegoat: one of the two goats used in the Passover. The scapegoat is the goat upon which the High Priest lays his hands for the purpose of transferring the sins of the nation to it, and then it is released to wander alone into the wilderness.
- Scenario: a situation or plot in which the relevant persons find themselves.
- Schizophrenia: a long-term mental disorder of a type involving a breakdown in the relation between thought, emotion, and behavior, leading to faulty perception, inappropriate actions and feelings, withdrawal from reality and personal relationships into fantasy and delusion, and a sense of mental fragmentation (dictionary).
- Scrutiny: critical observation or examination (dictionary).
- Sepulcher: grave.
- Shackles: round metal bands that can be opened or locked in order to hold the wrists or ankles of a captive (dictionary).
- Slave: somebody who is regarded as the property of the owner or master; somebody who is completely dominated by the owner and who meekly accepts being ruled by his master.
- Sovereignty: supreme power or authority which belongs to God alone.
- Spiritual walk: a free walk but it is in complete agreement with God's Law; violation of the Law disqualifies the walk from being a spiritual walk.
- Stewardship: a person employed to manage another's property, esp. a large house or estate; a person whose responsibility it is to take care of and use something for the welfare of its owner. The proper and correct use of those resources God has given to man for the divine purpose of bringing salvation to all mankind.
- Subjective: based on somebody's opinions or feelings rather than on facts or evidence; existing only in the mind and not independently of it (dictionary).
- Submissive: giving in or tending to give in to the demands or the authority of others (dictionary).
- Teleological*: the end results govern one's actions.
- Temporal: relating to worldly values in time as opposed to spiritual values in eternity. Temporal is the life we live on earth as opposed to eternal which is the life that never ends.
- Totem pole: among some Native North American peoples, a tall wooden pole carved with totems that symbolize family and historical relationships in a hierarchy.
- Transaction: an instance of buying or selling something; a business deal; the action of conducting business; an exchange or interaction between people (dictionary).
- Transgression: sin or error. It is an act that does not please God.
- Tribulations: great difficulties, afflictions, or distresses.
- Trinity of epistemology: Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge, in particular its foundations, scope, and validity (dictionary). In this case the trinity of epistemology begins with knowledge, goes to hope, and then goes to love. Knowledge of God's Word is not enough. That knowledge or faith must then move on to hope or the doing of that Word. That then leads the individual to love or to feel the affirmation of God. This is the beginning of what happens to the Christians who in serving God learns His Word, puts it into action, and then begins to love as God wants him to love, i.e. love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love neighbor as much as he loves himself.
- Unilateral: one direction. Agape love is unilateral; a response by the person receiving the love does not have to return it.
- Vat: a large container used to hold or store liquid (dictionary).
- Vocation: your call. Somebody's work, job, or profession, especially a type of work demanding special commitment; a strong feeling of being destined or called to undertake a particular type of work, especially a sense of being chosen by God for religious work or a religious life (dictionary).
- Zeal without knowledge: acting out one's feelings rather than one's knowledge of objective truth; a faith in faith.

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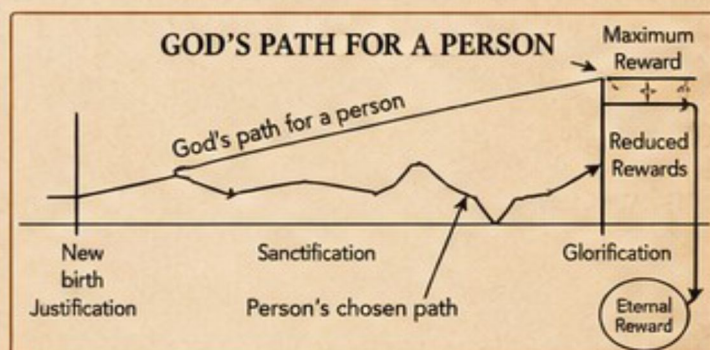
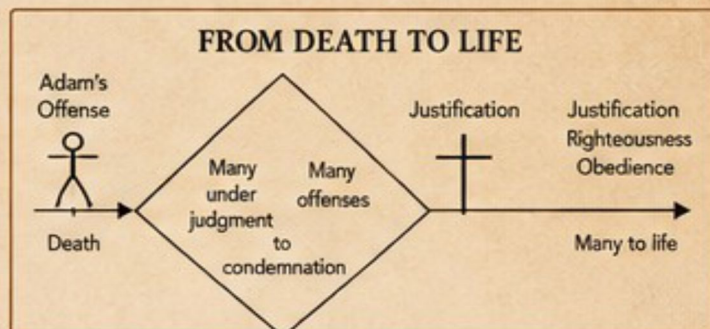
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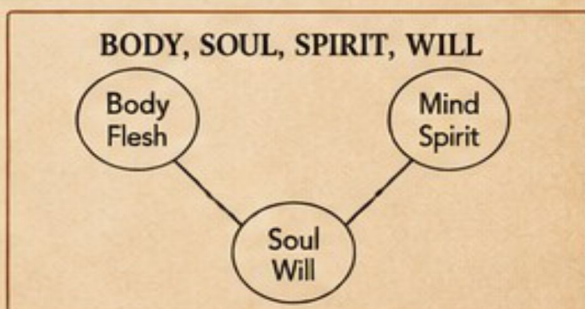


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WILLIAM E. VINSON, JR., PhD

Former director of Seminary Extension in Nashville, TN, and professor of Biblical Studies with 25 years of experience teaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and through internet teaching. The discipleship series is a unique approach to Biblical education.



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