

# The How and Why of Salvation

## Sacred Heart Parish Mission

Paonia, CO – May 8, 2021

### The Holy Spirit is the Key

- How are we made capable of loving as God loves?
- The Holy Spirit transforms us, renewing our minds: Tit 3:3-5
- Transformation is the New Covenant - Jer 31:31-34
- No longer hostile to the law - Rom 8:7
- Without transformation, the best we can do is conform. In the new covenant, it becomes nature
- The law is not external commands but rather the selfless love God is
- How does God put His love within us? Rom 5:5
- Technical term: Sanctifying Grace - II Pet 1:4, Eph 2:8-10

## Insanity to Sanity

- I Cor 2:9-16 (v. 14 – NASB or Rotherham)
- What makes us think as humans instead of chickens, cows, or chimps? I Cor 2:11
- What makes us different from God? I Cor 2:11
- The Holy Spirit enables us to think, act, feel, be as God - II Pet 1:3-4
- How do we partake of the Divine Nature? I Cor 2:11-12, Rom 5:5

## Spiritual Insanity

- Human thinking is insane. We are saved not only from death but from abased insanity - justification and sanctification
- Human standards would judge Jesus as insane
- To God, NOT to come and die for us would be insane
- Selfishness is insanity
- We are so used to insanity as normal that we don't realize it

## Centrality of Christ

- Our "normal" insanity must be replaced
- We are only saved from it by Christ's mind living daily within us by the Holy Spirit
- No Christianity without a living Christ
- Christian terms: old self and new creation – II Cor 5:17,21

## Christianity Without Christ

- Many views of Christianity do not require a living Jesus. Christianity is not:
  - A religion
  - A moral code
  - A philosophy
  - A way of life
  - Defined by doctrine
  - Defined by rituals
  - Defined by commandments
  - Belief in God - James 2:19, Luke 4:41
  - External conformance by human effort
  - A choice among many

## A Living Christ

- None of the previous require a living Jesus
- Christ-less models reduce Christianity to a choice among many
- Some Protestant views do not require a living Christ
- Redemption - requires Jesus' sacrifice 2000 years ago
- Sanctification - requires a living Jesus every day
- Christianity IS Christ living in us – I John 5:11-13
- It is not becoming a better person
- We can never improve ourselves to be as God is
- We can never improve ourselves to live an eternally sustainable life style

## Christianity is a Death

- Something that is good as God is good must replace what we are
- That's why Christianity is the death of ourselves
- Death of old self is replaced by a new creation
- All dies (nothingness) - we take on the hopes and dreams of Jesus
- Luke 9:23-24 - Picking up a cross is a march to death
- We are offered death in exchange for a new life – Rom 6:3-8
- John Sullivan will never be good enough - He can only be human
- Only God can be God – Eph 3:14-19
- Thus we need Jesus in us, the hope of glory - Col 1:27
- The Centrality of Christ

## Christian Discouragement

- Same old sins - of course, same old self!
- Reflects misunderstanding of Christian growth
- It is not improving self - self can only die
- It is not a continuum of improvement
- It is replacement of self - II Cor 5:15,17

## The Switch

- Two Natures:
  - Human and Divine
  - One desperately weakened, the other perfect
- Conversion is less like a continuum and more like an on/off switch
- If response to inputs is selfish good or evil, the "God switch" is off
- When we respond to the Holy Spirit, the "God switch" is on
- It can even flicker!
- The switch is either on or off, perfect or imperfect - Is 55:8-9
- Perfection - Matt 5:48 - is attainable!
- The problem is not attaining perfection but retaining perfection
- When we walk as Jesus - perfect
- When the old self walks - imperfect

## Expectations

- Don't expect the old self to change
- Changing habits is not changing self
- Self can only die
- Christian growth is not measured by how much the old self changes but rather how often the switch is on

## I Am the . . . .

- Jesus Christ is central to Christianity not because He gives it His name but because He makes it happen!
- Christianity IS Christ in us
- Without Him, there is no Christianity
- Now the "I am" statements make more sense
- John 14:6, 15:5

## Centrality of Christ and Holy Spirit

- Christianity is not when we join a Church, accept Jesus, or are baptized (Acts 8:9-24)
- It is when Christ dwells in us - Rom 8:9b, 14
- It is Christ in us through the Holy Spirit that changes us from our human insanity to God's sane way of being – Heb 13:20-21
- How does it work? What do we do?
- ***Christians are transformed through following the lead of the Holy Spirit***

## Following the Lead of The Holy Spirit

- Rom 8:14 - those who are led
  - Toward what?
    - Tit 2:14, Eph 2:8-10
  - Not just any good works
  - Those born of selfless love like God
- But How???
  - *We are led by the Holy Spirit the same way we are led by the human spirit*
  - I Cor 2:11
  - We "hear" the voice of the human spirit
  - Now we "hear" the voice of the Holy Spirit

## Distinguishing the Voices

- The Holy Spirit does not motivate out of:
  - Fear
  - Obligation
  - Responsibility
- That is not how God is motivated - I John 4:18
  - There is a time for fear:
    - When stepping outside the way – I Tim 5:20
    - Taking it seriously – Phil 2:12
    - Not wanting to hurt the one we love – Jude 23
  - But it is not where we stay: Rom 8:14-15
- Motivated by selfless love simply because it is there
  - “That’s what love does”

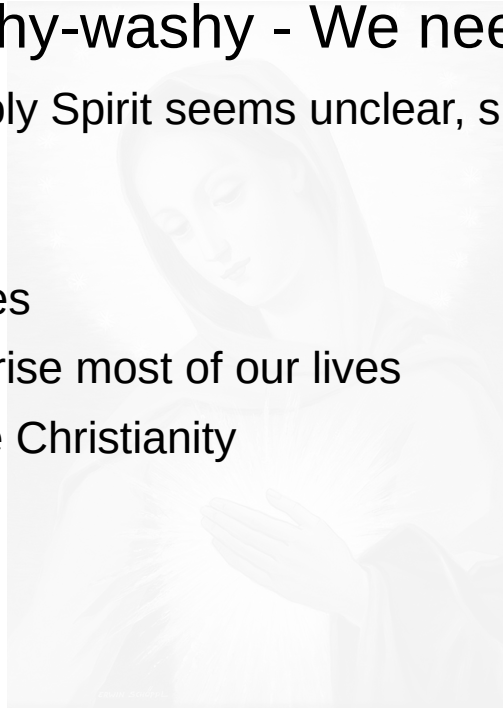
## Distinguishing the Voices

- Monumental, trivial - always God's love - Rom 5:5
- Pervades, captures every thought - II Cor 10:5
- If it's not selfless love, it is not God
- Neighbor's roof example
- We need Wisdom
- We need God's Word
- Examples:
  - Fornication
  - Roadside help
  - Gay marriage



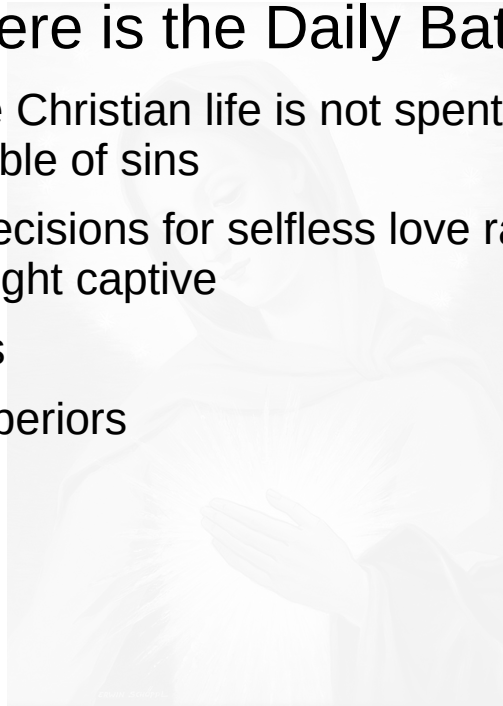
## Too wishy-washy - We need rules!

- Listening to the Holy Spirit seems unclear, subjective, wishy-washy
- There are rules
- There are absolutes
- They do not comprise most of our lives
- They do not define Christianity



## Where is the Daily Battle?

- The majority of the Christian life is not spent in titanic struggle with the most horrible of sins
- It is making little decisions for selfless love rather than selfishness - taking every thought captive
- Carrying packages
- Complimenting superiors
- Hosting dinner
- Brushing teeth



## Presupposes Obedience

- Right and wrong defined by motive more than action MOST of the time
- Forgetting that MOST leads to grave errors
- There are right and wrong actions but that is not most of our battle:
- *Christianity is not so much found in what we do as in why we do*
- Following human or Holy Spirit, human or divine nature
- All this PRESUPPOSES OBEDIENCE

## Different Covenants

- Defining ourselves and our state by action is easier but it is not Christianity
- Old Covenant - right and wrong actions
- New Covenant - right and wrong hearts
- Freedom surpasses (not replaces) obedience
  - Freedom builds and tests love
  - Freedom builds wisdom
  - Following rules requires discipline but not a right heart
  - The most sinful heart can adhere to right actions if it will be sufficiently rewarded

## Freedom is Essential

- God ordained our freedom
- We must be free to be like God because God is free
- Freedom allows us to give God something He does not have – our free choice to love Him
- **Without Freedom, perfect Love cannot exist!**
- Gal 5:13-15 – freedom yet servants! - I Peter 2:16
- To love perfectly, we must be perfectly free
- To be perfectly free, we must be perfectly detached
- The freedom of our love is forged in the crucible of suffering

## Christianity Requires More than Rules

- Following rules does not require:
  - Christ
  - Holy Spirit
  - Wisdom
- Christianity Is a LIVING Phenomenon – Heb 4:12
  - Rules are static
  - Actions may change depending on circumstances
  - The constant is God's selfless love
- Requires a Living Jesus
- Centrality of Christ to Christianity

## Easy to Abuse

- This approach to Christianity is easy to abuse for those who wish to abuse it
- Those who love do not wish to abuse it – I Tim 1:8-12
- Those who do right actions without love are not ready for Heaven – I Cor 13:3
- Heaven is BOTH the absence of sin and the presence of love
- Those who sin in love are not ready for Heaven
- Those who are righteous without love are not ready for Heaven - Job, Elijah

## Review

- We do not see the beauty of God's perfect, selfless holiness when we view Him through our false presuppositions about good and love - Is 55:8-9, 25:7
- Listening to the Holy Spirit removes the veil
- As we think, feel, and act more like God, the Holy Spirit bridges the chasm between God and man
- Without the Holy Spirit we are hostile and think this way is insane - Rom 8:7
- With the Holy Spirit, the veil is removed and we are transformed - II Cor 3:16-18

## Changes Everything

- We can think and be a new way
- It changes EVERYTHING
- Fundamentally changes relationships, e.g., with God
- Banishes guilt and fear - I John 4:18
- Allows us to have the relationship with God that God has always had within Himself
- To partake of this life, we must change the way we look at God, the way we interact with God, the way we love God

## Summary

- The Holy Spirit is the means of transformation from human to divine
- Doesn't just happen
- We follow the lead, the voice, toward selfless love
- *To be transformed to be like God, FOLLOW THE LEAD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT*
- Why???

## A Change in the Way We Relate to God

- Something has changed the way we can relate
  - Gal 4:4-7, John 15:15, 17:26
- ***We can now relate to God as God relates within Himself!***
- Is that how we are approaching God now?

## God Prefers Love to Obligation!

- Philemon
  - Written by Paul from prison in Rome (61-63 AD) or Ephesus (56-57AD)
  - Philemon – a leader of Church in Colossae
  - Onesimus – one of Philemon's slaves
  - Roman slavery different than American
    - Generally well treated (Deut 15:7-18, Ex 21:26-27)
    - Foundational to economy
    - Guarded fiercely – crucifixion for runaway slaves
  - The Onesimus problem
    - Not that simple, e.g., employer with gross misconduct of Christian employee

## Philemon

- One of the few “mature” epistles
- Strong relationship between Paul and Philemon reflects a mature Christian relationship – note tone of introduction: vv 1-7
- Phile 8-10 – the purpose of the letter
- God could insist on a relationship of obedience – Rom 9:20-21
- This was the Old Covenant relationship - Ex 23:20-24:8
- New Covenant is different – Jer 31:31-32 – Why?
  - Different Spirit = Different Capability
- A Family Relationship – II Cor 6:18
  - Do we serve our children out of obligation or love?
  - Which delights us – children obeying because they have to or because they want to?

## Obedience

- Important, but it is a given
- Do our children make us happy by not committing grievous sin?
- Love does not eliminate obedience
  - Don't even think of intentionally disobeying!
  - No exceptions for sinners in Heaven – I Cor 6:9-11
- A relationship stunted at the level of obedience alone is not pleasing to God
- Must move beyond obedience to faith and love – Paul's introductions
  - Faith springs from trust in God's love
  - This puts a smile on God's face

## A Foundation of Love

- God's relationship with us is never self-centered
- Neither is the relationship He seeks from us
- He seeks a relationship fueled by selfless love for each other
- It is strictly on the basis of love that Paul makes his request
- Phile 12 – N.B. the level of trust – Onesimus could be crucified
- Phile 13-14 – N.B. the relationship Paul seeks – he prefers love to obligation
- Paul encourages us to be the same toward God – II Cor 9:7

## The Way Love Works

- Phile 21 – the strength of their relationship, the strength of love
- The way love works – Eph 3:20
- Not what must I do but what can I do
- How God is toward us and how we must be toward Him



## The Holy Spirit Changes Everything

- We can now love as God loves
- We no longer seek what we have to do for salvation
- God seeks a relationship of love, not accounting
- Matt 25:31-40 – note the surprise – it was not out of obligation
- If we are seeking a reward, we are missing the point
  - The challenge of freedom – how far can we go
- The horizons of our spirituality open when we stop worrying about how much we are growing and focus on bringing joy to our Beloved

## Grace

- God prefers love to obligation
- So He gives us the ability to love as He loves
- This is by the power of the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit literally joins us to the body of Jesus wherein divinity and humanity are joined
- This power of making us partakers of the divine nature is called Sanctifying Grace
- Grace is everything to Christianity – it makes Christianity happen
- For much more information:  
<http://elmontbiblestudy.org/foundations/>