

Dear all, greetings.

Today we complete our brief discussion of our salvation from sin that we began in the last edition of Worldview. So, here goes....

Salvation is the overarching theme of the Bible, for it not only reveals God's actions for us but these actions express more profoundly than mere words the character for the universe to understand. Salvation involves eternity past-historical present-eternity future, and in the Scriptures, we find that Jesus was the "Lamb that was slaughtered for the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13.8). Paul says concerning the plan of salvation that "We speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages of our glory" (1 Cor. 2.7).

Salvation is not only God acting in time and history to save us - it is also God acting to vindicate His name in the great controversy between God and Satan. And what is God saving us from? Sin....

Sin is universal. It affects us all. It is the ultimate human problem, for it leads to death. For us to understand the nature of God's salvation from sin, we must first understand the problem of sin.

Sin as Deed

At a surface level, the most immediate way in which sin manifests itself is through misdeed. According to Isaiah 64.6, even our righteous deeds are like filthy rags. In Romans 3.9-18, Paul describes the universality of the sin problem, before concluding that "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3. 23).

What is the cure for sin as deed / misdeed? When sin is considered to be an act of wrongdoing, we are called upon to repent, confess our sins, be baptized, and receive God's forgiveness for our sins and cleansing from guilt.

This is the experience of justification, of being declared righteous by God, not because of who we are, but because of who Jesus is and what He did for us at Calvary.

Sin as Depravity

Yet, sin is more than deed / misdeed. It may end in action, but it always begins in the fallen inclinations of the heart. Scriptures testifies that sin is a perversion of a person's heart and will, moral nature and innermost nature. We are fatally polluted. Like an oil-polluted coastline, which cannot clean itself up, so somebody must come in and clean up the mess in our own hearts, or the polluted coastline / heart slowly but surely dies.

Genesis 6.5 describes sin as inner depravity thus, "Every inclination of their hearts was only evil continually." What is the cure? When sin is regarded as the evil inclination of the heart of the will, an inner depravity, the sinner needs a new heart and right spirit. David captured this spiritual reality and need well in Ps. 51.10 – "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me."

God promises to supply this for us – in the new covenant experience, when He affirms that, “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you: I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezek. 36. 26).

This the experience of heart conversion, regeneration, of sanctification. Of one’s will coming ever closer to the will of God. Of seeking more and more that God’s will be done in our life as it is in heaven. Of becoming more and more holy, as God Himself is holy.

But sin is yet deeper than this....

Sin as Despot

Sin is more than mere deed / misdeed or even depravity. Sin is an enslaving power that has dominion over us.

Romans 5-8 describes sinful actions as the product of living under the rule of an alien, evil and enslaving power, sin. Sin as despot is portrayed as a king or lord that exercises dominion unto death (Romans 5.12-15, 21).

Sin as despot is portrayed as a harsh taskmaster that holds individuals in slavery (Romans 6.6, 16-18) and pays them their wages of death (for the wages of sin is death....6.23).

Sin as despot can lie dormant and then spring to life, be aroused, stirring sinful passions into action (Romans 7.6-15).

Sin as a despot stands opposed to God, and is condemned by God (Romans 8.3).

To speak of sin as a power expresses the paradox that sin is something we do, and yet which precedes and determines our doing. In sinning it is we who sin, yet not we ourselves. Thus, in what we do, we are really acting out the power of sin which controls us.

And what is the cure? What is needed is more than repentance, confession, or a change of heart. What is needed for the enslaving, death-dealing power that is sin is an exchange of lordship in our life, from that of sin to that of Jesus Christ (Romans 6). Only under Christ’s lordship is there true freedom from our slavery to sin and whereas, “The wages of sin is death, the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6.23).

Conclusion

Each day we come before God as sinners, seeking to affirm or enter into a covenant relationship with God. Our common desire is forgiveness and reconciliation with God, our common enemy is sin.

For sin as a deed - we acknowledge afresh our sinful deeds, and confessing our sins we receive the forgiveness of our sins that is only possible through the spilt blood of Jesus. “Drink from it,

all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins.” Drinking from the cup signifies our acceptance of God’s forgiveness.

For sin as depravity – we ask God afresh to renew a right spirit within us, to remove our hearts of stone. “A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezek. 36.26).

For sin as despot – we are asking God to rule in our lives, rather than sin. We no longer wish to be slaves to sin, to see our homes and families torn apart by sin, but to enter into the “new covenant” as Jesus describes it in Luke 22, where we are His obedient people, where He is our God, where the claims of sin and Satan over our lives are denied before the watching universe, and where in becoming slaves to God we look forward to eternal life rather than as slaves to sin simply looking forward to eternal death.

So, 2nd thoughts anyone? Jesus had no 2nd thoughts when He breathed the breath of life in Adam’s lifeless body, and my prayer today is that we will have no 2nd thoughts as we enter into, or affirm, our faith in Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life, the Resurrection and the Life, the King of kings and Lord of lords, my Lord, and your Lord.

Have a blessed Sabbath everyone!

Conrad.