***Sin; Righteousness; and, Judgment, No. 2

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-046***

We are studying Colossians 1:3-8, and our subject is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," segment number 24.

Every spiritually born-again person has the gospel present in him, in the person of the redeemer, Jesus Christ. The indwelling Savior is the foundation of the believer's spiritual life (1 Corinthians 3:11). From the foundation of the gospel, the believer is capable of learning and applying the full gamut of Bible doctrine truth, which we find in Scripture (Acts 20:27). The teacher of doctrine is the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 16:12-14). The transforming power of this gospel base in the believer, which he received through free grace salvation, carries the believer into a life of temporal fellowship with God the Father. That temporal fellowship may be broken on occasion, but it is never necessary for it to be in a broken, permanent condition. It never ceases. The problem when fellowship is broken, and consequences are experienced, naturally, is that we sit on dead center instead of removing ourselves from that terrible position. So, it's important to realize that the base of the gospel gives us unending capacity from God to live a victorious Christian life in the midst of the greatest of defeats.

Now, Satan constantly belittles the importance of doctrine in the life of the believer and of the doctrine of salvation particularly in the mind of the unbeliever. But we have seen that the Holy Spirit brings conviction to the mind of the world of the unbeliever in three respects in order to neutralize this attempt by Satan to dissuade people from believing the gospel – to bring confusion to them. And nobody is ever saved until the Spirit of God does this work on him. So, this gives us a clue that these three things are what you should pray for when you want to bring the gospel to someone – when you want to point someone to heaven.

**Sin**

First, we have seen that it deals with sin. The Holy Spirit brings conviction concerning sin. This is the human condition of moral guilt before God because of having missed the standard of God's absolute perfection in mental and overt evil. The average person doesn't think that he is a sinner. He doesn't think that he has a moral guilt that is an enormous problem. He looks at other people, and sees how bad they are, and comparatively, he's so much better, and he feels that all is well with him and God. So, the average person naturally makes the mistake that sin is not a serious problem. Moral guilt is an enormous serious problem, and everybody has that guilt. But by nature you don't understand that, until the Holy Spirit hits you with this first whammy, and then it comes to you what your real condition is.

**Righteousness**

Secondly, we've seen that the Holy Spirit brings conviction concerning righteousness. This refers to the absolute righteousness of God, the Judge, which one must have in order to enter into heaven. People are good (some are better than others), and they feel that how good they are compared to how bad they are is what's going to make it with God. That's the natural way to think. And you will think that until the Spirit of God comes with the second whammy, and hits you with the realization that unless you're absolutely perfect, and as perfect as Jesus Christ, you can't go to heaven. Once you understand that, things begin to come into focus.

**Judgment**

Then we see that the Holy Spirit brings conviction on the third element concerning judgment. This is the divine verdict which condemns the unsaved to eternal punishment in the lake of fire along with Satan, their master. The Spirit of God makes this clear with this third whammy. He hits you with the realization that you are going to end up in the lake of fire. There's no question about that. You are on your way there, and you are going there because you're related to the wrong Lord. You're related to the lord Satan instead of the Lord Christ.

Now, when a person finally comes into an understanding with these three whammies about his moral guilt; his lack of absolute righteousness; and, the fact that God has already made the decision that he is going to send such a person to the lake of fire, then he is ready for the final decision that he must make about the gospel. The convicting work of the Holy Spirit gives the unsaved person an understanding of his status relative to salvation in respect to these three factors.

Now, the person can go positive or negative to the gospel. The Holy Spirit teaches the gospel to the lost person even though that person does not have the Spirit of God in him. You cannot learn spiritual things if you don't have God the Holy Spirit within you to be your teacher. But here is the one exception where God overrides the dead human spirit, and brings to the mentality of the individual an understanding concerning this spiritual truth of the gospel, relative to these three factors. So, it's the Holy Spirit who teaches the gospel to the person, and gives him conviction that it is true, relative to these factors of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He gives the unsaved person a comprehension of the gospel of salvation as a free gift from God's grace.

Now, once a person understands all that, he understands what his problem is relative to these three factors, and he understands that there is a solution, but the solution is entirely a gift grace from God, then there can be a change. The Holy Spirit can then move that person as the elect one of God to positive volition response to the gospel in the form of faith in Christ. That individual can then appropriate the salvation which is offered.

Now, if you'll turn back again to John 16:9-11 today, we're going to look at the reason for this triple conviction, so that, even more specifically, we understand the issue with the unsaved person. And when you understand this passage in John, you'll recoil all the more from what you see done in churches when they talk about getting saved (when they extend salvation to people) – how confused, how absolutely misleading it is. In these three verses (John 16:9-11), sin, righteousness, and judgment are dealt with. You'll notice that, in each one, two words appear: "concerning;" and, "because." And they're very prominent in the Greek Bible, and they are the signals that guide us through this passage.

**Sin**

He's going to speak first of all: "concerning." This means "about" sin. And the word for "sin" here is that word "hamartia" (ham-ar-tee'-ah) that we've already looked at. And it's the word that refers to missing the mark of God's standard of absolute righteousness.

Then "because" introduces the reason that the Holy Spirit brings conviction about missing the mark of absolute righteousness: "because they do not believe." This is the Greek word "pisteuo" (pist-yoo'-o), P I S T E U O. We've seen it before, and it refers to an act of faith. That's all – nothing more. It refers to taking God at His Word. It is not adding something in a way of some human commitment; some human promise; or, some human determination. It is simply saying that God is not lying about how I can go to heaven through a gift from Him. He is not telling a lie in the gospel. That's what the word "pisteuo" means. It's faith.

Now, the unbeliever does not trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. Instead, like Cain, he offers his good works and his religious rituals. And that is not acceptable to God, so he remains under his moral guilt. But once the unsaved person does believe in Jesus Christ, then his moral guilt is permanently removed from him – permanently, because it covers sins past; present; and, future. This person will then receive the benefit of the substitutionary death of Christ on Calvary in his behalf, bearing his sin guilt. The penalty for moral sin guilt is death. Somebody pays it. Now, remember that the word "death" means "separation." You do it by eternal separation from God; or, Christ did on the cross in your place when He was separated from God (when He died spiritually), from high noon to 3:00 PM. He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He was speaking to the Holy Spirit and to the Father.

I remind you the core message of the gospel is very clear in Scripture. And where better to find it than in the book that was written to make the gospel clear. The gospel of John 3:16-18. Here's the core message of the gospel. "For God's so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. And he who believes in Him is not judged. And he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the Only Begotten Son of God."

Now, you must not try to fix the Bible to your liking. Just leave it for what it says, relative to how to go to heaven. It's a matter of believing what Christ has done for you, and accepting that in your behalf. Turn over to John 6:47. This is another expression of the core of the gospel: "Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes has eternal life." Nothing could be more explicitly clear. "He who believes has eternal life" is clearly is an act of accepting something that God has offered – an act of appropriation.

Take one more – a splendid expression of the core of the gospel: 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. Paul says, "For I delivered to you, as of first importance, what I also received." He didn't invent it. It came to him from God: "That Christ died for our sins." And, of course, He did this according to the prediction of Scripture: "And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." If His payment was acceptable to the Father, the penalty of death had indeed been paid for the sin of all mankind, then Christ would be raised from the dead. He could not be held. If His payment was not acceptable, He would never have been raised from the grave.

Now, this gospel must be believed. It must be believed as the truth of God, and as the only way for salvation. One of the most distressful verses in all the Bible, for the religions of the world, is John 14:6, when Jesus said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Me." If this verse is true: that Jesus Christ is the only way to get into heaven; and, that He is the small gate and the narrow way to eternal life, then all the religions of the world are false, and they are taking people into the lake of fire. You cannot redefine the gospel. You cannot redefine Christianity to update it to modern times. The pastor of Southlake Church in Southlake Texas has written a splendid article on the subtleties of redefining Christianity, and thereby redefining the gospel. And in fact, sincere people who are trying to get people in the heaven, see to it that they keep them out of heaven. . . .

Now, the Holy Spirit makes clear that the consequences of not believing the gospel are terrible. But the only way to get to heaven is through Jesus Christ. And the religions of the world may be as sincere as they may be. And please remember that those people are very nice people. The fact is that you'll often find that unbelievers, because they're very sensitive to their personal morality in reference to God are often nicer than Christians – a lot nicer than Christians. But that is not the issue. Hell will be filled with moral people – the sweetest, nicest kind of human beings you could ever want to meet.

Faith in Jesus Christ alone brings eternal life, while unbelief brings eternal judgment in hell. John 3:36, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides in Him," How do you obey the Son? You obey the Son by believing in Him. That's the point of the verse. Those who do believe in the Son as one who has paid for their sins – they go to heaven. Those who won't obey Him to believe Him, that He has done this for them – they go to the lake of fire.

Roman 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" – the free gift of God. It's an acceptance of something to be saved. It's an appropriation.

What the Holy Spirit does is clarifies that the consequences of not believing the gospel, and thus of not trusting in Christ for salvation, is to remain morally guilty before God. If you will not trust in Christ, you will be morally guilty forever. And you will have no hope when you face God in eternity. This is the constant state of the unbeliever. And nothing that he may do can mitigate his doomed position. He is without hope. He is without Christ. He is destined for the lake of fire. But once a believer understands the factors of sin, righteousness, and judgment, then he sees his need to believe in Jesus Christ in order to remove this problem from him. Then he has a reason for believing the gospel. But until the Holy Spirit does that work, he will not be motivated to believe the gospel. As Paul says in the book of Romans 3:12, early on: "There is none that seeks after God, no, not one." And he's quoting an Old Testament passage (Psalms 14:1-7) when he says that.

No one is saved without the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. Relative to sin, you are in that position of guilt. How can you get out of it? By believing in Jesus Christ. John 16 says, concerning sin" Because they do not believe in Me. Do not say that unbelief is a sin. That isn't what the passage says. It says, "The Holy Spirit convicts them of their sin condition" (their moral guilt condition). And they have that condition because they will not believe in Christ. And he makes it clear to them that that is their condition until they do accept Him.

**Righteousness**

Secondly, in John 16:10, you see again the words "concerning" / "because:" "And concerning righteousness" ("dikaiosune") (dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay) – that noun we have seen before. The word for "righteousness" here is referring to the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ: "Because I go to the Father." The Greek word here "to," by the way, is this word "pros" P R O S. This is a preposition, and it means face-to-face. Jesus says, "I am leaving this earth." I'm going back to heaven – back to where I'll be face-to-face with God My Father. And because of this condition, someone has to make this clear, because I'm going to leave. Someone has to be making clear to lost human beings what they need in terms of absolute righteousness to go to heaven: concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me." You will no longer be able to see Jesus Christ.

The person; the life and, the work of Jesus Christ was always one of absolute perfection. You could not look upon the Lord Jesus, and not realize that there was a difference when you looked at Him. He just was different. There was something different about Him when you looked at Him. He was manly in every respect. He was a quality person in every depth. But there was something that was different. While He looked human and was human, He had a quality of perfection about Him that exuded from Him, that was not to be seen in other people. He caught your attention when you looked at Him. He was the embodiment of absolute righteousness. He was sinless – totally sinless in every respect. Furthermore, He stood up to the world and said so.

How many of you good Christians would like to stand up to the world and tell us that you are sinless? Some people do. They have no hesitancy in telling you that they have arrived at sinless perfection. And that's okay unless you talk to their husband or wife. Then questions will be raised in your mind. But there are always idiots out there who think that they have come to some high state of holiness like that. Ah, but John 8:46 points out to us that Jesus, on one occasion, when people were accusing him of being less than morally perfect, Jesus looked them in the eye and said, "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me?" Jesus said, "Okay, you don't believe what I claim about who I am; about my deity; or, about my relationship to you as a Savior. You don't believe Me? You accuse Me of being an agent of Beelzebub? Of the devil? You accuse me of being of My father, the devil? You are of your father, the devil? And I'll challenge you to point out anything that you can if sin in me. Step right up gentlemen. Do it now, here in this forum where everybody can hear you." And, of course, nobody dared to do it because they could not do it. He was the embodiment of absolute righteousness.

So, when Jesus was here, you could look at this human being, and say, "This is what a person should be." You watched him in his dealings with people. You watched him in his every action. You listened to what he said. You entered into his thinking. And in every respect, it was ennobling. It was refreshing to be with him. He didn't make you feel like you just walked through a sewer. He didn't make you feel like you were a deceiver – like someone with deceit in him. He was just clean-cut. And it is amazing how Christians have not caught onto that.

I had a man one time who showed me how he had cleverly reproduced one of those little cards that says you have insurance on your car. He didn't have insurance on his car. And he showed me how (because he knew how to handle a computer), he had made this little card that looked like the real one. When he went to buy his license plate, he put that across it, and they said, "Okay." And he fooled them every time. I'm surprised that he, as a Christian, would have the stupidity to tell me. . . . At least you ought to keep that kind of stuff to yourself. But he was sold beside himself. Here was a Christian, and he was proud of it.

Well, this is what you would never have seen in Christ. You could tell. You knew what it was to be a perfect person when you saw Him. He was the embodiment of absolute righteousness. And the ascension and the reception of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God the Father in heaven confirms His absolute righteousness, and it confirms for us the success of his mission of paying for the sins of all mankind.

Ephesians 1:20: "Which He brought about in Christ (speaking of God the Father), the glory of salvation, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly places." The Bible makes it very clear that Christ ascended it to heaven, and He was given the honored position of the right hand of God the Father – the place of honor and the place of authority.

Now, the New English Bible that has come out has removed the word "right hand" from the Greek Bible, and put something else in there, like "the hand of honor," or "the hand of respect," or something, because this is politically incorrect to talk about the right hand as a place of honor. Where does that leave all the southpaws? It's very bad. It's very demeaning to all the lefties out there that people are going to be put in a place of honor. They're not going to put Him on your left hand. They're going to put Him on your right hand. Well, there you have the hatred for the Word of God, and the stupidity of man in his natural wisdom. The Bible says that He's up there at the Father's right hand.

Many years ago, in San Francisco, California, that citadel of spiritual enlightenment, there was a bishop of the Episcopalian church. His name was Bishop Pike. His son committed suicide, and he was trying to get in touch with him through the occult, demonic world. And he was on TV, talking about how he was getting messages from the spirit world, and how he was trying to make progress to contact his son. And in the process of this TV interview, as I listened to him, the interviewer asked him something about Christ. And he says, "Well, yes, of course, he was a person. He was a historical figure. And He did die. And He did make a provision for mankind." But he said, but, "Of course, I don't believe this kind of stuff about like He's up in heaven seated at the Father's right hand." That's a very chilling remark. What he was implying was that Jesus, the human, was a great example, but he was still dead. He wasn't up there as a human in heaven. And he blew it off. I thought a few weeks later, how ironic that he should be in Israel, and he's riding around in a Jeep, and he goes out in the desert to look at some archeological site, and he gets lost, and finally he dies of dehydration. And they find him. What a shock it was for him to learn that Jesus was at the Father's right hand, and I only hope that he had enough trust in Christ that he found that by seeing Him there, rather than by learning it in the other place. The terrible thing about hell is that it's a place where you learn truth too late.

There's another verse. Let's go over to Colossians 3:1: "If then you have been raised up with Christ" (which you have all positionally been raised from the dead already), "keep seeking the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father." You got that? That's the implication of the doctrine of Christ being seated at the right hand of God the Father. If you have been raised from the dead, then act accordingly. Set your affections on things above. And stop living in this world on long-time plans. Get your affections where your Lord is, because that's where you are. You already seated at the right hand of God the Father positionally. Now make that the reality by which you live. That should be the guiding factor. The fact that Christ is there at that respected and honored position shows that what He did for sin has covered our guilt, and it shows that He was absolutely true. He was sinlessly perfect. He was what He claimed to be. He was absolute righteousness. If He were not absolute righteousness, He would not be sitting up there now.

Now, for any lost person to ascend into heaven, he must meet the standard of absolute righteousness, which was required of Jesus Christ as a human being, to sit there. Since the Lord Jesus Christ is no longer on the earth as the visible expression of the absolute righteousness of God, it was necessary for the lost to be given an understanding of what that standard is from another source. And that's what the Holy Spirit does.

Now, you can see how hard it is to make it clear to some people, and get them to accept the fact, that they are sinners. That's tough enough. But for you to be able to make clear to them what absolute perfection (righteousness) is, that's even harder. That's why the Holy Spirit has to do it. So, what the Holy Spirit does is that He provides the lost person with a clear understanding of the absolute righteousness which is required for salvation. He sees that he has to be as good as Jesus Christ. This absolute righteousness of Christ can only be secured as a free grace gift from God through faith in Christ Himself.

2 Corinthians 5:21 points us out: "He made Him (Christ), Who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf." Christ bore our sin: "That we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Because He bore our sin, and paid the penalty of death, we can have imputed to us the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ. You can't earn it. You can't merit it. But you can get it as a free gift. Salvation cannot be a free gift, however, if it is contaminated by adding human good works; human promises; or, human good intentions to live right. That is a commitment. Nobody is saved by a commitment. Human good works are a commitment. You can only be saved by an appropriation. It is very important that you do not give people the wrong idea.

Romans 4:4-5: "Now to the one who works, his wages is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes, in Him, Who justifies the ungodly, His faith is reckoned as righteousness." It could not be clearer. You cannot work. You cannot make deals. You cannot make any arrangement with God – promises or intentions to be saved, without having interjected a work element. That's very important.

Then there's Romans 11:6, "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise, grace is no longer grace." Grace means no promises; no good intentions; and, no deals with God to be saved. It is simply an act of grace.

**Judgment**

The third thing, in John 16:11, for which the Holy Spirit brings conviction is relative to judgment. And again, we have: "Concerning (because) the ruler. This is "archon" (ar'-khone), A R C H O N, which refers to Satan: "The ruler of this world," which refers to the world of unsaved humanity: "Has been judged." The word "judged" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "krino" (kree'-no), K R I N O. The word "krino" means a decision made by God. He has permanently judged Satan, and has broken his power over those that were enslaved to him. The Holy Spirit makes clear to the unbeliever that God has condemned Satan forever to the lake of fire. The unbeliever has to understand that Satan is a loser, and that Satan has been judged by God, the Judge of the universe, and has been assigned to the lake of fire.

Now, those who choose to follow Satan (who choose to stand with him instead of with Jesus Christ) are going to share His destiny, and that's the point. People have to understand that the devil has been judged on the cross. He is doomed. And God has prepared a place for him. Matthew 25:41: "Then He will say to those on his left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Human beings are going to be where their lord, Satan, is. People have to understand that that's where they will end up if they follow the world system. The Holy Spirit makes it clear to the unsaved their need to repent of their sin by turning from Satan to the living God, Jesus Christ. Did you get that gem? He makes it clear that they have to repent of their sins. How do you repent of your sins? By turning from your evil to Christ. You cannot repent by turning from evil. You cannot repent just by turning from the bad things you do, because if you do that you'll turn to some other bad things.

**Repentance**

When the Bible says "repent," it means "to turn to the living God." And the only way you can turn to the living God is through Jesus Christ. Let's get this straight. Acts 14:15: "And saying, 'Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men.'" Barnabas and Paul were being worshiped by these people, and saying, "Men why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you are, and preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that is in them." What was he telling them? He said, "I want you to change your mind about worshiping Zeus, and Hermes, and all those dudes of the mythology that are not gods. I want you to turn from them. I want you to change your mind about them ('metanoeo' (met-an'-oy-ah) – repent), and I want you to come to the living God. I want you to believe in the God who made heaven and earth the Creator." And there's no way that they could turn from the pagan gods unless they turned to the living God. To turn from the pagan god, and not to turn to the living God was only to turn to some other pagan god.

Acts 26:18: "To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." How do you repent? By faith in Jesus Christ. You don't repent by turning from your sins. You repent by turning to Jesus Christ, and believing in Him as Savior. Then indeed you will turn from sin.

Acts 26:20. "But kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem, and then throughout all the regions of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance," There it is even more explicit. How do you repent? You turn to God. How do you turn to God? You believe in Jesus Christ. And what happens? You'll have appropriate conduct – deeds appropriate to one who has turned to God.

Acts 11:21, "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord." The ministry of Peter at Antioch turned to the Lord," What did they do? That was the act of repentance.

Let's look at one more, in Thessalonians 1:9: "For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God." There you have biblical repentance. It's not changing your mind about sins. It's changing your mind about the living God from your dead gods, or your no gods, or your self-God. Repentance is turning from your dead idols to the living God. You change your mind about the authority.

Now, God the Holy Spirit responds in evangelism prayers of the believers. You see that being a witness of Jesus Christ is a divine human experience. The Holy Spirit does His specific convicting work of unbelievers in response to the prayers of the saints. The Christian brings the biblical doctrine of the plan of salvation to the lost. The Holy Spirit makes clear what is at stake: sin; righteousness; and, judgment. The unbelievers do not trust Jesus Christ for salvation, so they remain guilty in their sin before God the Judge. The unbelievers lack absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ, so they're disqualified from heaven no matter how they try. The unbelievers who choose to remain loyal to Satan, the first sinner, will share his condemnation and conscious suffering in the lake of fire forever. Luke 16:23-25, in the historical record on the rich man, makes it clear that hell is a painful place.

Conviction of sin clarifies the moral guilt of the lost. Conviction of righteousness clarifies the standard of absolute righteousness for entering heaven. And conviction of judgment certifies the doom of Satan, and all who follow him, by rejecting Jesus Christ. That's the point of the Holy Spirit bringing conviction on sin; righteousness; and, judgment. Without it, there's no way for the system to work. The believer must cooperate with the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in evangelizing the unsaved. We must present a bad news / good news gospel for the Holy Spirit to use as the basis of His convicting work. If you mess up at that point, then the Holy Spirit does not have a basis to do His work. You have to give a straight free grace salvation gospel, or the whole system is clogged. The gospel must be a biblical presentation as an appropriation, not as a commitment to a good lifestyle as an evidence of repentance. The Christian witness cannot bring conviction to the unsaved. Only the Holy Spirit can, so you have to leave it with Him. You do not try to bring conviction by adding human gimmicks: "Please walk down the aisle," or "Would you raise your hand so we can pray for you?" And everything else under the sun that the gimmickry that people will come up with in their intense desire to get somebody saved? Only the Holy Spirit can do that, so don't try to figure out a way to trick them into being saved. You have to depend on the Holy Spirit in your witnessing work.

Remember that evangelism is the grace work of the Holy Spirit. Christians should seek, therefore, to discern. Keep your spiritual eye open for the person that you see is being moved relative to his moral guilt problem; his lack of righteousness; and, his awareness that he is destined to share Satan's future. That's the person you want to move on with more prayerful intensity. That person has been prepared for the message and the conviction is now in high gear.

However, but don't take it personally when somebody believes the gospel. Rejoice, but don't take it that this is a great victory that you have had. It's a great victory that the Holy Spirit has had. And don't take it personally if somebody turns you down, because most will. And that is no great defeat for you. Evangelizing a person means that you have given them the gospel, and you have prayed for them, for the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. When you have done that, the job has been done. The work of the Holy Spirit is what is the essential thing.

Now, when we do win a person to Christ, we want to move him to spiritual maturity. And we're going to talk about that a little more next time. From the point of salvation, the believer moves to spiritual maturity through the learning and the metabolizing of Bible doctrine. We do not lead someone to salvation in Christ, and then abandon him to the world system of Satan – the lust patterns of the sin nature. Very often that's what's done in churches, especially if somebody should be saved in the church, that hasn't even preached the gospel in the service, but ask people to come forward to indicate their salvation interest – that they have accepted Christ, hardly knowing any basis upon which to do it. They come forward. They join the church. And then they get into the program.

I attended a seminar all day on Wednesday, and one of the things that the teacher pointed out was that, in dealing with young people in the church, that churches fall into the trap of programs. You got a gym? Hey, open it up for the kids to come out to have a night of fun. You got a youth group? Hey, get the girls and boys to buddy up to one another. Some parents are so stupid that they never realize that if they allow their teenage children to have a one-on-one relationship with a boy or girl, they're going to get in deep trouble. They will be scarred. There is no question about it, because they will do what the Scripture says: "Do not defraud one another." "Defraud" means "do not deny" a person an emotional implication that you have built in that individual. And when you start getting one-on-one when you're immature, it's very easy to defraud. And you throw your children to sinning left and right. And I thought it was very discerning of this man to say, "Focus upon a spiritual relationship with God. That's the youth work.

He said, "I had this pastor tell me. I have a youth director. He came in. He ran programs. The kids went here. The kids went there. The kids had fun. The kids were up. The kids were down. And the kids were lousy." He said, "He left, and I got another man. He came in and he says, 'No fun and games. They are peripheral. Now, we'll do good things, but,' he said, he trained them in the Word of God. He trained them in loyalty to Jesus Christ. He trained them in manhood and womanhood and self-respect as a child of God." He said, "And the kids were transformed. They loved it. They had a respect for themselves that they were not pigs and dogs anymore, as we had been training them to be before.

We don't just lead a person to salvation, and we don't just then leave him out into the world system to be chewed up by the world; sin; and, the devil. What we do is guide this infant saint to a local church under the instruction of a pastor-teacher using the HICEE technique of instruction in divine viewpoint. If you don't know what the HICEE technique is, ask the person next to you after the service. That has been the method here at Berean Memorial Church for over four decades, so that we have fulfilled our divine mission as a local church. We use the HICEE technique, and we give people a chance to be royalty. We have not preached the gospel only in every service, and then let the Christians who are present wither away from spiritual malnutrition, because they are not instructed in the Word of God. We don't do that. Though we have done nothing, however, but divine good for people, young and older, enabling them to live victoriously over Satan, if they want to; over the sin nature; if they want to, and, over the world system, if they want to, so that they were capable of serving God under the Holy Spirit to enrich their eternity with great rewards. We have done that for people, but in spite of it, we have often not been appreciated. We have been hated; we have been abused; and, we have been deserted.

Now, I say this because you might think that that's cause for you to be intimidated; that it's not worthwhile; and, that, in spite of all the opportunities, some people cannot rise to it. And some parents can't get their heads screwed on straight. Our spiritual banquet feasts that we have in every church service have been treated by people with indifference. That's true – and with contempt. And any trivializing event gets their priority over Sunday's time, and their presence in the service. We have years of faithful ministry, shepherding people – and you youth leaders, and people in the academy, have years of taking care of people in their spiritual lives, only to find them, in their arrogance, shoving off, and deserting, and getting their noses out of joint over some triviality.

However, I remind you that, in spite of that kind of treatment, we are not alone. So too did they to Jesus, the very Son of God. John 6:66-67: "As a result of this, many of His disciples withdrew." Jesus said, "I'm not here to give you fun and games." They wanted Him to be a bread king. He says, "I'm here to give you the spiritual food, and to get your souls ready to meet your God:" "As a result of this, many disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. Jesus said, therefore, to the 12, 'You do not want to go away also, do you?" What a poignant statement for the Son of God to make: "After all the time we've been together, and after all the benefit that has come to you from the knowledge of the Word of God, do you want to be like these people, and turn your back upon God's source of great blessing to you?"

John 15:25-26: "'But they have done this,' Jesus said, 'in order that the Word might be fulfilled that is written in their Law" 'They hated Me without a cause.''" Jesus said, "These people have treated me like this, but not because I did evil to them, but because I did good to them – because I held them to the truth of God. They hated Me without a cause. "Dorean" (do-reh-an') is the Greek word. It is a very poignant word, and a very sad word – "Without any reason, they should have hated Me?

John 15:18: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you."

John 15:20: "Remember the word that I said to you. A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."

So, when people give you the back of the hand for your service to them in the cause of Christ, and when they're so blinded, don't take it personally. And there's no greater word for this than "blinded." I was thinking this week that the most terrible word in the Bible, I think, is "blinded." Just think of what it is to be spiritually blinded – not to have the sense of consequences, and not to have the sense that this little thing that I'm letting this happen with my kids is going to have this consequence out here. The enormity of what can happen from a slight deviation – just a slight deviation. And to invest your life, as many of you do, and then see the ingratitude and the willingness to desert the dream and all the potential? And when that happens, I'm amazed how, about the time the Lord needs to encourage me from people who are saying "No" to me, He comes through and says, "Hey, you're on track. What you're doing is what I want you to do."

This week, I got a letter. On it is a little sticker that says, "The Lord is my light and my salvation. It comes from a lady who used to attend church here, many, many years ago. She's up in the Columbia River area, up in Washington state now. I hadn't heard from her for many years. A couple of our folks have had some contact with her. And I opened it up. She wrote me this letter: "Dear Dr. Danish, I don't know if you remember me or not. It doesn't really matter if you do or don't. What does matter is the learning I received from you in person and on tapes. It has certainly brought unlimited joy, blessing, and prosperity that I know would not have been there had it not been for the teaching I received from you, and the hand of God upon me (Psalm 139:5). The ability to focus on Philippians 4:4-9."

Let me read that for you. Philippians 4:4-9: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice." And I'll tell you this: in the Greek language: that's a command: "Be happy." How's that? How do you like them bananas: "I'm commanding you to be happy." There's only one way you can be happy: in doctrine (straight doctrine), and being positive to it, and living by it. Then you will be happy, because then you share God's happiness, and God is always happy: "Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true; whatever is honorable; whatever is right; whatever is pure; whatever is lovely; whatever is of good repute, if there's any excellence, and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these thing. The things you have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace shall be with you."

That's the passage. She says, "The ability to focus on Philippians 4:4-9 brings me joy despite divorce, childlessness, and medical problems. As our little community struggles with the recent tragedy of a 14-year-old boy murdering two classmates and a teacher at the junior high school, the old teaching of humanism and situational ethics came to my mind. How fortunate I am to understand these thing. As I search the Scriptures daily (for our Lord is a God of knowledge (1 Samuel 2:3)), I can fondly recall the wonderful lessons you taught. I have never found a church where teaching was done (and not preaching) since I moved from Dallas. How wonderful to be eternally secure, and so frustrating to the many denominationally-minded folks I encounter who think I am arrogant because I know I am bound for glory, and refuse to accept their 'salvation-plus' techniques.

"I now reside on a 400-acre farm in the Colorado River basin of Central Washington, and wish to extend greetings to all Bereans, and an invitation to please look me up if you ever are up this way. My heart rejoices in the Lord. My soul is exalted in the Lord. And I owe it all to your faithful teaching of the Word, the Word, the Word, and not the fiction and the hype offered by most churches. May God bless and prosper you as He has done me. Your sister in Christ."

I happen to have found recently too that this lady went through some ups and downs spiritually in her own life. And as I told that individual, "I've got good news for you. The Word of God has done its work."

She enclosed a card: "I've already thanked God for your faithfulness. Now let me thank you," And she enclosed a check to Berean Memorial Church for $3,500.

Mr. Gitchel, how about taking it and dropping it in the offering box, since you're going to handle it? You don't often get to handle things like this.

Well, those of you who stuck by us, and were here in prayer meeting last week, we prayed for the money to replace this furnace unit. I hated to announce it today, but I thought maybe I would announce it. Some of you like matching funds. You love to have people give, and you'll match it. Well, if you match that, we'll be able to get rid of that duplex too. That'll be just right. And we'll clear that haunted house. We're not making much money. Halloween is only once a year. Now we're not making much money out of it. Maybe you'd like to match that fund. But don't tell me that doctrine does not work. It is the Word, and the Word, and the word. God, our Father, we thank You for Your grace to us. And we thank You for the constant examples.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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