

Calvary's Cavalry

WHAT IS NORMAL ANYWAY

Proverbs always has a great way of putting life in perspective (DUH!!!); and that includes when we are locked inside due to a global pandemic. As Christians who happen to be Americans, we have a tendency to act as Americans who happen to be Christians. This means we end up with an over-developed sense of what we deserve. The wisdom of Scripture takes a different tact than the materialism of the Western World; the wisdom of Scripture (and hence God—see the article on inspiration of Scripture in the February issue), holds to a needs based provision rather than want (Proverbs 30:7–9).

Now I know what you are thinking (and probably wish I would stop doing that), I am not sacrificing my soul for the world (Mark 8:36), I am simply wanting the provision in this world that I am entitled to receive. And as an American who happens to be a Christian, I get that completely. That is why I wish to challenge both your assumptions and my own.

As Christians we are supposed to view this world through the lens of God and His revelation to us. We are required to have what we call a Biblical worldview. I say required because we love the idea of reasoning together (Isaiah 1:18a), but forget the rest of that section (Isaiah 1:18b–20) is a call to surrender to God and repent of sin. Our reasoning is flawed (Proverbs 14:12), and in need of correction and supervision (Proverbs 3:5–7). That starts with examining what we think we are entitled to; and what we think normal really is or should be.

Much has been made in our world over the last few weeks of the idea of the collective good and the need to be safe; which is why we are predominantly shut down. But where did we get these ideas from? Yes, we should be careful and mindful of how we treat those around us (Matthew 7:12). Yes, our holy, obedient living takes the needs of others into account (Luke 10:25–27). Does that mean I sacrifice the entirety of society to save “just one life” as has been said? If not, am I entitled to go where I want, when I want, how I want? These are the things we must wrestle with—Biblically!!!!

After this is over, if this is ever really over; our country is going to begin a much needed conversation about who we are and what we value. The majority of our nation is currently operating out of fear. Fear of disease and death and suffering. Much of our public policy is driven from the desire to eliminate all disease and death and suffering. We can't; and make a mockery of ourselves and God when we try. If our demand to return to “life as normal” is nothing more than a desire for the status quo, we have sadly missed the mark and have wasted a discipleship opportunity sent from God. We have to see who we are, and what we want, and what we deserve in light of God and His provision for our needs. Then we are operating from a Biblical perspective.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Church History Spotlight2
- Practical Theology 101.....4
- Darrell's Recovery Room.....5
- Kat's Korner.....6
- Careful Covenants.....7
- Kids Zone.....8
- Bible Study.....10
- Final Words 12

OUR HOPE

For All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work



OUR SECOND GREAT COUNCIL CHALCEDON

This council is not nearly as much fun as Nicea (no heretic punching by Santa Claus at this one, sorry). But it does offer a new perspective upon the Christian church toward the end of the 5th century. Namely, the work (unintentionally) begun by Constantine is being furthered during the subsequent centuries; the mingling of the Christian church with the state. This never ends well for the church, and does not work during the Middle Ages (500–1500) either.

That discussion, while fun, will have to wait for another article. Instead we want to see the value of Chalcedon, whose decrees are listed at the bottom of the following page. In order to do that, we need to know why this council was first called. On page 3 there is a list of heresies that the Definition of Chalcedon refutes. I would venture that the majority of church people have never heard of any of them, and

wouldn't have the first clue what they are.

Therefore our first step in understanding Chalcedon is understanding the Christological heresies of the early and middle fifth century so we can understand why the precision of Chalcedon was and is so important. And it is still important; Christians still use these definitions over 1500 years later.

.....He is fully God....He is fully man.....No, I do not understand how that works; and neither do you. Such is the beautiful mystery of the God who has created and saved us.....

Arianism is a dark stain on the history of the church. While technically refuted with the Council of Nicea, most heretics did not have the common decency to stop teaching false doctrines. Not only that, heresies are like viruses; they have a tendency to mutate in order to survive and all that serves to do is create multiple strands of the same disease which unfortunately makes it easier to pass around to more people.

Arius (grand patriarch of modern-day Jehovah's Witnesses heresy), taught that Jesus was an exalted, but created being. This teaching denied the deity of Christ, by placing Him subservient to the Father, not in function, but in substance and existence. This is why the declaration of Nicea (325) was so important: *And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God,] Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father*

In response to the affirmation of the deity of Jesus, a new problem arose in the church, the denial of the humanity of Jesus. All of these heresies can be grouped into the category of monophysitism (one nature). This heresy dates back possibly into the first century as it was a basis for some Gnostic groups who divided the world into the good (spiritual) and the evil (physical). Based on that dualistic (wrong) understanding, Jesus could not have been a man with flesh as that would have been sinful and evil.

Our first foray into this heresy is Nestorianism which denied the singular nature of Jesus and claimed His humanity and deity were joined together, not in personhood; but by will. Meaning, the joining was not really any joining at all, but rather Jesus was two persons: one divine and one human. This was actually done to defend the humanity of Jesus, while having the unfortunate side effect of destroying it.

In response to Nestorianism is Eutychianism, based upon the teaching of Eutyches (380–456). In an effort to defend the deity of Christ, Eutyches held that Jesus was a fusion of divine and human. This fusing made Jesus "more than a man" and therefore made Jesus not an equal human with the rest of us. This would remove our representative as our fully man (Jesus) would have in reality been a super-man incapable of identifying with our sin.

Heresies Refuted by the Definition of Chalcedon

- Arianism
- Apollinarianism
- Eutychianism
- Nestorianism
- Monophysitism

Famous Players of Chalcedon

- Pope Leo (by proxy)
- Emperor Marcian

Finally, Apollinaris denied the humanity of Jesus' mind following in the super-man mold (although his teaching would predate that of Eutyches).

All of these teachings would be set aside formally at the conclusion of the Council of Chalcedon. Over the course of (what is believed to be) 16 sessions, the most widely attended of any ancient council (520 bishops represented) settled upon the orthodox understanding of the doctrine of Christ and His nature.

While there was widespread agreement with the writing of what is now known as Leo's Tome; there was need to formulate a creed that would encapsulate the orthodox understanding of these doctrines. The council affirmed the Creed of Nicea (325 printed last month), the Creed of Constantinople (381 now known as the Nicene Creed, yes it is very confusing), letters condemning Nestorianism, and Leo's Tome.

This collection serves as an affirmation of the dual natures of Christ. He is fully God, with a fully divine nature. He is fully man, with a fully human nature. These natures do not mix nor mingle, they are both present in Christ. No, I do not understand how that works; and neither do you. Such is the beautiful mystery of the God who has created and saved us.

The Confession of Chalcedon

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach people to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood;

truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood;

in all things like unto us, without sin;

begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood;

one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; (*εν δύο φύσεσιν άσυγχύτως, άτρέπτως, άδιαρέτως, άχωρίστως* – in *duabus naturis inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter*)

the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person (*prosopon*) and one Subsistence (hypostasis),

not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten God (*μονογενή Θεόν*), the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ;

as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

Bibliology Basics

- 66 Books
- 40+ Authors
- 1500+ years of writing
- 3 languages & continents
- Inspired by God
- Inerrant in composition
- Infallible in teaching
- Sufficient in practice
- Solitary rule of faith

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY 101—INFALLIBILITY

Infallible (a side-path of inerrant) means the Bible does not fail and cannot be disproven; what the Bible proclaims is right and true. This is not exactly the same as inerrant (hence a side-path), but it is similar. The differentiation is that while inerrancy proclaims the Scripture true in whatever it affirms, infallibility proclaims the Scripture will never be shown to be in error. They are in effect two sides of the same coin of veracity (truth).

The “proof of concept” for infallibility can be seen in modern archeology as the centuries have gone by. Do you doubt the existence of a group of people mentioned in the Bible; like historians did with the Hittites? You simply must be patient; God will not be mocked and His Word will be shown to be faithful and true, as archeological findings of Hittite cities and rulers has shown.

This is big and important claim, as the Bible does not present itself as fairytale. Rather: people, places, times, events, geography, and even natural (and supernatural) events are all recorded as if daring the reader to check Scriptures bona fides. God dares the world to double-check Him, because He always proves Himself to be accurate and faithful to the truth (especially since He is Truth—another doctrine).

.....people, places, times, events, geography, and even natural (and supernatural) events are all recorded as if daring the reader to check Scriptures bona fides. God dares the world to double-check Him, because He always proves Himself to be accurate and faithful to the truth

This SHOULD provide the Christian with confidence as we enter into the world of debate, apologetics, evangelism, etc. within the public square. We have an authoritative, inspired, true, unfalsifiable standard from God that He has provided for just those express purposes. The reason we believe is because our hearts have been changed by the Spirit of God. The reason we know what He has provided is true is because we know that He is God and nothing that comes from Him is capable of being anything less than perfect and true and right.

Instead of being embarrassed by our faith and the source of our doctrines being the Bible, we should cling to the truths of Scripture and boldly declare what God has spoken because we know it is good. He has rightly defined our world and the problem(s) within her. He has correctly diagnosed our souls and the sin that drags us down. He has righteously provided a cure for both, and given us the means by which we may apply the cure, not just as a one-time fix, but as a continual salve by which we rightly live and work and move in this Creation.



This understanding should have immediate impact on us today. Because the Bible is infallible, we can trust it not just in looking back, but in looking forward. With God as our ultimate author, confirming His past work and preparing for His future work; we can trust that what has not yet happened will indeed come to pass. We can do this because we can trust that God is true and good, as He has shown us repeatedly in His trustworthy Word. This idea is directly applicable because, as Christians in the now/not yet of salvation, we live in constant anticipation of the future fulfilment of God’s final work; His return.

Next month we will look at the idea of sufficient.

Egypto-Hittite Peace Treaty (c. 1258 BC) between Hattusili III and Ramesses II. Istanbul Archaeology Museum



RECOVERY ROOM WITH DARRELL

Hello everyone, it's Darrell again. I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe.

This month I would like to talk about our identity in Christ. The Bible is very clear that when we accept Christ into our lives we are a new creation; a different person. 2 Corinthians tells us in 5:17: *if anyone is in Christ Jesus he is a new creation, the old things have passed away, and behold new things have come.*

This is because the moment we accept Christ we receive the Holy Spirit of God and we are changed. 2 Timothy 1:7 says *the Spirit God gave us does not make us fear, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline.* We are changed.

I have a personal example of how we are identified in Christ. My wife and I were drug addicts for years before we accepted Christ and He changed us. We used to go to Narcotics Anonymous meetings and when you identify yourself you say: *Hi, my name is Darrell and I'm an addict.*

At the same time we were going to a Bible study with friends from church and we were telling them how we identify ourselves at the N.A. meetings. They stopped us in our tracks.

They told us, you do not identify yourselves as addicts, you are now a child of God and you identify yourself as a child of God.

That day changed the way I view myself. Instead of a dried-up, drug addict, I am a son of the Almighty God. Thanks to the work of Christ on the cross and I am working on 17 years of sobriety. Because of my new identity in Christ, amen.

See you next month.

Addiction = Dependence = Craving = Need = Habit = Weakness = Slavery

Salvation = Release = Life = Freedom = Joy = Completeness

1 John 1:8–10

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

The Problem

Psalm 51:1–4

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

The Cure

2 Corinthians 5:20–21

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The Promise

John 10:27–30

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

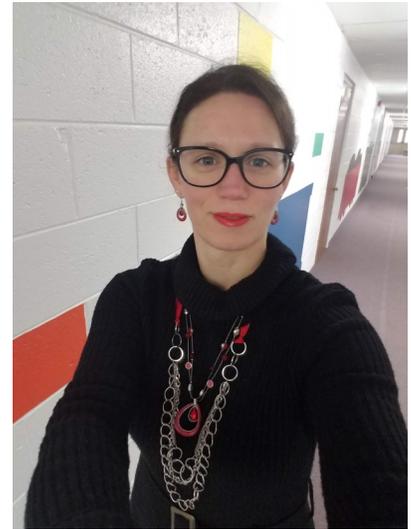
KAT'S KORNER

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, Fear is a Noun:

- 1a: an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger
- b(1): an instance of this emotion
- (2): a state marked by this emotion
- 2: anxious concern : SOLICITUDE
- 3: profound reverence and awe especially toward God
- 4: reason for alarm : DANGER

Fear is also a Verb:

- 1: to be afraid of : expect with alarm fear the worst
- 2: to have a reverential awe of fear God
- 3: archaic : FRIGHTEN
- 4: archaic : to feel fear in (oneself)



We must acknowledge that God is in control and sovereign. He knows the beginning and the end of all things: our lives, our family's lives, the stock market, the grocery store isle, even this virus.

We have all had our fair share, if not more so, of FEAR in the month of March. (new meaning to March Madness). And to an extent, we should be fearful of what we don't know in terms of cautiousness, particularly in concerns of our health and the health of our loved ones. But does that warrant complete fear?

For those who are not followers of Christ, the answer is yes. They have every right to be fearful. They have no hope outside of this world. And when this world is over, what is there for them but hell and condemnation? Death has a severe and realistic sting, so they should fear.

But for the Christian, we have something, or rather someone, bigger than this entire world and that is a "profound reverence and awe especially toward God". This takes our fear in the emotional and anxious sense of the word and turns into an action; Glorifying God. God is the ruler and on the throne even in the mist of worldly fears. God is the giver and sustainer of life. We are in His providential care; what then shall I fear? Death loses its sting because Christ has defeated death. For the Christian death is our beginning in the presence of God.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 (NASB)

⁵⁵O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But what to do as a Christian when you begin to feel fear? Notice I said "feel" fear. There are times in our lives we are truly in a fearful situation of life and death. But with "feeling" fear, we must stop at the door of Scripture and evaluate why we "feel" fearful. Is there something that I can do about a fearful situation, remove myself and loved ones from danger maybe, lock the door and prepare to defend my loved ones from danger, call for help even? Then those things should be done.

But what to do when you fear what you cannot see or stop? Sunday school answer would be PRAY; and that would be right. In fact Christians should be praying without ceasing already (1 Thessalonians 5:17); but there is more to it than just saying "Lord help us!" We must acknowledge that God is in control and sovereign. He has us and every situation in the palm of His hand. He knows the beginning and the end of all things: our lives, our family's lives, the stock market, the grocery store isle, even this virus.

KAT'S KORNER KONTINUED & KONCLUDED

If we are walking moment by moment with Christ, then we truly have nothing to fear. When we start to worry (having a lack of Faith in God in our circumstances) we are forgetting who we are walking with. Does that mean we are to never worry or fret or fear? Yes and no. Yes we should never worry or fret or fear because God is with us, but we are still living in a fallen world marred by sin, and in a broken body. So we still have those feelings. As Christians we are to use those feelings of worry and fear to lean more on the God who we believe in and find comfort and strength in and grow in our faith. Christian discipline is daily remembering to whom we belong and who is in control; and then acting on that truth.

As we grow in Christ, we should be leaning on God more easily in every situation. We may find ourselves, as young believers, getting wrapped up and over-whelmed with fears in life, before turning and leaning on God. As we grow in Christ, we as believers should be getting less wrapped up in the things of this world and lean more on God easier with each passing year. Our seniors who have a lifetime of walking with God are some of your more calm and stable people to be around in troubling times because they have a BLESSED ASSURANCE that comes with walking with a God who keeps His promises.

Fear as a verb is having a reverential awe of God. That is the fear we are to have. Fear not the things of this world, but the one who saves.



CAREFUL COVENANTS

Sometimes life gets in the way, and this month life has gotten in the way for Lou. Both Lou and Darrell work actual jobs (as opposed to me—Michael).

With working from home, having kids and grandkids in the house and generally having to deal with all of the things going on in the world (as many of us are), this labor of love has had to be put on the back burner.

But fear not, Careful Covenants will return, and the blessing we all receive from the knowledge of God working in history will be rich and sweet; and well worth the wait.

OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

- The Covenant with Creation
- Noahic Covenant
- Abrahamic Covenant
- Mosaic Covenant
- Davidic Covenant
- New Covenant

A Good reminder at a time like this

Psalm 46:1—11

- 1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.
2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;
3 Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah.
4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High.
5 God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.
6 The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted.
7 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.
8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, Who has wrought desolations in the earth.
9 He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.
10 "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."
11 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.*

FUN WITH LEARNING—PARENTS ZONE

FAMOUS CATECHISMS

- Martin Luther's Small (1529)
- Geneva (1541)
- Book of Common Prayer (1549)
- Heidelberg (1563)
- Westminster (1647)

Catechism is not just a dirty word that Roman Catholics use to scare children. It is a valid method of teaching that we use in other areas of life. Based partially on the Socratic method (question & answer), the fundamental goal of a catechism is to communicate timeless, Biblical truth in such a manner that it “sticks” into a child’s mind (Proverbs 22:6).

The goal of this section is not to make you feel like a bad parent if you have not done this. It isn’t even to make you feel guilty if you do not use it. The goal of this section is to give you another tool in the toolbox to combat the secularization of your brain, my brain, and our children’s brains.

The more we recognize the need for discipleship in our homes, the more we will want solid tools that aid us in that task. Each month we’ll give you some new questions, and blank the answers to last months as a way to test. If this works for your family, awesome, if it does not; find something that does. Then tell us about it so we can include it for other families.

Last Month's Questions

Run through them & see how you did.....
Even if you don't get them all correct—Celebrate the things you have learned

Question 1: Who made you?

Answer:

Question 2: What else did God make?

Answer:

Question 3: Why did God make you and all things?

Answer:

Question 4: How can you glorify God?

Answer:

Question 5: Why are you to glorify God?

Answer:

Question 6: Is there more than one God?

Answer:

Question 7: In how many persons does this one God Exist?

Answer:

Question 8: Name these three persons.

Answer:

Question 9: What is God?

Answer:

Question 10: Where is God?

Answer:

This Month's Questions

Question 11: Can you see God?

Answer: No, I cannot see God, but He always sees me

Question 12: Does God know all things?

Answer: Yes, nothing can be hidden from God.

Question 13: Can God do all things?

Answer: Yes, God can do all His holy will.

Question 14: Where do you learn how to love & obey God?

Answer: In the Holy Bible alone.

Question 15: Who wrote the Bible?

Answer: Chosen men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit

Question 16: Who were our first parents?

Answer: Adam and Eve.

Question 17: How did God create man?

Answer: God created man, male & female, after His own image

Question 18: Of what were our first parents made?

Answer: God made Adam's body out of the ground and Eve's body out of a rib from Adam

Question 19: What else did God give Adam and Eve?

Answer: He gave them eternal souls.

Question 20: Do you have a soul as well as a body?

Answer: Yes, and my soul is going to last forever

FUN WITH FUN—KIDS ZONE

Resurrection Sunday

O S K D L C D M J R J F N E I
H U Q O X O S E K S Y O T T V
N K V K F H D S A H I R O A K
R E T S O O R D O T O G M L G
K C E C Z E U B C R H I B I H
L A R B V J E E U Z C V N P S
R H U U F L R R P X L E J N C
B N E W C R E A T I O N F B D
C X S L U I S O S F L E L L C
Y T G S P S F V F C Q S Y I K
Z N E A O P R I S E N S X I Z
N R V V S U O K X E Z H T Z J
F A E F T A C U U I S R H E K
K R B Z V Q V I V Y O L G H H
O U Z E D P H H S H I N F E N

CROSS
JUDAS
PILATE

DEATH
LOVE
SIN
NEWCREATION

ROOSTER
RISEN
TOMB
RESURRECTION

FORGIVENESS
CRUCIFIXION
PASSOVER

WALKING THROUGH THE WORD BIBLE STUDY

COLOSSIANS 1:15–23

AUTHORSHIP & DATE

- Written by Paul
- Between 60–62 A.D.
- Prison Epistle

COLOSSAE

- In modern day Turkey
- Founded by Epaphras
- Encountering Gnosticism
- Not visited by Paul

Our stroll through Colossians continues with what can only be described as an exaltation of Christ.

Verse 15 dives right in by proclaiming Jesus (the He of v. 15), as the image of God and firstborn of creation. This description is of the utmost importance as it is necessary to the work of Christ. Jesus cannot accomplish salvation unless He is capable of bridging both people and God. The humanity of Jesus is easy; it was obvious that He was a man. The divinity is harder, but necessary. Jesus is the God-man, who wields the power and authority of God (Hebrews 1:3). But He does this without breaking unity in either the plan or essence of God (John 10:30–33). Therefore Jesus is able to bring to life those who were dead, because that is what the plan of God has always been (Romans 8:29).

As proof of this power, Paul describes how Jesus functions as God. According to verse 16, Jesus is the one who is the Creator (Genesis 1:1), and He is the Head of all things (John 1:1–3); as well as being the Agent of all of God's work coming to pass (Revelation 1:8). Again, this cements the Trinitarian understanding of Jesus and the work of God; and that is good, because otherwise, Christ could not deliver upon His promised redemption.



That last part is the vital turn of verse 17, Jesus is not just the beginning and power, He is the ruler and sustainer of all things. This is because of both the work that He has done (1 Corinthians 15:27–28), as well as the nature of who He is (Colossians 2:8–10). We often overlook the Trinity when examining soteriology (salvation), because we focus on Jesus, almost exclusively. Paul, here, is ensuring the Colossians understand that the work of salvation is a divine work (Ephesians 2:8–9), and that divine work is accomplished by the divine-man; Christ Jesus.

The accomplishing of that work affords a necessary status among the people to which it is afforded. Namely, that Jesus will be the head of everything, especially His people. Hence, Jesus is the head of the church; He is the One we seek to ultimately follow (1 Corinthians 11:1); and is the very goal of Christian living (Ephesians 4:14–15). This is because the goal of Christian living is sanctification, Christlikeness. Since the Garden, humanity has been separated from God; in Christ (God in human flesh) that separation is done away with and the people of Christ (Christians) are the holy people of God (1 Peter 2:9–10).

That is why we follow Him, that is why we worship Him, that is why He is our all in all. He has accomplished what we could not; in our deadness, He has made us alive (Romans 5:6–11). And even more, because of His power; in Him we are secure (Romans 5:17).

Now before you forget the rest of the Trinity, Paul returns to the active work of the Father by reminding of His conferring this status. God has moved, God has acted; therefore we can understand and we can be brought close and understand (John 1:14–18). Without the condescension of God to first act, and second explain; we would be unable to comprehend His goodness and mercy; and be eternally at a loss to how great our saving God truly is. That is why verse 20 points to the reconciling work of Christ.

The Trinity works together, as the Father sends the Son, and the Son redeems a people for the Father. Due to this cooperative dynamic, we have an access to God because we have God granting us His presence (1 Timothy 2:5–6). The Son has died on our behalf and raised to stand on behalf of His people (Hebrews 9:15). As we stand as His people, we stand safely and securely before God (Hebrews 4:14–16 & Jude 24–25).

That work should remind us of who we are as well as who we were. Before Christ verse 21 is us at work to the uttermost; we are dead in our trespasses, and incapable of desiring the righteousness of God (Ephesians 2:1–3). But verse 22 reminds that God is gracious. And His great mercy has been demonstrated by the precious work of Christ (Ephesians 2:4–7), in bridging the gap that our sin has created. We are now not guilty, because He is not guilty. We are righteous, because He is righteous. Our sins are condemned in our flesh, because our sin was put aside and condemned in His flesh (Colossians 2:13–14).

The man who is God, is also the Man who is our God; our righteousness and representative before the throne of God in heaven.

.....The Son has died on our behalf and raised to stand on behalf of His people.....As we stand as His people, we stand safely and securely before God

This brings us to the conclusion of this section, which comes to us in the form of a warning. All of this is true of God's people; that part is indisputable. The question is, who are God's people? We do not change colors, we do not change clothes, we do not grow taller or shorter or anything else. How do we know this work has been, and is being, and will be wrought on my behalf?

By remaining in the faith. If we depart from the faith, it is only because we were never truly a part of it to begin with (1 John 2:19). Our connection to God and His salvation is secured and held by Christ (who is God). Therefore we cannot possibly sever it or separate ourselves from it. And if we are in Christ, we would have neither the desire or will to do so in the first place.

The access point to God and His salvation is faith (Romans 4:9–12). The tether that keeps us secure is faith as well (Galatians 3:6–9). As we live and move in this world we are creating a testimony to who we are and what we believe in. We are proving what is true about ourselves on the inside; for better or worse. While the occasional rotten fruit is always going to be present in our souls; the overarching movement of our lives should be Godward in direction, and anyone looking in should be able to testify to that reality (1 Thessalonians 1:9–10).

That is what Paul proclaimed, because that is what God has demonstrated. That is what the Apostles cried out from the beginning (Acts 2:22–24), because that is the only message of salvation (Galatians 1:8–9). The God who does not change (Hebrews 13:8), and cannot fail (Hebrews 4:12–13), is the God who calls people to Himself and holds them there eternally.

This is the message of salvation and the hope of the people of God. Our clinging to this reality (notice that word), is the proof of my saving faith. I trust God because He has made me know. I cling to His promises, because they are all that is certain. I live to glorify Him, because He is my saving God.

OUTLINE

- Paul's greeting (1:1–2)
- Thanksgiving (1:3–8)
- Prayer for the Church (1:9–14)
- Exaltation of Christ (1:15–23)
- Sacrifice for Christ (1:24–29)
- Unity with Believers (2:1–5)
- Grounding in Christ (2:6–15)
- Freedom in Christ (2:16–23)
- Sanctification by Focus (3:1–4)
- Sanctification in Living (3:5–11)
- Born-again Living (3:12–17)
- Relationships (3:18–4:1)
- Testimonial Living (4:2–6)
- Commendations & Greetings (4:7–18)

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY MINISTRIES

A ministry of Calvary Baptist Church in Rockford, IL; we are a teaching ministry with the goal of making Biblical Theology make sense to the everyday Christian.

We are Pastors and laymen, formally educated in theology and trained in the school of life. We have had success and failure, joy and heart-break, faith and doubt. And through all these things we have had a secure salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

ANALYZING APRIL

No need to analyze anything. You've seen the news, you have an opinion. My concern is that your opinion be grounded in Scripture and run through that lens first and foremost.

If it is not, then it does not matter what you think. You need to repent and return to God and build your life and decisions around Him and His word. Looking to the future Kingdom He is establishing, and being the diligent disciple He has redeemed you to be.

Practical Theology Ministries

www.practicaltheologyministries.com

Email us

info@practicaltheologyministries.com

lou@practicaltheologyministries.com

Connect with us

on Facebook @PracticalTheologyMinistries

on Twitter @P_T_MTweets

Worship with us

6286 Linden Rd.

Rockford IL 61109

Sundays @ 10:30 AM

