

July 3, 2011

Selfless

Philippians 3:17-21; 2 Peter 2:4-22

Zig Ziglar, one of the world's most noted motivational speakers says, "A lot of people are suffering from 'stinking thinking'." It's true. Instead of counting our blessings, we are often guilty of counting our problems.

In today's session, the Apostle Paul reminds us that we should think about things which will keep our attitudes positive. And before you dismiss that thought, consider the vantage point from which Paul wrote this advice—from PRISON !

1. How did Paul categorize those who lived differently from his admonition of 3:17 ?

2. What reasons did Paul give for those who know Christ in personal faith to eagerly await Christ's second coming ? (3:20-21)

3. What end awaits those who conduct their lives contrary to the ways of the Lord ? (3:19)

4. Follow Peter's logical "if . . . then" argument from 2 Peter 2:4 through 9. What is his point ?

5. In your own words describe the personality type that Peter mentions in 2:10-11 :

6. What does Peter say is the fate of people who live with no regard for God or faith ? (2:12b-13a, 17)

7. Read 13b-15. Is Peter describing people of his generation, or of our society today ?

8. What effect do those who live in error have on those around them ? (2:18)

9. What is the relationship of the person to his bad habits and evil desires ? (2:19)

10. Why should Christians guard against returning to their "unsaved" lifestyle ? (2:20-21)

PERSONAL APPLICATION

What is the distinguishing characteristic of those who live a Godless lifestyle ?

Often, people like this are found at the top of their companies or organizations, in leadership roles. Do you know anyone like that ? Is there anything to admire about such a person ? Defend your answer in class.

July 10, 2011

Saved By Grace

Philippians 3:17-21; 2 Peter 2:4-22

Perhaps nothing is more detrimental to the cause of Christ today than legalism. While those—perhaps with good intentions—believe that they are “guardians of the faith”, they fail to realize that no code of conduct or set of rules can make one worthy of salvation.

This is what Paul was arguing to the churches of Galatia, where Judaizers were teaching that Gentile believers must obey the Jewish law in addition to belief in Jesus Christ in order to be saved. Paul tells them that the law cant save anyone—since no one is capable of keeping the law in its entirety. We can be right with God only by believing in Christ and accepting His redemptive work.

- 1. Why was Paul so obviously disappointed in the Galatian believers ? (3:1-2)
2. How did Paul's use of Abraham as an example of faith discredit the chief argument of the Judaizers ? (3:6-7)
3. Why is it that everyone who insists ob observing the law is under a curse ? (3:10)
4. How did Christ free us from the curse of the law ? (3:13)
5. What is the Gentiles' relationship to Abraham ? (3:14)

- 6. In what way did Paul say that God's promise to Abraham was like a will or legal document ? (3:15)
7. Since the law was not given to take the place of the promise, why was it given ? (3:19-20)
8. Can the law give life ? Why or why not ? (3:21)
9. What then, was the role of the law ? (3:22-25)
Before Christ :
After Christ ?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

How would you respond to someone who believes that he can have a right relationship with God by keeping the 10 commandments and attending church ?

How would you respond to someone who believes that no one is right with God unless s/he follows that person's rules of conduct ?

July 17, 2011

A Child of God

Galatians 4:1-7; 1 John 1:5-9; 3:1-3

It is a natural instinct of human nature to want to be accepted by others. We make every effort to gain this approval and limit rejection. The spiritual danger comes about when we begin to project these same fears in our relationship with God. It is easy to forget that God has already accepted us as His children by adoption through our faith in Christ. In today's lesson, the Galatian believers felt these same inner struggles.

The first John passages, on the other hand, deal with our personal walk with God, and how we should manage the sin problem in our lives.

1. How is being under the law like being an heir who is still a minor ? (Gal. 4:1-3)

2. How did the coming of Jesus perfectly satisfy the requirements of the law ? (Gal. 4:4-5)

3. Since the Galatians were no longer slaves to the law, what had they become ? (Gal. 4:7)

4. What is the relationship between our daily conduct and our claim to have fellowship with God ? (1 Jn. 1:6-7)

5. How is it possible for us to deceive ourselves ? (1Jn. 1:8)

5. Does Christ automatically forgive the on-going sins of a Christian, or is something required first ? (1Jn. 1:9)

7. What reason is given in 1Jn. 3:1 for the inability of unbelievers to understand a Christian's relationship with God ? Explain in your own words.

8. In what way(s) do you think Christians will one day be like Jesus ?

9. Since even the most devout Christians can not claim to be without sin (1Jn. 1:8, 10), what is John teaching in 3:3-6 ? Also see 3:9.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

As a child of God, do you behave more like a slave, or more like an heir ? Explain :

What role does the confession of sins play in your daily life ?

What do you need to change in your current lifestyle so that you may be confident and unashamed before Christ at His return ?

July 24, 2011

A Child of God

Romans 6:8-18

For those who have accepted Jesus Christ as savior, the battle for your soul may be over, but the battle for your allegiance still rages. Believers must, therefore, claim victory through Christ who conquered the power of sin. We have been liberated—set free. We are free to say no to sin, and yes to God. When this truth becomes reality in a Christian’s life, he/she will experience true freedom—the true freedom that only Christ can give.

1. Why do Christians have no reason to fear death ? (6:8-9)

2. How is a Christian to view himself as far as sin is concerned ? (6:10-11)

3. Although no one can attain sinless perfection, how does the term “reign” (6:12) describe what Christians should avoid ?

4. What change in attitude and action should take place because of what God has done for us ? (6:13-14)

5. What hypothetical question did paul ask in 6:15, and what emphatic answer did he expect ?

6. What did Paul say would be the outcome of letting sin dominate our lives ? (6:16)

7. For what did Paul express special thanks in verse 17 ?

8. What change has taken place in the lives of those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ ? (6:17-18)

9. Paul compares both the old and new life to slavery. (6:15-23) In your own words, tell why this analogy is appropriate in each case :

PERSONAL APPLICATION

In your own words, how would you contrast the benefits and pleasures of sinful, selfish living with those of righteous living ?

Sinful, selfish : _____

Righteous : _____

July 31, 2011

A Loving Servant
Galatians 5:13-16, 22-26; 6:7-10

We've all heard the expression "Don't kick a man when he's down." This advice is especially good for us as Christians, as some of us seem all too quick to point out shortcomings in others. But Christ has commanded us to love one another; hope for the best in one another; and, seek ways to express love to one another. We, as God's children, must also remember that the world will know us by our love rather than our many religious words or good intentions.

1. Read 5:13-16. Explain how verse 16 enables the actions called for in 13-15.

2. What character traits did Paul say should be present in the life of one who is Spirit-controlled ? (5:22-23)

3. In what way is a Christian to regard his/her former sinful desires ? (5:24)

4. What connection do you see between one's walk in the Spirit and their relationships with others ? (5:25-26)

5. What should be our primary concern when a fellow believer is caught up in sin ? (6:1)

5. What type of spirit are we to have toward the fallen believer ? (6:1)

6. What is an important caution Paul gives to the ones who seek to restore the brother who has sinned ? (6:1)

7. What law are we fulfilling when we bear one another's burdens ? (6:2)

8. What is Paul seeking to guard against when he exhorts Christians to self-examination ? (6:3-5) See also 2Cor. 5:10

9. According to 6:10, what is it that Christians should be continually on the lookout for ?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

What role does affirmation play in helping Christians who are under spiritual pressure ?

Think of one relationship in which you need to demonstrate love. What needs to change in your actions toward this person ?
